

**Facilitating the Transition from Student to Professional  
through Instrumental Teacher Education:  
A Case Study with Main Reference to the  
Royal Birmingham Conservatoire**

**Volume 1 (of 2)**

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## **Abstract**

A skilled music education workforce is essential to ensure longevity of music-making for future generations of young learners. According to the Review of Music Education in England (Henley, 2011), conservatoires have a responsibility to contribute to this workforce development. However, little is yet known about how undergraduate conservatoire students learn to teach.

Through an eclectic methodology (Chapter 2) (Rossman and Wilson, 1994; Aluko, 2006), this doctoral thesis uncovers challenges faced by the conservatoire sector in preparing students for careers that involve instrumental teaching, with main reference made to a case study at Royal Birmingham Conservatoire (RBC) where the pedagogical training of undergraduate students was investigated across Levels 4–6 of the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (Chapters 5, 6). Findings were triangulated with perspectives obtained from academics at six other English conservatoires, as well as from senior leaders across Music Education Hubs in England and RBC alumni (Chapters 3, 4, 7). Thus, the research was underpinned and influenced by multiple communities of practice involving both ‘newcomers’ and ‘old-timers’ (Lave and Wenger, 1991) who, between them, offered numerous ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’ perspectives (Reed-Danahay, 2016).

These findings revealed that hegemonic assumptions associated with conservatoire education create barriers to developing the future music education workforce in several ways (Chapter 8). While many RBC students’ outlooks towards teaching as a potential career path were transformed as a result of their engagement with various communities of practice throughout their undergraduate studies, alumni who benefited from similar training as students still considered that they could have been prepared more effectively for their early professional careers. Furthermore, institutional challenges have resulted in inconsistent pedagogical provision across the conservatoire sector and a mismatch between students’ pedagogical training and employer expectations. Recommendations include closer collaboration and dialogue between institutions, employers and alumni, to ensure that conservatoire graduates are trained appropriately to meet the needs of the modern music education sector, both during their studies and as they transition into employment.

## Volume 1

### Table of Contents

<b>Abstract</b> .....	<b>i</b>
<b>Table of Contents</b> .....	<b>vi</b>
<b>List of Tables</b> .....	<b>vii</b>
<b>List of Figures</b> .....	<b>ix</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b> .....	<b>xi</b>
Published prior work.....	xii
<b>Note on text: (i) Abbreviations</b> .....	<b>xiii</b>
<b>Note on text (ii) Presentation of data</b> .....	<b>xiv</b>
<b>Part I: Introduction, Research Contexts and Methodology</b> .....	<b>1</b>
0.1 Research aim and thesis structure .....	5
0.2 Researcher background and rationale for the research .....	7
<b>Chapter 1: Research contexts and frameworks</b> .....	<b>13</b>
1.1 The music education workforce in England.....	13
The need to develop the music education workforce in England .....	16
1.2 Instrumental teacher education .....	17
Instrumental teacher education in conservatoires.....	17
1.3 Learning theories and theoretical frameworks .....	26
Communities of Practice and legitimate peripheral participation.....	27
Transformative learning .....	29
Pedagogical Content Knowledge .....	33
Habitus, capital, field and doxa .....	36
Hidden curriculum .....	39
Classification and framing.....	40
Hegemony .....	42
Critical pedagogy .....	43
Student voice .....	44
1.4 Summary.....	45

<b>Chapter 2: Methodology and Pilot study</b> .....	<b>47</b>
2.1 Research paradigm.....	47
2.2 Methodology: an eclectic approach.....	49
Grounded theory.....	49
Action research.....	51
Case study.....	51
Autoethnography.....	53
Mixed-methods research.....	54
2.3 Research design.....	55
Structure of the research: projects and timescale.....	55
Participants.....	57
Ethical considerations.....	60
Approaches to data analysis.....	62
Hawthorne and halo effects.....	64
Summary of projects and research methods.....	65
Pilot study (Y4 students: 2019).....	65
Project 1.....	67
a) <i>Interviews with academics in six conservatoires in England</i> .....	67
b) <i>Employer perspectives via an online questionnaire</i> .....	68
Project 2.....	70
a) <i>Questionnaires and textual narratives (Y1 students: 2019–20)</i> .....	71
b) <i>Textual narratives (Y2 students: 2020–21)</i> .....	72
c) <i>Interviews (new graduates: summer 2020)</i> .....	73
Project 3.....	74
a) <i>Contextual observation and focus-group discussion (alumni: early 2020)</i> .....	74
b) <i>Interviews (alumni-mentors: summer 2020)</i> .....	76
2.4 Key findings of the Pilot study.....	77
Questionnaire and focus group.....	77
Participant feedback on questionnaire design.....	81
Focus-group participants' broader reflections on their musical training.....	82
Aspiration (Prejudice).....	82
Exploration (Uncertainty).....	83
Transformation (Passion).....	86
Reflections on the Pilot study findings: an original learning model.....	87
2.5 Summary.....	89

**Part II: Educational Research Findings ..... 91**

**Chapter 3: Conservatoire-sector challenges in preparing students for careers in instrumental teaching ..... 92**

3.1 Background.....	92
3.2 Leadership of undergraduate pedagogical training in English conservatoires	93
Participant background: circumstances leading to appointments .....	94
Roles and responsibilities in the conservatoires .....	97
Philosophies and approaches to pedagogical training.....	97
3.3 Curriculum design for undergraduate pedagogical training across the conservatoire sector.....	99
Overview of undergraduate pedagogical training in conservatoires.....	99
Pedagogical provision for Y1 (Level 4) .....	100
Y2 (Level 5) .....	102
Y3 and 4 (Level 6) .....	103
Departmental provision.....	105
Work placements .....	107
3.4 Institutional valuing of pedagogical training.....	112
Perceived staff values.....	112
Perceived student values.....	115
Alumni: an invaluable (but little used) resource .....	118
3.5 Summary.....	120

**Chapter 4: Employer perceptions of conservatoire graduates' preparedness for the instrumental teaching profession ..... 123**

4.1 Background.....	123
4.2 Employment of conservatoire graduates in MEHs .....	125
4.3 Employment challenges for MEHs .....	128
Perceived graduate incompetence .....	129
Perceived graduate indifference .....	135
4.4 Perceived institutional barriers .....	140
Partnership potential.....	143
4.5 Summary.....	143

**Chapter 5: Undergraduate assimilation of the unfamiliar through core pedagogy modules (Levels 4–5) ..... 146**

5.1 Background.....	146
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5.2 Core pedagogy modules at RBC: aims and content .....	147
5.3 Students' prior experience and aspirations at entry level .....	149
5.4 Students' reflections on the Y1 Community Engagement module.....	155
Developing pedagogical knowledge (DPK).....	157
Egocentricity versus altruism .....	159
Confidence, collaboration and communication .....	161
Impact and aspiration.....	164
5.5 Reflections on the research with Y1 .....	168
5.6 Why study pedagogy in a conservatoire? Joining the dots in Y2 .....	169
Specificity, transferability and responsibility.....	171
5.7 Reflections on the research with Y2.....	178
5.8 An adapted learning model (DPK).....	179
5.9 Summary.....	180

**Chapter 6: Undergraduate assimilation of the unfamiliar through professional placements and projects (Level 6)..... 183**

6.1 Background.....	183
6.2 Promoting learning: prepare, engage, support.....	188
6.3 Perceived drawbacks and benefits of placements .....	196
6.4 Testing the water: evolving career aspirations .....	199
6.5 Summary.....	204

**Chapter 7: Conservatoire alumni contributions to developing curricula and pedagogy in instrumental teacher education ..... 207**

7.1 Background.....	207
7.2 Alumni as role models in the lecture room: perspectives from early career experiences.....	208
An alumni-led workshop.....	208
An alumni-led focus-group discussion .....	215
Identity .....	217
Stability .....	218
Anxiety .....	220
Reality.....	221
7.3 A student–alumni cycle: the next generation of instrumental teacher-mentors .....	227
Mentoring and being mentored .....	230
Reciprocal learning .....	234

7.4 Summary.....	236
<b>Part III: Conclusions and Recommendations .....</b>	<b>239</b>
<b>Chapter 8: Conclusions and recommendations – counteracting hegemony and increasing dialogue.....</b>	<b>240</b>
8.1 Responses to the research sub-questions .....	240
8.2 Theoretical frameworks that underpin and influence outcomes .....	250
of instrumental teacher education .....	250
8.3 Reflections on methodology, including limitations and scope for future research .....	252
8.4 Closing remarks and recommendations.....	256
<b>References .....</b>	<b>263</b>
<b>Volume 2</b>	
<b>Table of Contents</b>	
<b>Appendix A – Ethical matters and overview .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Appendix B – Pilot study selected materials .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Appendix C – Project 1 selected materials .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Appendix D – Project 2 selected materials .....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Appendix E – Project 3 selected materials.....</b>	<b>51</b>

## List of Tables

Table 1: Summary of instrumental teacher education in conservatoire BMus (Hons) programmes in England (based on data available via conservatoires' websites and undergraduate course specifications published online in 2018) .....	4
Table 2: Overview of core and optional pedagogical provision at RBC pre- 2019 and 2019 onwards.....	11
Table 3: Classroom-based music provision across phases and ages ranges .....	14
Table 4: Challenges for alumni starting out in the instrumental teaching profession, reproduced from Shaw (2020: 9).....	24
Table 5: Definitions of mentoring (Renshaw, 2009: 62).....	31
Table 6: Numerical alignment of research sub-questions and projects .....	56
Table 7: Chronological timescale of data collection.....	56
Table 8: Participants' involvement in projects and their IONO status .....	60
Table 9: Anonymisation of participants throughout the research process .....	62
Table 10: Pilot study – summary of themes.....	78
Table 11: Pilot study participants' experiences of supporting the learning of young people (pre- RBC) .....	79
Table 12: Pilot study participants' career aspirations (original and current) .....	80
Table 13: Overview of Pilot study and three main projects.....	90
Table 14: Project 1a – summary of themes .....	93
Table 15: Project 1b – summary of themes .....	124
Table 16: Alphanumeric anonymisation by principal study discipline .....	150
Table 17: First-choice career aspirations (number of students by department).....	153
Table 18: Participants with prior experience of supporting musical learning but no related career aspirations .....	154
Table 19: Y1 Community Engagement assessment guidance .....	156
Table 20: Project 2a – summary of themes .....	157
Table 21: Impact of Y1 pedagogical training on students' career aspirations.....	165
Table 22: Y2 reflective task .....	170
Table 23: Project 2b – summary of themes .....	172
Table 24: No. of placement activities completed per participant across Y3–4 (by context) .....	185
Table 25: No. of placement activities completed per participant in Y3–4 (by delivery mode) .....	185

Table 26: Prompt questions for interviews with new graduates.....	186
Table 27: Project 2c – summary of themes .....	187
Table 28: Alumni background information .....	209
Table 29: Questions arising from the alumni-led class.....	210
Table 30: Prompt questions for alumni-led focus-group discussion .....	215
Table 31: Project 3a – summary of themes.....	217
Table 32: Project 3b – summary of themes.....	228

## List of Figures

Figure 1: Instrumental/vocal teacher roles (reproduced from AEC, 2010: 43).....	9
Figure 2: The mixed economy of music education in England, reproduced from Fautley et al. (2019: 245) .....	15
Figure 3: Challenges for alumni starting out in the instrumental teaching profession, reproduced from Shaw (2020: 10).....	24
Figure 4: Components of a social theory of learning: an initial inventory, reproduced from Wenger (2018: 221) .....	29
Figure 5: Shulman’s model of teacher knowledge, reproduced from Wolf and Younie (2019: 227) .....	34
Figure 6: Competencies and learning outcomes, reproduced from AEC (2010: 45)	45
Figure 7: Interrelated theoretical frameworks .....	46
Figure 8: IONO model .....	59
Figure 9: Creswell’s summary of the coding process, reproduced from Creswell (2012: 244).....	63
Figure 10: Original learning model emerging from Pilot study .....	89
Figure 11: Methodology summary .....	90
Figure 12: No. of years worked at participant institution .....	94
Figure 13: Professional background/experience of participants .....	96
Figure 14: Geographical spread of responses from MEHs.....	125
Figure 15: Does your music hub recruit teachers who are only just graduating from conservatoires/music colleges, or who graduated very recently, i.e. less than a year ago? .....	126
Figure 16: Approximately what percentage of your teaching staff trained at a conservatoire?.....	126
Figure 17: In your music hub, which of the following genres/specialisms/lesson types do you recruit new employees to teach? Please select all that apply.....	127
Figure 18: Of the genres/specialisms/lesson types identified, are there any that you consider new conservatoire graduates are typically not qualified to teach? .....	130
Figure 19: What are the particular challenges faced by new teachers working for your music hub? .....	133
Figure 20: Have you ever been asked to contribute to undergraduate course development in conservatoires?.....	139

Figure 21: Does your music hub offer placements/training for undergraduate conservatoire students as part of their course? .....	139
Figure 22: Geographical locations of conservatoires in England.....	142
Figure 23: Employer perceptions of challenges in preparing conservatoire students for careers in instrumental teaching .....	144
Figure 24: Participants' previous experience of supporting the learning of young people .....	151
Figure 25: Y1 students' previous experience of supporting the learning of young people .....	152
Figure 26: First choice career aspirations (across the sample) .....	152
Figure 27: Y1 students' career aspirations .....	154
Figure 28: Developing pedagogical knowledge in a conservatoire (DPK) .....	179
Figure 29: Number of placement activities completed in Y3 and 4 across participant sample (by context) .....	184
Figure 30: Number of placement activities completed in Y3 and 4 across participant sample (by delivery mode) .....	184
Figure 31: Promoting learning model: Prepare, Engage, Support .....	188
Figure 32: Shifting focus from teaching to learning (reproduced from Fautley and Savage, 2008) .....	204
Figure 33: Extended DPK model .....	205
Figure 34: ISAR model .....	226
Figure 35: Student–alumni cycle .....	238
Figure 36: Interrelated theoretical frameworks that underpin and influence outcomes of instrumental teacher education .....	251

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## Published prior work

The research cited below was carried out and completed prior to commencing doctoral study but has been published whilst working on this thesis (citation below). Completed in partial fulfilment of a Masters in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education at Birmingham City University, this small-scaled project proved to be the catalyst for commencing doctoral study.

Shaw, L. (2020). From student to professional: Recent conservatoire graduates' experiences of instrumental teaching. *British Journal of Music Education*, 38(1), 13–30. Available at: <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/british-journal-of-music-education/article/abs/from-student-to-professional-recent-conservatoire-graduates-experiences-of-instrumental-teaching/B46978CD5B8DA5663FF4C7B9B6D82191>

## **Note on text: (i) Abbreviations**

ABRSM	Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music
AEC	Association of European Conservatoires
A-level	Advanced Level qualification
ACE	Arts Council England
BEd	Bachelor of Education
BCU	Birmingham City University
BERA	British Educational Research Association
BMEP	Birmingham Music Education Partnership
BMus	Bachelor of Music
CoP(s)	Community(ies) of Practice
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
DA	Discourse Analysis
DipABRSM	Diploma of the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music
DfE	Department for Education
DCMS	Department for Culture, Media and Sport
EDI	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
GPK	General Pedagogical Knowledge
FHEQ	Framework for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree and Awarding Bodies
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
HE/HEI	Higher Education/Higher Education Institutions
IN	Insider-newcomer participants
IO	Insider-old-timer participants
IONO	Insider/outsider/newcomer/old-timer model
ILEA	Inner London Education Authority
ITE	Initial Teacher Education
L&P	Learning and Participation
LRSM	Licentiate of the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music
MEH	Music Education Hub(s)
MPCS	'Music Performance and Communication Skills' project
MU	Musicians' Union
NPME	National Plan for Music Education

NYMOs	National Youth Music Organisations
ON	Outsider-newcomer participants
OO	Outsider-old-timer participants
PCK	Pedagogical Content Knowledge
PGCE	Postgraduate Certificate of Education
PGCert	Postgraduate Certificate
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency
QTS	Qualified Teacher Status
RBC	Royal Birmingham Conservatoire
RCM	Royal College of Music
SCK	Subject Content Knowledge
SCITT	School-Centred Initial Teacher Training
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
SFE	Services for Education (Music Service)
TA	Thematic Analysis
TRA	Teaching Regulation Agency
TCK	Transferable Content Knowledge
UCAS	Universities and Colleges Admissions Service
VBK	Values-Based Knowledge
WCET	Whole Class Ensemble Teaching
WCIT	Whole Class Instrumental Teaching
Y	Year/Year-Group, e.g. Y4 = Year 4 student

### **Note on text (ii) Presentation of data**

Throughout the thesis, whether indented (50 words or more) or presented within the body of a paragraph (less than 50 words), verbatim quotations from research participants are shown in italics, to differentiate them from literary quotations.

Within graphs, charts and in the text, percentages are rounded to one decimal place where rounding is necessary.

**Part I:**  
**Introduction, Research Contexts**  
**and Methodology**

## Introduction

Music education in England finds itself in increasingly challenging times. Recent research shows that growing numbers of schools are reducing or completely removing music from the curriculum: the introduction of the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) in 2011 may have contributed in part to a reduction in the numbers of students able to study one or more arts subjects (Burland, 2020) and the continual decline of pupils sitting formal GCSE and A-level Music examinations in recent years (Daubney and Mackrill, 2016; 2018; Whittaker et al., 2019; Whittaker, 2020; 2021; Whittaker and Fautley, 2021). In the face of such deterioration, the receipt of and access to high-quality instrumental music tuition remains crucial for school-aged pupils (and subsequent adults). Indeed, it is one of the principal ways in which pupils are able to experience long-term music-making, but one that the Musicians' Union (Gutierrez, 2018), amongst others, has argued still needs to be made much more accessible to low-income families.

Another issue is that, for many years, the quality of instrumental teaching has been highly variable across England (Ofsted, 2009). With no single quality assurance measure in place, instrumental teachers are at liberty to set up in private practice with no formal qualifications whatsoever (Barton, 2019: 2). Similarly, the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions set out by the Department for Education (DfE, 2021) permits schools and music hubs to employ 'unqualified' instrumental music teachers (see Chapter 1.1), many of whom emerge from music degree courses at universities and conservatoires. Even the most recent Subject Benchmark Statement for Music published by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA, 2019) only defines in broad terms what a music degree involves. While it is understandable that a 'detailed definition of the content of a music degree must of necessity be indicative rather than prescriptive' (ibid: 5), it is interesting that, despite 'teaching' being listed third amongst the possible career paths for musicians after performing and composing (ibid: 6), pedagogical training is not prioritised: 'Courses of study *may* [my emphasis] involve reference to 'a number of areas including music education' (ibid: 5), while 'the performance, analysis and critique of a particular repertoire may be *complemented* [my emphasis] by [...] music pedagogy' (ibid: 8).

As ethnographic accounts of conservatoire culture purport (Kingsbury, 1988; Nettl, 1995), conservatoires train their undergraduates to a high level in their principal study discipline. However, I argue that provision is somewhat inconsistent and insufficiently focused with regard to preparing students to work as instrumental teachers in the twenty-first century, and that there are wider implications for the quality and longevity of music-making for future generations of young people. Such concerns resonate with Burland (2020: 2), who poses questions regarding ‘the longer-term implications’ of current challenges in music education ‘for the future of school, college and university music education, and perhaps more importantly, for individuals and society’. Attempts are at least being made to address issues such as these at institutions including the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire (RBC), but a survey of website data at the beginning of this study in 2018 revealed that undergraduate [BMus (Hons)] provision for ‘instrumental teacher education’ (also referred to within this thesis as ‘pedagogical training’) appeared to vary considerably between conservatoires in England (see Table 1 below).

The fact that this information was difficult to find online raises questions about the visibility of instrumental teacher education in conservatoires. Indeed, there is a paucity of literature that interrogates the quality, effectiveness and impact of instrumental teacher education received and experienced by conservatoire students, which could be due to the fact that, according to Boyle (2018: 30), instrumental music teacher training, particularly within undergraduate (BMus) courses, is underdeveloped in English conservatoires at present, with existing postgraduate courses focusing on individuals who are already engaged in teaching (Boyle, 2021: 26). Furthermore, a recent study involving alumni across eight conservatoires in the UK revealed a perceived lack of guidance and training for students on how to improve their teaching skills, which ‘could be seen by many as a longitudinal training failure’ (Porton, 2020: 108). It is this larger-scale situation of concern, even crisis, that has inspired the current doctoral study.

*Table 1: Summary of instrumental teacher education in conservatoire BMus (Hons) programmes in England (based on data available via conservatoires' websites and undergraduate course specifications published online in 2018)*

Undergraduate pedagogical training as of 2018	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4
Guildhall School of Music and Drama	Professional Studies 1 (general professional skills) [core 10 credits L4]			Professional studies 2 (includes teaching skills) [core 20 credits, L6]
Leeds College of Music		Music students into schools [core 20 credits, L5]		N/A
Royal Academy of Music			Creative music leadership elective in conjunction with Open Academy [optional 20 credits]  Principles of education elective [optional 20 credits]	
Royal Birmingham Conservatoire	Professional Portfolio: Community Engagement [core 20 credits, L4]	Professional Portfolio: Pedagogy and Practice [core 20 credits, L5]	Professional Portfolio: Work Placement [optional 20 credits, L5]	Further Pedagogy [optional 20 credits, L6]  Music, Community and Wellbeing [optional 20 credits, L6]
Royal College of Music		Professional Portfolio: Autumn term – teaching, Spring term – outreach [core 20 credits, L5]	Instrumental/vocal teaching (three pathways for varying levels of experience) [optional 20 credits, L6]  Workshop Performance [optional 20 credits, L6]	
Royal Northern College of Music	Artist Development 1 and 2 (weekly tuition in essential skills such as recording and editing, conducting, musicians' health, teaching skills, and websites, biographies and CVs) [Core, L5/6]		Professional Placement [core, L6 – teaching optional]	
Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance		Department specific teaching skills integrated into Principal Study provision. The Artist as educator [core 75 credits, L5]	Elective: Instrumental and vocal teaching	Elective: Instrumental and vocal teaching advanced (LTCL)

## **0.1 Research aim and thesis structure**

Through this doctoral study, I aim to inform the approaches of conservatoires, employers and alumni who collectively have an important role to play in supporting the development of early career instrumental teachers. Therefore, using RBC as a case study in the context of the wider conservatoire sector in England, this research asks, ‘How best can we facilitate the transition from student to professional through instrumental teacher education?’ In order to address this overall question, the investigation focuses upon the following three research sub-questions (which effectively become enabling objectives and the subjects of three projects):

- 1) What are the main challenges faced by the conservatoire sector in preparing students for careers in instrumental teaching?
- 2) How do undergraduate conservatoire students assimilate the unfamiliar as they learn how to teach and facilitate music-making?
- 3) In what ways can conservatoire alumni contribute to the continuing development of curricula and pedagogy in instrumental teacher education?

The thesis comprises two volumes: the main text is supplied in Volume 1. Volume 2 contains a series of Appendices, labelled A–E, that provide supporting ancillary data to verify details across the range of research methods employed. These Appendices are cross-referenced for the reader within Volume 1 to aid ready comparison.

Volume 1 consists of eight chapters structured in three parts. In Part I: Introduction, Research contexts and Methodology, Chapter 1 sets out the research context in relation to the music education workforce in England and the contribution of conservatoires to the training of instrumental teachers in particular. A range of interrelated theories and theoretical frameworks is considered, notably Communities of Practice (CoP) and legitimate peripheral participation, transformative learning, Pedagogical Content Knowledge, habitus, capital, field and doxa, hidden curriculum, classification and framing, hegemony, critical pedagogy and student voice. Chapter 2 sets out the methodological approaches, which include elements of grounded theory, action research, case study, autoethnography and mixed-methods research within

an overarching research design that comprises three subdivided projects (with seven components) and a Pilot study. Collectively, the Pilot study and projects combine 'insider' and 'outsider' perspectives from those long-established in the field of music education and those relatively new to it. Chapter 2 culminates in a discussion of the Pilot study carried out with Y4 RBC students in April 2019, where an original learning model is proposed.

Part II: Educational Research Findings constitutes the main core of the research. Chapters 3 and 4 address research sub-question 1 by exploring the challenges faced by the conservatoire sector in preparing students for careers in instrumental teaching. The findings presented reflect perspectives gathered from interviews conducted with academics in six conservatoires in England and employers across 66 music hubs in England.

Chapters 5 and 6 respond to sub-question 2, where RBC students become partners in the research process. A variety of research methods are employed to ascertain how undergraduate conservatoire students assimilate the unfamiliar as they learn how to teach their principal study discipline to learners less experienced than themselves, namely school-aged children between the ages of 5–18 in instrumental lesson or workshop scenarios. Thus, these chapters explore students' developing 'metacognitive awareness' (Shulman, 1986: 13) in relation to their own learning and its implications for facilitating learning in others. To begin, Chapter 5 presents baseline data generated from a questionnaire completed by a cohort of Y1 BMus and BMus Jazz students. Amongst the findings, participants reveal their former experiences of facilitating music making in young people as well as their career aspirations. Later, the students from this cohort reflect on their learning in two core pedagogy modules across Y1–2 of their course: a community engagement module and a teaching module respectively. Subsequently, in Chapter 6, a small group of newly graduated students offers their perspectives on their learning during professional placements, completed across Y3–4.

Chapter 7 focuses on sub-question 3, exploring ways in which conservatoire alumni can contribute to the continuing development of curricula and pedagogy in instrumental teacher education. It builds on my previous research (Shaw, 2020) by

enabling interaction between research participants in an alumni-led class and focus group within RBC. In contrast, perspectives are also gained from alumni-mentors who have supported the learning of current RBC students outside the institution in professional contexts.

In Part III: Conclusions and Recommendations, Chapter 8 draws together the most significant research findings and my original contribution to knowledge, which include the incorporation of Communities of Practice (CoP; Lave and Wenger, 1991) into methodology and an adaptation of Shulman's Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) model (1986; 1987) as a research outcome. It also tackles the hidden, insidious issue of hegemony. Comprehensive responses are provided for the three research sub-questions, while interrelated theoretical frameworks are revisited in the context of the findings. Also included is a reflection upon the methodology, highlighting both its strengths and limitations, which leads into suggested avenues for future research. Finally, the thesis offers a number of recommendations for the continued development of instrumental teacher education, not only for the conservatoire sector and other HEIs, but also for consideration by employers and policy-makers.

## **0.2 Researcher background and rationale for the research**

From an autoethnographic standpoint, it is fitting here to discuss my motivations for carrying out the doctoral study, my involvement in undergraduate curriculum developments at RBC and my previous research in this area (Shaw, 2020). Like Hill and Lloyd (2018: 3), I employ 'provenance', a term derived from the French *provenir*, 'to come from' (ibid: 4), to create 'a starting point and scaffold for practice-led inquiry' (ibid: 2). In addition to drawing on the overall discourses for a given practice, as accessed through published literature, provenance enables 'practitioners' historic perspectives of their practice' to inform their research (ibid: 4), which can be particularly relevant where they are 'aware of and [...] inspired by their own experience with the issue or practice they are investigating' (ibid: 5). In addition, provenance raises the level of consciousness, leading practitioners to question 'issues and themes that may have influenced their exposure to and adoption of a particular practice' and helping them to 'uncover beliefs and [...] assumptions related to the practice and the profession as a whole' (ibid). Therefore, it is helpful to reflect

briefly on my own musical background and the circumstances that have led to my undertaking this doctoral study.

I studied at Birmingham Conservatoire, as it was previously known, in the early 1990s. Prior to commencing my studies there, I had enjoyed eight years of high-quality, inspiring clarinet tuition and ensemble membership through a Local Authority music service, free of charge. Soon after I left for music college, charges were introduced for instrumental lessons, thereby restricting the musical opportunities for hundreds of school pupils in my home town.

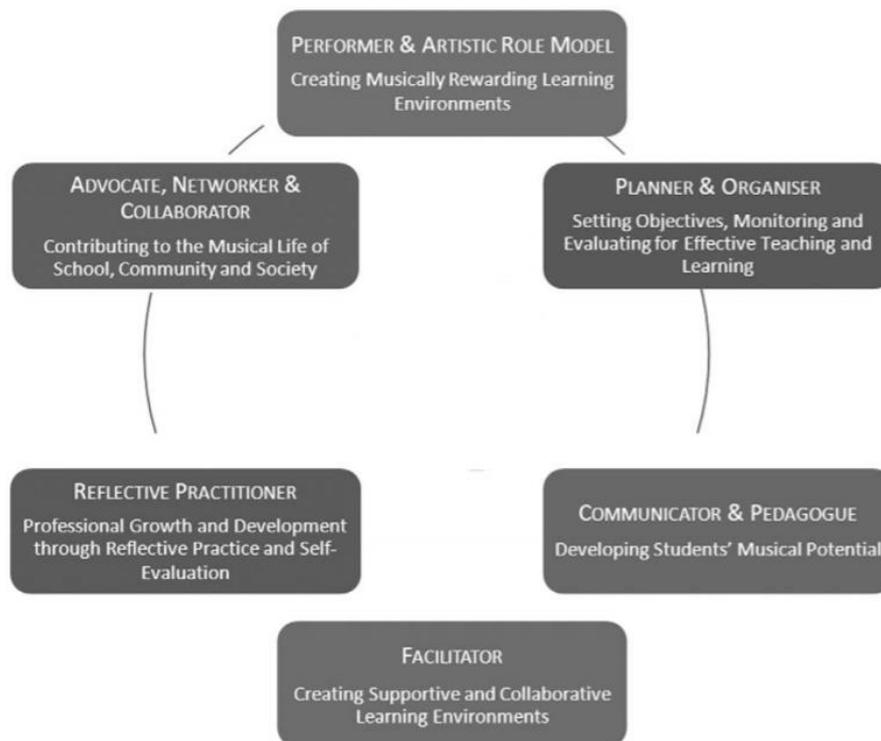
For as long as I can remember, I have been driven by a desire to teach and this doubtless stems from having been so inspired by my own teachers. At the age of ten, after just six months of lessons, I decided I wanted to become a clarinet teacher in the future, and so took every opportunity to gain experience during the ensuing years. Whilst my peers at school completed their work experience in various department stores, supermarkets, factories and offices, I initiated my own placement, choosing to shadow music service teachers. This proved a really exciting, valuable and positive experience, which helped in gaining the self-confidence to pursue more teaching opportunities and the ability to generate my own work as a freelance musician. I began teaching privately aged 16 and gained a first job based in a school two years later. Throughout my student years at RBC and beyond, I continued teaching individuals, small groups and whole classes in a wide variety of educational settings: nursery schools, special schools, primary and secondary schools in both the state and independent sectors, a conservatoire junior department and a university music department. I never considered teaching as a 'fall-back career' (Bennett, 2012: 11), but rather as a role that was integral to being a musician.

In 2011, I joined the staff at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, having enjoyed a twenty-year freelance career, combining performing, teaching, workshop leading, examining and adjudicating. I still pursue these freelance activities since, crucially, the personal qualities and skills required to carry out this range of roles directly inform and influence my academic role and embody the kind of skill set that, according to the Association of European Conservatoires (AEC, 2010), conservatoire

students themselves are aiming (and needing) to develop in order to be employable (see Figure 1).

In reflecting above on my musical upbringing and career trajectory in the context of my research, I can see why I am so committed to nurturing future generations of instrumental music teachers. Young people should be entitled to access quality music tuition, and to be taught by highly trained, committed musicians who, before they graduate, have already gained some ‘real-life’ experience in, and understanding of, the rewards and challenges of learning and teaching in the field of instrumental music in the twenty-first century. This is why I continue to contribute to the development of instrumental teacher education at RBC and strive to ensure that it is viewed by staff and students alike as an integral part, not only of the curriculum, but of developing into a successful professional musician.

Figure 1: Instrumental/vocal teacher roles (reproduced from AEC, 2010: 43)



In terms of furthering the rationale for this research, my initial employment at RBC was as a visiting pedagogy tutor, teaching on a postgraduate course that I had played a significant part in designing, and which proved the catalyst for subsequent

undergraduate course developments in music pedagogy and for my full-time employment at the institution. In 2011, I still encountered a distinct air of ambivalence amongst undergraduates regarding instrumental teaching. My recollection of the general attitude from students (and some staff) was that teaching was a second-class profession, only for those who did not succeed as performers. This was concerning given that in 2012, the Musicians' Union (MU) claimed that only 10% of musicians were in full-time employment and that nearly half had no regular employment, with 94% of musicians working on a freelance basis for all or part of their income. Furthermore, according to the MU, 'Musicians need to develop skills to sustain their portfolio careers beyond those associated with being a musician such as, business, marketing, teaching and community engagement skills' (ibid: 10).

Prior to an undergraduate curriculum review in 2011, instrumental teacher education at RBC comprised a Y3 module taught within principal study departments on the BMus course and non-credit bearing electives in 'Music in the Community'. At that time, revalidation enabled the introduction of new modules in Y2 and 4, requiring all students to commence pedagogical training one year earlier and enabling those who wished to extend their learning into the final year to gain first-hand instrumental teaching experience via a placement-based module. A further curriculum review across 2017–18 implemented core pedagogical training from Y1; the addition of a second core pedagogy module in Y2; and options to specialise in pedagogy across Y3–4. For students on the BMus Jazz course, pedagogical training had been entirely optional prior to 2019, but the revalidation process completed in 2018 formalised core provision for these students, enabling greater interdisciplinary collaboration with classically trained students on the BMus course. At the time of this doctoral study (2018–21), all RBC undergraduate students engage with a combination of cross-departmental and discipline-specific pedagogical training across Y1–2, benefiting from workshops led by RBC staff and visiting professional practitioners. Across Y3–4, students are offered the opportunity to undertake placements under the supervision of a mentor in a variety of ensemble, whole-class, small group and one-to-one settings. Table 2 provides an overview of the most recent changes to RBC's pedagogical provision:

*Table 2: Overview of core and optional pedagogical provision at RBC pre- 2019 and 2019 onwards*

Year	Pre-2019 provision	Core/optional	Revalidated provision 2019 onwards	Core/optional
1	No provision	N/A	Community Engagement	Core
2	Community Engagement	Core (optional for jazz students)	Pedagogy and Practice	Core
3	Pedagogy	Core (optional for jazz students)	Work Placement (in approved music education setting)	Optional
	Work Placement (in approved music education setting)	Optional		
4	Further Pedagogy (incorporating work placements in approved music education settings)	Optional	Further Pedagogy (incorporating work placements in approved music education settings)	Optional
	Music, Community and Wellbeing (incorporating work placements in approved music education settings)	Optional	Music, Community and Wellbeing (incorporating work placements in approved music education settings)	Optional
	Final Project (Music education option includes self-devised/ negotiated placements)	Core (Music education specialism optional)	Final Project (Music education option includes self-devised/ negotiated placements)	Core (Music education specialism optional)

A significant number of placements (up to 80 each year) now run in collaboration with the Services for Education Music Service (SFE): the lead organisation of the Birmingham Music Education Partnership (BMEP), one of some 120 Music Education Hubs (MEHs) formed in response to the National Plan for Music Education (NPME) (2011). My previous research (Shaw, 2020), completed across 2017–18, revealed that from a sample of 31 survey participants who studied RBC’s Further Pedagogy module in Y4 between 2012–16, 84% gained employment in educational contexts in the UK and overseas, with 96% of participants attributing their employability to this module. Participants reported an overwhelming amount of satisfaction from working as instrumental teachers and revealed a profound sense of personal fulfilment in their pupils’ progress and achievements, along with an appreciation of the flexibility, independence and variety that teaching brings. Graduates seemed to enjoy building a rapport with their pupils and considered that teaching contributed to their continuing professional development. Of the challenges reported by early career instrumental teachers, the most prevalent were behavioural management, administration and teaching advanced pupils. A key outcome of this previous research was that alumni were keen to use insights gained during their early careers to advise and influence current students who aspire to teach.

My key aim as an academic since joining the staff at RBC has been to raise the profile of instrumental teaching as a potential career pathway for conservatoire graduates. Several years on, now in a senior leadership role, I believe we have made significant progress, but the aim is ongoing. It is appropriate therefore, that this doctoral research and thesis should include an autoethnographic element (see Chapter 2.2).

## **Chapter 1: Research contexts and frameworks**

This chapter outlines firstly the wider research context of the music education workforce in England, as well as considering how instrumental teacher education fits into this context, with a particular focus on conservatoires. Secondly, a number of interrelated theoretical frameworks and learning theories are discussed in terms of their relevance to this doctoral study.

### **1.1 The music education workforce in England**

In order to understand the context for instrumental teacher education, it makes sense first to outline the somewhat complex make-up of the current workforce. In England, the music education workforce comprises both 'qualified' and 'unqualified' music educators. A 'qualified' music educator or teacher is one who has completed specialist training via one or more accredited routes where Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) is conferred by the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA). Such routes include a Bachelor of Education (BEd) degree, a Postgraduate Certificate in Music Education (PGCE) or School Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT) programme). Teachers must have QTS to take up teaching posts in maintained primary, secondary or special schools which form part of the state-funded schools system in England. Meanwhile, QTS is not currently a requirement for teaching in non-fee paying 'free schools' or 'academies', which are funded by the government but not run by Local Authorities. Similarly, independent schools are at liberty to employ teachers whom they believe to be well-qualified for the job, despite possibly not having QTS (DfE, 2021).

Often, qualified and unqualified music educators working in the contexts described above are classroom-based, teaching music to pupils within or across certain age ranges or phases as shown in Table 3 (below):

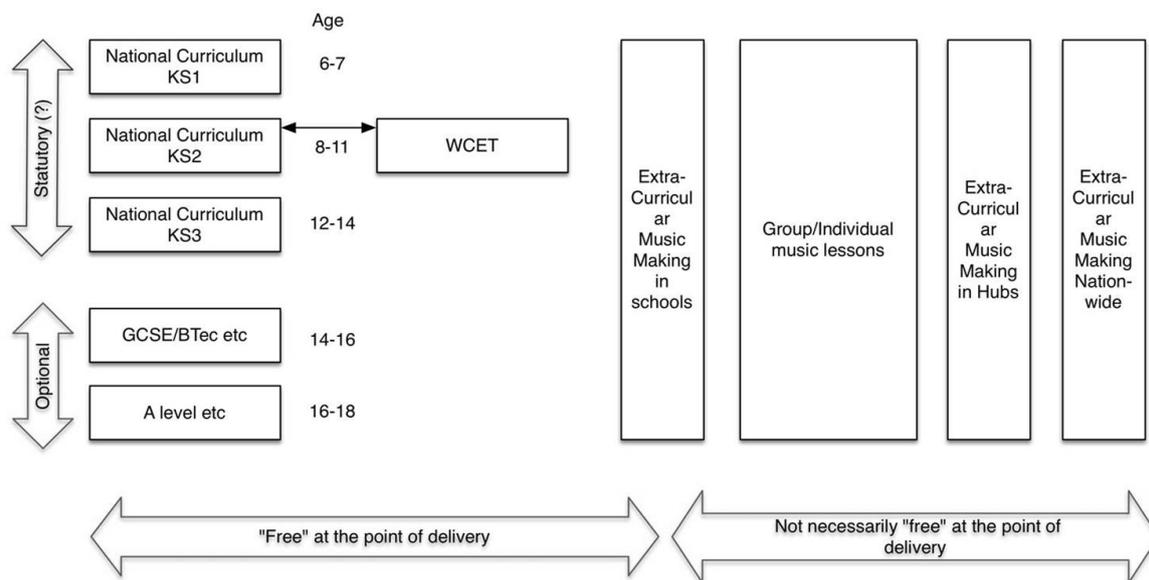
*Table 3: Classroom-based music provision across phases and ages ranges*

Phase	Stage	Ages	Year groups	Music part of National Curriculum?
Early Years Foundation Stage		3–5		N/A – separate statutory framework for EYFS. Music is included within ‘expressive arts and design’
Primary	Key Stage 1	5–7	1–2	Statutory
	Key Stage 2	7–11	3–6	Statutory
Secondary	Key Stage 3	11–14	7–9*	Statutory *(though only until Year 8 in some schools due to early selection of GCSE subject options)
	Key Stage 4	14–16	10–11	No. Pupils may elect to study music in some schools. Separate syllabuses published by exam boards (GCSE/BTEC Levels 1 and 2).
Post-16	Key Stage 5	16–19	12–13	No. Pupils may elect to study music in some schools. Separate syllabuses published by exam boards (A level/BTEC Level 3).

However, the music education workforce also includes professional musicians who work as workshop facilitators and instrumental tutors within and outside the school contexts and age ranges discussed above. These tutors represent a wide range of disciplines, including classical, jazz, pop and rock, folk and world musics, composition and music technology. These musicians may be either employed or self-employed and may work for more than one school/institution and/or for one of around 120 Music Education Hubs (MEHs or hubs) established in 2012. MEHs were formed in response to the NPME (2011), to provide access, opportunities and excellence in music education for all children and young people in England ([arts council.org.uk](http://arts council.org.uk)). Consequently, instrumental tutors may find themselves delivering Whole Class Ensemble Teaching (WCET), also known as Whole Class Instrumental Teaching (WCIT) or First Access (Fautley et al., 2019) alongside small group tuition, directing ensembles and teaching one-to-one lessons: in other words, taking on a demanding and diverse role. Instrumental tutors may choose to include private teaching as part of a portfolio career that includes performing, or to engage solely in private practice (Barton, 2019: 35). Furthermore, whatever their work context, instrumental tutors who teach in England are likely to find themselves

preparing pupils to take performance examinations offered by one or more instrumental music examination boards, or possibly even helping their students to gain entry into one of many National Youth Music Organisations (NYMOs) that provide ‘progression routes and pathways for talented young musicians to develop across a range of musical genres’ (artscouncil.org.uk). I have utilised a diagram devised by Fautley et al. (2019: 245), originally intended to show ‘the mixed economy of music education in England’, but used here to provide an overview (further to Table 3, above) of the contexts in which conservatoire graduates who reside in England may find themselves working (see Figure 2):

Figure 2: The mixed economy of music education in England, reproduced from Fautley et al. (2019: 245)



Yet a further tier of the music education workforce includes those working in higher education (HE), nurturing the next generation of professional musicians, many of whom will go on to become music educators themselves in some capacity. While academics working in HE contexts are normally required to hold at least a Masters degree and significant professional experience, formal pedagogical training has not necessarily been considered a pre-requisite to securing a position, though in recent years, institutions have increasingly encouraged employees to gain accreditation through fellowship routes (Advance HE – formerly the Higher Education Academy – advance-he.ac.uk). In fact, the need for higher education institutions (HEIs) to

continue to build a 'workforce' of skilled music education professionals is becoming ever more important to ensure the longevity of music-making for future generations of young learners (Daubney et al., 2019; The Music Commission, 2019) within what is an increasingly fragile economic and cultural climate. Indeed, according to Boyle (2021: 110), the role of the instrumental teacher 'sits at the heart of music education, generating and educating musicians of the future and underpinning the culture of music-making in the UK'. Arguably, a 'music education workforce' should include well-qualified instrumental teachers who are trained to respond to the rewards and challenges of practices in instrumental teaching that are likely to be very different from their own learning experiences in music. Indeed, the Browne Report recommendation (2010: 28) that institutions 'close the gap between the skills taught by the HE system and what employers need' is pertinent for conservatoires.

### **The need to develop the music education workforce in England**

The Music Manifesto (DfES, 2005; 2006) was a government-supported campaign launched in 2004 to improve music education for young people in England, following a decline in Local Authority music provision, and resulting from the Education Reform Act (Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1988). One of its key aims was to 'develop a world class workforce in music education' (Zeserson et al, 2014: 10). A decade or so later, the NPME (DfE, 2011: 12) stated that 'the music education workforce is fundamental to ensuring all pupils experience high quality music teaching, both in and out of school'. While the NPME recognised that such a workforce includes 'musicians for whom music education may make up only part of a portfolio career' (ibid: 21), I argue that it did not sufficiently address the specific training needs of this particular group, which includes conservatoire graduates. This is despite a key recommendation in the independent review that informed the NPME such that: 'Conservatoires should be recognised as playing a greater part in the development of a performance-led music education workforce of the future' (ibid: 26). Similarly, 'the development of a diverse and skilled music education workforce' was proposed as one of eight 'outcomes for the 2020s' by The Music Commission (2019: 7). In the same year, *Music Education: State of the Nation* (Daubney et al., 2019: 31) observed that it is important to 'ensure that there is a sufficient number of properly qualified teachers coming through to support the delivery of music

education in our schools and Hubs'. However, neither report offered any specific reference to the role of conservatoires in preparing music students to enter this vital element of the music profession.

## **1.2 Instrumental teacher education**

Anecdotal evidence suggests that, for many conservatoire graduates, gaining QTS is undesirable because it entails taking a year out of their professional performing careers to pursue a PGCE course, SCITT programme or other year-long intensive training route, resulting both in loss of earnings and valuable professional connections gained during their undergraduate studies. Furthermore, regulations (TRA, 2018) are such that even courses with specialist instrumental teaching pathways are required to focus largely on classroom training in order to enable students to meet the Teachers' Standards (DfE, 2011). Many conservatoire students do not see themselves as classroom teachers, despite the fact that my own previous research, referenced in the Introduction to this thesis, revealed that 84% of graduates who studied a final-year specialist instrumental music teaching module found themselves working in classrooms during their early careers (Shaw, 2020). Unfortunately, the Certificate for Music Educators (Level 4) qualification recommended by the NPME has not been widely adopted by conservatoires since it is not necessarily compatible with course credit structures. Equally, teaching qualifications available through organisations such as the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music ([abrs.org](http://abrs.org)), Trinity College London ([trinitycollege.com](http://trinitycollege.com)) and the European Piano Teachers Association ([epta-uk.org](http://epta-uk.org)) also involve an additional time commitment and financial investment that may conflict with full-time study.

### **Instrumental teacher education in conservatoires**

It would seem, therefore, that conservatoires do indeed have a responsibility to embed credit-bearing modules into their undergraduate courses that are directly relevant to the contexts in which their students are likely to find themselves working once they graduate. This should be entirely possible given that the Subject Bench Statement for Music (QAA, 2019: 1) advocates 'flexibility and innovation' in course design (see Chapter 3.3) as opposed to prescribed approaches to teaching, learning or assessment. According to Ford (2010: 14) there is a need for conservatoires to

‘respond to government pressure to link higher education into employability’: an important consideration given findings highlighted by the Working in Music Report (Musicians’ Union, 2012). This MU research revealed that highly educated, skilled and experienced musicians face an uncertain and precarious career that is not comparable to highly trained workers operating elsewhere in the UK labour market. Moreover, the report highlights an important issue regarding ‘the earnings potential of the average musician and the spiralling costs associated with education, training and sustaining a musician’s career’ (ibid: 22), which raises questions about the longevity of conservatoires themselves.

In conservatoires there are ‘dominant discourses placing performance [rather than teaching] as the pinnacle of success for a musician [and] it is not uncommon for students to feel ‘second-rate’ if they redefine their career aims to include activities beyond performance’ (Bennett, 2012: 11). If, as this view suggests, the hegemonic culture (Bruner, 1996) within conservatoires is that a student’s principal study (for example, performance or composition) takes priority above all else, it appears that one of the greatest challenges is that of ensuring that instrumental teacher education is effectively integrated into curricula in a way that enables all stakeholders to understand its importance, relevance, value and potential for professional recognition. As stated by Porter (1998: 13): ‘Part of the role of leadership in the conservatoire is to effect change without losing those aspects of the institution which give it its greatest strength. A conservatoire is an institution in which the practice and development of art is its business.’ Porter seems to be arguing that anything other than performance does not constitute the ‘practice and development of art’, a contentious issue challenged by the AEC (2010: 7):

For many years, discussions [...] mainly focused on the professional training of performers in music. This somehow reflected the opinion (still present in some institutions) that ‘teaching is something you do when you have failed as

a performer'. More recently, viewpoints have radically changed.<sup>1</sup> Not only is it clear that teaching is increasingly a vital component for professional musicians as part of their portfolio career, in which they combine various professional tasks. It is also understood that instrumental/vocal teachers play an essential role in society by providing access to culture in general and music in particular for individuals of all ages.

As noted in the Introduction, a recent doctoral thesis suggests that instrumental music teacher training within undergraduate (BMus) courses in particular remains underdeveloped in English conservatoires at present, with the focus instead being on postgraduate courses (Boyle, 2018: 30). Her statement (below) may partly explain why there is little, if any, focus in research literature on instrumental music teacher education within UK conservatoire four-year BMus (Hons) programmes.

The majority of existing courses are aimed at individuals already engaged in instrumental teaching. Conservatoire courses such as the Trinity Laban Teaching Musician offer instrumental teachers the opportunity to extend and enhance understandings relating to practice and pedagogy through reflection on their own teaching. The Royal Northern College of Music offer[s] a PGCE with specialism in instrumental teaching and the Guildhall Artist Programme offers a PGCert in Performance Teaching for existing instrumental teachers.

Beyond the UK, there is an established body of research into the experiences of emerging music educators in the USA, reviewed by Conway (2014), who recommends that 'continuing to document teacher voice' highlights 'the need for new areas of enquiry within music education'. Challenges facing emerging instrumental teachers have also been explored in relation to the Australian system of music education (Watson, 2010) and in Latvia (Gonzalez, 2012). However, research that leads to a greater understanding of the impact of undergraduate-level pedagogical

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<sup>1</sup> Anecdotally, I have heard RBC students saying such things out loud, which suggests that viewpoints have not 'radically changed'. However, attitudes such as this appear to be less prevalent at RBC than they were a decade ago.

training on early career instrumental teachers in the UK, particularly those graduating from conservatoires, remains scarce, despite a call having been made for more instrumental teaching research well over a decade ago (Triantafyllaki, 2005).

Over three decades ago, Kite (1990) outlined the philosophy and practice of the former Instrumental Teaching Course at the Guildhall School of Music, where students were mentored by instrumental teachers from the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) from 1987 until its demise in 1990. Unfortunately, it is not possible to ascertain the extent of the impact of the learning that took place, since Kite's article did not aim to evaluate the outcomes of the training. Some studies have since explored how students develop teaching skills in informal contexts or small-scale projects (Haddon, 2009; Perkins et al., 2015) whilst others have investigated the interrelated theoretical frameworks of professional identity, role/identity transition and transformative learning in relation to students becoming professional teachers (Hargreaves and Marshall, 2003; Schreib, 2007; Joseph and Heading, 2010; McClellan, 2014; Randles and Ballantyne, 2014; Reid and Bennett, 2014; Wagoner, 2015). However, with the exception of Perkins (2012; 2016) conservatoire students and graduates have not been considered specifically. Elsewhere in the literature where conservatoire students have been the focus, teaching itself has often been overlooked, with the emphasis placed on the choices and challenges in attempting to forge a performance career (Creech et al., 2008; Gaunt et al., 2012). This is despite recommendations by Burland and Pitts (2007), who argue that music courses in higher education need to equip students with a skill set beyond performance. There are parallels between the current doctoral study and that of Burland (2005: 230), who identifies a need to address 'performers' readiness for the [music] profession and how institutions can maximise the transition of their students'. Burland and Davidson (2016) propose that musical development and the eventual transition to professional musician status is influenced partially by positive experiences with other people (for example, peers, teachers and parents), as well as institutional factors, whilst Hill et al. (2020) explore music students' emotional responses as they learn and develop over time. Comparably, the current doctoral study explores influential factors such as these in relation to the development of conservatoire students as music educators.

It should be acknowledged that Long (2016: 35) does explore the notion of instrumental teaching as a 'practical and realistic' career aspiration for conservatoire students. She argues that 'an aspiration to have a career as a solo performer can bring long-term benefits to students [since] acquiring elements of the solo repertoire holds relevance [...] when applying for a teaching position in a prominent school' (ibid: 36). Indeed, the potential for learning how to teach through mentoring or participation in masterclasses and one-to-one lessons in the HE context is also implicit (Creech et al., 2009; Gaunt, 2008; 2010; 2011; Haddon, 2014; ucas.com) and the notion of hidden learning is discussed further in Chapter 1.3. However, when considering the value of masterclasses in particular, Edwin (2018: 61–2) expresses an opposing view:

What's concerning are performers (and teachers) who think teaching is about telling and showing students what they personally do and expecting that their approach will work for all other performers. This one-size-fits-all mentality succeeds only when the teacher and the student match up exactly the same in body, mind, and spirit. How many clones can one have? [...] What's even more concerning are performers (and teachers) who have no systematic, fact-based, and genre-specific pedagogy at all.

Examples of research that examine the place of instrumental teaching as part of graduating conservatoire students' portfolio careers include a study by Miller and Baker (2007), where students at a UK conservatoire were interviewed to ascertain their views on their pedagogical training, and on teaching as part of a musical career. A little later, the 'Polifonia' project (AEC, 2010), summarised by Lennon and Reed (2012), contemplated the changing landscape of instrumental teaching along with the competences needed by conservatoire graduates in order to carry out multiple roles in the music profession. Contemporaneously, Bennett (2012) collated a range of resources to support conservatoire graduates. Finally, Burt-Perkins (2008) embraced teaching as part of a diverse employment portfolio, while Latukefu and Ginsborg (2018) explored conservatoire students' perceptions and attitudes around portfolio careers, with teaching often being viewed as inferior to performance.

Nonetheless, Blackstone (2019: 36) still claims that ‘evaluations of pedagogical training in the conservatoire are generally scarce’, thus providing firm justification for the current doctoral study. She investigates conservatoire graduates’ transitions into the music profession, but unlike my study, she explores the career building process more broadly, as opposed to focusing solely on students’ development as potential future music educators. Despite such differences, her finding that conservatoire students had ‘fixed ideas and attitudes pertaining to ‘ideal’ musicians’ careers’ (ibid: 4) resonates strongly with Bruner’s (1996) notion of hegemonic culture referred to above.

Instrumental teaching research in the conservatoire context features most significantly in the output of the late Janet Mills, who claimed that ‘the work of conservatoire students as instrumental teachers is under-researched’ (2004: 145). According to Cox (2008: 6), Mills’s ‘sympathies lay with teachers [such that] she wanted to empower them to do as effective a job as possible’. This view, along with a further observation by Cox of Mills’s beliefs about her work, that ‘educational research [...] stems from the unique perspectives and understanding of practitioners [and] needs to be potentially useful’ resonates strongly within me and forms the basis of my own methodology (see Chapter 2).

In contrast to the previous reference to ‘dominant discourses’ (Bennett 2012: 11), Mills found that conservatoire students expected to teach and were committed to doing so, though a perceived lack of relevant training was still implicit. For example, Mills’s studies include: a focus on students’ beliefs regarding what constitutes effective teaching based on their receipt of individual lessons at a conservatoire (2002); students’ perceptions of the differences between instrumental teaching in schools and in HE (Mills and Smith, 2003); students’ attitudes and aspirations towards teaching as informed by current experience (2006); and an exploration of the extent to which instrumental teaching informs students’ performance skills (Mills and Burt-Perkins, 2008). In the ‘Working in Music’ project, initiated in 2001 (2004a; 2004b) to investigate the careers of alumni of the Royal College of Music (RCM), Mills reported that, where alumni from the RCM had initially taken on teaching ‘simply because they needed the money’ (2004b: 181), attitudes subsequently

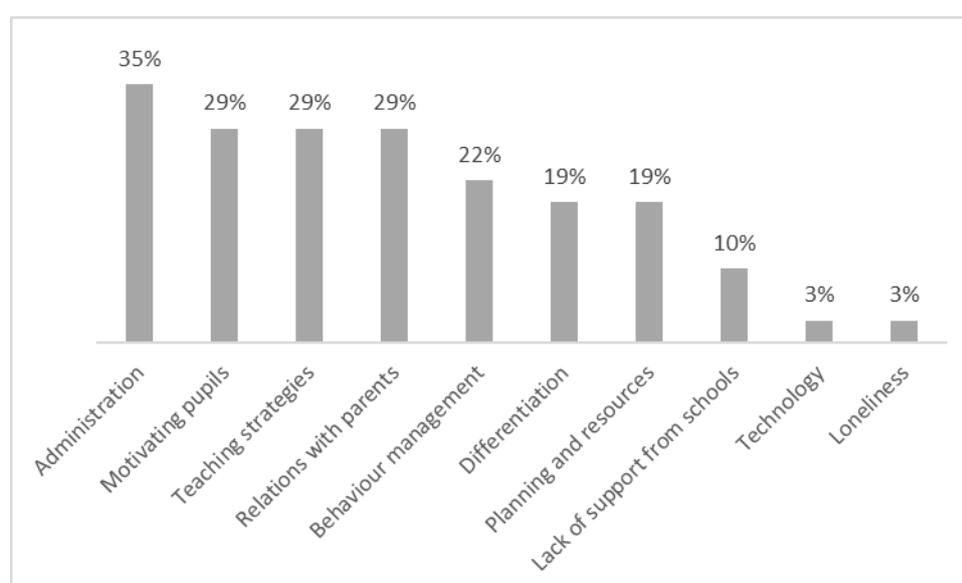
changed such that they later found they could not be without it, either personally or musically. In the case of alumni who returned to the RCM to teach as professors, it was suggested that they had little if any training prior to taking up their positions, and in some cases, had never taught before at all, a finding corroborated by Gaunt (2005; 2008), and Haddon (2009), who reported that many instrumental teachers in conservatoires have never been trained to teach and/or have not been required to undertake training. It is, however, unfortunate that when participants were asked how well they thought their course prepared them for their career and how it could be improved, the findings were not reported, especially since the music education landscape looked rather different across 1960–98 when these RCM alumni graduated. Burt and Mills's (2006) study of conservatoire students' 'taking the plunge' from school into HE provides a useful model for exploring students' transitional experiences from conservatoire study into employment. There are surely parallels to be drawn between the 'pivot points' (ibid: 67) experienced by the relatively inexperienced performers in the study and their development as instrumental teachers. It is notable that participants in this 2006 study were keen to be taught by distinguished musicians (as was the case for Nettle's ethnographic study in 1995), yet did not show any interest in or awareness of teaching as a potential career for themselves until later in their course.

Mills's (2005) study of conservatoire students' views about music teaching in schools supports a previous reference to anecdotal evidence suggesting that conservatoire students 'typically do not aspire to obtain QTS' (ibid: 63). In the same study, students' concerns 'about children who behave badly' and 'that teachers have to spend too much time doing paperwork' (ibid: 68) resonate with my earlier research (see below Table 4 and Figure 3, reproduced from Shaw, 2020). Indeed, administration was considered the most challenging aspect of being an instrumental teacher by alumni who had been teaching for between one and five years at the point of data collection.

Table 4: Challenges for alumni starting out in the instrumental teaching profession, reproduced from Shaw (2020: 9)

<b>Administration</b> - including timetabling, managing own time, recruiting pupils, claiming payment, taking registers, writing reports, doing tax returns	<b>35%</b>
<b>Motivating pupils</b> - including encouraging pupils to practise (scales in particular), unlocking their musical tastes and preferences, maintaining enthusiasm where pupils lack interest	<b>29%</b>
<b>Teaching strategies</b> - including explaining technical, rhythmic or musical concepts in accessible ways to beginners, teaching concepts which come naturally to you as a performer to advanced pupils	<b>29%</b>
<b>Relations with parents</b> - including managing their expectations in relation to graded examinations, gaining their trust in your professional opinion, seeking their support with their child's practice	<b>29%</b>
<b>Behaviour management</b> - including when working in schools with poor discipline, and working with large groups, especially WCIT where there is often a lack of class teacher/TA support	<b>22%</b>
<b>Differentiation</b> - including tracking progress, particularly in whole classes, and working with SEND pupils	<b>19%</b>
<b>Planning and resources</b> - for WCIT, and structuring short 20-minute lessons	<b>19%</b>
<b>Lack of support from schools</b> - including poor communication, poorly run departments, little support in WCIT due to teachers spending the time on marking and administration	<b>10%</b>
<b>Technology</b> - how to incorporate it into teaching	<b>3%</b>
<b>Loneliness</b> - particularly when working as a private teacher	<b>3%</b>

Figure 3: Challenges for alumni starting out in the instrumental teaching profession, reproduced from Shaw (2020: 10)



There are strong connections between the main aim of my doctoral thesis and Mills's desire for 'raising the profile of training for instrumental teaching in higher education' (2006: 388). Conversely, the potential impact of a student's instrumental teaching practice on the development of their performance expertise is explored in a later study where the researchers claim that instrumental teaching encourages an expansive approach to learning (Mills and Burt-Perkins, 2008). I argue that the focus of such research could be reversed, thus encouraging students to use their performance practice as a starting point from which to form connections to aid developing their instrumental teaching skills (see Chapter 5).

Mills's extensive output notwithstanding, there remains a paucity of industry-informed literature to support the development of instrumental teacher education for conservatoire students, as Norton et al. (2019) concur. These latter authors view instrumental and vocal tuition as important: they consider that little is known about musicians who participate in the profession and that teachers' perspectives should be taken into account when developing qualifications. Their sample of 496 respondents included 96 conservatoire graduates who 'were more likely to teach young adults [...] and less likely to teach primary school pupils' (ibid: 566), suggesting that the students' teaching experience and associated beliefs about vital knowledge, skills and attributes may have been limited in scope.

The above discussion reinforces the notion that little is yet known about whether conservatoire graduates in England benefit from the pedagogical study and mentoring they undertake alongside their rigorous performance training, or of the extent to which this assists them in 'successfully navigating' (Weller, 2012: 203) their early careers in a range of educational settings. Therefore, this doctoral research is concerned with both what and how students learn; their interest and motivation for learning; the social contexts in which they learn; and the challenges and barriers they face (and those they engage with) in approaching that learning.

### **1.3 Learning theories and theoretical frameworks**

This extended portion of Chapter 1 is concerned with several pertinent learning theories and interrelated theoretical frameworks to support the main research that follows in Part II. These are not presented in an order that denotes implicitly a hierarchy of importance since no single theory or framework is considered more significant than any other: rather the order in which the ensuing discussion unfolds is intended to highlight inherent commonalities and connections.

The educational scholar Illeris (2011: 14; 2018: 4) outlines three dimensions of learning as ‘content, incentive and interaction’ and, in an earlier publication (2007), he refers to Piagetian childhood theory, claiming that learning is accumulated while mental representations or concepts are assimilated and accommodated through interaction with the environment. By the same token, Froehlich (2007: 90–91) claims that individuals test ideas and approaches based on their prior knowledge and experience, apply them to new situations and integrate their new knowledge into familiar constructs. Indeed, social constructivist theory emphasises the importance of culture and context in the construction of reality and knowledge, and that effective learning takes place when individuals are engaged in social activity (Pritchard and Woollard, 2010: 7). As early as the interwar years, the hugely influential psychologist, Lev Vygotsky, spoke of a Zone of Proximal Development (1938), arguing that an individual’s performance or achievement at any given time is not necessarily optimal and that there is some ‘distance between the actual development level [...] and the level of potential development [...] in collaboration with more able peers’ (1938: 86). Somewhat later, Wood et al. (1976) introduced the idea of ‘scaffolding’ to represent the way in which learning could be supported by ‘significant others’, gradually removing or reducing the amount and type of support as individuals grew in confidence, competence and independence. These theories of Vygotsky, and of Wood et al. remain pertinent to the current doctoral study, relating closely to the work of Wenger (1998), since, in order to facilitate such development, individuals may be deemed to engage in ‘Communities of Practice’. In fact, according to Davidson and Burland (2006), significant others are a vital factor in musician identity formation.

## **Communities of Practice and legitimate peripheral participation**

The concept of Communities of Practice (CoP) was first introduced by Lave and Wenger (1991) and offered a perspective that placed learning ‘in the context of our lived experience of participation in the world’ (Wenger, 2018: 219), with that learning being influenced by interaction between ‘newcomers’ and ‘old-timers’. Lave and Wenger (1991: 101) claimed that ‘to become a full member of a community of practice requires access to a wide range of ongoing activity, old-timers, and other members of the community; and to information, resources, and opportunities for participation.’ According to Kenny (2016: 11), ‘the CoP framework offers a lens for conceptualising, understanding and analysing the development of musical communities in practice’. Kenny describes how she used this theoretical framework to ‘examine a university-community partnership project [...] which led to an informed understanding of how this particular musical community interacted, learned, formed relationships, participated, made meaning and constructed knowledge’ (ibid: 15–16).

While my research design (see Chapter 2) requires both researcher and research partners to engage with multiple musical CoPs, the ‘situated learning’ model has been criticised for its limitations, since ‘learning from experience of what is immediately to hand [...] only produces direct, context-based practical knowledge, for direct application’ (Ponte, 2010: 72). This model also has implications for hegemony, where traditions and dominant ideologies are reinforced (see below). However, Dewey (1938: 49) suggested early on that knowledge gathered through experience in one context can still be transferred to future experiences and scenarios:

We always live at the time we live and not at some other time, and only by extracting at each present time the full meaning of each present experience are we prepared for doing the same thing in the future. This is the only preparation which in the long run amounts to anything. All this means that attentive care must be devoted to the conditions which give each present experience a worthwhile meaning.

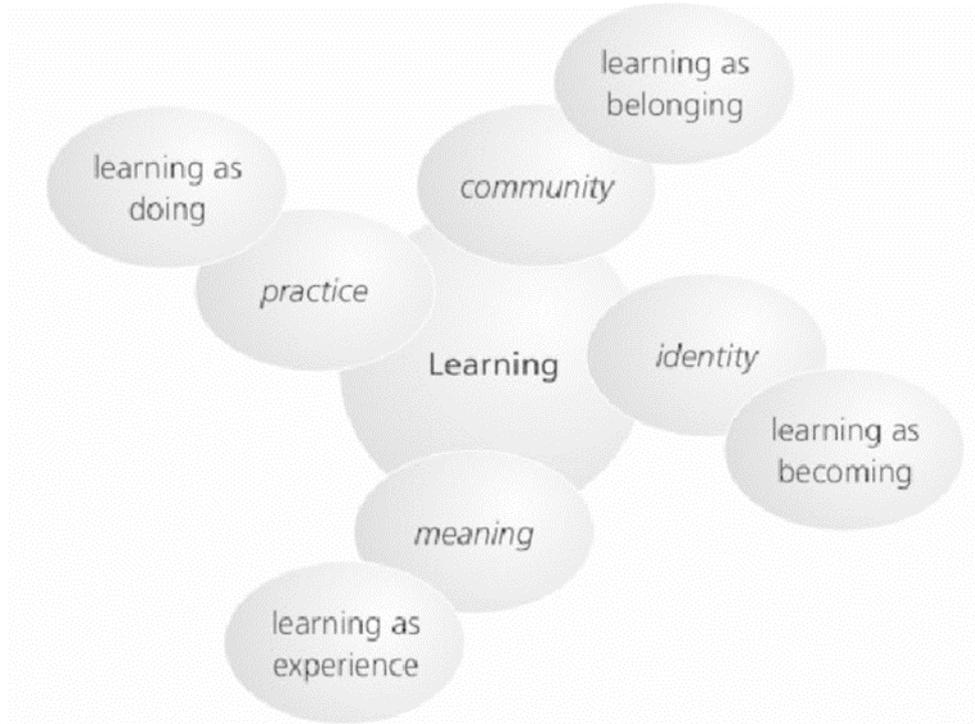
Additionally, Gaunt (2016: 271) considers ‘the richness of engaging in communities of practice’ an important factor in empowering emerging artists ‘to meet unknown future challenges.’ Lave and Wenger’s (1991) model therefore holds direct relevance to my study since I am concerned with how conservatoire students (newcomers) learn through encounters with experienced professionals (old-timers) as they prepare for the instrumental teaching profession within multiple CoPs, environments and scenarios. Since Illeris (2011: 8) argues that Lave and Wenger (1991) neglected to consider the impact of ‘management and power structures’ on learning communities, it is therefore pertinent that I have also explored reciprocal learning processes: that is, the extent to which those in authority (old-timers – including myself) can benefit and learn from the experience of conservatoire students and recent graduates (newcomers), whilst enabling the voices of these students and alumni to come to the fore (see Chapter 1:3: Student voice below).

In developing CoP concepts further, Wenger (2018: 220) proposes that:

Participation [...] refers not just to [...] engagement in certain activities with certain people, but to a more encompassing process of being active participants in the practices of social communities and constructing identities in relation to these communities. Participation [...] shapes not only what we do, but also who we are and how we interpret what we do.’

In this revised social theory of learning (2018), participation is viewed as both a ‘kind of action and a form of belonging’ (ibid). Wenger outlines four interrelated components as a process of learning and of knowing (see Figure 4 below). ‘Meaning’ is concerned with our changing ability, both individually and collectively, to learn through meaningful experiences. ‘Practice’ relates to the shared historical and social resources, frameworks and practices that sustain learning through active engagement, whilst ‘community’ represents the social organisations and relationships that help develop learners’ sense of belonging as they gradually develop competence. Finally, throughout the process of becoming fully proficient, our personal histories and ‘identity’ evolve.

Figure 4: Components of a social theory of learning: an initial inventory, reproduced from Wenger (2018: 221)



### **Transformative learning**

Wenger's emphasis on construction of identity through 'belonging' and 'becoming' relates strongly to a concept of transformative learning introduced in 1978 by Jack Mezirow. Mezirow promotes a critical dimension that enables adults to 'recognise and reassess the structure of assumptions and expectations which frame [their] thinking, feeling and acting' (2018: 114). According to Mezirow, thinking, feeling and acting are 'habits of mind', whilst assumptions and expectations are labelled 'meaning perspectives' or 'frames of reference'. He further defines frames of reference as 'the structures of culture and language through which we construe meaning by attributing coherence and significance to our experience' (ibid: 116). These frames of reference and habits of mind shape human perceptions and once 'programmed' can lead individuals 'to reject ideas that fail to fit [their] pre-conceptions' (ibid: 117). Additionally, transformative learning requires participants to 'reflect critically on the source, nature and consequences of relevant assumptions' in a variety of ways.

If we bring these two domains together, transformative learning can be facilitated within a CoP through mentoring and coaching (Stevens, 2008; Burley and Pomphrey, 2011; Kimsey-House et al., 2011; Starr, 2011; Stewart and Joines, 2012; Brouwer et al., 2017) and through reflective practice (Borton, 1970, Rolfe et al., 1971; Schön, 1983; Driscoll, 2000; Moon, 2004; Brockbank and McGill, 2006, Jasper, 2013; Carey et al., 2017). The terms ‘mentoring’ and ‘coaching’ are often used synonymously in educational research literature, though, according to Renshaw (2009: 61–2) the process of mentoring is multifaceted and comprises a broad ‘spectrum of related but distinct roles’ (see Table 5 below).

Renshaw (ibid: 101) affirms that effective mentoring needs to ‘take into account the importance of the dynamic relationship between reflection and reflexivity, between the outer and inner thought processes of the person being mentored’. He states that reflective practice or ‘reflection-on-action’ ‘entails adopting a critical perspective about the reasons and consequences of what we do in different contexts’ (ibid: 30) and that ‘by focusing on the why rather than the how, this process of self-observation and self-review, rooted in evidence and experience drawn from their practice, enables a person to evaluate their starting point and to redefine their future actions’ (ibid: 98). Renshaw also advocates that people can be supported to ‘shift their perspective’ (ibid: 98) through reflective conversations. By contrast, reflexive practice or ‘reflection-in-action’ ‘focuses on how the quality of a person’s inner listening, attention and awareness can help them clarify their purpose and motivation’ (ibid: 99). Renshaw recommends that being reflexive in a conversation has the potential to ‘strengthen a person’s sense of identity, deepen their self-awareness and enable them to understand how their personal motivation, values and emotions can affect their professional practice and learning’ (ibid: 98–9). Whilst he adopts terminology originally introduced by Schön (1983), Renshaw’s interpretations of ‘reflection-on-action’ and ‘reflection-in-action’ are notably more intrinsically focused than Schön’s, which have been neatly summarised by Fautley and Savage (2008: 155): ‘Reflection-in-action is what takes place when you reflect on what you are doing as *you are doing it*, whereas reflection-on-action is reflection which you undertake once the event has taken place.’

*Table 5: Definitions of mentoring (Renshaw, 2009: 62)*

<i>Buddying</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• an informal, friendly 'confessional' process in which experiences and insights are shared.</li> <li>• offers low-level support with little sense of progression</li> <li>• is generally only short-term</li> <li>• assists transition to a new job or new role</li> </ul>
<i>Shadowing</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A job role can be 'shadowed' by a musician with an interest in learning about the role, without necessarily aspiring to do that particular job.</li> <li>• The reasons for wishing to gain experience through shadowing and observation need to be clear and understood prior to the activity taking place.</li> <li>• might take the form of peer-to-peer 'conversation' about shared observation of practice.</li> <li>• could develop into a continuing professional peer relationship – i.e., peer mentoring.</li> </ul>
<i>Counselling</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At its centre lies a conversation about personal development issues that arise from professional practice.</li> </ul>
<i>Advising</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• constitutes a conversation about professional issues that arise from practice in a specific context (e.g., career orientation; possible new directions for the future; professional development opportunities; new networks and partnerships; marketing; budgeting).</li> </ul>
<i>Tutoring</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• an intentional, goal-oriented activity aimed at fostering the understanding and learning of knowledge through the process of questioning, critical dialogue.</li> </ul>
<i>Instructing</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• comprises a didactic form of imparting and passing on specialist knowledge and skills with little scope for dialogue – i.e., a mechanistic model of transmitting knowledge.</li> </ul>
<i>Facilitating</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a dynamic, non-directive way of generating a conversation aimed at enabling or empowering a person(s) to take responsibility for their own learning and practice.</li> </ul>
<i>Coaching</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• an enabling process aimed at enhancing learning and development with the intention of improving performance in a specific aspect of practice.</li> <li>• has a short-term focus with an emphasis on immediate micro issues. (e.g., how can I improve my performance in this particular area? How can I strengthen my workshop practice? What are the most appropriate ways of making my team work together more effectively?)</li> </ul>
<i>Mentoring</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a more developmental process, including elements of coaching, facilitating and counselling, aimed at sharing knowledge and encouraging individual development.</li> <li>• has a longer-term focus designed to foster personal growth and to help an individual place their artistic, personal and professional development in a wider cultural, social and educational context (e.g., why am I doing what I do? How do I perceive my musical identity? In what ways does this impact on my professional life and work? Where am I going? What determines my long-term goals?).</li> </ul>

Killian and Todnem (1991) developed Schön's ideas further to include a third form of reflection: 'Reflection for action' – a means of planning next steps, whilst considering what might happen and how we might deal with a particular situation. This addition of a third element enables a cycle where 'reflection requires [the] linking [of] existing knowledge to an analysis of the relationship between current experience and future action' (McAlpine and Weston, 2002: 69). A reflective model initially proposed by Borton for the teaching profession in 1970, and subsequently developed for clinical

contexts by Rolfe et al., (1971) and Driscoll (2000), promotes similar aims whereby the questions 'What?', 'So what?' and 'Now what?' relate respectively to reflection-in-action, reflection-on-action and reflection for action. McAlpine and Weston (2002: 69) argue that 'intentional reflection' generated by models such as these, alongside reflective cycles proposed by Kolb (1984) and Gibbs (1988), enables individuals to make sense of and learn from experience 'for the purpose of improvement', thus 'transforming experiential and tacit knowledge into principled explicit knowledge'.

A further perspective is offered by Brookfield (1987) who argued that reflective practitioners should be able to challenge their own beliefs or values and evaluate the extent to which their assumptions influence the way they perceive the world and their experience in it. However, 'identities [...] are shaped by the ways in which people are socially and historically located and how they adopt various cultural customs and ideals' (Gomez and Johnson Lachuk, 2017: 457) and 'every student comes with a "learning past" that is an important part of his or her present and future learning' (Kegan, 2018: 39). Therefore, it is important that mentors adopt a sensitive approach when encouraging students to place their own prior knowledge and beliefs to one side to think about something in a completely new way. Equally, mentors need to be mindful that trainee teachers may feel uncomfortable about disclosing imperfections (Hill, et al. 2020) or suffer from 'Impostor Syndrome' (Carrillo and Baguley, 2011; Wilding, n.d., online), a phenomenon common in high-achieving individuals (Clance and Imnes (1978), who may experience 'feelings of not being as capable or adequate as others perceive or evaluate them to be' (Brems et al., 1994: 183–4).

In the context of training the next generation of music educators, conservatoires need to facilitate transformative learning for students who may arrive with presuppositions based on their prior learning (Carey and Lebler, 2008). According to the AEC (2010: 14), 'One of the challenges for conservatoires is to help students integrate their musical and pedagogical knowledge, skills and understanding', helping them to 'appreciate the broader role instrumental/vocal teachers can play in developing not only instrumental/vocal skills but also their pupils' musicianship and overall personal development'. Additionally, the AEC recommends that conservatoire

students 'need to develop what Shulman describes as 'pedagogical content knowledge'.

### **Pedagogical Content Knowledge**

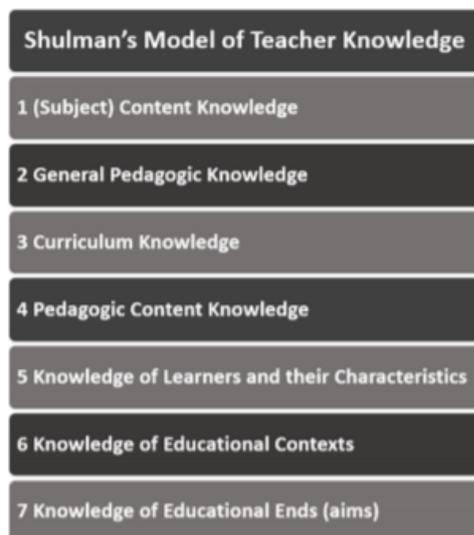
When advising aspiring secondary school classroom teachers, Capel et al. (2019) state that knowing a significant amount about a given subject area does not automatically result in effective teaching and that educators need to transform their subject content knowledge into tasks that lead to learning. Significantly, trainee teachers in school settings have access to multiple experts in the music education field who can offer such support. According to Allen and Toplis (2019: 66), the 'key players' in initial teacher education (ITE) programmes include headteachers, professional tutors or mentors, subject tutors, class teachers, heads of department, university tutors and the student teacher themselves. It follows that conservatoire students should have access to a similar CoP (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998; 2018) when training to become instrumental teachers. For example, students might expect to be supported by several of the following: their peers, principal study teachers, heads of departments, academic staff (including at least one staff member with oversight of pedagogical provision across the curriculum), visiting professionals, alumni, employers and mentors. (Chapters 5–7 offer insights into how some of these key players contribute to students' ongoing development as instrumental teachers at RBC.)

Shulman (1986; 1987) defined multiple types of knowledge required of effective teachers as shown in Figure 5, adapted from Shulman (1986; 1987) by Wolf and Younie (2019: 227). In the context of conservatoire training, 'Subject Content Knowledge' (SCK) encapsulates the extent of students' musical knowledge in both the principal study discipline and supporting/academic studies. However, according to La Velle and Leask (2019), teachers accumulate SCK from a variety of sources in addition to HE contexts: indeed, the accrual of SCK relates strongly to Pierre Bourdieu's notion of cultural capital (see below), given that students are likely to gather SCK from their home and former school environments as well as through personal study and reading. However, SCK alone is unlikely to equip conservatoire

graduates to deliver content to learners in challenging circumstances or environments.

It could be argued that conservatoire students accrue some General Pedagogic Knowledge (GPK) by the time they graduate, though this is likely to vary, depending on the nature of the pedagogical training offered by their institution and students' enthusiasm to engage with it. Given La Velle and Leask's suggestion (2019: 20) that GPK includes principles and strategies that relate to 'managing the learning environment for effective learning' for example, gaining pupils' interest, sustaining their motivation and differentiating the learning to support or challenge pupils as appropriate, it would seem that situated learning within a relevant CoP (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998; 2018) could be an appropriate means of accumulating GPK for trainee instrumental teachers.

*Figure 5: Shulman's model of teacher knowledge, reproduced from Wolf and Younie (2019: 227)*



Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) combines SCK and GPK, thus integrating knowledge of content (what to teach) with pedagogy (why, how and when to teach it). Importantly, Shulman (1986: 9) suggested that the ability to pre-empt, reduce or eliminate misconceptions in learners is dependent on effective communication via 'the most powerful analogies, illustrations, examples, explanations, and demonstrations – in a word, the ways of representing and formulating the subject

that makes it comprehensible to others'. Other facets of Shulman's model include knowledge of teaching materials and resources necessary to formulate a curriculum; knowledge of how children develop with age, both socially and cognitively, and how to tailor learning to the needs of individuals or groups; knowledge of the contexts in which learning takes place, and finally, knowledge of the aims of learning, including the setting of short-medium and long-term goals for pupils. What appears to be missing, however, both from Shulman's recommendations and the above adapted model is the need for an acute awareness of the social and emotional dimensions involved in teaching roles. Such awareness is required in order to foster positive relationships, personalise learning and create nurturing environments when interacting with individuals and groups across a wide range of ages and abilities (Kitwood, 1997; Mackworth-Young, 2000; Creech and Hallam, 2009; 2011; Burke, 2019), though 'Knowledge of Learners and their Characteristics', as derived from Shulman's model, will surely contribute to that awareness.

Interestingly, the then innovative 'Music Performance and Communication Skills' (MPCS) project at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, was documented by Renshaw (1986) in the same year as the introduction of Shulman's PCK model (1986) and presents a much broader overview of the wide range of skills that conservatoire students need to respond to a rapidly changing society (Renshaw, 1986: 81):

- a) Technical authority with instrument or voice (performing credibility is essential, as the quality of performance must rise above contextual constraints and difficulties).
- b) Basic musical skills, e.g., aural skills, rhythmic sense, fluency in musical literacy, improvisation, transcription, arrangement and creative skills.
- c) A broad view towards different forms of music-making.
- d) Planning, management and leadership skills.
- e) A strong commitment and determination.

f) A professional attitude to all tasks - e.g., ability to work in a team, ability to assume personal and collective responsibility, personal organisation, reliability.

g) Personal qualities necessary for responding to different contexts, e.g., flexibility, spontaneity, openness, sincerity, integrity, humour, inter-personal sensitivity, empathy.

As yet, however, little appears to be known of the extent to which conservatoire students' knowledge of subject matter is 'transformed into the content of instruction' (Shulman, 1986: 6) as they transition into the music education profession. To return to Shulman's model, arguably, graduates need all seven types of knowledge to be effective music educators. PCK was defined by Magnusson et al. (1999: 96) as 'a distinct knowledge base that encompasses a teacher's understanding of how to help students understand specific subject matter. It includes how particular subject matter topics, problems and issues can be organised, represented and adapted to the diverse interests and abilities of learners and presented for instruction.'

Shulman (1986: 8), meanwhile questioned how the 'expert student' transitions to 'novice teacher' and whether 'pedagogical prices are paid when the teacher's subject matter competence is itself compromised by deficiencies of prior education or ability'. Additionally, he recommended that a professional should be 'capable not only of practising and understanding his or her craft, but of communicating the reasons for professional decisions and actions to others' so involving a kind of reflective practice that leads to 'metacognitive awareness' (ibid: 13). Arguably, this is where the mentoring and coaching within a Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky, 1938), with significant others (Wood, Bruner and Ross, 1976; Davidson and Burland, 2006), within a supportive professional CoP (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998; 2018) may prove beneficial.

### **Habitus, capital, field and doxa**

Parallels may be drawn between the transformative learning taking place within CoP and the interrelated conceptual tools from Bourdieu: habitus, capital and field (Maton, 2014). Several researchers have been drawn to apply these concepts in the field of music education (Reay, 1995; 2004; Burnard, Trulson and Söderman, 2015;

Wright, 2015; 2016; Butler, 2019) and, specifically, in a conservatoire context (Perkins and Triantafyllaki, 2010; Perkins, 2015, Porton, 2020). These concepts were central to Bourdieu's *Theory of Practice* (Bourdieu, 1977), where he first attempted to theorise human action systematically and to reconcile conflicts between two opposing traditions in the social sciences: objectivism/structuralism, where humans act in accordance with social rules; and subjectivism/existentialism, where humans are free to make choices and decisions (Wright, 2015). Instead, Bourdieu proposed that human action could be explained as resulting from *habitus*.

From Bourdieu's stance, everything is social, and habitus is defined as a set of dispositions each of us have that are structured by our past social experiences. Bourdieu claimed that the way we behave, think and act is largely linked to our family backgrounds and educational experiences, and that these bring with them various forms of *capital*, some of which are cultural and influence our knowledge, tastes, preferences, judgements and prejudices. Meanwhile, social capital is accumulated through interaction, and consequently, an individual's habitus evolves and transforms as they encounter new CoP (as noted above). With increased social capital comes the potential to gain symbolic capital (for example accreditation or recognition) and ultimately economic capital (for example, employment or other financial gain). Bourdieu argued that an individual's habitus is unconsciously shaped and influenced by the *field* (or environment) in which they live and/or work and that it is therefore not fixed, but constantly evolving. Indeed, the fields in which we operate help us to gather the various forms of capital discussed above, though an element of competition is likely to be involved.

Thomson (2012) asserts that Bourdieu's notion of field can be conceived as a scientific force field or, more prosaically perhaps, a football field. The former analogy resonates with notions of power inherent within other theoretical frameworks explored within this chapter (see 'Classification and framing', 'Hegemony' and 'Critical pedagogy' below) whilst the latter is useful in linking to another concept introduced in Bourdieu's *Theory of Practice* (1977) where *doxa* was likened to 'the rules of the game'. These 'rules' are assumed and/or taken for granted (Wright, 2015: 83) by established players and promptly absorbed by new ones. For Bourdieu

(1977: 167), doxa is where 'what is essential goes without saying because it comes without saying: the tradition is silent, not least about itself as a tradition'. As a conceptualisation of doxa, a force field forms 'an invisible barrier that surrounds a space, protecting those inside and marking the space off as a self-contained world' (Wright, 2015: 83).

Thomson (2012: 67) expands on the metaphor, proposing that 'players' compete to improve their position within the field and that those who begin the game with particular forms of capital are advantaged from the outset. This is because 'the field depends on, as well as produces more of, that capital advantage' so that certain players are 'able to use their capital advantage to accumulate more and advance further (be more successful) than others'. To place this in a musical context, Butler (2019: 200) discovered a similar phenomenon in schools where pupils who helped to preserve the traditions of their music department through participating in school ensembles and taking music examinations perceived their music department as a supportive 'family', whilst pupils who did not partake in such activities felt excluded from the 'inner circle'. A further perspective on 'the rules of the game' is offered by Wright (2016a: 13) who considers that humans have

a tendency to behave in certain ways based on a particular understanding of the rules of the social world and its accepted patterns of behaviour [...]  
[Bourdieu] considered that the initial basis for this conditioning arose in early childhood, as parents' actions and behaviour towards their children would be dependent upon their own habitus.

Wright's perspective is pertinent to the aspiring professional musicians who have informed this thesis. Typically, conservatoire students begin their specialist instrumental or vocal training many years before they enter HE, and their childhood learning experiences will undoubtedly shape their perspectives, as proposed by Higgins (2015: 449):

Studying music full-time at most of the world's universities or conservatoires requires particular privileges that are linked to one's past: for example,

economic, financial investments that stretch back to the first private lesson; opportunity, having access to a quality music education and/or a music education that meets our expectations; and support from family and friends.

However, as implied above, Mezirow's transformative learning theory (2018) offers considerable scope to shape and influence entrenched perspectives such as these. Similarly, for Reay (1995; 2004), habitus can be replicated or transformed depending on the circumstances or context within which an individual or group interacts and/or accumulates experience. Such transformation could take place over time where aspects of learning are replicated, reproduced and reinforced with increasing levels of complexity, as in the spiral curriculum model first posited by Bruner (1960) and further developed in music education by Thomas (1970); Swanwick and Tillman (1986); Tillman (1987); Fautley and Daubney (2015) and Charanga (n.d.).

Bruner's original concept of spiral curriculum is reinterpreted by Johnston (2012), who explains that students revisit subject content several times through their school career. As in post-Piagetian childhood theory referred to above (Illeris, 2007), such an approach enables students to assimilate and accommodate new concepts in the context of their former knowledge (Froehlich, 2007), since information is reinforced and solidified as the subject matter is revisited, with a logical progression from the simple to the more complex. Furthermore, students are encouraged to apply early knowledge to subsequent course objectives. Johnston's interpretation holds relevance for the current study where pedagogical training is offered from Y1 at RBC and revisited in subsequent years, albeit in different guises.

### **Hidden curriculum**

Curriculum content is, however, not always explicit; consequently, neither are the influences that shape habitus. Further to the notion of implicit or 'hidden' learning referred to above, the concept of 'hidden curriculum' was originally proposed by Jackson (1968) who claimed that learning was not only transmitted via formally scheduled lessons and course materials, but also by institutional and societal values. Bruner (1996: 27) employed the term 'underground curriculum' to express a similar phenomenon. In music HE research, the hidden curriculum has been explored in the

context of university music departments (Pitts, 2003; Haddon, 2012). In setting out to uncover the hidden messages and values communicated within institutions, these studies relate closely to the notion of 'invisible pedagogy' proposed by the sociologist Basil Bernstein (1975), where 'conflicting ideologies' exert implicit control over learners with some areas of the curriculum being afforded greater status than others. Indeed, within a conservatoire context, Bernstein's notion of 'cultural reproduction' is pertinent since many of the teaching staff were themselves trained in similar institutions. To elaborate, Persson (1996: 25) suggested that principal study teaching in conservatoires 'tends to rely on self-devised strategies, commonsense and tradition', whilst (Triantafyllaki, 2010) proposes that advanced teachers construct their identities and teaching practices in response to the dominant values of their workplace. If, as suggested elsewhere in this chapter, these dominant values and traditions in conservatoires are most strongly weighted in the direction of developing expert performers, then conservatoire students are unlikely to gain the necessary 'know-how' to teach effectively in a 'multiplicity of roles' (Perkins and Triantafyllaki, 2016: 182) from their principal study lessons alone. Moreover, it appears that conservatoire students may not understand the relevance of their supporting academic studies in preparing them for portfolio careers that include teaching. When gathering views of conservatoire curricula retrospectively from alumni across eight institutions, Porton (2020: 107) found that conservatoire curricula include 'many applicable and vital modules [but] there is perhaps a miscommunication and haziness in reflecting exactly why the module content has been chosen and its direct connection to the student as a performer, on their specific instrument'.

### **Classification and framing**

Bernstein's analytical concepts of 'classification' and 'framing' (2003) have been used together as a theoretical lens to attempt to understand power relations within educational contexts and pedagogical relationships. Classification relates to the differentiation or boundaries between categories. For example, in terms of curriculum, Bernstein claims that certain elements or subjects are viewed as standalone, 'well insulated' or 'strongly classified', while others 'stand in an open relation to each other' (ibid: 79), being integrated with one another and therefore 'weakly classified'. Framing is used as a means of understanding the controlling

factors in pedagogical relationships between educators and learners, in respect of which 'knowledge is transmitted or received' (ibid: 80) and how. Where learners have little choice in what is learned, curriculum is strongly framed; where students have more autonomy to make choices about their learning trajectories, curriculum is weakly framed. In instrumental teaching it might be said that curriculum is often weakly framed since many teachers tend to rely on strongly framed examination syllabuses to provide learning content for their pupils (Goddard, 2002). Equally, where a teacher chooses to focus solely on facilitating their pupils' instrumental or vocal technique, the curriculum will be strongly classified; whereas a more holistic 'whole brain' approach (Chappell, 1999) that combines technical development with creative activities such as playing by ear and improvisation, will be weakly classified. Despite the negative connotations in the labelling, 'weak' classification and framing in instrumental teaching is likely to produce stronger, well-rounded musicians. Furthermore, in group instrumental teaching, weak classification and framing are a necessity if teachers are to engage pupils from a wide range of abilities and backgrounds and appeal to their varied interests (Gane, 1996).

Bernstein's analytical concepts are highly relevant to the current study, especially in conservatoire curricula where it is pertinent to examine the extent to which framing affirms or negates classification in relation to pedagogical training. Bernstein's claim that 'curriculum defines what counts as valid knowledge, pedagogy defines what counts as a valid transmission of knowledge and evaluation defines what counts as a valid realisation of this knowledge on the part of the taught' (Bernstein, 2003: 77) raises questions about who should decide 'what counts'. This view resonates with Bourdieu's observation that 'categorisations make up and order the world and, hence, constitute and order people within it (Schubert, 2014: 180). Thus, institutions dominate and even impose 'symbolic violence' on learners by teaching them 'particular things' and socialising them in 'particular ways' [...] with certain forms of judgement' (ibid: 184). Regarded as a form of 'ideological manipulation [that] works to keep people quiet and in line', such a perspective 'explains the way in which people are convinced to embrace ways of thinking and acting that they believe are in their own best interests, when they are, in fact, harmful to them' (Brookfield, 2012: 49) and thus relates to Gramsci's (1971) concept of hegemony.

## Hegemony

Further to the reference to hegemonic culture above (Bruner, 1996), hegemony is defined by Darder et al. (2003: 7) as a process through which 'the daily implementation of specific norms, expectations and behaviours [...] conserve the interest of those in power' leading students to be 'ushered into consensus'.

According to Wright (2016: 273) support of such consensus is reinforced and rewarded, and students thereby 'reaffirm the interests of the ruling elite in education, even when their actions may be in opposition to their own [...] interests', thus reproducing cultural hegemony. Similarly, Brookfield (2017: 16) claims that 'commonsense' understandings of society are internalised and inhabited by families, friendships, communities, culture and social institutions, stating that 'The subtle cruelty of hegemony is that over time it becomes deeply embedded, part of the cultural air we breathe.' This view suggests that society may not even be aware of significant underlying social and cultural influences that cause individuals and communities to accept aspects of their everyday lives without question, and that such naïve acceptance may perpetuate or legitimise an unjust status quo. To elaborate on Bourdieu's concept of symbolic violence or the notions of harm and control introduced above, Brookfield (2012: 34) further defines hegemony as

thinking something, and acting enthusiastically on that thought as if it were the most obvious, commonsense thing in the world, all the while being unaware that your actions benefit those who wish to keep you uninformed. Getting people willingly to agree to, even support, a situation that is hurting them is difficult and cannot be done with force, since outright and overt coercion is easily identified. But control how people think and how they perceive the world [...] and you are well on the way to getting people to agree to things that will end up harming them.

For Howarth (2015: 201), however, 'the concept of hegemony is multidimensional and contested [...] and there is an ongoing battle to establish its precise meaning'. He argues that while hegemony is often equated with domination and coercion, it is also associated with 'processes of persuasion and 'soft' forms of power' (ibid), as in

Gramsci's concept 'historical bloc' (ibid: 197), which implies that systems, processes, values and beliefs within societies and institutions are often so long established and steeped in tradition that they are seldom questioned. This concept is pertinent to my study, given that the conservatoire model of education was established over a century ago (conservatoiresuk.ac.uk). Indeed, Porton, (2020: 87) proposes that conservatoires (and especially, heads of departments) 'inflict hegemonic power', although 'power is hegemonic only if those affected by it [...] consent to it and struggle over its common sense'. According to Howarth (2015: 199), Gramsci suggested that critiquing and challenging the status quo offers the 'capacity to transform societies in various ways' through 'counter-hegemony' (Liguori, 2015: 124). Indeed, if conservatoires are, like other educational systems, 'highly institutionalised [and] in the grip of their own values' (Bruner, 1996: 32), there is distinct potential to uncover notions of power in relation to curricula through critical pedagogy.

### **Critical pedagogy**

One of the most prominent and influential writers on the theory and practice of critical pedagogy was Paulo Freire (1921–97) who, according to Apple et al. (2001: 30), referred to teachers and their students as 'unfinished beings' who have much to learn from each other and that the educational process must be based on 'critical dialogue and mutual knowledge creation'. In his seminal work, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire suggested that those 'who have adapted to the structure of domination in which they are immersed [and] are resigned to it [...] prefer the security of conformity' (1996: 29–30). This stance relates strongly to Gramsci's concept of 'subalternity' (Liguori, 2015) where communities have little or no means of having their voices heard within society. However, like Gramsci, Freire argued that individuals have the capacity to overcome situations that limit them and that there are 'ways of helping the people to help themselves critically perceive the reality which oppresses them' (1996: 147). Lynch (2019, online) clarifies the value of a methodological approach (to be discussed further in Chapter 2) where, as 'teacher', I have been in the fortunate position of collaborating with RBC students and alumni as partners in the research process:

Critical pedagogy is a teaching philosophy that invites educators to encourage students to critique structures of power [...]. It is rooted in critical theory, which involves becoming aware of and questioning the societal status quo. In critical pedagogy a teacher uses his or her own enlightenment to encourage students to question and challenge inequalities that exist in [...] societies.

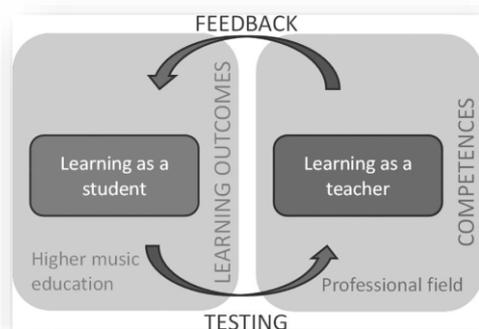
Lynch (ibid) suggests various methods to implement critical pedagogy, including changing the classroom dynamic, changing assessments and encouraging activism, all of which link to the notion of student voice.

### **Student voice**

The concept of student voice in HE (Healey et al., 2014) relates strongly to Freire's and Gramsci's philosophies and is rooted in recommendations offered by the AEC in 2010, cited in Lennon and Reed (2012: 289). If conservatoires are to continue to develop their provision for instrumental teacher training, it will be important to continue to learn from current students' changing perspectives as they learn in CoP. As Renshaw (1986: 81) discovered during the MPCs project discussed above, conservatoire students can be 'a dynamic force in the process of negotiating their present and future curriculum'. As suggested by Figure 6, below, conservatoires may also learn from alumni working in the field as early career music educators: 'Student learning (which starts in the conservatoire and continues throughout lifelong learning) and the learning outcomes of these institutions can be tested within the profession through the performance of their graduates'. This view is further validated by Sturrock (2007: 9) who states that:

Alumni are the link between conservatoires and the outside world. As practising professional musicians in their own right, they keep us alert to ongoing developments in the profession and new opportunities for employment in music. Their feedback informs our curricula, ensuring that we are preparing students realistically for a rapidly-changing and increasingly competitive professional environment.

Figure 6: Competencies and learning outcomes, reproduced from AEC (2010: 45)



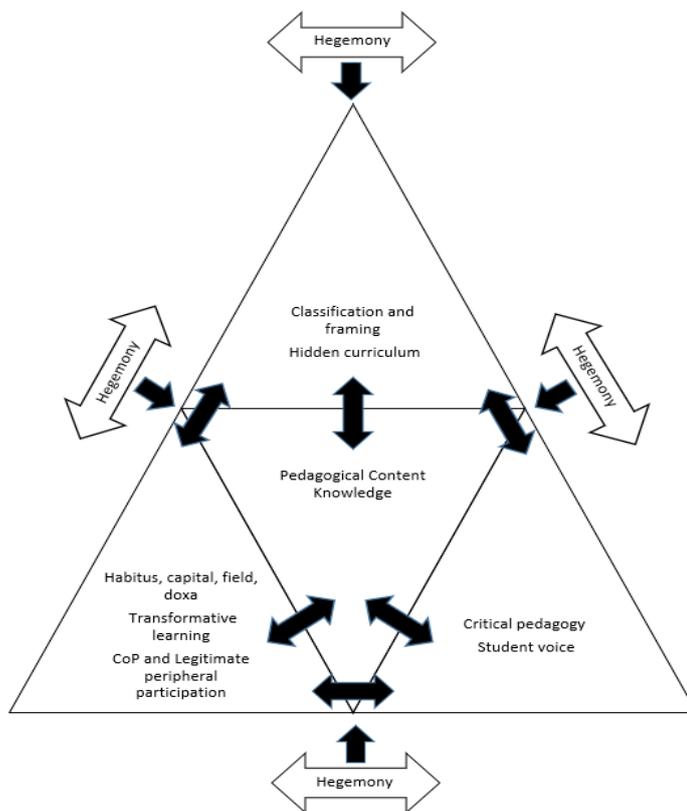
Similarly, Gaunt (2016: 270) advocates such an approach: ‘It is vital that we further champion the interface between education and professional worlds, increasing two-way influence and exchange’. My research has responded to these recommendations by engaging RBC students and alumni as research partners, ‘pedagogical consultants [and] co-creators of course design’ (Healey et al., 2014: 50–51). Their ontological perspectives, which were based on ‘lived experiences’ (Charmaz, 1996: 30) within and outside the conservatoire context, and their developing self-perceptions and professional identities formed the epistemological foundations for an institutional case study involving RBC (see Chapter 2.2–2.3). Moreover, as working music educators who, according to Bennett (2008: 62) tend to ‘operate in isolation from peers’, alumni stand to benefit from the research themselves by participating in networks that have the capacity to lead them to reflect on their practice in new ways.

#### 1.4 Summary

As noted above, little research has been undertaken in the field of music education to explore the efficacy of instrumental teacher education delivered by conservatoires (also referred to within this thesis as ‘pedagogical training’, or learning how to teach the principal study specialism), nor to explore its impact on conservatoire students and alumni. Where research into conservatoire-based pedagogical training exists, it is often situated within the context of learning how to perform or focused on the development of a broader portfolio career. Academics’ involvement in research in this field has usually been as a researcher, rather than participant, and those who employ conservatoire graduates as instrumental teachers have tended not to be

consulted during the research process. My methodological approach, outlined in Chapter 2, takes all this into account and attempts to address some of the shortcomings by involving academics across several different institutions and employers across a wide geographical area, alongside perspectives from students and alumni affiliated to RBC. The subsequent educational research findings discussed in Chapters 3–7 utilise and expand on the theoretical frameworks discussed above, many of which are interconnected as shown in Figure 7, below. These interrelated theoretical frameworks will be revisited as part of the Conclusions discussed in Chapter 8.2.

*Figure 7: Interrelated theoretical frameworks*



## Chapter 2: Methodology and Pilot study

This chapter sets out the research paradigm and methodological design, taking into consideration my own position as an insider in the research process. The rationale behind the range of data collection methods employed is discussed and the overarching structures and timescales within which the research was conducted are presented.

### 2.1 Research paradigm

Neumann (1991: 57) defined a paradigm as ‘a framework or a set of assumptions that explain how the world is perceived’. According to Cohen et al. (2018: 5–7), these assumptions might be defined as ontological, where the researcher is concerned with social reality: whether it exists ‘out there’, independently of individual cognition (realist); or whether the world is interpreted or perceived by people in very different ways according to their own experiences (subjectivist). Further assumptions may be epistemological, where the researcher seeks to understand the nature of knowledge about social behaviour. Positivist researchers might acquire and communicate such knowledge through scientific and experimental research designs that aim to test hypotheses or cause and effect relationships, whilst anti-positivist researchers will seek to understand multiple ontologies based on individuals’ personal and subjective insights. Further philosophical assumptions may be axiological, where the researcher questions ‘the role of values in the research’ (Bailey, 2007: 51).

My methodology has been heavily influenced by my positionality as a former RBC student, active performer, instrumental teacher and lecturer/former lecturer of many of the research participants; it could be viewed simultaneously as practice-led research *and* research-led practice (Smith and Dean, 2009) since I have been motivated both by undertaking research into my own practice, and the potential impact of this research on my subsequent practice and that of others. However, my lived experiences in these roles have brought with them multiple ontologies and an unavoidable number of biases. Even though I acknowledge that I could not possibly understand the reality of what it is like to be a new teacher in the twenty-first century, it has been important to question continually my own beliefs and assumptions

surrounding RBC's provision for instrumental teacher education. Furthermore, from an axiological standpoint, it should be noted that, while I am concerned with the values of the research participants, my personal values have undoubtedly had a role in shaping my methodology.

Thus, the exploration of multiple ontologies from the perspectives of my research participants has been especially important to me, to offset the inevitable bias (emerging from my own epistemological perspectives) that is inherent in insider research. Consequently, my research was placed within an interpretivist/constructivist paradigm: an anti-positivist approach where 'reality is socially constructed' (Mertens, 2005: 12) and relies heavily on the perspectives of the participants being studied. In constructivism, 'the researcher has to examine the situation in question through the multiple lenses of the individuals involved [...] to see how they make sense of the situation and to focus on interactions, contexts, environments and biographies' (Cohen et al., 2018: 23). In interpretivism, 'meaning is relocated from "reality out there" to reality as experienced by the perceiver' (Clarke, 2019: 7). Moreover, 'theory is "grounded" in data generated by the research' (Cohen et al., 2018: 20) to which, according to Glaser and Strauss (2008: 251–2), the researcher brings their personal reflections and insights as a 'highly sensitised and systematic agent'.

It was important that my overall methodological design was sufficiently flexible to accommodate these multiple ontologies, and to maintain an open mind in order to allow participants to shape my research 'from the ground up' as their ontologies emerged. Thus, my methodology needed to be 'eclectic' (Rossman and Wilson, 1994; Aluko, 2006), comprising several interrelated approaches that were compatible with my ontological, epistemological and axiological assumptions, whilst also allowing scope for these to be challenged. Therefore, I have combined elements of grounded theory, action research and case study, and given the emphasis on practice-led research/research-led practice, it followed that autoethnography should also feature, whilst mixed methods research offered yet further flexibility by enabling the gathering of both qualitative and quantitative data. These five methodological

approaches are considered below (see Chapter 2.2), before moving on to outline the research design (Chapter 2.3).

## 2.2 Methodology: an eclectic approach

### Grounded theory

Grounded theory is that which is 'grounded in data and rises up from the ground of data' (Cohen et al., 2018: 75): essentially, the emphasis is on the generation of theory, as opposed to the testing of existing theory. Indeed, the originators of grounded theory, Glaser and Strass, who wrote their seminal text on the subject in 1967, were concerned at that time by 'an overemphasis [...] on the verification of theory' in sociology (2008: 1): concerns that shared some similarities with the positivist paradigm discussed above. However, they advocated that 'the researcher does not approach reality as a *tabula rasa*. He<sup>2</sup> must have a perspective that will help him see relevant data and abstract significant categories from the scrutiny of the data' (ibid: 3), a view that is compatible with the aforementioned interpretivist/constructivist paradigm. Denscombe (2014: 109) supports this view:

The grounded theory approach expects the researcher to start research without any *fixed* ideas about the nature of the setting that is about to be investigated. The aim is to approach things with an open mind. An open mind, of course, is not a blank mind and it is inevitable that existing theories and personal experience will have some influence on what the researcher already knows about a topic. However, the crucial point is that pre-existing knowledge and concepts are to be treated as 'provisional' and open to question. They are simply a tentative starting point from which to launch the investigation.

According to Charmaz (1996: 29), grounded theory is 'suitable for studying individual processes, interpersonal relations and the reciprocal effects between individuals and larger social processes'. Meanwhile, Barton (2019: 14) advocates grounded theory

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<sup>2</sup> Gender specificity in original.

as a flexible 'framework' in which fieldwork can be undertaken. Such flexibility was appealing to me, as a researcher, since it enabled the tailoring of research methods to suit the issues I wanted to explore, 'not only as the starting point of the research but throughout the course of the research as well' (Denscombe, 2014: 107). Even though 'the hallmark of grounded theory studies consists of the researcher deriving his or her analytic categories directly from the data, not from preconceived concepts or hypotheses' (Charmaz, 1996: 32), it was helpful near the beginning of my research journey to outline a potential long-term trajectory for the investigation. However, I remained open-minded and prepared for the emerging data to take me in various directions, and to redesign or adjust the approach for subsequent stages as I learned from the data generated by the research participants. In addition to adopting RBC as the 'initial site' for the research to enable student involvement, further sites of participant groups (for example, academics from other conservatoires, employers and alumni) were consciously selected through 'theoretical sampling' (Denscombe, 2014: 110). This occurred whenever emerging concepts from the ongoing literature review or findings from primary data suggested that additional perspectives from specific individuals in certain contexts could contribute something of value to the research.

The flexible and open-minded approach offered by the grounded theory framework proved vital, since (as noted in the Introduction) the global pandemic resulting from the COVID-19 virus threatened to disrupt this research in 2020, forcing me to rethink my strategy. The pandemic imposed unprecedented changes on initial (classroom-based) teacher training courses in the UK, with face-to-face teaching experience in schools being temporarily or permanently curtailed (Daubney and Fautley, 2020; Kidd and Murray, 2020; La Velle et al., 2020). While these authors do not contemplate specifically the impact of the pandemic on the training of instrumental teachers, some of their discussion of issues faced by working professionals in the music education field does have implications for instrumental teacher education within conservatoire curricula: 'Inevitably, with all face-to-face teaching suspended, many models of learning have either had to [be] stopped or significantly adapted to meet the demands of lockdown learning' (Daubney and Fautley, 2020: 108). Chapter

2.3 below offers a detailed summary of the research stages and methods employed, including, where relevant, any adjustments made in light of the pandemic.

### **Action research**

Given that the aim of this doctoral research study and thesis is concerned with how best to facilitate the student–professional transition into careers that involve instrumental teaching, with RBC as its main case study, the overall methodological approach is partially informed by elements of action research. (This approach also holds relevance in developing RBC’s provision for instrumental teacher education and my own practice in HE.) As noted by Kemmis (2009: 463) action research is a ‘practice-changing practice’ that not only seeks to transform practitioners’ practices, and understandings, but also the conditions in which they practise. By utilising action research within the grounded theory framework, I have been able to combine diagnosis, action and reflection (McNiff, 2010), by focusing on issues raised by participants at various stages of the study, and adjusting my intended approach to subsequent stages where appropriate.

Creswell (2012: 579) distinguishes between ‘practical action research’ and ‘participatory action research’. In practical action research, the research may focus on teacher development and student learning, and the researcher may implement a plan of action, leading to the ‘teacher as researcher’. In participatory action research, the researcher may be interested in social issues that restrain individuals and there may be a focus on ‘life-enhancing changes’ through collaboration with research participants. My methodology combines both practical and participatory approaches to action research, since a large element involves the study of societal issues and perspectives that impact on conservatoire students’ training as music educators, and both students and alumni are encouraged to become equal partners in the research process (see Chapter 1.3: Student voice).

### **Case study**

The notion of case study is clearly a crucial one since this thesis centres upon investigation of RBC’s instrumental teacher education provision. Theoretically, ‘for a case study, the intent is to develop an in-depth understanding of a case or an issue,

and researchers collect as many types of data as possible to develop this understanding' (Creswell, 2012: 477). Since the 'case' may involve any phenomena from single individuals to large groups, established events to the implementation of new initiatives, or even 'a college curriculum process', this seemed an ideal fit for responding to research question 2 (see Chapter 2.3 Research design: Structure of the research), whilst being highly compatible with a mixed methods approach (see below), since 'the researcher seeks to develop an in-depth understanding of the case by collecting multiple forms of data' (ibid: 465). Moreover, a case study will comprise many key features of ethnographic research:

- Cultural themes
- A culture-sharing group
- Shared patterns of behaviour, belief and language
- Fieldwork
- Description, themes and interpretation
- Context or setting
- Researcher reflexivity

(ibid: 468)

Indeed, the 'culture-sharing group' within my case study is a single cohort of undergraduate students, for which 'the context or setting' is RBC. The 'cultural themes' to be explored relate to students' development as music educators within a performance-oriented environment, while 'shared patterns of behaviour, belief and language' are relevant both within the institution and via fieldwork. A combination of thematic and discourse analysis (discussed in Chapter 2.3) will enable me as researcher both to interpret and reflect on the emerging data to inform subsequent research (and my HE practice). Given the need to be reflexive throughout the study and resultant thesis, I have discussed my role in the research openly from the outset (see Introduction), thus the case study element here evidently shares key principles with Action research (see above) whilst also containing elements of Autoethnography.

## **Autoethnography**

Whilst aware of potential bias in my research, I argue that the best strategy is to embrace it, by adopting an autoethnographic stance in parts of my thesis, since such an approach openly acknowledges ‘the unavoidable influence of the researcher on the research process’ (Cohen et al., 2018: 298). According to Reed-Danahay (2016: 34):

Autoethnography, as a method of research and writing, requires reflective and critical approaches to understandings of social and cultural life and the relationship between the self and the social. Autoethnographic texts are most compelling when they synthesize objective (outsider) and subjective (insider) points of view, rather than privileging the latter.

It therefore remains important to ‘identify [my] subjectivity throughout the course of [my] research’ by being ‘meaningfully attentive’ (Peshkin, 1988: 17; Savage, 2007). In reflecting on the foundations for Peshkin’s ‘subjective I’s’, Savage (ibid: 195) suggests that subjectivity is drawn from a range of sources:

- [my] own belief and value systems;
- [my] experiences of [one or more] particular environment[s] or place[s];
- [my] ongoing experiences of life within the particular [institution];
- The wider community and the relationships that [I have] established within that community.

I have been mindful of these ‘sources’ through the research process, addressing my subjectivity directly through ‘provenance’, defined by Hill and Lloyd (2018: 3) as ‘the practitioner identifying and articulating the story of their development of their current professional practice as a start to investigating their practice’ (see Introduction). In this context, ‘memoing’ has been an important, relevant process (Cohen et al., 2018: 718), taken up during the collation and analysis phases whenever I became aware of being judgmental or emotionally affected by participants’ responses or behaviours. This ‘continual evaluation of subjective responses’ (Finlay, 2002: 532) has been necessary in order to be as transparent as possible and to mitigate against the

danger of ignoring lines of inquiry or argument that might not resonate positively within me. Usage of this methodological approach alerts me, not only to my bias and subjectivity, but also to ‘the origins and significance in the culture in which [my ontological and epistemological perspectives were] created’ (Bruner, 1996: 3).

### **Mixed-methods research**

Whilst the interpretivist/constructivist paradigm outlined above is based largely on qualitative research that ‘uses a range of methods to focus on the meanings and interpretation of social phenomena and social processes in the particular contexts in which they occur’ (Sumner, 2006: 367), this approach does not prohibit the use of quantitative data. Gorard (2004: 7) identifies mixed-methods research as ‘a key element in the improvement of social science, including education research [...] because figures can be very persuasive to policy-makers whereas stories are more easily remembered and repeated by them for illustrative purposes’. Indeed, the intention in gathering both numerical and textual data and in using a variety of methods (questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, observations and textual narratives, all of which are discussed in Chapters 2.3 and 2.4 below), both within and outside RBC, is to strengthen the research. According to Cohen et al. (2018: 33):

mixed methods research enables a more comprehensive and complete understanding of phenomena to be obtained than single methods approaches [...] combining particularity with generality [...] insider *and* outsider perspectives (*emic* and *etic* research), focusing on the whole and its constituent parts, and the causes and effects.

Meanwhile, Denscombe (2014: 147) proposes that the multiple approaches used in mixed methods research can help overcome biases, whilst increasing accuracy and reliability of data through triangulation. For Laws (2003, cited in Bell 2010: 118):

the key to triangulation is to see the same things from different perspectives and thus be able to confirm or challenge the findings of one method with those of another [though] accounts collected from different perspectives may not match tidily at all. There may be mismatch and even conflict between

them. A mismatch does not necessarily mean that the data collection process is flawed – it could be that people just have very different accounts of similar phenomena.

Since one enabling objective is to gain multiple perspectives from research participants, I view any ‘untidiness’ resulting from my attempts to triangulate data in a positive light. Indeed, this is where the autoethnographic elements of my methodology merge with critical pedagogy, enabling the student voice to come to the fore. In an earlier paper (2008), Denscombe considers mixed methods as ‘the third paradigm for research’ alongside its qualitative and quantitative counterparts, advocating its flexibility for use in CoP and stating that ‘membership of the communities of practice is open to change. The chances are that there will be some movement between communities’ (ibid: 278). While Denscombe’s work relates to groups of researchers working jointly on projects, I consider his view to be pertinent, given my own collaboration both as an insider and outsider within various CoP and given that, as the research has progressed, membership of participant groups has sometimes become unpredictable.

### **2.3 Research design**

In this section, I outline the overall structure and timescale of the research study, provide details about the participants involved, discuss ethical considerations, summarise my approaches to data analysis with reference to Hawthorne and halo effects, and describe methods employed, whilst explaining the rationale behind my decision-making.

#### **Structure of the research: projects and timescale**

A decision was taken to divide the research into three subdivided projects (with seven components), which were preceded by a Pilot study, as shown in Table 6, below. The Pilot study took place in April 2019, with the main projects proceeding through to 2021. Since the projects were numerically aligned to the research sub-questions, it is worth revisiting these questions at this point:

- 1) What are the main challenges faced by the conservatoire sector in preparing students for careers in instrumental teaching?
- 2) How do undergraduate conservatoire students assimilate the unfamiliar as they learn how to teach and facilitate music-making?
- 3) In what ways can alumni contribute to the continuing development of curricula and pedagogy in instrumental teacher education?

*Table 6: Numerical alignment of research sub-questions and projects*

	Pilot study
RQ1	Project 1a
	Project 1b
RQ2	Project 2a
	Project 2b
	Project 2c
RQ3	Project 3a
	Project 3b

This numerical ordering of projects did not translate chronologically; rather the data collection was undertaken in an order that seemed most feasible, dependent on the outcomes of preceding projects, with elements of some projects running concurrently, as shown in Table 7 below. Project 1b, for example, had not initially been factored into the research design: it was added once it became apparent that the findings from Project 1a would benefit from a degree of triangulation (see Chapter 2.2). A similar decision was taken regarding Project 3b, where I sensed the need to broaden the range of perspectives, and possibly confirm or contest the findings of my previously undertaken research (Shaw, 2020).

*Table 7: Chronological timescale of data collection*

2019					2020						2021
Apr	May–July	Aug	Sep	Oct–Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar–June	Jul	Aug	Sep–Dec	Jan
Pilot Study	Project 1a		Project 2a (i)		Project 3a	Project 2a (ii)		Project 2c			Project 2b
					Project 1b			Project 3b			

As already noted in Chapter 2.2, some adjustments needed to be made to elements of the research design due to disruption caused by the global pandemic. The original plan was to follow an undergraduate cohort across at least three years of their course, to discover whether and how teaching placements offered in Y3 (and designed to build on core module provision across Y1–2) would impact on students' learning. This would have enabled a longitudinal element to the research that involved 'collecting data about trends [or] changes in a cohort group [...] over time' (Creswell, 2012: 379) to explore the extent to which 'individuals undergo important changes [...] which have a significant effect on their sense of self and identity' (Burland, 2020: 3). However, given that all placement activity was cancelled or compromised in the academic year 2020–21 due to the potential dangers surrounding the COVID-19 virus, I considered that the situation might be just as unpredictable in 2021–22, when the cohort being tracked would reach Y3. Even if I had planned to investigate the impact of online teaching placements on students' development as instrumental teachers in 2021–22, it would have been impossible to predict whether risk assessment requirements would allow such a project to be conducted in a meaningful way. This idea was therefore dismissed, though the potential for pursuing future research into online placements is considered in Chapter 8. Consequently, the decision was made to retain a longitudinal element only across Y1–2 and to seek alternative means of gaining student perspectives on placement activity (see below).

Other considerations influencing the order and timescale of data collection were dependent on whether projects were to be conducted internally or outside RBC, the latter involving additional logistical planning, travel time and access arrangements. Nevertheless, the alignment of projects to research questions enables the chapters of this thesis to unfold in a logical order.

## **Participants**

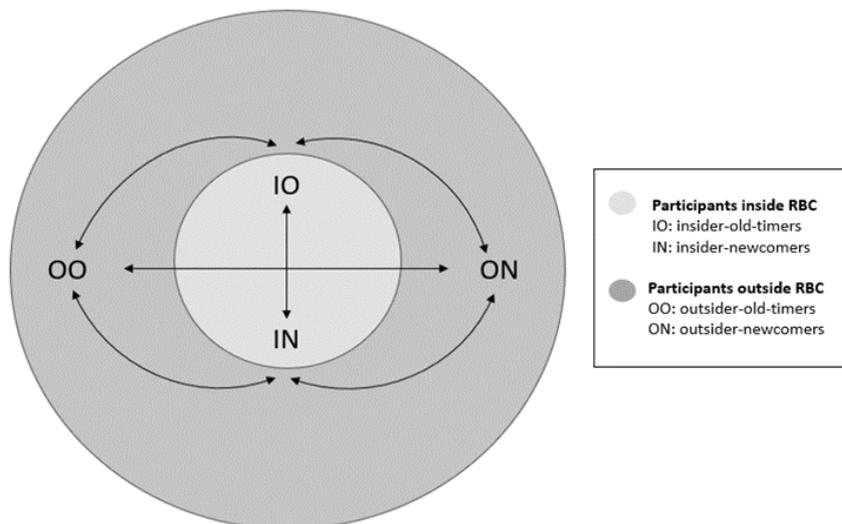
As discussed in Chapter 1.3, learning is influenced by interaction between 'newcomers' and 'old-timers' (Lave and Wenger, 1991: 101). The research participants in the current study constituted a combination of newcomers and old-timers, though not all were affiliated to RBC: some participants were external to the

institution, enabling the gathering of both insider/emic and outsider/etic viewpoints (Reed-Danahay, 2016; Cohen et al., 2018). It was important to gather the perspectives of those people who will be referred to from this point on as ‘outsider-old-timers’ (OO), ‘insider-newcomers’ (IN) and ‘outsider-newcomers’ (ON), in order to place my own ‘insider-old-timer’ (IO) perspectives and biases within a wider research context. The OO participants included seven representatives from across six conservatoires in England (not including RBC) and 66 senior staff/employers from Music Education Hubs (MEHs) in England, who were able to offer insights into the challenges involved in preparing conservatoire students for the instrumental teaching profession. The IN groups comprised a small group of Y4 students, who were due to graduate from RBC in June 2019 (see Chapter 2.4: Pilot study); a large cohort of students who began the BMus or BMus Jazz course in September 2019 (who were offered the opportunity to be involved in the research across Y1–2); and a group of new graduates who were invited to reflect on and share their placement experiences across Y3–4. (Since these participants had only completed their course a month or so earlier, it would have been inappropriate to categorise them as outsiders.) During their course, conservatoire students and new graduates interacted with both IO (staff associated with RBC’s Pedagogy Department) and outsiders, who may have been either OO or ON (visiting music education professionals and mentors in professional settings). For the purposes of this study, RBC alumni were viewed as ON and were amongst those in a position to contribute to students’ learning and to the research more broadly, by bringing insights from their earliest career experiences, post-graduation.

Participants’ insights were combined to both broaden and influence my own perspectives and counter my bias, though as noted in the Introduction (Chapter 0.2), my motivations for undertaking this doctoral research were deeply rooted in my own experiences of working in a conservatoire, and thus embracing bias was appropriate at times (see below). An IONO model has been devised to illustrate the interrelationships between the different participant groups and the potential for the perspectives of each participant group to influence others, either during or beyond the research study (see Figure 8). The arrows here suggest the potential for the research process to influence the practices of the various newcomers and old-timers

participating in the Pilot study and the three ensuing projects, both inside and outside RBC:

Figure 8: IONO model



In placing my research in a wider national context through Project 1, I have been able to mitigate my own bias as an insider–old-timer by seeking and learning from the perspectives of academics in other conservatoires and professionals working within MEHs across a wide geographical area (outsider–old-timers). At the same time, I have embraced my bias by using methods and approaches to questioning that have required outsider–old-timers to reflect on their current practices. Similarly, through Projects 2 and 3, I mitigated against bias by eliciting and reflecting on feedback from students (insider–newcomers) on their learning, and alumni (outsider–newcomers) on their early career experiences in relation to their learning as former students (see Chapter 1.3: Student voice). As will be discussed in Chapter 8, this student feedback, along with insights gained from alumni, offers the potential to inform ongoing course developments within RBC and across the conservatoire sector. Being mindful of this, I have embraced my bias by incorporating data collection tools into module delivery. It is also conceivable that, where alumni and current students have been brought together through this research design, the resultant reciprocal learning opportunities will have informed participants’ continuing

professional development. Table 8, below, clarifies which projects involved insiders, outsiders, newcomers and old-timers (i.e. their IONO status), along with the research context and number of participants involved:

*Table 8: Participants' involvement in projects and their IONO status*

Pilot study	Insider-newcomers (IN)	8 Y4 RBC students BMus 4/Level 6 leavers (2018–19)
Project 1a	Outsider-old-timers (OO)	7 academics in 6 English conservatoires
Project 1b	Outsider-old-timers (OO)	66 employers across 66 Music Education Hubs
Project 2a	Insider-newcomers (IN)	94 Y1 RBC students FHEQ Level 4 (enrolled 2019–20)
Project 2b	Insider-newcomers (IN)	41 Y2 RBC students FHEQ Level 5 (enrolled 2020–21)
Project 2c	Insider-newcomers (IN)	6 former Y4 students (newly graduated 2020)
Project 3a	Outsider-newcomers (ON)	3 alumni (graduated 2017/18/19 respectively)
Project 3b	Outsider-newcomers (ON)	2 alumni-mentors (graduated 2016/17 respectively)

### **Ethical considerations**

According to Cohen et al. (2018: 111), 'ethical issues are not a once-and-for-all matter which can be decided before the research commences [...] they run throughout the entire research process.' Therefore, while I acted in accordance with: BCU's ethical policies and frameworks (2010a; 2010b; 2016); BCU's Privacy Notice for Research Participants (2018); the Concordat to Support Research Integrity (Universities UK, 2012); and the BERA Ethical Guidelines (2018) by adopting a rigorous, transparent and respectful approach throughout my research, I also acknowledged that ethical considerations would evolve continually.

Ethical approval was obtained from the RBC Ethics Committee at least two months before the anticipated start-date for each of the projects outlined above. Prior to every project, a bespoke information sheet and consent form was provided that clarified the voluntary nature of participation and asked participants to respond to

statements that revealed the proposed benefits and potential risks of the research, whilst providing reassurances regarding 'honest reporting' (Creswell, 2012: 279). (A copy of my ethical considerations statement can be found in Appendix A (pp. 1–2), along with sample participant information sheets and consent forms (pp. 3–8), indicative of those used for all projects.) Potential participants were given a minimum period of one week's notice to decide whether they would like to take part in a particular project. More specifically, participants were informed that they had the right not to participate at all, and that, if they did opt to take part, they were at liberty to change their mind or their preferences, or indeed withdraw from the research at any point before data analysis commenced. It was also made clear that, if a consenting participant subsequently lost their capacity to consent or changed their mind during the research, any 'raw' data relating to that participant would be destroyed immediately, though any data that had already been processed, analysed (and anonymised) would be retained. If informed written consent was not obtained, participants' contributions were not included when analysing or presenting data.

Anonymity and confidentiality was ensured when gathering and storing data. For example, permission was always sought in advance for audio recording for transcription purposes, on the understanding that recordings would always be made on an encrypted, password-protected device loaned from BCU, stored securely and confidentially on an encrypted, password-protected hard drive and destroyed on completion of the research. Furthermore, individuals were never identified by name or geographical location during the analysis or reporting stages and were always assigned an alphanumeric code recognisable only by myself as researcher, for use from the point of collation, as shown in Table 9 below. It is worth noting here that, where students participated in both Project 2a and b, the same alphanumeric codes were retained. New alphanumeric codes were allocated to four Project 2b participants who had not previously participated in Project 2a.

*Table 9: Anonymisation of participants throughout the research process*

Project	Participants	Anonymisation
Pilot study	8 Y1 RBC students	S1–8
Project 1a	7 academics in 6 English conservatoires	P1–7
Project 1b	66 employers across 66 Music Education Hubs	H1–66
Project 2a	94 Y1 RBC students (2019–20)	19[instrument code]1–94
Project 2b	41 Y2 RBC students (2020–21)	19[instrument code]1–98
Project 2c	6 former Y4 students (newly graduated 2020)	NG1–6
Project 3a	3 alumni (graduated 2017/18/19 respectively)	A17/A18/A19
Project 3b	2 alumni-mentors (graduated 2016/17 respectively)	M1/M2

With the exception of theoretical sampling (see Chapter 2.2), the intention was to be transparent regarding participant inclusion and exclusion criteria, and to be wholly inclusive within RBC, either by involving the entire student population of a given year group or module (for example, in Project 2a), or by offering the opportunity for all to participate (as in Project 2b), even though full cohort engagement may not have been required. While it was apparent that my research could have had the potential to compromise lecturer–student relationships, and to influence participants’ responses unwittingly, I endeavoured to remain mindful of and sensitive to underlying perceptions of power and authority (Cohen et al., 2018: 136–7). Importantly, it was emphasised to students that participation/non-participation would have no bearing whatsoever on their studies or assessments. I was prepared to receive derogatory comments about my practice and/or that of my RBC colleagues that might affect me psychologically and emotionally, though I believed that any such findings should be seen positively as a vehicle through which to improve and advance practice.

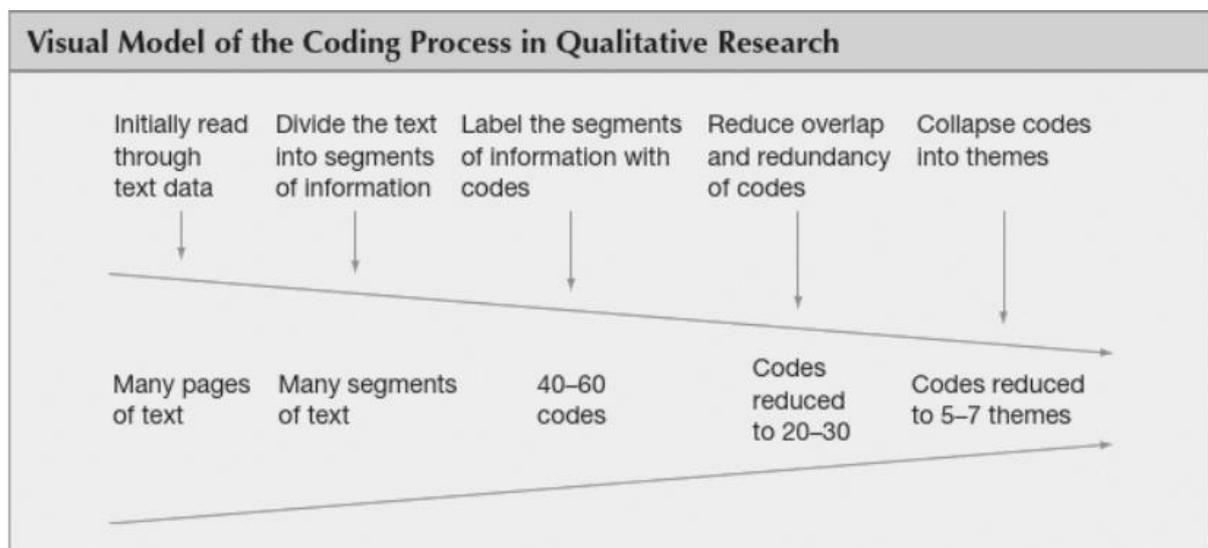
### **Approaches to data analysis**

This brief section outlines my approaches to data analysis prior to the more detailed discussion of the projects below. Further details will then follow in the chapters that

correspond to each project: Chapters 3–4/Project 1; Chapters 5–6/Project 2; Chapter 7/Project 3.

Using Excel, it was possible to undertake statistical calculations and present quantitative data via graphs and charts, though for Project 1b (see below), graphs and charts were automatically generated by the platform through which the survey was conducted: [onlinesurveys.ac.uk](http://onlinesurveys.ac.uk). Thematic analysis (TA) was applied to qualitative data arising from questionnaires, interview/focus-group transcripts, and textual narratives. Where paper-based or online questionnaires had generated qualitative data through open questioning in free-text format, or where blocks of text were provided in narrative form, data were cut and pasted into an Excel spreadsheet prior to facilitate analysis. Where interviews had been manually transcribed from recordings, or where notes from observations had been handwritten during sessions and subsequently typed up, Word documents were imported into computer-assisted data analysis software (NVivo) before analysis commenced. Qualitative data were then analysed line-by-line to identify segments of text that were distinctive from one another in some way. Initially multiple ‘codes’ were applied to these text segments but, subsequently, codes were grouped together and overlapping themes were eliminated to create broad categories or umbrella ‘themes.’ This process is neatly summarised by Creswell, 2012: 244 (see Figure 9):

*Figure 9: Creswell’s summary of the coding process, reproduced from Creswell (2012: 244)*



The approach to TA was, however, also influenced by some principles of discourse analysis (DA). For example, according to Gee (2011a), whether in speech or the written word, it is important to look at what and how something is being expressed, as well as how the communicator identifies themselves within the social setting or culture about which they are speaking or writing. Gee claims that individuals use language to ‘build an identity’ (ibid: 18) and that ‘different identities [...] may seriously conflict with one another’ (ibid: 33). Moreover, the extent to which participants use primary (already familiar) discourses or secondary discourses (previously unfamiliar) (Gee, 2011b: 194) is pertinent (see Chapter 5). Meanwhile parallels may be drawn with Wenger’s (2018) social theory of learning, CoP and the application of Bourdieu’s conceptual tools, as discussed in Chapter 1.3.

### **Hawthorne and halo effects**

When gathering, collating and analysing data, I was mindful of the Hawthorne effect (also known as observer effect) and the fact that participants ‘may wish to avoid, impress, direct, deny or influence’ me and/or my research (Cohen et al., 2018: 321). According to Denscombe (2014: 70), ‘When humans become aware that they are the focus of attention for research, there is the very real possibility that they will act differently from normal.’ Participants may feel self-conscious or anxious due to their behaviour or opinions being placed under scrutiny. Alternatively, Denscombe argues, the ‘halo effect’ may occur if participants

enjoy being in the limelight and respond accordingly with enthusiasm and motivation that would not have existed if they had not realized they were the subject of special attention [...] They might [even] try to help the researcher by doing what they think is expected of them, or they might try to do the opposite. These are *self-fulfilling prophecies* that can result from the knowledge which participants have (or believe they have) about what the [research] is trying to achieve.

Across Projects 1–3, every attempt was made to mitigate observer effects by ensuring that the participant information distributed at the ethical approval stage comprised neutral statements that did not attempt to persuade or influence

participants in any particular direction. Similarly, caution was exerted when formulating questionnaires and interview schedules, to ensure that leading questions were avoided and that, during interviews and focus groups, my input was minimal, to lessen the tendency for participants to tell me what they thought I wanted to hear. Furthermore, during observation (see Project 3a below), I was aware that the recent graduates might experience feelings of mild pressure in front of their former lecturer; thus, I took steps to help them feel at ease. As noted below, where the textual narratives (Project 2a and b) were concerned, I distanced myself from the participants and played no part in their formal assessment, though it was still possible that the tone of written comments might have influenced those who did assess their submissions.

### **Summary of projects and research methods**

The projects and research methods selected for each (questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, observations and textual narratives) will now be summarised in turn.

#### ***Pilot study (Y4 students: 2019)***

In April 2019, a questionnaire, intended for distribution in a face-to-face setting to initiate Project 2a (see below), was piloted by Y4 students who offered feedback subsequently on the questionnaire design by participating in a focus-group discussion. Alongside feedback data, information was gathered about students' evolving career aspirations across their four-year course (September 2015–June 2019) and their perspectives on their development as musicians and music educators during that period. Incorporating student feedback and insights at this early stage not only informed the design of the eventual questionnaire distributed to Y1 students in September 2019, but also the broader direction of the research study.

When selecting questionnaires as a method of data collection, I was aware that they are 'fiendishly difficult to design' and that doing so 'requires discipline' (Bell, 2010: 26). It was important, therefore, to plan carefully to factor in sufficient time, not only to write questions, but to ensure that none were misleading or ambiguous to the reader. I was mindful of the need to exclude compound or leading questions and to avoid those of a sensitive nature. It was also crucial to consider the order of

questions, since 'early questions set the tone or the mindset of the respondent to later questions' (Cohen et al., 2018: 492). Moreover, the layout and overall appearance of the questionnaire needed to be kept as uncomplicated as possible with clear instructions, especially since a free-text format was chosen to elicit open responses, alongside a variety of question types to maintain participant interest, including multiple choice, tick box, circle preference, Likert-scale and open questions designed to elicit qualitative data. Thus, whilst focused on the demands of the participants (Cohen et al. (2018: 473–4), the questionnaire was planned with data analysis in mind since 'much of the research on respondent burden has focused on interview length and has generally found that longer surveys result in lower response rates' (Porter et al., 2004: 64). The Pilot study also offered a means of checking that the questionnaire could be completed within 15 minutes, thus reducing the risk of survey fatigue.

Since the Pilot study was intended partly as a practical exercise to test the questionnaire mechanics and to check for any stylistic or structural ambiguities, it was not an issue that responses from students with several years' experience of conservatoire training might be different from those of Y1 students completely new to a conservatoire environment. That Y4 students' memories of former career aspirations and attitudes to learning might not be completely reliable four years on was an acknowledged risk. A good working relationship had been cultivated with students on the Y4 Further Pedagogy module through interactive teaching approaches, so I anticipated that frank, honest feedback would be given, and that this cohort would not be afraid to question anything deemed anomalous.

Upon gaining informed consent from eight students, I issued an invitation for them to attend an hour-long session during which they would complete the questionnaire and contribute to a focus-group discussion. Five students returned the questionnaire by email (as they were unable to attend the session in person) and three students completed the questionnaire in my presence before participating in the ensuing discussion. Qualitative and quantitative data from the eight completed questionnaires were manually collated and analysed. With participants' permission, and in accordance with university ethical requirements, the focus-group discussion was

recorded on a password-protected, encrypted audio device (a practice adopted across all interviews and focus groups, detailed above) and the recording was subsequently transcribed to facilitate thematic analysis without the use of software. Bell (2010: 165) states that 'focus groups can be structured, where there are pre-prepared questions and checklists, or completely unstructured, where the intervention of the researcher is minimal.' The latter approach was chosen here to maintain an open mind and allow participants to speak freely. Consequently, the data gathered from the focus group was much richer than originally anticipated since participants did not merely offer feedback on questionnaire design. The nature of the questions in the questionnaire led individuals to reflect deeply on their experiences, not only during their course, but prior to commencing their studies at RBC. The current chapter culminates in a discussion of the key findings from the Pilot study (see Chapter 2.4).

### ***Project 1***

#### *a) Interviews with academics in six conservatoires in England*

Project 1a took the form of a cross-sectional study which, through an initial 'snapshot' (Cohen et al., 2018: 349), aimed to 'examine current attitudes, beliefs, opinions or practices' in conservatoires other than RBC (Creswell, 2012: 37). To inform research question 1, academics at other institutions were interviewed regarding their provision of instrumental teacher education to acquire a far clearer picture than had been possible through internet searching alone (see Introduction). This initial stage served as context for the overall study and its emergent methodologies. Interviews were used since it seemed that questionnaires would limit the obtainable data. The approach here was congruent with that of Bell (2010: 161), for whom interviews offer more adaptability than questionnaires and enable the interviewer to

follow up ideas, probe responses, investigate motives and feelings, which the questionnaire can never do. The way in which a response is made (the tone of voice, facial expression, hesitation, and so on) can provide information that a written response would conceal. Questionnaire responses have to be taken at face value, but a response in an interview can be developed and clarified.

The interview schedule was designed according to the recommendations of Cohen et al. (2018: 506–26), whereby questions adequately reflect the intended aims and are designed to put the interviewee at ease, whilst avoiding prejudicial language, assumptions, leading or compound questions. These interviews were semi-structured, with careful use of prompts and probes to encourage participants to elaborate where they felt comfortable in doing so. Initial piloting of the interview meant that the ensuing feedback could be used to further refine the questions, where necessary, prior to carrying out the actual interviews. It was apparent that interviews could be time-consuming, especially where it was necessary to travel to the informants. However, it seemed important to ensure that participants felt as comfortable as possible during the interviews and were not inconvenienced themselves; thus it was always the participants' choice as to where the interview should take place. Interviews were transcribed in full, which is a time-consuming process; for example, the transcription process for a one-hour interview would take approximately six hours. However, the time taken to do this proved to be advantageous, enabling my close engagement with the data in preparation for undertaking thematic analysis. According to Grbich (2013: 53) 'living with the data' and revisiting it over time can be beneficial in enabling the researcher to 'see [...] pattern[s] [they] have not seen before'. Extracts from transcriptions imported in NVivo and the subsequent coding process can be found in Appendix C, pp. 18–21.

*b) Employer perspectives via an online questionnaire*

While Project 1a aimed to seek insights into the challenges faced by conservatoires in preparing students for careers in instrumental and vocal teaching, the perspectives offered focused mainly on the concerns of staff and students. It was therefore necessary to triangulate the data with further research that investigated the issues from the perspective of employers, who had first-hand experience of interviewing and employing recent conservatoire graduates (defined in the study as those who had completed a first degree within the year prior to their employment). In order to gain insight into employers' perceptions of instrumental teacher education in conservatoires and their views on the extent to which conservatoires were addressing the challenges in meeting the needs of employers and the music

education workforce, contact was initiated with as many senior staff representatives (for example, heads or their deputies) as possible across all MEHs in England.

Since it was necessary to gather quantitative and qualitative information from many respondents, an online questionnaire seemed the most appropriate method, especially since undertaking multiple interviews would be impractical due to time, geographical and financial constraints. The questionnaire was devised using a General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) compliant online survey tool designed for academic research: [onlinesurveys.ac.uk](https://onlinesurveys.ac.uk) to protect participants' sensitive data (BERA, 2018: 24) and contact details were obtained from both a public domain website ([arts council.org.uk](https://arts council.org.uk)) and individual hub/music service websites. When the questionnaire was launched (January 2020), 122 music hubs were listed on a downloadable 'Arts Council England Music Education Hubs Contact Details' document ([arts council.org.uk](https://arts council.org.uk)) and the questionnaire was distributed by email to all these contacts.

Again, the questionnaire design followed recommendations of Bell (2010) and Cohen et al. (2018) as outlined above. Question types were restricted to multiple choice, tick box and open questions, with a free-text format adopted for the latter. Participants were asked to provide minimal personal details, including their name, the hub they represented and their position within that hub, though it was made clear that this information was for administrative purposes only. Subsequent questions aimed to elicit responses regarding the recruitment by hubs/music services of recent conservatoire graduates, including the areas within which such employees would be required to teach, and any particular challenges faced by new teachers in working for their hub/music service. Employers were also asked whether they had ever been invited to contribute to course development and/or delivery in conservatoires; whether they would be interested in doing so in future; and what they would recommend such courses should cover to ensure that graduates were suitably prepared for careers in instrumental teaching.

As already noted in Ethical considerations, it was made clear in advance that the data would be stored securely and confidentially, destroyed upon completion of the

doctoral study and that participants' anonymity would be preserved throughout the reporting process. At the end of the questionnaire, participants had the option to provide contact details for clarification purposes and/or further correspondence, but it was emphasised that doing so was not compulsory. Weekly reminders sent by email proved successful in communicating the value of participants' contributions and 66 questionnaires were returned by the deadline in February 2020, a response rate of 54%. On return of questionnaires, data were collated into an Excel spreadsheet, and an alphanumeric code was allocated to each participant for identification purposes before analysis commenced. A copy of the questionnaire and screenshot samples of the Excel spreadsheet used for the coding of the qualitative data can be found in Appendix C, pp. 22–8.

### ***Project 2***

In contrast to Project 1a and b, which looked outside RBC, Project 2 had an internal focus, with its three sub-projects forming the basis of an ethnographic case study within RBC. As noted in the Introduction (Table 2), RBC had reviewed its undergraduate courses in 2017–18. Consequently, 2019 proved an ideal time to research the constituent instrumental teacher education elements, since two new core modules (updated and extended versions of former Y2 and 3 modules) were rolled out in September 2019 and September 2020 as Y1 and Y2 modules respectively. A focus upon these core modules enabled the retention of a longitudinal element to the research despite the restrictions posed by the pandemic, allowing my investigation of changes in a single cohort 'over time and in different settings' (Creswell, 2012: 39). A sample from a separate cohort was then selected to investigate experiences across Y3–4 (see below).

Across Project 2, the aim was to discover how students assimilated prior/external and cumulative musical and educational experiences from a variety of social contexts as they learned how to teach and facilitate music-making in other individuals and groups. A mixed-methods approach was employed here, involving questionnaires, textual narratives, observations and interviews. The three constituent parts of Project 2 (a, b and c) are discussed in turn below.

*a) Questionnaires and textual narratives (Y1 students: 2019–20)*

The questionnaire, piloted in April 2019 (see above) to gain valuable feedback on length, clarity, content and layout prior to distribution (Bell, 2010: 151) was adjusted subsequently and distributed to new BMus 1 students during 'Welcome Week' (September 2019) to initiate Project 2a. The aim here was to gain insight into Y1 students' musical backgrounds; any previous experience they might have had of supporting the learning of young musicians prior to commencing their study at RBC; and their future career aspirations. Of a possible 134 students, 95 attended the Welcome Week session.

Unlike the online questionnaire used in Project 1b, a paper-based questionnaire was introduced and distributed in a face-to-face setting. However, while Cohen et al. (2018: 502) state that the presence of the researcher during questionnaire completion 'can be helpful in enabling any queries or uncertainties to be addressed immediately', they also argue that 'it may be threatening and exert a sense of compulsion [...]. Respondents may want extra time to think about it'. These opposing perspectives were taken into account, though it was decided that the benefits of a verbal introduction to the questionnaire that aimed to encourage students to become involved and engaged in the research study outweighed the negative aspects. Furthermore, allowing students time to complete the questionnaire outside the lecture room would have involved an element of risk and it was my ethical responsibility to guard against students' personal data potentially going astray. Ultimately, a balance was achieved by my introducing the questionnaire, inviting any queries and then stepping back from the situation and delegating collection of the forms to the module leader on my behalf. Consequently, from the 95 students attending the session, some 94 completed questionnaires were handed in.

A second element of Project 2a involved analysis of written narratives that had originally been submitted for assessment by Y1 students towards the end of their Community Engagement module. According to Riessman (1993), the moment we experience something, we reflect through stories or narratives: indeed, these personal narratives are an inherent part of our everyday experiences. Written narratives were employed in Project 2a (and later in 2b) where it was necessary to

gather reflective accounts on the learning experiences of many participants across a cohort. Such an approach is reminiscent of that adopted by Burland and Pitts (2007), who used diaries (alongside questionnaires and in-class tasks) to ascertain first-year university students' attitudes to learning. Questionnaires would not have been appropriate at this point in the current doctoral study, however, due to their limited capacity to obtain large amounts of qualitative data. Interviews were also disregarded since the large numbers of participants would have rendered them both time-consuming and logistically challenging, if not impossible, to organise and administer. Therefore, consent was gained in advance from participants to use written reflections, submitted for assessment, as data. While textual narratives submitted for assessment might aim to impress the 'audience' and therefore present skewed perspectives (see Hawthorne and halo effects above), it should be noted that (other than an initial meeting to introduce the Project 2a questionnaire in September 2019) I had no direct contact with participants, and the fact that I would have no involvement in assessing their work was made clear from the outset. The only potential influence on this aspect of the study was my design of the prompt questions, which I asked the module leader to approve prior to distribution to students. A copy of the questionnaire and samples of quantitative and qualitative data analysis (including supplementary graphs and charts not included in Volume 1 and initial coding of textual narratives) can be found in Appendix D, pp. 29–36.

*b) Textual narratives (Y2 students: 2020–21)*

The BMus cohort which contributed to Project 2a during Y1 was invited to participate in Project 2b during their subsequent Y2. One aim behind this strategy was to discover whether and how students' learning had evolved from engaging with a second core pedagogy module. This Y2 module was mostly taught online via a combination of departmental and whole-year classes, since it could not be taught wholly in-person due to health and safety measures imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Another specific aim here was to explore the extent to which students could recognise connections between the different aspects of the conservatoire curriculum and acknowledge the relevance of these to their potential careers as music educators, thus linking with notions of hidden curriculum (Pitts, 2003; Haddon, 2012) and invisible pedagogy (Bernstein, 1975) discussed in Chapter 1.3. As in the

second part of Project 2a, Project 2b involved textual narratives. Once again, the prompt questions that would be used to elicit written reflections of up to 500 words were agreed with the module leader, who was asked to introduce the reflective task to students on my behalf, thus reducing researcher influence. Unlike the written component of Project 2a, the reflective task (submitted in January 2021) was formative and did not count towards a final assessment mark, though this would not necessarily have ruled out the Hawthorne effect (Denscombe, 2014: 70; Cohen et al., 2018: 321). Screenshot samples of the Excel spreadsheet used for data collation and analysis of the Y2 textual narratives can be viewed in Appendix D, pp. 37–42.

*c) Interviews (new graduates: summer 2020)*

As noted above, it was originally planned to follow the same undergraduate cohort across at least three years of their course to discover how placement involvement further impacted their learning as developing instrumental teachers. However, the pandemic forced the change to different participants who could offer similar insights, and to conducting the interviews online. According to Maddox (2020: 6), online interviews are different from in-person interviews in two key ways: firstly, ‘the role of the technology in facilitating real-time co-presence and interactivity’, and secondly, ‘the approach the interviewer takes to build rapport and curate the conversation’. The interviews with new graduates were conducted using the online platform Microsoft Teams, partly because of institutional recommendation for security reasons, but also because I was experienced in using this platform and was confident that it would enable ‘audio-visual interactivity’ (ibid). Furthermore, conducting interviews in this way also enabled as similar an experience as possible to that of an in-person interview, given that by July 2020, the participants had gained several months’ experience of communicating via this, or similar online platforms, as a result of the pandemic. Maddox (ibid: 6) also recommends that

Live interviews allow for the interviewer to seek clarification and follow threads of the conversation. They also allow for the ability of the interviewer to check that they understand the meaning of what the participant has said. Online interviews mean that you can conduct a real time interview, with another

person, in a conversational format, but be in different spatial locations and contexts.

As I knew participants well, I was confident that it would not be difficult to build a rapport online. However, as previously noted, one should be mindful that no matter how open and friendly the staff–new graduate relationship, it would be impossible to identify the extent to which underlying notions of authority and power (Cohen et al., 2018: 136–7) might still influence participants’ responses. Therefore, once again, both Hawthorne and halo effects could come into play (Denscombe, 2014: 70). It was highly desirable that participants should feel valued as equal partners in the research and confident in recalling information during the interview itself. To this end, a proforma was distributed to be completed in advance (see Appendix D, p. 43). The intention behind this was to assist participants in preparing for the interview by listing the placements they had participated in across Y3–4 and recalling the activities they had undertaken.

As with the in-person interviews discussed for Project 1a, a semi-structured approach was adopted, with a set list of questions formulated, whilst some deviation from these was enabled whereby participants chose to elaborate on matters of particular interest to them (see Chapter 6.1 for a specific list of questions). In order to ensure the security of the collected data, the material was not recorded in the Microsoft Teams app: instead, an encrypted recording device was used to facilitate the subsequent manual transcription process. In addition to the proforma referred to above, Appendix D (pp. 44–9) also includes illustrations of the stages of data analysis undertaken in Excel.

### **Project 3**

#### *a) Contextual observation and focus-group discussion (alumni: early 2020)*

Project 3 was concerned with the early career perspectives and experiences of RBC alumni, with the potential for the insights gained to influence current Y4 students and contribute to curriculum delivery at RBC: thus, this project had both an insider/emic and outsider/etic focus. Recent graduates (across 2017–19), who studied RBC’s Further Pedagogy module in their final year, were invited to return to RBC and

contribute to an instrumental teacher training workshop for students enrolled on the same module during January 2020. At that time, all participating graduates were working as music educators (for example, instrumental or vocal teaching, ensemble coaching/conducting and music workshop leading). Due to their relatively recent graduation dates and the way in which a conservatoire operates (with instrumental departments bringing multiple year groups together to collaborate daily alongside supporting academic activity in interdisciplinary groups), all three alumni were known to current students and could act as relatable role models.

The intention was that I would observe the alumni-led workshop to provide context for an ensuing alumni-led focus-group discussion, keeping an open mind in order to learn about recent graduates' early career experiences and to discover the extent to which they considered that their conservatoire studies prepared them for working in the music education field, particularly as instrumental/vocal teachers. According to Robson (2016: 321), observation can be used as part of 'an exploratory phase, typically in an unstructured form' to find out what is going on in a particular situation. Meanwhile, Creswell (2012: 214) outlines the difference between participatory observation where the researcher takes part in the activities in the setting they observe, and non-participatory observation where the researcher records what they see and hear, but without becoming actively involved. As detailed in Chapter 7.2, a non-participatory stance was adopted here, so enabling an alumni-led approach. However, in order to reduce any sense of power relations, it was suggested that the alumni participants choose the room layout themselves.

The workshop was followed by a focus group (without Y4 students present) in which I facilitated further discussion among the alumni to explore the issues arising from the workshop. This method was chosen for Project 3a because group discussion was deemed more appropriate than one-to-one interviews. In contrast to the Pilot study focus group, a 'half-way house' route was employed here in relation to Bell's (2010: 165) advice, adopting a semi-structured approach, whereby questions were prepared in advance and only used as pointers where the conversation might have otherwise veered off track in the limited time available. This method seemed highly appropriate given that the aim was to have participants 'interact with each other [...]

be willing to listen to all views [...] and give a good airing to the issues which seem[ed] to be interesting or important to them' (ibid: 166). Whilst transcribing the focus-group interviews was challenging, my familiarity with the participants meant that distinguishing one voice from another did not pose a problem during the transcription process. Samples of data imported into NVivo, along with an illustration of the coding process, aided by manual annotations, are located in Appendix E, pp. 51–3.

*b) Interviews (alumni-mentors: summer 2020)*

This sub-project was undertaken during the COVID-19 pandemic. Consequently, a similar approach to gathering data to that of Project 2c was adopted (via semi-structured interviews on the Microsoft Teams online platform) with similar protocols pertaining to recording (using an encrypted device as opposed to the app itself). When selecting participants, specific alumni who had gained experience of mentoring RBC students in educational contexts since graduating were approached. According to Robson and McCartan (2016: 163), 'within grounded theory, this type of purposive sampling (also referred to as theoretical sampling above) is where 'the persons interviewed [...] are chosen to help the researcher formulate theory'. Of three potential participants, two responded to an initial communication and subsequently agreed to participate. As with the Project 2c participants, the two alumni-mentors knew me well from their time as RBC students. Equally, they had become familiar with using Microsoft Teams as a platform for their teaching during the pandemic. This meant that the interview process was relatively straightforward, though, again, care was taken not to ask leading questions that might cause participants to say what they thought I might want to hear. In fact, both alumni were given the freedom to lead the discussion wherever appropriate, whilst certain parameters were retained via a list of questions common to both interviews. Exemplar extracts from the transcriptions imported into NVivo can be found in Appendix E (pp. 54–5), along with an illustration of the coding process.

## 2.4 Key findings of the Pilot study

### Questionnaire and focus group

As discussed in Chapter 2.3, in April 2019, Y4 students were invited to pilot a paper-based questionnaire, which was then used in September 2019 to gain insight into new Y1 students' musical backgrounds, any previous experience of supporting the learning of young musicians prior to commencing study at RBC and their career aspirations. Data provided by eight Y4 students (anonymised as S1–8) were manually collated in Excel to produce graphic and tabular representations (see Appendix B, pp. 11–12 for examples). With participants' permission, a subsequent focus-group discussion (attended by three students) was recorded and transcribed afterwards as per the protocols outlined above (see Ethical considerations). As several weeks elapsed between hosting the focus-group discussion and transcribing the data, it was necessary to read the transcript multiple times in order to refresh my memory of the discussion and to gain a deeper insight into the issues discussed. Throughout this first pass over the material, I highlighted words and phrases that I considered particularly interesting and added memos (Denscombe, 2014: 285; Cohen et al. 2018: 718) as a means of recording my personal responses to particular comments. The entire transcript was then cut and pasted into an Excel spreadsheet. From this point, I adopted a more systematic approach, reading through each line of text and assigning a new code each time I encountered a 'shade of opinion, an instance of the use of a particular word or expression or an implied meaning or sentiment' (Denscombe, 1984: 286). Subsequently, in order that themes could emerge from the data itself, I collated all codes in the spreadsheet, checked for and eliminated overlapping codes, and grouped related codes together into categories to create sub-themes. These sub-themes were then grouped within the overarching themes, Aspiration (Prejudice), Exploration (Uncertainty) and Transformation (Passion) as shown in Table 10.

An extract of the annotated transcript of the focus-group discussion can be found in Appendix B (pp. 13–14), along with screenshots of Excel file samples to illustrate the TA process (pp. 15–17). The key findings of this initial questionnaire and resulting feedback on questionnaire design are presented below. They are followed by the

focus-group findings that comprise three students' reflections on their musical training, both during their course and prior to attending RBC.

*Table 10: Pilot study – summary of themes*

<b>Overarching themes</b>	<b>Sub-themes</b>
Aspiration (Prejudice)	Solo career regarded as priority (a dream) Excitement regarding desire to be a performer Performance the only thing students knew (lack of awareness of other career pathways) Teaching viewed as a completely different skillset from performance Lack of understanding regarding importance of developing wider skillset In your own head (egocentric) Stigma – teachers are failed musicians Divide between musician and teacher/teaching not a respected career Awareness of pedagogical ideas depends on cultural background/former teacher Teaching can depend on the sort of teaching you have seen
Exploration (Uncertainty)	Reality check (needs to be delivered sensitively) Consider what constitutes success as a musician Keep an open mind (maturity) Play to your strengths (acknowledge transferable skills) Unsure what kind of career may lie ahead Come to appreciate what you can do with your love for music (other than performance) A need rather than a desire to explore teaching Teaching can depend on the sort of teaching you have seen
Transformation (Passion)	Changed expectation of success and what that means Clearer understanding of possible career avenues A passion for teaching - no longer a 'Plan B' Pleasurable to see learners make progress Changed career outlook A need to create a sustainable system for music education Teaching can depend on the sort of teaching you have seen
Competition (Collaboration)	Have to 'be the best' to be a solo musician Students compare themselves to other students Recognition of need for diligence, effort and teamwork Doors start to open/opportunities arise

The questionnaire revealed that a combination of school-based and extra curricula activity, involving instrumental or vocal lessons and ensemble music-making in the Western Classical tradition, was common to all participants' experience, irrespective of cultural background. Interestingly, six respondents reported experience of supporting the learning of young people in various settings prior to commencing their own studies at RBC, as shown in Table 11:

*Table 11: Pilot study participants' experiences of supporting the learning of young people (pre- RBC)*

Activity	Participants							
	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8
Helping out in a local school			1				1	
Volunteering in an educational setting, e.g., Duke of Edinburgh				1				1
Instrumental/vocal teaching	1	1		1				
Supporting younger players in an ensemble/choir			1	1				
Leading or assisting with music workshops			1				1	

The responses recorded in Table 12, below, revealed several points of interest, in no particular order of significance:

- There was no change in career aspirations for participants S1, S2, S3 and S6, though the latter proved to be an interesting case (detailed below).
- Classroom teaching appeared in all participants' rankings at the end of the course, having previously not been included amongst the start of course choices for participants S4, S5 and S7.
- Participants S4, S5 and S7 also included workshop leadership in their rankings at the end of the course, having not considered this as a potential career goal at the beginning.
- Performance did not feature as a career goal at all for participants S1 and S3.
- By the end of the course, performance (in any form) did not feature in the career plans of participant S4, despite solo performance having been ranked as number 1 in Y1, though there was an indication that they would seek to continue to 'enjoy [...] music-making' through informal performances as part of a future teaching role.

- Of the four participants who reported a change of career aspiration, solo performance had reduced in priority by the end of their course, whilst instrumental teaching featured more prominently at the end than it had at the beginning.

*Table 12: Pilot study participants' career aspirations (original and current)*

<b>Original career aspirations (beginning of course)</b>								
<b>Participants</b>	<b>S1</b>	<b>S2</b>	<b>S3</b>	<b>S4</b>	<b>S5</b>	<b>S6</b>	<b>S7</b>	<b>S8</b>
solo performer				1	3	1		1
chamber musician		4						2
orchestral musician					1		1	
composer							2	
conductor							3	
instrumental/vocal teacher	3	1	3	3		2		3
classroom teacher	1	3	4			3		5
music workshop leader	2	2	1			4		
arts administrator		5					5	
music therapist			2	2			4	
recording/sound engineer					2			
non-musical career						5		4
other								
<b>Current career aspirations (end of course)</b>								
<b>Participants</b>	<b>S1</b>	<b>S2</b>	<b>S3</b>	<b>S4</b>	<b>S5</b>	<b>S6</b>	<b>S7</b>	<b>S8</b>
solo performer						1		3
chamber musician		4			3			1
orchestral musician					1			
composer								
conductor							1	
instrumental/vocal teacher	3	1	3	2	2	2	3	2
classroom teacher	1	3	4	1	4	3	5	4
music workshop leader	2	2	1	4	5	4	4	
arts administrator		5					2	
music therapist			2	3		5		
recording/sound engineer								
non-musical career								5
other								
<b>Have career aspirations changed?</b>	NO	NO	NO	YES	YES	NO*	YES	YES

## Participant feedback on questionnaire design

When compiling the Pilot study questionnaire, it had been apparent that requiring participants to rank their career goals in numerical order would have its limitations and could not give a complete picture of participants' experience, partly because 'change' is a multi-faceted term, and partly because despite my attempts to limit survey fatigue, there could be no guarantee that participants would give due consideration to all questions. Participant S8 warned against this: *'reading all this information, they might not think too much about it'*. Interestingly, it became clear that, in Y1, not all participants had been sure what they wanted to do in the future, but that by Y4 they had reached a decision. Inevitably, maturation processes would have played a part here, but students attributed their ability to make decisions about their future careers to their learning environment: *'it is the way the course has been set up to give opportunities to explore so many different options that allowed me to make that decision'* (S2). On a related note, participant S6 offered an insightful perspective, suggesting that the questionnaire could not 'reflect the actual transformation that has happened' since students might still have the same aspirations as they did in Y1, but could nonetheless since have developed a different outlook towards them:

*My outlook has very much changed, but the order of things that I would want to pursue things: the solo performer, vocal teacher, classroom teacher, music leader [...] they are pretty much in the same order. But I [now] have a different expectation, level of excitement, talent and understanding of what's achievable* (S6).

While the ranking order style questioning could still be appropriate for Y1 students, participant feedback affirmed the necessity to gather qualitative data by additional means as the cohort progressed through their course (for example, focus groups, observations and textual narratives), in order to evaluate students' changing attitudes and ambitions. All three focus-group participants recommended that the questionnaire might aim to elicit further information about participants' musical backgrounds, for instance, the specific nature of the instrumental music training students had received prior to coming to RBC. It was also suggested that it could be

important to enquire which aspects of the course new Y1 students were particularly looking forward to studying.

### **Focus-group participants' broader reflections on their musical training**

The questionnaire led the three respondents who participated in the focus group (anonymised as S5, S6, and S8 through the ensuing discussion) to reflect deeply on their experiences, not only during their course, but prior to commencing their studies at RBC. Coincidentally, all three students had been educated previously in Eastern-European countries, and this revealed intriguing cultural insights about their personal learning experiences, and the people they had been influenced by (for example, peers and teachers, both former and current). Indeed, participants' perspectives resonated with Bourdieu's interrelated theoretical concepts of habitus, capital and field (see Chapter 1.3). Thematic analysis of the focus-group transcript in Excel (see Appendix B, pp. 15–17 for an extract) generated three primary themes (aspiration, exploration and transformation) that are juxtaposed respectively with three secondary themes (prejudice, uncertainty and passion) in the ensuing discussion.

#### **Aspiration (Prejudice)**

According to Wright (2016: 13), Bourdieu 'claimed that habitus is subconscious and determines things such as [...] aspiration.' This notion is pertinent since the focus-group discussion revealed that there may be underlying prejudices influencing students' outlook and career aspirations when they commenced their undergraduate training, creating a tendency to hold onto familiar cultural beliefs and attitudes. For each student, it appeared that their desire to be a performer was synonymous with needing to 'be the best', a perception that resonates with the personality characteristic: 'perfectionistic self-representation' explored by Hill, et al. (2020). There was a certain naïvety present at the start of participants' studies, such that the concept of developing a broad skill set (beyond performance) seemed completely unfamiliar to them. Instead, there was an evident lack of respect for teaching as a worthwhile profession.

*In Eastern Europe, there's a stigma that if you're a teacher you're a failed musician [...]. I don't think about it that way anymore, but before I thought that*

*if I just became a music teacher then I was just not very good at [performing]. For me, this country has a very different outlook on teaching. [In my country] it's not very well respected [...] so when you come to conservatoire and you see that people can specialise in certain things and that they are actually experts at what they do [...] you think [...] there's someone who's a teacher and who's a legend [...]. So how you see teaching can depend on what sort of teaching you've seen (S6).*

Participant S8 attributed the desire to be a concert musician as being '*the only thing that [they] knew*' upon commencing their studies in Y1, and suggested that, where students '*come with that dream, then they don't want to do all the [academic] work that is going to be necessary and [...] might not really understand the importance of [it] until they walk out of these doors*'. Participant S5 concurred: '*If you have a certain background, then you're not even aware of [...] pedagogical ideas [such as] improvising [...] and the importance of practising sight-reading.*'

### **Exploration (Uncertainty)**

In light of the viewpoints above, it is pertinent that, according to Wright (2015: 84), 'the conditions an individual meets in the social space or field are vital to whether the habitus is confirmed or replicated, or confronted and disrupted'. It was clear that the focus-group participants' perceptions of 'success' and what it meant to be a musician changed during their course, creating feelings of uncertainty. Indeed, it was revealing to hear the students' reactions in dealing with their original hopes and dreams being brought into question.

*When you come to the Conservatoire, there's a reality check [...] but then as you become more open minded about your possibilities [...] doors start to open and opportunities will arise [so] you need to be able to [...] play to your strengths [and] look out for skills that could be useful (S8).*

In the current study, participants mostly felt that the 'reality check' was delivered by performance staff, and thus Porton's study (2020: 86) of 20 alumni, as interviewed across eight UK conservatoires, is pertinent: 'The principal study teacher was

typically seen as the most influential regarding personal development and identity and was also considered the “most important” across the discourse. However, the head of department was typically viewed as the most powerful [figure] in relation to “success” within the conservatoire.’ Congruent with this stance, especially given the power relations involved, participant S6 warned that heads of departments and principal study tutors should handle students’ emotions sensitively when giving out this ‘reality check’:

*You come here and you’re pretty good. I mean, you’re in a conservatoire, and they go, ‘well actually you’re not gonna make it. You’re gonna have to explore these other things as well and that’s also success [...]. If you’re eighteen, that’s not very nice [...]. You’ve got four years to come to that conclusion, so first year is perhaps a bit too early to have that reality check I think [...]. You come here with all this expectation to be really good and then think ‘well actually, it’s probably not going to happen’. And if you insist, then they [say] ‘you’re being unrealistic’. So there needs to be a balance of making people understand that there are other options, but not necessarily taking away from their excitement of wanting to be an excellent solo performer (S6).*

The above view relates to Porton’s finding (2020: 82) that, of those 20 conservatoire alumni interviewed, over half ‘considered that conservatoire students were commonly pigeon-holed into possessing/not possessing certain musical talents [and that] once decisions regarding talent had been made, it was perceived as extremely difficult for this assessment to be readdressed’. Participant S8 also expressed frustration with such a practice: *‘There’s this belief that there are people who can [perform] and then there are people who just can’t.’* This ‘belief’ is concerning,<sup>3</sup> given that performance tutors in conservatoires are themselves, by definition, respected pedagogues, who surely should aim to nurture all their students, not only as performers, but also as teachers, thus acting as role models. Participant S8

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<sup>3</sup> This testimony led me to recall an anecdote. Sitting on a performance exam panel I was astonished to hear a conservatoire tutor express dissatisfaction with a Y1 student. *‘They’re never going to be good enough’,* my colleague said. *‘Good enough for what?’*, I thought.

concluded, suggesting that conservatoire students need to be supported by their institution in becoming well-rounded musicians if they are to nurture musical skills in the next generation of learners: *'We need to be able to make a sustainable education system that's going to create capable musicians'*. In contrast, participant S5's reality check appeared to have been imposed by competition from his peers:

*[In] my first year [...] I see people with [...] great instruments [worth] several thousands of pounds and I see they're hard working, [have] acclaimed teachers [and] they already play better than some of us will play after we've graduated from conservatoire and I think to myself 'Am I really going to compete with them?'* (S5).

This notion that conservatoire students compete for recognition (Kingsbury, 1988) resonates once again with Porton's findings (2020: 14): 'There are inherent social challenges faced by students attending conservatoires, who must find the balance between making friendships and developing professional contacts alongside competing with each other for position within the conservatoire hierarchy'.

As noted above, participants also claimed that they had been strongly influenced by the course structure. It would appear, for example, that participant S8 experienced a transitional phase where they had gradually assimilated ideas and attitudes that were previously unfamiliar. Consequently, S8 felt that it was important to

*come in with an open mind and see what's there to explore because coming from [...] my country, you don't exactly know what's possible and what your options are [...]. I think it depends on your open-mindedness first of all, and also the disappointment when you realise actually where you are in terms of level compared to the musicians that earn a living from only performing [...]. In reality, you have to do a bit of everything, and I think it's a bit of a disappointment when that [realisation] happens, but after that, you learn to appreciate it and in the end, it's good. [Students need] maturity and open-mindedness* (S8).

### **Transformation (Passion)**

On transformation (as noted in Chapter 1.3), Reay (2004: 435) claims that 'habitus can be transformed through a process that either raises or lowers an individual's expectations. Implicit in [this] concept is the possibility of a social trajectory which enables conditions of living that are very different from initial ones.' In a similar fashion, having grappled with the desire to be a performer and the associated challenges, participant S6 eventually came to a new understanding of, and familiarity with, what being a musician could involve and appeared to demonstrate the characteristic maturity and open-mindedness that was alluded to by participant S8, above:

*The transformation I've gone through mentally and in terms of attitude and desire, [my understanding of] what to be a musician is, is completely different to what it was as a first year [...]. I still want to be a solo performer, but my expectation of success and what that means has changed [...]. You come here and you think you're an opera singer or you're a teacher and that's it. But now I think that's not so black and white. [Before] I felt like [teaching] was an option I needed to explore rather than because I really had the desire to do it [whereas] now I really feel passionate about it and it's not a Plan B. It's more of a 'that's really exciting. I really want to do that' whereas before I was like 'well I guess I'll have to do that' (S6).*

Indeed, this student reported a decidedly marked change in attitude and aspiration across a period of just twelve months, having completed a teaching placement as part of the Y4 Further Pedagogy module:

*I did pedagogy last year. Couldn't care less. I genuinely wasn't interested. I had my viva voce and it was the most painful experience. I had my [Further Pedagogy] viva this year and I couldn't stop talking because I was really excited about the things I learnt and the things I wanted to explore. I changed. So, you know, I think for me, teaching in my third year may not have been a good experience but now I have the passion for it (S6).*

In fact, there was a fine line during the focus-group discussion between reflecting on the value of learning how to teach and on the pressure of learning to perform in a competitive conservatoire environment. While S8 appeared to value teaching, they nevertheless attempted to understand why others might find it less appealing, attributing '*being in your own head*' as a coping mechanism:

*I think teaching itself is pleasurable, but there are some mentalities that don't allow that pleasure to be felt because you're in your head too much or you don't [like] kids that much cos they get on your nerves. I think [...] you have to deal with yourself rather than [think] 'oh I'm not made to do this', you know?*

### **Reflections on the Pilot study findings: an original learning model**

It became apparent through the Pilot study that participants began conservatoire study with varying aspirations that were informed, for better or worse, by a degree of cultural hegemony (Bruner, 1996) of which they may or may not have been aware. For instance, it was suggested that to be a performer '*you have to be the best*' (S8), implying that one does not need to 'be the best' to pursue a teaching career. This hegemonic perception resonates with Nettl (1995: 55–6):

Members of music school society identify and classify themselves and the components of their world [...] performance is seen as central by music school society, and there are those who perform and those who don't. The grouping and status are encapsulated by a frequently heard maxim: "Those who can, do: others teach".

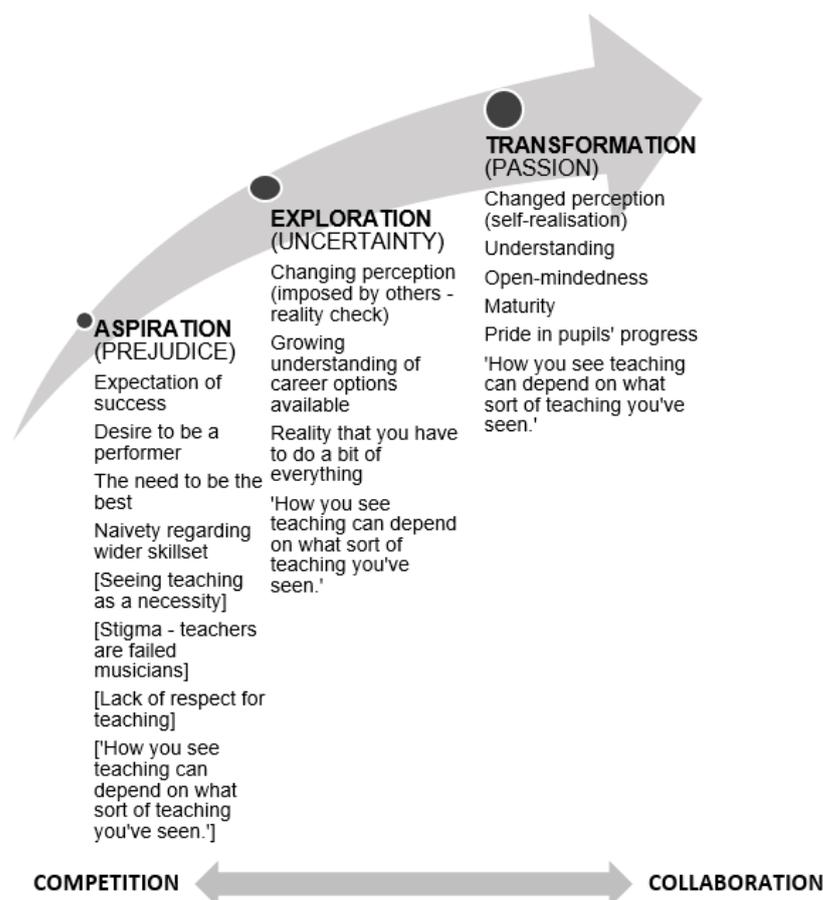
However, findings also suggested that through assimilating previously unfamiliar concepts, practices and cultural attitudes, and exploring relevant CoP, undergraduate students can develop the aspiration and passion to become music educators in cases where this was not originally present. These findings resonate with Burland and Davidson (2016) who claimed that influences of other people and institutional factors play a part in transitional development. Figure 10 (below) brings together these key ideas.

I contend that the theme, '*How you see teaching can depend on the sort of teaching you've seen*' (as expressed above by S6) is a recurrent one, representing underlying cultural and institutional influences encountered by students long before they begin their course, as well as throughout their studies and beyond. The accompanying 'competition–collaboration' continuum represents students' evolving attitudes to conservatoire life and their developing 'professional self-concept' (Long, 2016: 30) as they gradually transition from a competitive 'inside their heads' mindset and come to terms with the 'reality check'.

The acknowledged 'reality check' could be enforced in multiple ways: through seemingly cutting remarks from students' performance teachers; through the core modules students were required to study alongside their principal study specialism; and through competitive peer relations. It could even be said that the reality check was a crucial 'pivot point' (Burt and Mills, 2006: 67) in students' transition into conservatoire life as they began to understand and assimilate ideas and attitudes that were previously unfamiliar. Indeed, it provoked emotional responses in these participants, forcing them to explore the positive and negative feelings experienced whilst studying the performance and pedagogical aspects of the conservatoire curriculum, thus resonating with research by Hill, et al. (2020).

In response to Pilot study participant feedback (see Appendix B, p. 14), the original questionnaire was revised to incorporate participant suggestions (see Appendix D, pp. 29–30), and plans were developed to emphasise qualitative data within Project 2a–c (see Chapters 5 and 6). Project 2 builds on the Pilot study findings by monitoring students' changing perceptions of reality as they 'grow up' in and 'find an identity within [the conservatoire] culture' (Bruner, 1996: 42). Furthermore, the sub-projects have been designed to deliver the 'reality check' in as gentle and supportive a way as possible, through reflective tasks that enable students to explore their developing identities in relation to careers in music education.

Figure 10: Original learning model emerging from Pilot study



## 2.5 Summary

This chapter has provided an overview of the research paradigm that has influenced my overall methodological approach: it has also outlined the research methods employed, as summarised in Figure 11, below. The ensuing Table 13 summarises the structure of the three main projects, the participants involved, the research methods employed, the timescale during which data collection was undertaken and the data analysis/presentation techniques utilised.

Whilst some personal biases are of course inevitable, I have still attempted to mitigate against, or at the very least minimise these by seeking external perspectives and 'corroborating evidence from different individuals' for triangulation purposes (Creswell, 2012: 259). Examples of this corrective strategy include extending the case study beyond the confines of RBC to involve other conservatoires in England; consultation with employers; and reaching out to RBC alumni who work in the music

education field, thus combining several approaches within an ‘eclectic’ methodology (Rossman and Wilson, 1994; Aluko, 2006). The findings are discussed in Chapters 3–7 and are followed by recommendations for future practice and research in Chapter 8.

Figure 11: Methodology summary

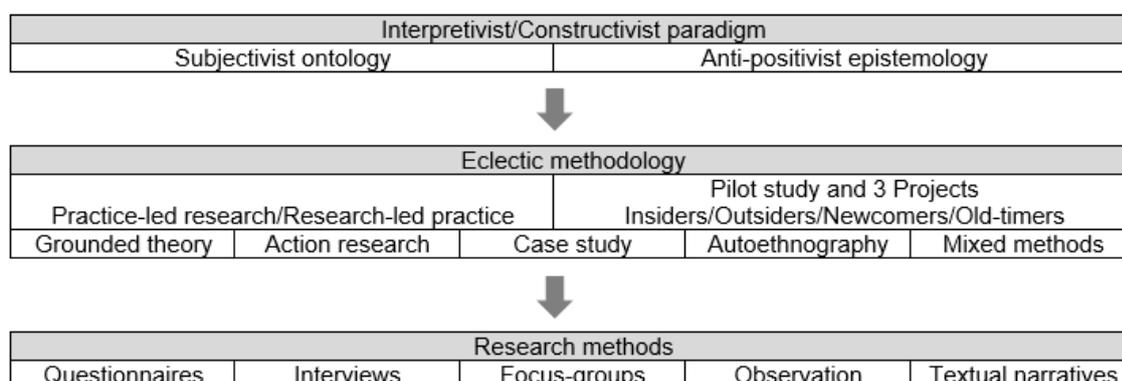


Table 13: Overview of Pilot study and three main projects

Project	Sub-project	When conducted	Participants	Research tool	Quantitative/Qualitative?	Data analysis/presentation
	Pilot study	April 2019	8 Y1 RBC students	Questionnaire Focus group	Quantitative + Qualitative	Graphs + charts TA/DA
RQ1	Project 1a	May–July 2019	7 academics in 6 English conservatoires	Interviews	Quantitative + Qualitative	Graphs + charts TA/DA
	Project 1b	Jan–Feb 2020	66 employers across 66 Music Education Hubs	Online questionnaire	Quantitative + Qualitative	Graphs + charts TA/DA
RQ2	Project 2a	Sept 2019 Feb 2020	94 Y1 RBC students (2019-20)	Questionnaire Textual narratives	Qualitative + Quantitative	Graphs + charts TA/DA
	Project 2b	Jan 2021	41 Y2 RBC students (2020-21)	Textual narratives	Qualitative	TA/DA
	Project 2c	July 2020	6 former Y4 students (newly graduated 2020)	Online interviews	Qualitative	TA/DA
RQ3	Project 3a	Jan 2020	3 alumni (graduated 2017/18/19 respectively)	Observation Focus group	Qualitative	TA/DA
	Project 3b	July 2020	2 alumni-mentors (graduated 2016/17 respectively)	Online interviews	Qualitative	TA/DA

**Part II:**  
**Educational Research Findings**

## **Chapter 3: Conservatoire-sector challenges in preparing students for careers in instrumental teaching**

### **3.1 Background**

The two-fold rationale for this part of the doctoral project (Project 1a) has been, firstly, to place the case study at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire in a wider, national research context, and secondly, to be in a position ultimately to increase the impact and value of this pedagogical research by offering larger-scale recommendations for future practice. To this end, between May and July 2019, interviews were conducted with seven colleagues in six conservatoires in England (with the resultant findings identified and discussed across Chapter 3.2–3.4). In addition, a questionnaire was distributed to all music hubs across England to gain employer perspectives (Project 1b), the findings of which are considered in Chapter 4. In relation to the IONO model introduced in Chapter 2 (Figure 8), both sets of participants are classed as OO for the purposes of this study, since it was assumed that, as long-established music educators (old-timers), they would bring a necessary external (outsider) perspective to the research.

Following the transcription process referred to in Chapter 2, each of the seven transcripts relating to Project 1a were read multiple times in order to gain familiarity with the data (a process akin to that employed in the Pilot study). However, this time, the transcripts were uploaded for analysis to be conducted via the computer assisted software, NVivo, instead of Excel as in the Pilot study. Here, each document was read line by line to identify notable segments of text (or codes) that could be grouped into categories and sub-categories. Given that there were seven transcripts to analyse, it was important to return to them all several times and to ensure that comparable time and consideration were given to each. In fact, conducting the analysis on a rotational basis was useful in making decisions about which parts of the data were ‘more important than others’ (Denscombe, 2014: 287). As in the Pilot study data analysis, duplicate codes and categories were either eliminated or merged to create overarching themes and sub-themes as shown in Table 14 below.

Table 14: Project 1a – summary of themes

Overarching themes	Sub-themes
Background	Circumstances leading to appointment Time in post Job title and responsibilities Musician identities Reciprocal learning
Curriculum overview	Philosophy and approach Challenges in curriculum delivery Departmental provision Bespoke pedagogical training for composers (or lack thereof) Compulsory modules First year provision (or lack thereof) Optional modules Interdisciplinary working Assessment Placements Growth: recent or future possible developments Challenges standing in the way of developments
Institutional valuing (staff)	Resistance to provision (breaking down barriers) Snobbery: performance vs teaching Institutional comparisons Master-apprentice' teaching promotes 'teach as they were taught' pedagogy Student/alumni achievements in music education Student feedback
Institutional valuing (students)	Academic vs performance Student engagement Recognition of transferable skills

As noted in Chapter 2, supplementary information relating to Project 1a and b is located in Appendix C (pp. 18–21 and pp. 22–8, respectively).

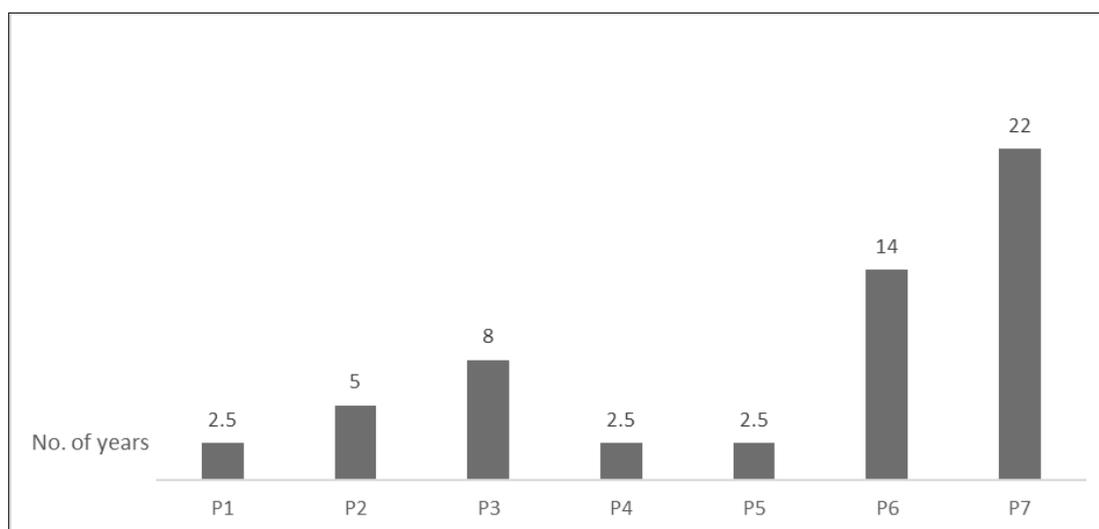
### 3.2 Leadership of undergraduate pedagogical training in English conservatoires

With regard to the interviews, the aim, where possible, was to converse with the individual(s) responsible for designing and/or overseeing provision for pedagogical training within their respective institutions. Where this was not possible, interviews were arranged with colleagues involved in the delivery of provision. It quickly became apparent that, whilst some conservatoires had a recognised 'department' for music education with one or more members of staff leading provision in this area, in others the oversight of such provision was absorbed into wider academic responsibilities with no specific department or key staff member identified. Interview participants are anonymised throughout this chapter as P1 through to P7.

### Participant background: circumstances leading to appointments

The length of time participants had worked at their current institution ranged from 2.5 to 22 years, as shown in Figure 12:

Figure 12: No. of years worked at participant institution



In some conservatoires, posts were formally advertised, and participants were required to undergo a rigorous recruitment process. In others, however, participants already known to the institution or who had heard about the position through word of mouth were recruited less formally: *'I heard about this from a friend who was also a [instrumental teaching] mentor'* (P1). Six of the seven participants interviewed originally trained at a conservatoire themselves and, at the point when the interviews took place, three participants were teaching at the conservatoire at which they previously studied. These findings are reminiscent of Mills's (2004) study, where graduates returned to their former institution to teach their principal study instrument.

On one hand, it could be argued that such an approach to recruiting alumni as staff enabled institutions to conserve their 'own distinct history and identity' (ucas.com) where, according to one institution's website, students 'can follow in the footsteps of [their] heroes in music'. On the other, such an approach might be viewed as simultaneously restrictive, where 'cultural reproduction' (Bernstein, 1975) has the capacity to prevent growth and mitigate against change. Indeed, if 'the educational

practices of universities and music colleges are steeped in tradition', it is important to question 'whether or not such values are still relevant for today's musicians' (Burland, 2005: 233–4). Similarly, according to Ford (2010: 14), there is 'concern that conservatoires perform an elitist function in privileging certain musical repertoires and practices' (see also Chapter 1.3: Classification and framing) amidst recommendations in the Browne Report (2010: 23) that 'there needs to be a closer fit between what is taught in higher education and the skills needed in the economy' (a point that will be explored further in Chapter 4). Perkins (2015: 99) similarly referred to a need for conservatoires to 'recognise the multiplicity of skills required by today's musician' and to 'continually reflect upon the ways in which students are prepared for their careers [in] rapidly changing professional music fields'. However, I contend that, where alumni have spent time away from the conservatoire environment in which they originally trained and have gained experience in a range of contrasting educational contexts, they can then bring their additional professional insights to inform their employee role and subsequently influence students' professional outlooks (a notion furthered in Chapter 7). Such an approach disrupts 'dominant ideologies' (Bernstein, 1975) whilst helping conservatoires to fulfil the ongoing need to ensure that HE links to employability (Ford, 2010).

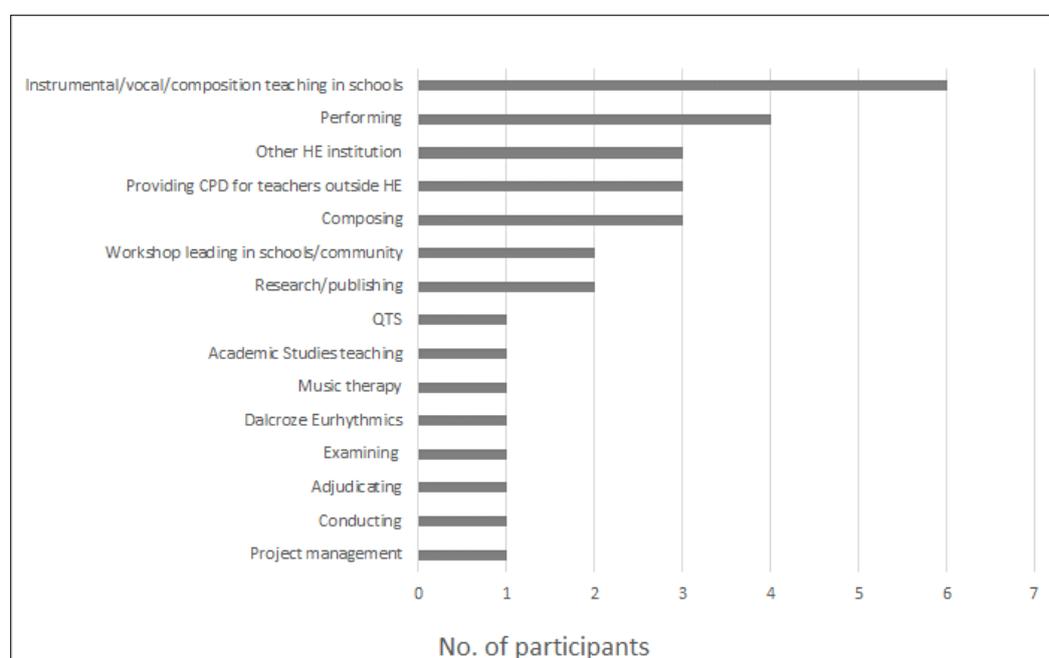
It is therefore pertinent that the academic participants who contributed to this doctoral study (July 2019) brought a range of industry-informed skills and experience to their roles and that the interviews encouraged them to reflect on the provision they were offering. (Participants' perspectives on the extent to which professional experiences gained before joining their current institution informed their teaching philosophy and approach to curriculum design will follow later in this chapter, along with consideration of staff colleagues' and students' attitudes to their conservatoire-based pedagogical training). Participants were attracted to their respective roles for several reasons, including the desire to teach in HE as a means of adding new skills to their existing portfolio, for example:

*I remember writing on my job application 'this is my dream job', because I felt I could take a leadership role in the college in terms of developing music*

*education training for students, which I hadn't been able to do previously [...]. It just gave me a chance to use a wider set of skills (P5).*

As noted, above, participants each brought to their role a wide skill set developed as part of a portfolio career that appeared to inform directly their ongoing work at their respective conservatoires. Figure 13 shows the professional activity reported by participants (with the number of participants involved in each activity type shown on the horizontal axis).

*Figure 13: Professional background/experience of participants*



It is possible, however, that participants' experience was even broader than the interviews revealed; for example, only one academic referred to QTS as forming part of their credentials. It is intriguing that this might seem irrelevant in connection with training the next generation of music educators in conservatoires, but at the time of this study, QTS was only a statutory requirement for classroom teachers working in the state sector and infrequently pursued by conservatoire graduates. Furthermore, conservatoire staff are invariably not required to gain a formal teaching qualification. Indeed, many have no formal pedagogical training at all (Gaunt, 2008) though, as discussed in Chapter 1.1, this is changing in some institutions due to accredited

'Fellowship' routes offered by Advance HE (formerly the Higher Education Academy – advance-he.ac.uk).

### **Roles and responsibilities in the conservatoires**

The remit of participants interviewed included those who taught and/or led individual or small groups of music pedagogy modules themselves, through to those who line-managed colleagues to deliver provision across one or more whole-year groups. In one case, an interviewee had oversight of the entire undergraduate and postgraduate curricula, where duties extended far beyond the scope of pedagogical training alone. Interviews revealed that music education as a recognised subject area tended to vary widely in stature from institution to institution with (as mentioned above) some having a named department and leader (i.e. head of department) assisted by a team of salaried and hourly paid staff, and others having no one in particular in charge of coordinating pedagogical activity. This variance in staffing appeared to correspond with a lack of consistency in music education provision across different institutions, whereby for one respondent: *'I'm module co-ordinator, although as there's only one module member of staff, I only coordinate myself!'* (P2).

### **Philosophies and approaches to pedagogical training**

As noted previously, the interviews held led participants to reflect on their philosophy and approach to curriculum design and preparing students for the profession. Transferring industry-based skills into HE was important to interviewees, with one participant in particular valuing the potential for reciprocal learning:

*I very much enjoy teaching children, working with young people, but I [have] also very much enjoyed working with student teachers. Through the process of asking them to reflect on their practice, observing them and things like that, I developed a lot as well. It was much more like a peer-learning experience as opposed to [...] me being the 'master' and telling the student what to do, and there was a parity there that I really enjoyed (P4).*

Another interviewee saw pedagogical training as a much broader spectrum of activity than teaching alone, expressing the view that *'pedagogy is ultimately a caring role'*

(P5). Here again, the participant's philosophy and approach appeared to be strongly influenced by their own training and work experiences, and once more, the value of reciprocal learning was appreciated:

*I do take a very broad view of what pedagogy is [...]. I've been very influenced by my training in music therapy to take, as much as I'm able to – a person-centred approach to teaching, which to me is a fundamental foundation of pedagogical thinking [...]. And so, when I talk to my colleagues about trying to develop students' pedagogical awareness, I don't necessarily mean teaching them to teach one-to-one lessons or anything like that. It might be doing music in a special school or music in a hospital or a community music choir. It's this notion of understanding the people you're working with, starting from where they are, understanding their expectations and hopes and how they fit along with yours and then collaborating in a way that helps them develop and [from] which you learn (P5).*

This view relates strongly to the work of Creech and Hallam (2011), where nurturing interpersonal relationships between teacher and pupil significantly enhanced the learning process. It can also be related to Burke (2019: 2), who states that development 'depends on each unique child having opportunities to interact in positive relationships and enabling environments', and Kitwood (1997), who sought to improve quality of life for people with Dementia through a 'person-centred' approach. The previously observed notion of 'caring' also came through in the philosophy of P3:

*The central principles of teaching are very good life skills like sharing and being kind and being generous and that sort of thing. These are qualities of good people. Qualities of good teachers are qualities of good people [...]. I try to make them feel that teaching is an extremely worthy occupation, maybe the most worthy of all occupations, because you know, we're shaping the future.*

This latter view resonates with Ford (2010: 3), who, in posing the question, 'What are conservatoires for?', found the historically institutionalised 'discourse of classical

music challenged by more recent discourses [...] particularly [...] higher education for employability and higher education for personal development'. Thus, in 'selling' instrumental teaching as a career path to conservatoire students, the views of P3 aligned with these opposing discourses by suggesting that by learning to teach, students were also developing their ability to care for their students. Furthermore, as instrumental teachers, conservatoire students could potentially be 'shaping the future' through the positive influence such a caring approach might have on their pupils' own future contribution to society. The interrelated concepts discussed in this section have potential to play out in conservatoire-based pedagogical training where there are often dual curriculum strands relating to both teaching and community engagement (see Chapter 3.3 below).

### **3.3 Curriculum design for undergraduate pedagogical training across the conservatoire sector**

#### **Overview of undergraduate pedagogical training in conservatoires**

Each participant was asked to provide an overview of the undergraduate curriculum of their institution in this area (May–July 2019). At this time, most conservatoires offered a four-year BMus course, with one institution running a three-year programme, and commonalities in curriculum mapping were clear. Pedagogical training in the conservatoires represented in this study constituted a range of compulsory and/or optional credit-bearing music education modules (sometimes referred to as 'electives') utilising two main curricular 'strands', namely teaching and workshop facilitation (often some form of music in the community). Some conservatoires embedded interdisciplinary working/cross-departmental collaboration and work placements into modules, thus enabling 'classical' performers to learn from and alongside composers, music technologists, jazz, rock and pop musicians, and vice versa where applicable. Such approaches to curriculum design adhere to recommendations set out in the Subject Benchmark Statement for Music (QAA, 2019: 1), which provides

general guidance for articulating the learning outcomes associated with the course but [is] not intended to represent a national curriculum in a subject or

to prescribe set approaches to teaching, learning or assessment. Instead, [it] allow[s] for flexibility and innovation in course design within a framework agreed by the subject community.

However, it would seem that 'flexibility and innovation' has led to a lack of parity across the conservatoire sector regarding at what stage(s) in a BMus course pedagogical modules could or should be studied. In general, the participant data suggested that provision tended not to be 'joined up' from one year to the next because the curriculum was often not structured in a way that enabled students to build on acquired skills. Furthermore, in some conservatoires, it was not possible to specialise equally in teaching and workshop facilitation, since the curriculum structure forced students to choose between one or the other. Approaches to pedagogical assessments varied between modules and across institutions, as did quality assurance procedures; for example, some conservatoires were not required to employ a formal mechanism through which to gather student feedback on education-based modules. Whether, in some cases, this lack of monitoring extended to external placements in some instances was unclear. In some conservatoires, as noted in Chapter 1.2 (Boyle, 2018), postgraduate provision for pedagogical training seemed to take priority over undergraduate provision.

#### **Pedagogical provision for Y1 (Level 4)**

There appeared to be inconsistency amongst the conservatoires regarding at what point in the course pedagogical training was introduced. It emerged that, whilst some conservatoires embedded pedagogical training from Y1, others did not – *'There's nothing in the first year'* (P2) – and the rationale for this was unclear. Furthermore, interviewees' knowledge of Y1 provision in this area was patchy in some cases: for example, *'I'm not sure what they do in their first year here'* (P1) and in others, not mentioned at all.

In one instance where pedagogical training did begin in Y1, it was reported to be within the context of *'developing the artist holistically [through] a module that presents to students some of the broader skills that they will need as a graduate'* (P5). In the institution of P5, the Y1 pedagogical element enabled the student to *'dip*

*their toe in the water*' by observing a young person in a one-to-one instrumental setting and *'beginning to think about the skills that a teacher actually needs to be able to do that work'*. According to P5, students' pedagogical awareness would be developed through asking questions such as: *'What's actually happening there? Is the student learning? If so, how do we know they're learning? What's the teacher doing that's facilitating the learning?'* The observation would normally involve the conservatoire's junior department, which provided 'high-quality weekend training for children and young people who show exceptional potential and commitment in music' (conservatoiresuk.ac.uk). Further discussion about the place of conservatoire junior departments in pedagogical training follows later in Chapter 3.3.

Elsewhere, an equivalent Y1 module was considered as *'more to do with students transitioning from further education to conservatoire'* than *'looking outside'* (P7). However, alongside *'the skills that are needed to survive [...] in terms of practice, [...] managing their time [and] their health'*, students engaged in *'improvisatory, creative work [...] to get them communicating with one another and learning from different disciplines'*. Indeed, it was suggested that these wider skills might be transferable to students' future work as music educators (see Chapter 5.4 and 5.5 respectively for further discussion in relation to Y1 and 2 RBC students). However, participant 7's institution did not appear to offer any further bespoke training of this kind until Y4 (see below).

The collaborative element described in the Y1 module above was central to another conservatoire's Y1 module, where again, a link was made to students' possible future work in the field of music education. (Further to the point made by P6 below, RBC students and alumni allude to links between instrumental teaching and workshop leading across Chapters 5–7.)

*The students get some collaborative composition skills in a [...] strand that is currently called Engaging Audiences [...]. In the first year they get collaborative composition skills [including] lots of workshop leading [and] improvisation together, and their assessment is a leadership task where they have to lead their colleagues in a collaborative composition, and the idea here*

*is that then informs education work (typically workshop leading type work) but actually it informs their instrumental teaching as well (P6).*

To summarise this section, the interviews revealed that conservatoires prioritised different things within Y1 curricula at the time of this study and that undergraduate pedagogical training was not necessarily one of these priorities. However, as noted above, the concept of curricular 'strands' was common to conservatoires, though progression routes through the course in both instrumental teacher education and workshop facilitation were variable.

## **Y2 (Level 5)**

Interviews revealed inconsistency in Y2 provision, ranging from courses with no core pedagogical training whatsoever, through to a specialist module that enabled students to build on skills they developed during Y1: *'We train [students] in interactive performance, and then they go out to primary schools and deliver [...] a kind of interactive concert'* (P6). One conservatoire that offered no pedagogical training in Y1 did provide an element of choice within core Y2 pedagogic provision, where one module was concerned with *'the basics of [...] one-to-one, [small] group and whole class instrumental teaching and the sort of skills that you need to develop for that'* and the other was *'focused around workshops and projects'*. In the instrumental teaching module, students *'practised teaching each other'*, whilst in the workshop facilitation module, students would *'devise their own project'* and then go on to deliver it *'in some kind of setting, usually a school'* (P2). It was explained that, if students wanted to take both modules during their course, they could take the instrumental teaching option in Y2 and the workshop skills module the following year. However, at the time of the study, there was no built-in opportunity for students to develop their instrumental teaching skills further via a credit-bearing module. In another conservatoire, pedagogical training was included as a proportion of a core module in Y2:

*In the second year, there's a compulsory module they all do which has three strands [...] one of which is Alexander Technique, the other is creating a professional portfolio and the third is all about education. The first half of [the*

*education strand] is built towards the ABRSM diploma exam, although it's not compulsory for them to take it [...]. I think then they start doing things like workshops in schools [...]: some outside people come in who teach them how to create a workshop. They do things like going to a primary school and doing the Fire of London with the kids [...]. Then they have to write about that afterwards in a reflective way (P1).*

The opportunity to access an external diploma qualification (DipABRSM) from the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM) in conjunction with a Y2 pedagogy module offered in the above institution appeared to be appreciated by students. However, it is worth noting a mismatch here between the levels set by the FHEQ (Revised UK Quality Code for Higher Education, 2018) with the ABRSM qualification being validated at Level 4, and Y2 undergraduate modules being set at Level 5. At the time of the study, the Level 4 qualification offered by ABRSM was one of three instrumental teaching diplomas, with subsequent awards set at Levels 6 and 7, but none at Level 5 (abrsm.org, 2019). Applicants were not required to have actually done any teaching to be eligible to attempt the Level 4 examination which focused on the principles of instrumental teaching as opposed to direct teaching experiences.

### **Y3 and 4 (Level 6)**

As already noted, in one conservatoire, students were unable to access pedagogical training in Y2 or 3 via credit-bearing modules within the curriculum. But in Y4, students were required to take a core module that included a teaching skills component led by principal study departments alongside aspects such as freelancing, administration and an independent project, the aim being to get them ready for the outside world: *'It's the module that tries to push them out a little'* (P7).

Other conservatoires represented in the study adopted a similar exit velocity approach to curriculum design by offering optional modules in the areas of instrumental music pedagogy and/or workshop delivery strategies at Level 6, often with some form of embedded professional placement. In some conservatoires, there was an element of progression from Y3 through to 4, with modules needing to be

taken in a particular sequence. Others offered the flexibility to choose from a pool of electives across Y3 and 4 that could be taken in any order. In the example below, students could continue and extend their Y3 placement experiences into Y4, although, at the time of the study, less than five students appeared to take up the opportunity.

*In the third year [...] there's this optional [instrumental/vocal teaching] module [...] and in the first half of it they go into three different teaching situations. Usually the [conservatoire junior department] is one of them, and [a local primary school]. Music's compulsory for all the children there and they do group string teaching. They [then] go somewhere else, like a secondary school - one to one teaching and [...] compare and contrast those three teaching situations [...] write all about it and really analyse it in great depth. That's the first half of it. Then the second half [...] they have a choice of hand-ins. They can either just write an essay about an aspect of teaching, or they can do a case study of their own teaching (if they are teaching), which links with the LRSM diploma [...]. I've tried to do one practical [lecture] then one kind of brainy, then one practical. So, we might have one on 'the first lesson' then one on 'stages of development' [...] then one on improvisation, so they've got quite a wide range of things they can then choose to write about. That's ten weeks, having a lecture every week (P1).*

During the interviews, the terms 'option modules' and 'electives' were used interchangeably, but both defined a credit-bearing, non-core unit of work. Participant 4 reported a similar approach to that defined above by P1:

*Third- and fourth-year students can take electives [...] and there are a number of those which are pedagogy focused. I [teach] two, one on individual instrumental teaching, so being a teacher in a simpler sense, and then one on Whole-Class Instrumental Teaching, as a kind of follow on from that. Those are practical electives, so the focus is not so academic but much more rooted in real experiences. We teach each other, we give someone else in our cohort a first trumpet lesson then [...] reflect on that or go and observe some*

*teaching, etc, etc. Then the outcome of that is not an essay, but some sort of presentation of their learning experiences (P4).*

Another academic described a contrasting approach to pedagogical training in their institution, where one module was *'based around students writing stories about their music education experiences'* (P5), thus resonating strongly with the autoethnographic element of my research design (see Introduction 0.2 and Chapter 2.2). Participant 5 perceived this method of learning and teaching to be

*a really powerful way of identifying some really key pedagogical principles because students remember when they've been well taught. They remember the moments of transformation. But they also remember the wounds and the times when the teacher was negative or critical in a non-constructive way. Of course, they can immediately reflect on what the flip side of that is. 'What should that teacher have done? And then how do we label that?' So that gives them a chance to reflect but also to bring in some [...] wider theory around learning to help them understand what they've been through.*

Such 'moments of transformation' are reminiscent of theoretical frameworks discussed in Chapter 1.3 (see, for example, 'Habitus, capital, field and doxa' and 'Transformative learning') and relate to the transitional processes undergone by students at RBC (see Chapter 2.4: Pilot study and Chapters 5, 6 and 8). A further module, bespoke to one particular department in the institution of P5, will be discussed in 'Departmental provision' below.

### **Departmental provision**

The interviews revealed that some conservatoires involved colleagues directly from the principal study departments (for example, instrumental, vocal) in delivering pedagogical training, but that this approach was not implemented consistently across all institutions, and pedagogical training for non-performance areas, for example, composition, was rarely bespoke. Of the six conservatoires participating in the study, only four seemed to have principal study-specific pedagogical training embedded within the curriculum across all performance departments, for example: strings,

woodwind, brass, percussion, keyboard and voice. Heads of departments were perceived by P7 as important role models, who were likely to engender student engagement and help them to acknowledge the crucial role of teaching specific instrumental techniques within a broader pedagogy.

*Being embedded into the principal study departments has the benefit of being integral to that [as] in that the mind of the conservatoire students [...] principal study is the main element. Everything that comes down from it has got a priority element [laughs] compared to other areas of the curriculum [...]. Some heads of department or deputies are themselves leading their area of the curriculum so it comes very high up in the module and in the department.*

It was reported that heads of departments were given ‘free rein’ (P1) to develop and deliver their provision as they wished, a feature that colleagues seemed to appreciate:

*On the whole of the BMus programme, we have created a structure whereby there is a great deal of autonomy for each instrumental and principal study department to do what they think is the best thing for their students to do. We’ve got, of course, parallel elements that need to be equivalent across all the students’ experiences but we have left, as much as possible, this independence and balance to pursue their own things (P7).*

This approach was presumably advantageous in building trust and cooperation between colleagues and enthusiasm for the subject. Conversely, it raises questions about quality assurance: ‘We don’t line manage [the performance staff]. We’re not always convinced that they’re terribly up to date with their [pedagogic] practices: that’s always an issue’ (P6). Typically, a high proportion of conservatoire performance staff are hourly-paid visiting tutors, with a range of professional and personal commitments in addition to their work at the conservatoire. Time and budget are not allocated to provide compulsory training for these staff, possibly to the detriment of students’ learning and development as music educators.

In another conservatoire, strong provision was reported in one department where a very passionate advocate for pedagogy had designed a teaching elective that had recently become credit-bearing. However, at the time the interview took place (July 2019), similar provision was not available to other departments, resulting in a lack of consistency that was fully acknowledged by the interviewee, who saw a forthcoming revalidation as *'an opportunity to rethink'* (P5).

As noted above, bespoke pedagogical training was rarely made available for non-performance principal study areas. For example, only one of the six conservatoires appeared to offer training in composition pedagogy. The remaining five expressed some uncertainty, suggesting that provision for non-performance areas (such as composition) may not have been sufficiently thought through. This may be indicative of the small numbers of, say, composers in each cohort compared with instrumentalists and singers. Indeed, one interviewee suggested that one composer was currently teaching piano as part of a pedagogy module at their institution (P1) while another stated that, in principle, composers were welcome to join the module as long as they could teach an instrument. However, the anomaly regarding the tendency to *'divide off composers'* was acknowledged (P4). Another participant seemed open to the possibility of providing bespoke pedagogical training for non-performance areas in future, the long pauses signifying the depth of their thinking:

*That's a really good question [long pause]. So [long pause], there isn't currently an elective about composition teaching specifically, but there could be. I'm not aware of any third-year placements that were directly involved with composition skills, but there must be opportunity to use them [...] so there's an opportunity there for development – that's made me think. There's nothing to stop a fourth-year [student], for example, from doing a [project] around composition teaching (P5).*

### **Work placements**

Interviewees emphasised a focus on experiential learning and reflective pedagogy in their respective conservatoires, though engagement in external pedagogy placements was not embedded into modular provision in all institutions. Inevitably,

the nature of placements varied between conservatoires due to geographical location or other factors. Whilst some institutions had built links with external partners, enabling students to deliver creative projects or observe instrumental teaching in schools or other community settings, others appeared more inward-looking. In one instance, it was suggested that students were not offered opportunities to engage with instrumental teaching in professional settings beyond the lecture room since the provision was '*pretty much all taught in-house*' (P3), a finding that correlates with employer perspectives (see Chapter 4).

In one conservatoire where students were required to teach their peers (see 'Y2 (Level 5)' above), there was no evidence that external placements were available as part of the pedagogy module: '*They get paired up with somebody who's a complete beginner on their instrument. So [while] they're very musically able, they've never played that instrument before [...]. It's as much like teaching a complete beginner as we can make it*' (P2). While this experience is arguably valuable in providing a testing ground for articulating and demonstrating pedagogical concepts, the lack of 'real-life' experience would have presumably restricted students' potential development as instrumental teachers, since their undergraduate peers would likely respond rather differently from young people in schools with far less prior musical training. And, as noted previously, in this particular institution, and in that represented by P3, there was no credit-bearing progression route available within the BMus course for students interested in pursuing studies in instrumental teaching further.

One conservatoire that required its Y3 students to undertake an external work placement offered an element of choice, giving students '*a certain say over where they wanted to go*' (P4), whilst still exerting some control. However, in this institution, it was unclear what percentage of a typical year group would opt to take a teaching or community-music focused placement as opposed to something unrelated to music education. Elsewhere, students were encouraged to find their own placements: '*They go back to their old school, or they observe each other if they teach in different places, or they observe their old teacher, or they just find another contact and they submit for approval and I say 'yes it's ok'*' (P6).

Requiring students to source their own placement is, arguably, beneficial preparation for finding their own work post-graduation, potentially promoting independence and autonomy. In addition, the opportunity to observe and reflect on the teaching strategies employed by students' former teachers' and/or their peers is potentially highly valuable. Equally, there is a risk that simply approaching a former teacher or other known professional might not take students beyond their comfort zones. Furthermore, students might not understand the potential negative impact a 'teach as you were taught' approach to pedagogy could have on a young pupil, who, due to socio-economic circumstances, learning environment, cultural background, or a range of other factors, may not necessarily respond to tuition in the way that they had as a young pupil. As Carey and Lebler (2008: 15) state: 'student expectations and dispositions to learning in conservatoires are shaped at least in part by the pedagogical culture they have experienced prior to entering tertiary music institutions'.

As discussed in Chapter 1.3, according to Bourdieu (Maton, 2014: 50), these 'dispositions' or tendencies (termed 'habitus') are unconsciously shaped by past or present social and educational experiences. In turn they 'generate perceptions, appreciations and practices' and are 'transposable' in that they can be influenced by the 'field' or environment with which they interact, engage and participate. It follows, therefore, that unless conservatoire students have been exposed to unfamiliar pedagogical ideas and practices, their habitus in relation to instrumental teaching is unlikely to evolve. Reay (1995: 357) concurs: 'At one end habitus can be replicated through encountering a field that reproduces its dispositions'. (I argue that this applies to those students who choose to stay within their comfort zone by observing their former teachers). 'At the other end of the continuum habitus can be transformed' (ibid). The outlook of P3 suggests that for many instrumental teachers, the latter is definitely not the case, resulting in negative outcomes for young learners:

*I think a lot of [...] young new teachers, particularly students who end up in music college have often been taught in a particular kind of way that caused them to end up in music college. And they [...] represented somewhere between 0 and 5% of their teacher's pupils who managed to stick with that*

*kind of teaching. Now what happened to the other 95%, I'd like to know. Often the other 95% will have given up, having decided they don't like the violin, or they don't like music and they certainly don't like the teacher. And for me that is a terrible indictment of the kind of teaching that has prevailed in many nations in the world for many decades, and I want to see an end to that [...]. Often a teacher goes on to teach in the way that they were taught and except for a few cases, that's not a good idea.*

Moreover, it was not possible to discern from the interviews the extent to which placements sourced by students were 'vetted' by institutions. Nor was it clear whether mentors in schools and other external settings received any training relating to module requirements or were made aware of learning outcomes and marking criteria. This raises wider questions about quality assurance procedures involving external partners in the professional training of conservatoire students as future music educators.

An approach common to several institutions was to utilise their own junior department as a means of offering observation opportunities for students. This was used in different ways at different stages of learning: for example, as noted previously, students in one conservatoire engaged with their junior department in Y1, whilst others became involved later in their course. However, the interviews revealed that for some conservatoire students, the junior department, described as '*a relatively high pressure and high expectation environment where the kids get a lot of additional musical teaching beyond the one-to-one lesson*' (P6), might be the only professional teaching setting students engage with during their entire undergraduate course. Not only does this provide a very limited outlook on the instrumental teaching profession and the many factors that influence pupils' learning and development; it also reduces the possibilities for raising students' awareness of unfamiliar socio-economic and multi-cultural environments where music-making happens. Therefore, I argue that conservatoires need to be mindful of Ford's opposition (2010) to privileging certain music and practices (as discussed in Chapter 3.2) when designing programmes of study aimed at preparing their students for careers in music education.

Few conservatoires offered the opportunity for students to do more than observe whilst on placement, though one participant referred to opportunities where students could gain actual teaching experience, for example *'within ensembles, like a local brass band who wants someone to help out in the section and lead some sectionals [or] in a music service setting where the student might do some observation and then do a little bit of co-teaching under the supervision of another teacher'* (P5). Another institution required students to be teaching already if they were to take a particular module:

*If they don't have any teaching then we have a system where we advertise a free course of lessons to either a [conservatoire] student or a [non-music] student who has an instrument, and the student has to be able to practise, you know, so there's a little contract [...]. I make the introductions and then it's all student-led so quite a lot of responsibility on them to meet the requirements* (P6).

Most conservatoires offered opportunities for students to engage with their own Learning and Participation (L&P) departments, though not all interviewees were fully aware of the provision available: the extent to which L&P provision overlapped with the academic curriculum (for example, in the form of credit-bearing placements) was also unclear. Where interviewees were familiar with L&P department activity, it was reported that students studying music workshop facilitation techniques or creative project modules were more likely to partake than those focusing solely on instrumental or vocal pedagogy, suggesting there was insufficient awareness amongst students of the transferable skills inherent in these interrelated practices.

The intersection between L&P departments and the music education curriculum in conservatoires had not been fully explored at the time of these interviews (May–July 2019), even in cases where L&P activity was long-established, though the benefits of collaboration were certainly acknowledged. According to P7, L&P was *'not necessarily linked to the [conservatoire] curriculum'* but it gave students *'contacts and networks'* and *'a more dynamic range of things'* to engage in. However, it was

suggested that one pragmatic barrier to forming an alliance between L&P and curriculum activity was students' already full timetables: student engagement in L&P activity was, therefore, 'voluntary' due to 'overload issues' (P6).

Analysing the links between L&P activity and pedagogy curricula in conservatoires would be a worthwhile exercise, but one that falls outside the parameters of this thesis. Nevertheless, I assert that conservatoire students' workloads would be reduced if their voluntary activities with L&P enabled them to gain academic credits. At the time of the interviews and contextual study, institutional websites revealed that most conservatoires in England claimed that they were making a significant contribution to the professional development of their current students through the training offered via their L&P programmes, but that in several cases, this provision was not linked to credit-bearing courses. I maintain that, with appropriate quality assurance measures in place, embedding L&P activity into modules in all conservatoires would provide more consistency across the sector, whilst enhancing students' formal pedagogical training through bringing together the interrelated and transferable skills involved in both instrumental teaching and workshop facilitation.

### **3.4 Institutional valuing of pedagogical training**

#### **Perceived staff values**

After outlining their provision for pedagogical training during the interviews, participants were asked how provision in this area was viewed and valued by their colleagues. This question elicited mixed responses with participants reflecting on varying degrees of cooperation within their respective institutions. Where participants reported that colleagues were supportive of provision, the suggestion that pedagogical training was something new and/or outside the norm came through quite strongly, for instance: *'I think that from the top, [the Principal] must be in favour of all this. I think [they are] quite innovative in [their] ideas and in [their] thinking'* (P1) or: *'I think the [conservatoire] has a creative approach to changing the curriculum and meeting the needs of the students'* (P4). Elsewhere, forging links with heads of departments and principal study teaching staff in order to work together on the development of provision was reported as a positive step:

*We're actually an incredibly collegiate institution and there's very little agitation against provision, and people recognise that the instrumental teaching stuff is really good. In fact, this thing we introduced five years ago, getting [...] the performance faculties more engaged in teaching the instrument has been relatively positive in terms of feeling that there's a bit more through flow of expertise [...]. When I fully have my way, there will be a team of performance teachers who are known as the education team and we can then train them. We'll get there! [...] Everyone's really supportive because they recognise it's a really important elective (P6).*

It is interesting to note the use of superlatives in the above responses (for example, 'innovative', 'creative approach', 'incredibly collegiate') implying that some participants felt the need to both defend and promote their provision. This phenomenon could perhaps be due to resistance or hegemony that seemed to manifest itself in different ways in different institutions (Bruner, 1996; Howarth, 2015; Brookfield, 2017; Porton, 2020). For instance, one participant appeared to be affected by colleagues' negativity:

*Every now and then, I'll bump into [a colleague] here and they'll say 'Hi, what are you doing here?' 'I'm teaching.' 'Oh, what are you teaching?' 'Music education.' 'Oh.' [Participant gives look of mock derision]. I've had it in concerts as well talking to colleagues. 'What are you teaching at [conservatoire]?' 'Well, I'm teaching [...] them how to teach'. 'Oh, sorry' [another look of mock derision] (P1).*

In some cases, it had been necessary to convince colleagues of the value of such provision by speaking to individual members of staff to 'break down barriers': 'I thought until recently that actually they were quite against it. I felt that there was resistance from [colleagues] and that there was kind of an old-fashioned snobby attitude, but I think that's breaking down, and certainly, it's not true of all of them' (P1). Similarly, P4 reported 'a little bit of a disconnect' between academic studies and performance in their institution, posing the question: 'Does [head of department]

even know my [module] exists?’ However, they went on to explain that whilst support was really strong in certain departments, the level of cooperation would depend entirely on the person with whom they were working. P4 expressed some frustration that colleagues were not always as open-minded and aware as they might be:

*I think that it would help if [colleagues] advised their students in a more sensitive way cos I think [...] in a high [...] pressure context, the idea of ‘well we’ve just got to make them the best performer’ is understandable but [...] were there to be a little bit more of an open sense of what our students might go and do, that might help them to advise. So sometimes, a bit disconnected, that thinking.*

According to another, the extent to which colleagues showed support for students’ pedagogical training

*depends on their own investment in pedagogy as a lifelong process of development for themselves [...]. If they’re interested in [...] learning about teaching and learning and their own CPD, then they’re more likely to be interested in how we develop our students in those ways [...] Some heads [...] not just instrumental heads, but also Head of Undergraduate [Studies], Head of Postgraduate [Studies] and so on, actively champion [pedagogy] through, if not their own teaching, then through supporting colleagues. And then there are others who are perhaps less interested in that and I think [...] that’s a problem, a challenge [...]. The irony is that the heads are all teachers. They know for themselves that their job is teaching, so of course they should be teaching their students to teach (P5).*

I suggested previously that there is potential for conservatoire students to apply pedagogical knowledge gained from principal study tutors in one-to-one lessons and other contexts to their own developing practice as teachers. However, as noted, despite some ‘buy in’ (terminology attributed to P1) at the most senior level in certain institutions, at the time of this contextual study, there was no statutory requirement in place for conservatoire staff (whether salaried or hourly paid) across the sector to

undertake CPD in the area of learning and teaching.

### **Perceived student values**

The interviews revealed that institutions did not always have a formal mechanism for gathering and responding to student feedback. In some cases, it appeared that the success of music education modules was measured according to the number of students choosing to take them: *'To be perfectly honest, we don't really know what they think about [the provision]. You could take a crude view of uptake as a measure [but] the uptake is only their initial enthusiasm for the module. It's not necessarily their view at the end'* (P5). Formal mechanisms aside, participants' perceptions of how students viewed and valued their institution's provision for core pedagogical training were comparable to how they perceived their colleagues' attitudes and values, with an element of resistance, though, as one might expect, this was less of an issue with optional pedagogy modules:

*The [students] I see really like it because I'm seeing the ones on the optional modules. Last year [...] in the Level 5, compulsory [module] they were just not interested at all really, which is funny because how are they going to make a living? So, that reminded me of my days [as a student at a conservatoire] when we just thought 'I'm just gonna play. I'm not gonna do anything else, I'm just gonna play'* (P1).

Participant 1 gave the impression that students' attitudes and values were changing as a result of the external placement opportunities being offered to them, not only within instrumental and vocal pedagogy (note that there was no bespoke pedagogical training for non-performance specialisms in this institution), but also within the workshop facilitation strand of the curriculum:

*I think that actually, all those creative workshop things and the group teaching is an absolute eye opener to the kind of students who come here because they've mostly been hot housed to do this sort of conservatoire one-to-one teaching and they just didn't know this stuff was on the planet [laughs]. I think*

*this whole thing is making them see education in a wider context. It's like teaching by stealth isn't it? Like  $X = Y$  (P1).*

The suggestion that teaching/music education was being introduced to students in a discrete, unobtrusive way, in the hope that they might not notice is indicative of the prevalent messages and discourses previously discussed. It was even implied that students were sometimes shocked, surprised or even daunted by teaching approaches they had not encountered before, thus strengthening the argument for interdisciplinary teaching that enables crossover between 'classical' students and those specialising in different genres, for example, jazz:

*I think the students here are surprisingly challenged by what we're giving them actually. So, for example, when I do a class in improvisation, I'm not trying to teach them how to improvise: I'm trying to give them ideas on how to use improvisation as a tool in teaching. But they're awfully terrified because [...] I suppose they're like adults. When I was that age, I didn't dare play anything that didn't have a dot on a page in front of me, but I would have thought that in all those years things would have changed [...]. I think we are loosening them up [but] if we go too far, we'll turn them all off (P1).*

The example above suggests there was a need to tread carefully and teach with sensitivity to nurture students' interest in and enthusiasm for teaching. A contrasting view, however, intimates that '*in some conservatoires [...] there are students who think they're too good for teaching*' (P2). Similarly, another perceived '*a certain amount of ignorance as to what this might lead to or why [students] should take pedagogy seriously. The successful ones are [those] who don't just pigeon themselves as a violinist but as a musician and [understand] what that means. I think it is changing slowly*' (P4). These views are reminiscent of Renshaw's claim (1989: 86) that 'students can no longer afford to hide behind a fantasy world of false expectations', though three decades later this still appears to be the case in some quarters. Certainly, as noted above, in some institutions, there was a need to justify to students the importance of studying pedagogy and to gently persuade students that it would be worth their while:

*My first comment at the very beginning of the course is something along the lines [of] ‘I imagine a good number of you are doing this course because you think it’s a useful backup for your careers, but I’m hoping that by the end of this course that I’m going to show you that actually it’s a front-up and maybe the most important work you’re going to do in your lives.’ And I think, you know, without overstating the case, that most of them are convinced by the end (P3).*

Conversely, P2 reflected that students at their institution did seem aware of the relevance of pedagogical training to their post-graduation plans: *‘Students are more aware of [the need for] versatility [...] and what that means [...]. They will make connections like “it’s good for you to teach because your communication gets better” or you know, “you get better at dealing with people”.*’ Despite these students’ alleged ability to think more broadly than their counterparts in other conservatoires, P2 still reported that students did not yet appear to recognise or acknowledge the direct link between their pedagogical training and principal study activity. This facet relates to notions of ‘hidden curriculum’ (Pitts, 2003; Haddon, 2012), ‘invisible pedagogy’ (Bernstein, 1975) and ‘classification and framing’ (Bernstein, 2003), as discussed in Chapter 1.3. My own intervention against this phenomenon is discussed in Chapter 5.

The attitudes described above suggest that there is still much work to be done to counteract hegemony in conservatoires, in relation to instrumental teacher education and/or music workshop facilitation training. P5 attributes this ongoing battle to the messages that students receive even before they arrive at the institution, for example, via the conservatoire’s website, at open days<sup>4</sup> and at the audition:

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<sup>4</sup> Recently, at RBC, a head of department who highlighted pedagogy provision as an important aspect of conservatoire training during an open day and other recruitment activities not only enticed more individuals to apply but also persuaded more offer holders to accept their places.

*It's not just what you provide, it's how you talk about it and how you communicate it [...]. If they're told what we're about is performing excellence, for example, or you're here primarily to develop as a performer [...] I don't know, but if those are the messages, then they're the wrong messages, or they're incomplete messages.*

Furthermore, according to P5, students' day-to-day interactions with principal study tutors and other members of staff *'will either build up the students' notions of themselves as teachers or not, and also build up the notion of value around teaching.'* Recalling anecdotal evidence, they believed that *'faint praise'* such as *'you might not make a performer but you'd make a good teacher'* was *'demeaning to teaching as a career choice'* and that a *'cultural shift'* in attitudes would now be necessary, reflections which again, may be linked to Ford's findings (2010: 13):

Within the conservatoire setting, it was [...] evident that students complained about having to do [...] activities [...] designed to make [them] aware of the range of jobs involving music that could also be available to them [and] students seemed very selective in what they defined the music profession to be. Thinking further about these issues, I observed that it was not just students who were articulating sets of values, but also their teachers, and aspects of the organisation of the conservatoire itself [suggesting] that conservatoires had something 'seeping through the walls' that made people act in a certain way and adhere to certain values.

### **Alumni: an invaluable (but little used) resource**

The interviews revealed that, across the conservatoire sector, provision had supported students to gain employment as music educators post-graduation, and that, in some cases, students' career aspirations changed part-way through their course as a result of their pedagogical training, as noted by P2, *'We have had several people who, as a result of that module, have decided that they actually want to go formally into teaching.'*

Participants were able to comment in a general way about graduate employability, though few specific examples of how provision has directly benefited students were given. Nevertheless, one reported that *'A girl just got a job with In Harmony directly after doing one of my electives, and those sorts of things are more common for me now [...]. There's been four or five [students] over the last year or so who've gone into quite meaningful positions'* (P4). However, participants implied that, while performance successes were highly celebrated by conservatoires; graduates' and current students' achievements in the field of music education were less widely acknowledged. This is akin to Ford's findings (2010: 218), where the institutional values surrounding the performance of classical music outweighed those relating to employability:

The conservatoire notice boards offered visual clues as to the official values of the institution [...] the celebration of competition wins and orchestral positions gained by alumni, along with the distinct absence of congratulations to students who had won jobs as say, teachers or jobs outside of the music profession.

Institutional valuing of achievements resulting from pedagogical training seemed in short supply and further manifested itself in equivocal responses that were attributed to losing touch with students once they had graduated, such as *'I really don't know because I haven't really seen them beyond [the module]'* (P1) and *'I don't yet feel I have a really good sense of where the graduates go in terms of music education work'* (P5).

The above findings suggest that there is scope for conservatoires not only to document student and graduate achievements in music education in a systematic and meaningful way, but also to keep in touch with alumni who work in this field. Inviting former students to contribute to module delivery would provide further role models for current students, thus raising the profile of pedagogical training within conservatoires and ensuring that current students understand its relevance and value. Using alumni insights and experience to inform course developments would ensure that provision was highly relevant and sufficiently up to date to meet the

needs of emerging teachers. The potential for conservatoire alumni to contribute to pedagogical training, explored as part of my research, is discussed in Chapter 7.

### **3.5 Summary**

This chapter has explored some of the challenges involved in preparing conservatoire students to work as instrumental teachers (or music educators more generally) within the profession, taking into account the perspectives of conservatoire academics (OO participants) in charge of devising, leading and delivering pedagogical training within their institutions. As previously noted, in 2018–19, conservatoires' provision for training undergraduates as music educators lacked consistency across the sector. This may have been partly due to each institution's need to retain 'its own strengths and specialisms' (ucas.com). However, I argue that such a focus on independence has negative implications for consistency in a climate where conservatoires are not meeting the needs of employers and the music education workforce (Chapter 4 offers a fuller discussion). Indeed, there appeared to be no agreed strategy across institutions regarding what point in the BMus course to introduce pedagogical training, nor whether/how to ensure equal opportunities across the sector for students who wished to further their music educator training beyond core provision. Pedagogical training within and between principal study departments was similarly inconsistent with non-performance specialisms, including composition, lacking bespoke curriculum content in most cases. However, there was clear evidence of interdisciplinary and cross-departmental pedagogical activity in some conservatoires, thus enabling 'classical' performers to learn from and alongside composers, music technologists, jazz, rock and pop musicians, and vice versa. Whilst conservatoires utilised internal contacts, such as their own junior departments and L&P provision, to engage students in supervised placement activity, in the case of the latter, this involvement was rarely embedded into modules. Some institutions offered their students external placements via core and/or optional modules, though there appeared to be no compulsion to do so, and no obvious quality assurance procedures in place to ensure that students were witnessing and/or experiencing up-to-date practices, with direct relevance for their early teaching careers. However, while approaches to assessment varied from institution

to institution, there seemed to be an element of consistency through an emphasis on developing reflective practitioners.

The interviews revealed several challenges and obstacles to preparing conservatoire students for careers as instrumental teachers. Many of these challenges were centred around the 'messages' (P5) or 'discourses' (Ford, 2010) that pervaded institutions, where classical music performance was strongly classified and framed (Bernstein, 2003), being promoted, advocated and valued over modules with the potential to enhance students' employability prospects as future portfolio musicians. Participants had experienced varying degrees of support from colleagues but where there was resistance from a department or individual member of staff, this tended to influence students negatively. Quality assurance posed further challenges regarding the cost and time implications of training hourly-paid staff, whose own practices were sometimes deemed out of date. It is possible therefore, that conservatoire teaching may impact negatively on students' own development as music educators and magnify their predisposition to 'teach as they were taught'. Furthermore, because conservatoire curricula appeared to prioritise principal study activity above all else, little space or flexibility remained to develop pedagogical training. Despite this, participants' reflections during the interviews revealed an appetite for such developments, though the lack of a mechanism for gathering student feedback on pedagogical modules revealed by some participants is concerning, and surely a missed opportunity for students to contribute to advancements in curriculum design and content. Likewise, there seems little or no systematic means of documenting current students' or graduates' career successes in the field of music education, and therefore, little is known about the extent to which conservatoire sector pedagogical training prepares students effectively for the music education workforce. My research attempts to begin to address all these issues.

While, as noted above, each conservatoire in the UK has its own identity (ucas.com) and 'each provider offers a distinctive educational experience, with its own mission and focus, contributing to the healthy diversity of the sector' (QAA, 2019: 6), these findings raise significant questions about whether there is a need to monitor principal study-specific pedagogical training more closely, both within individual

conservatoires and across the sector, to ensure that wherever students choose to study and whatever their principal study specialism, they can access comparable pedagogical training at undergraduate level.

The following chapter will consider challenges relating to instrumental teacher training for conservatoire students from an opposing perspective – that of another set of OO participants: employers representing 66 music hubs across England (Project 1b).

## **Chapter 4: Employer perceptions of conservatoire graduates' preparedness for the instrumental teaching profession**

### **4.1 Background**

This chapter provides insight into employers' perceptions of instrumental teacher education in conservatoires and ascertains their views on the extent to which conservatoires were addressing the challenges involved in meeting the needs of employers and the music education workforce at the time of this study (early 2020). Such OO perspectives, gathered from a cross-section of England's music education providers with first-hand experience of interviewing and employing recent conservatoire graduates, are useful in triangulating the findings from another set of OO participants, as discussed in Chapter 3. (Through this chapter, 'recent' graduates are defined as those who completed an undergraduate degree within the year prior to their employment). While an important first stage, the perspectives discussed in the previous chapter focused mainly on the concerns within conservatoires over the challenges they faced in preparing students for careers in instrumental and vocal teaching. In contrast, the current chapter presents the views of senior staff representatives (for example, heads or their deputies) across all the MEHs in England who completed an online questionnaire. This cross-section of participants was approached because, between them, they were likely to offer a range of perspectives based on their varying backgrounds and experiences. For example, whilst some were likely to have been conservatoire-trained, others may have trained at university or via other routes. Some senior leaders may have begun their teaching careers as peripatetic staff within a MEH or elsewhere, whilst others may have been former classroom teachers, active professional performers or working in areas other than music. These varying perspectives evidently have implications for the findings and are discussed below (see Chapter 4.5).

Details of the questionnaire design were outlined in Chapter 2 along with brief reference to the processes involved in data collection and analysis. As previously noted in Chapter 2.3, graphs and charts were automatically generated by the [onlinesurveys.ac.uk](https://www.onlinesurveys.ac.uk) platform. However, the questionnaire also generated qualitative data that were read multiple times for familiarisation purposes prior to being

transferred into an Excel spreadsheet to facilitate manual analysis. Data were then read repeatedly, line by line, and as codes were assigned to meaningful segments of text, they were typed into row 1 of the spreadsheet. In each case, a number '1' was entered into the cell corresponding to the participant response the code was linked to (an exercise employed in Projects 2a–c: see Chapters 5 and 6). Once this process had been completed, it was necessary to group related codes together and eliminate overlapping ones (as in Project 1) in order that the overarching and sub-themes could emerge: these are shown in Table 15 below. Supplementary information pertaining to this project (Project 1b) can be found in Appendix C (pp. 22–8).

*Table 15: Project 1b – summary of themes*

<b>Overarching themes</b>	<b>Sub-themes</b>
Perceived graduate incompetence	Lack of teaching experience, knowledge, confidence and ability – culture shock Conservatoire teaching should be more wide-ranging Limited experience of pedagogy other than one-to-one lessons Teach as they were taught approaches insufficient Emphasis on technical perfection over musical fluency Reliance on tutor books rather than lesson planning Graduates unprepared for WCET or large ensemble directing Insufficient awareness of safeguarding policy Group teaching challenges, e.g., differentiation, behaviour management Limited experience of teaching composition and improvisation Lack of experience in multi-genres, e.g., rock, pop, world, music technology
Perceived graduate indifference	Job security an issue Professional isolation a challenge Students lack understanding of pupils' socio-cultural backgrounds Teaching viewed as a 'stopgap' rather than as career progression Teaching for income 'on the side' Student expectations not matched to demands of the role Balancing performing with teaching is difficult Struggle with commitment to role and investing time to develop teaching skills
Perceived institutional barriers/ Partnership potential)	Acknowledgement that employer needs to provide further training Quality assurance needed Perceived lack of institutional interest Former partnerships failed Some existing partnerships work well Lack of funding for training graduate teachers Hubs keen to offer placements/contribute to course development

The discussion which follows utilises the emerging statistical and textual data as a basis from which to explore employer perspectives on recent conservatoire graduates' prior experience, self-confidence and attitudes towards instrumental teaching. Employer recommendations for developing conservatoire curricula are also presented, together with consideration of the nature and extent of their input into undergraduate course development to date. While practical considerations meant

that it was not possible to consult other music education providers, such as independent schools or arts organisations, the emerging employer perceptions from MEHs provide insights on the preparedness of conservatoire graduates for the instrumental teaching profession, uncovering further challenges for the conservatoire sector that may be considered alongside those uncovered in Chapter 3. Throughout this chapter, participants and their geographical locations are anonymised using an alphanumeric code that relates to the order in which responses were received, for example, Hub number 1 is denoted by H1.

## 4.2 Employment of conservatoire graduates in MEHs

MEHs returned 66 completed questionnaires by mid-February 2020, constituting a pleasing response rate of 54% across a wide geographical area (though some parts of the country lacked representation), as shown in Figure 14:

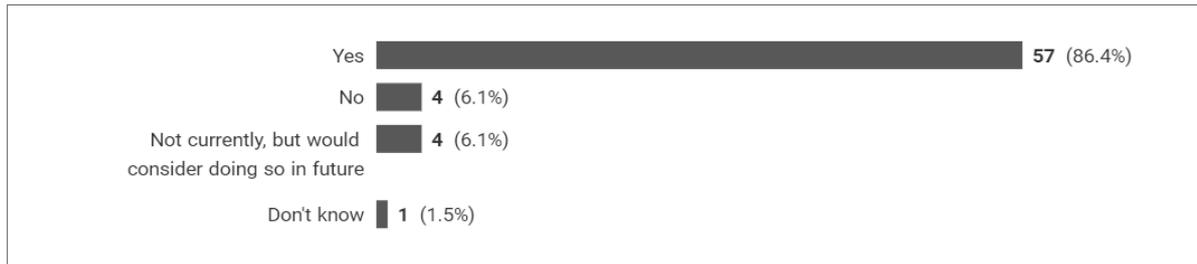
*Figure 14: Geographical spread of responses from MEHs*



Of those 66 hubs represented, 86.4% employed recent conservatoire graduates at the time of the study as shown in Figure 15 below. Four hubs did not employ any

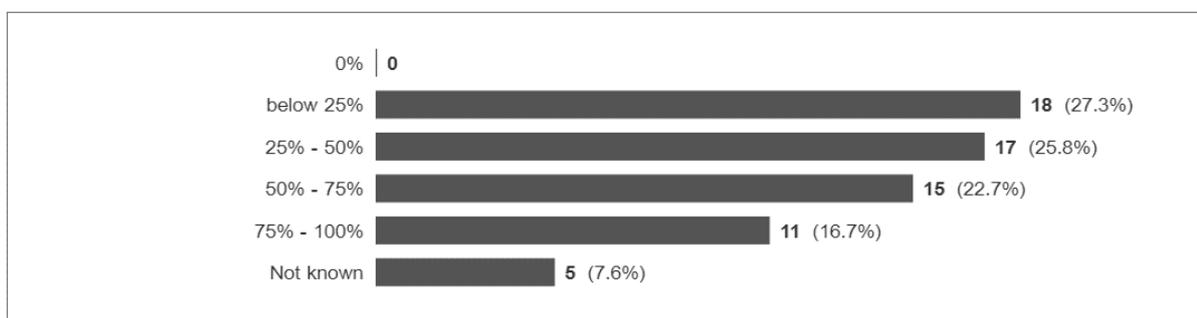
conservatoire graduates at all (H2; H19; H40; H59), while four others did not employ conservatoire graduates at this time but reported that they would consider doing so in future (H12; H24; H43; H51).

*Figure 15: Does your music hub recruit teachers who are only just graduating from conservatoires/music colleges, or who graduated very recently, i.e. less than a year ago?*



Across all participating hubs, the percentage of employees who had formerly trained at conservatoires appeared to vary widely (as illustrated in Figure 16 below) and, perhaps surprisingly, in 7.6% of cases, employers were unable to identify where their staff had originally trained, albeit that respondents were unlikely to have had ready access to detailed employment statistics when completing the questionnaire. Nevertheless, the high proportion of conservatoire graduates apparently being employed by hubs was notable, though qualitative data revealed (as discussed in the Introduction) that hubs also employed music graduates from universities.

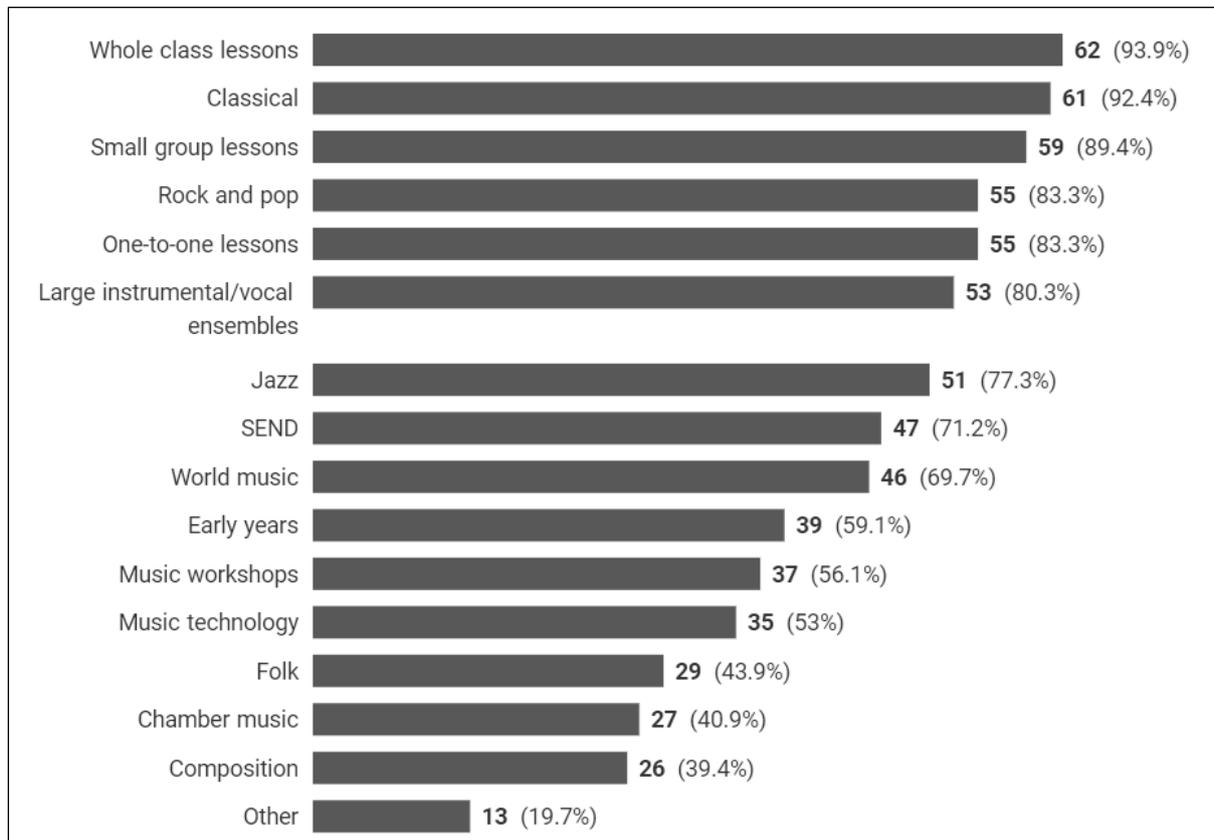
*Figure 16: Approximately what percentage of your teaching staff trained at a conservatoire?*



As part of the process to establish the strength of fit between employer needs and conservatoire training, it was important to establish the nature of the work that conservatoire graduates were typically being asked to undertake. Thus Figure 17

shows the range and breadth of specialisms offered by music hubs and services across England, all of which recent conservatoire graduates were required to teach.

*Figure 17: In your music hub, which of the following genres/specialisms/lesson types do you recruit new employees to teach? Please select all that apply.*



It is significant that Whole Class Ensemble Teaching (WCET) was ranked top of the list and was referred to multiple times in the qualitative data, given the reach of WCET across England as a result of its delivery having become a ‘core role’ of MEHs (DfE & DCMS, 2011: 26; Fautley et al., 2019), as noted in Chapter 1.1. It is also striking that ‘rock and pop’ and ‘one-to-one lessons’ were ranked equally, suggesting that conservatoire students should be just as prepared to teach the former as the latter. Small-group teaching was ranked more highly than one-to-one teaching and ensemble direction was also considered hugely important. A range of additional specialisms fell below 80%, including ‘others’ specified by participants, such as rap, contemporary, DJ training, theory, musicianship, piano accompaniment, instrument repair, leading singing festivals (or other one-off events) and offering

alternative provision for young people in pupil referral units (PRUs). It was also noted that some hubs expected employees to *‘teach in multi genres’* and that *‘composition [was] integrated into whole class and national curriculum teaching’* (H15). However, it was revealing that hubs found *‘very few conservatoire graduates with real-life rock and pop or music technology experience’* (H54), or many with a *‘folk or world music specialism’* (H53) raising questions about how or from where hubs recruit teachers of these disciplines and whether instrumental teacher education in conservatoires could be more diverse to assist with this, especially given the findings of Chapter 3 and wider national concerns around equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) in the music education workforce (Spence, 2021). I argue, however, that a lack of awareness of musical diversity manifests itself even before students begin their conservatoire training: at least for many students in England, the content of A-level music syllabuses represents *‘a kind of scholastic canon’* (Whittaker, 2020: 18), which inevitably forms a significant proportion of the cultural capital students bring to their undergraduate studies and future employment.

Rankings aside, Figure 17 (above) shows the wide range of professional activity taking place within a music hub/music service setting that conservatoire graduates were either required to (or, more positively, could) engage with as early career instrumental teachers. While one participant reported that the nature of an employee’s portfolio would be based largely on their current specialisms and prior experience: *‘A new entrant to the profession would be deployed according to their skill set [...] we would not expect an inexperienced teacher to be working outside of their skills and experience’* (H31), the majority of senior leaders in music hubs perceived that new/recent conservatoire graduates were not sufficiently *‘qualified’* (defined as prepared and/or trained) to teach across a large number of areas.

### **4.3 Employment challenges for MEHs**

The qualitative data provided by hub representatives revealed several challenges encountered by employers (which, arguably, should become challenges for conservatoires). Employers perceived varying levels of *‘incompetence’* (defined as inability to teach effectively) and *‘indifference’* (defined as a negative attitude towards pursuing teaching as a career, or a reluctance to develop as a teacher) in their

conservatoire graduate employees. In some cases, however, where hubs claimed not to employ conservatoire graduates, the apparent incompetence and indifference may have been anecdotal, or based upon experience of employing conservatoire graduates prior to the period during which this study was conducted (December 2019–February 2020). Nevertheless, many employers tended to attribute graduate incompetence and indifference to institutional barriers, suggesting that teaching was not actively promoted as a valued facet of the music profession in conservatoires. This view correlates strongly with the perceptions of the conservatoire academics I interviewed in the summer prior to distributing the questionnaire to MEHs. Similarly, it relates to notions of institutional valuing (Ford, 2010) and hegemony (Bruner, 1996; Darder et al., 2003; Howarth, 2015; Brookfield, 2017; Porton, 2020). Furthermore, employers perceived that obstacles stood in the way of forging partnerships with conservatoires to facilitate the training of new instrumental teachers, an issue to be discussed in Chapter 4.4.

### **Perceived graduate incompetence**

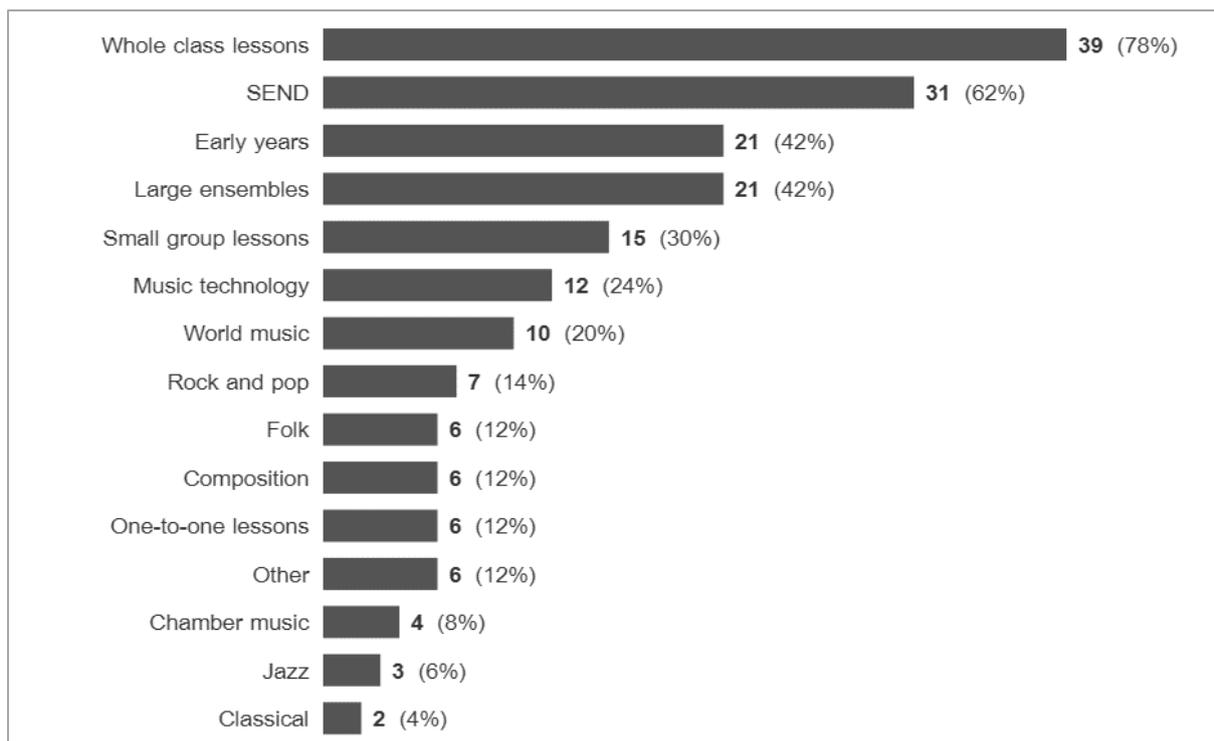
Employer participants were asked to identify genres, specialisms or lesson types that they believed new conservatoire graduates were typically not qualified to teach. One participant's response, *'I think it is important to agree what "qualified to teach" means'* (H32) is particularly pertinent since, as outlined in the Introduction to this thesis, School Teachers' Pay and Conditions (DfE, 2021) permits schools and music hubs to employ 'unqualified' instrumental music teachers: that is teachers without QTS. However, this respondent did go on to clarify their understanding of the situation regarding conservatoire graduates: *'The majority [...] don't have teaching experience in most of [the areas listed in Figure 18 below]. However, given support and training, many [graduates] can quickly become excellent teachers.'*

Directly corresponding to the previous revelation that WCET was regarded as the single most important activity, Figure 18 reveals that it was also viewed by the highest number of hub representatives (78%) as being the type of teaching that new/recent conservatoire graduates were least able or trained/prepared by their institutions to deliver. Indeed, one hub representative claimed that *'the majority of*

*[their] whole class teachers hold QTS* and that *'many freelance tutors are not selected by the hub for teaching roles'* (H28).

Another hub representative, who did not employ conservatoire graduates at the time of the study, believed that conservatoire students *'often don't get the opportunity to have worked in a whole class setting'* (H43). Others with experience of employing conservatoire graduates concurred, claiming that *'usually, the expertise required to command a full class of young people is not covered during conservatoire courses'* (H52) and that, as a result of this (while suggesting a certain empathy), new graduates *'have limited experience and can find teaching [...] whole classes intimidating and discouraging'* (H30).

Figure 18: Of the genres/specialisms/lesson types identified, are there any that you consider new conservatoire graduates are typically not qualified to teach?



Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) teaching appeared second in the above ranking order, being selected by 62% of participants. One hub representative expressed the view that *'SEND knowledge and experience tends to be almost non-existent'* (H1), whilst another acknowledged that *'SEND covers such a broad range*

*[that it is] therefore unlikely that new/recent graduates will have skills or sufficient knowledge to begin with'* (H20). Consequently, some hubs *'have not found it easy to recruit SEND staff'* (H47) and would only place *'those with prior experience into these settings to start with'* (H52). However, it was recognised that most conservatoire graduates were *'interested in SEND'* (H17) and that there was certainly scope to train them in this area.

Another important provision for consideration is that of Early Years learning and so it is somewhat salutary, if hardly unexpected, that 40% of hub representatives reported that conservatoire graduates were not sufficiently trained to work with children in such settings. One participant explained that Early Years and SEND are *'specialist areas [with] specific degrees or courses where the employee has focused in that area and/or has some work experience'* (H19), whilst another offered a more speculative response: *'I imagine Early Years will change in the near future'* (H22), presumably with the impending new National Plan for Music Education in mind. However, both SEND and Early Years teaching were seen as high priorities for whole-staff CPD training in at least one hub (H53), with conservatoire graduates receiving training in both disciplines during their first years of working for it.

Given the previous data around WCET and the finding that hubs definitively *'require conductors who are experienced in working with children and teenagers for [their] ensembles'* (H45), it is unsurprising that large ensemble direction was also viewed by 40% of participants as an area in which conservatoire graduates were insufficiently trained and *'often lacking in ensemble direction and conducting skills'* (H36). Indeed, as something of an indictment, according to one hub:

*really basic stuff seems to be missing, e.g. transposing, playing by ear, even reading different clefs, preparing a score as a conductor, basic conducting technique, how to plan and structure a rehearsal for young people [and] arranging rewarding music for beginner players'* (H3).

Another hub provided further insight into some of these ongoing issues, implying that conducting lessons taken as part of a conservatoire undergraduate degree did not

prepare graduates sufficiently for conducting in an educational context. (A related issue of behaviour management will be discussed further below):

*Though many of our [graduate employees] have ensemble coaching experience, this is often with smaller/chamber groups and the adaptation of conducting skill from taught conducting lessons into a full plan for a large (often junior or mixed-ability ensemble) can be daunting/difficult for new graduates. We try to overcome this hurdle by placing graduates in side-by-side settings as they are often unfamiliar with, say, a large wind band rehearsal (but much more comfortable with a sectional rehearsal). The aspects of behaviour management included within a large ensemble also need a little more time for our [graduate employees] to observe and formulate an approach (H53).*

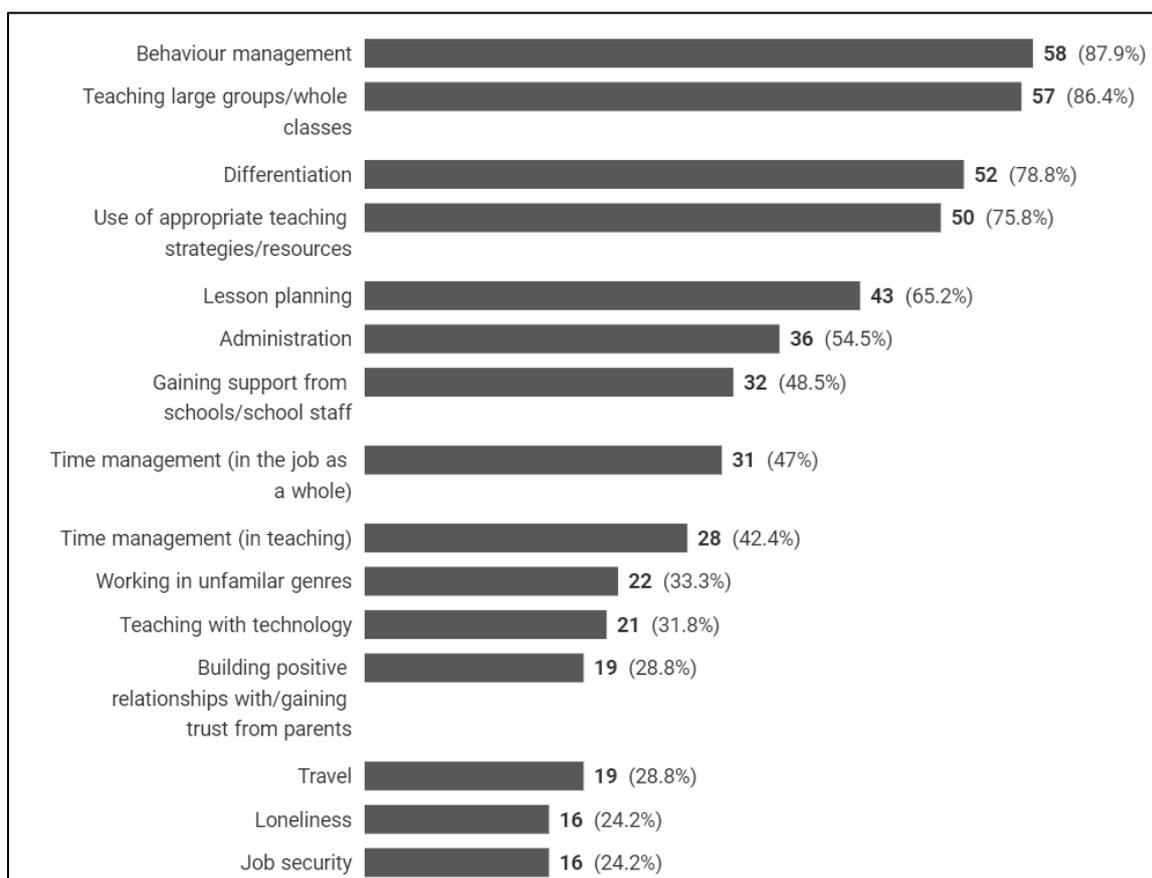
Even where small-group teaching was concerned, further comments suggested that conservatoire students were simply *'not prepared for the reality of small group teaching in schools'* (P39) and that, while they might have experience of delivering short workshop sessions during their undergraduate degrees, these would *'rarely equate to longer term weekly teaching of this kind'* and therefore would give them *'a distorted view'* of the challenges involved (H65). In revealing their own perceptions of the distinct challenges faced by new/recent conservatoire graduates in their early careers, employer participants implied that more support should be put in place during undergraduate training, with priority being given to those areas at or near the top of Figure 19 (below).

Again, those challenges closely associated with large- and small-group teaching received the highest rankings: for example, behaviour management came out on top at 87.9%, with differentiation falling not very far behind (78.8%). As noted by Gane (1996: 64), group teaching (of any size) brings its own set of diverse challenges:

Class music teachers face, in each year group, children whose diverse interests, background, music education to date, abilities, and needs demand great skill in the planning of learning so that it is effective for each pupil.

Instrumental teachers working in school have to encompass similar diversity, compounded by inconsistency of age, period of learning and instrument, perhaps even within the same group. If, added to this, there is the differing character of individual teachers and schools, it is a mixed picture indeed.

*Figure 19: What are the particular challenges faced by new teachers working for your music hub?*



Notably, hubs who did not employ conservatoire graduates at the time of the study asserted that, *‘if they haven’t been taught classroom management skills, they will struggle with whole class ensemble tuition and ensuring [the] evidencing of progression in small groups’* (H59), whilst others found that conservatoire graduates lacked creativity in facilitating pupils’ learning. Despite technological advancements in recent years, *‘typically, most graduates are not particularly conversant with music IT’* (H52), or even set up for *‘using technology at a basic level’* (H2). Furthermore, *‘they are generally less competent in enabling their pupils to improvise [and] often*

*rely on tutor books to drive the structure the lesson, rather than selecting appropriate repertoire that fits with the focus of their lesson planning'* (H4).

The above findings resonate with studies by (Chappell (1999: 253) who reported that lessons for beginners typically focused on 'working through tutor books and learning to read notation [after which] examinations became the main focus of lessons' and Goddard (2002: 245) where 'Teachers of beginners usually prefer to use tutor books rather than make up their own curriculum [and] success is usually judged by the number of examination certificates amassed.' It is pertinent that employers in the current study gave the impression that conservatoire graduates' teaching practices have not progressed in the two decades since Chappell's and Goddard's findings were published. Several hub representatives made generalisations about conservatoire graduates such as '*Most conservatoire students are limited to teaching what they themselves have been taught*' (H1). Moreover, it was suggested that the teaching approaches adopted by conservatoire graduate employees tended to relate to their most recent learning experiences and that they '*have very little understanding of the basic building blocks of music and how musical learning develops*' (H62).

*We find that new teachers teach the way they've been taught at graduate level, rather than how they were taught as young children. The focus nearly always emphasises technical perfection over musical fluency (which is necessary before technical aspects can be improved). Lesson pace is often far too slow as a result, and sometimes the angle of a finger seems more important than making sense out of a musical phrase* (H6).

Teaching approaches such as those outlined above could be attributed to the view that conservatoire graduates' '*expectations can sometimes be too high due to their own experiences*' and that '*it is sometimes difficult for new teachers to understand that the students they teach are not always as passionate about music as they are*' (H20). The collective views expressed above resonate with the argument posed in Chapter 3: that students should be exposed to teaching scenarios that are not immediately familiar to them. (Discussion pertaining to how RBC students were led

to question their assumptions and assimilate unfamiliar concepts in music education follows in Chapters 5 and 6.)

Further challenges will be addressed in the next section since they relate strongly to 'perceived graduate indifference'. However, before moving on, it is worth noting one 'other' challenge not specified in Figure 19: according to one hub representative, *'young teachers can struggle with role of teacher versus being liked by children/being their friend'* (H50), therefore implying that conservatoires could do more to prepare students about maintaining professional boundaries and raising their awareness of safeguarding issues. Further considerations put forward included a need to understand school structures, the socio-economic and/or cultural background of schools and their pupils, and to communicate with parents in a professional manner (H10): issues that are included in the Teachers' Standards (DfE, 2011).

The qualitative data provided by 74.2% of employers who elaborated on the challenges listed in Figure 19 also expressed their views about conservatoire graduates' attitudes in relation to pursuing a teaching career. In most cases, employers perceived that graduates lacked interest in or commitment towards developing their skills in that direction.

### **Perceived graduate indifference**

A further significant challenge for hubs who employed conservatoire students related to retaining conservatoire graduates as staff. There were various reasons for this view; for example, employers perceived that conservatoire graduates saw teaching *'as a stopgap'* (H6), or *'as something they might do on the side'* (H46), and in some cases *'are often still not sure if they want to be teachers and find it difficult to manage time between teaching and performing commitments'* (H30). Others concurred: *'There seems to be an attitude that teaching is not a career choice and it's just filling in time before they get a playing job'* (H27) and *'there are some students who see teaching as the means to generate income while they pursue performance rather than investing early on in becoming the best educator they can*

be' (H33). This perceived tendency for conservatoire graduates to prioritise performing work over their teaching was highly problematic for employers:

*The biggest issue for us is that [conservatoire graduates] are usually trying to build a portfolio of work in which education work is rarely (never) priority. Whilst this isn't an issue in itself, the problem it causes is two-fold. Firstly, when graduates want to regularly move things around to suit casual playing work it just doesn't work as the clients don't want it, regardless of how good the teaching might be. Secondly, [...] we often find that graduates don't want to put any work into developing their teaching (I couldn't imagine they would take this approach to their playing) and as such they often stall quite early on and struggle [...]. I would summarise by suggesting that many see it as an easy option and underestimate how skilled the best instrumental tutors are (H25).*

From a financial perspective, however, it is possible that teaching for a music hub did not appeal to conservatoire graduates, since 'very few permanent jobs [were] available and work [was] often limited in the first instance' (H5). Meanwhile, another participant intimated that the portfolio nature of conservatoire graduate careers may preclude them from any sense of belonging to an organisation or 'workforce'. As suggested in Figure 19, above:

*Job security is a huge issue. The employment structures in many hubs have weakened as have the pay and conditions. It's difficult to see why an aspiring young student would seek [to develop] a career in some hubs. The CPD systems that allowed many instrumental teachers to gain PGCE training and pay no longer exist and that has undoubtedly downgraded the attractiveness of peripatetic teaching as a career. This leads to 'part-time-ism' across the workforce which also leads to loneliness. If young student teachers are working multiple portfolio-type jobs they do not have time to become part of any workforce (H33).*

However, hub representatives perceived that even permanent teaching positions could lack appeal for conservatoire graduates due to conflicting commitments and goals:

*We are proud to offer salaried posts. However, this salary comes with a commitment that shocks many graduates to the core. Many really struggle with the reality of working full time in the sector and the commitment required to develop themselves, work on a growth mind-set and ensure that teaching and learning is exciting and relevant to children and young people from all backgrounds (H26).*

Some employers suggested that, in helping to support aspiring instrumental teachers in conservatoires, they would be keen to encourage them to view instrumental teaching as a means to ‘*career progression*’ (H13), as opposed to ‘*just a way to pay the bills*’ (H20). I contend that, while financial considerations are bound to factor into graduates’ employment destinations, their long-term commitment to teaching is likely to be influenced by the extent to which careers in teaching were celebrated by their former institution and their resilience to ‘hegemonic power’ (Porton, 2020: 87).

The questionnaire findings revealed that, to an extent, hubs tended to make assumptions about conservatoire graduates having little interest in teaching, with ‘*too narrow a range of skills and [a tendency to] avoid things outside their comfort zone*’ (H11). I argue that such a criticism did not consider the huge pressure experienced in a learning environment where a year’s worth of development in the principal study area (usually prioritised above all else) is assessed by a single end-of-year recital, leaving many students little time to explore other avenues for development, an issue raised by RBC alumni (see Chapter 7.2). Further criticism implied that the conservatoire sector’s approach to pedagogical training may be outdated, though, given the following participant’s hub did not employ conservatoire graduates, this comment may have been purely speculative, rooted in the participants’ own understanding of social norms (Wright, 2016a).

*In my experience (albeit 20 years ago) most teachers used a 'doctors' surgery' approach to teaching or simply said "play it like this"! If this is what current undergrads are experiencing it then requires a large learning leap to get them to what we expect our teachers to deliver in the classroom now (H3).*

However, this respondent did make an astute observation about the need for greater quality assurance in instrumental teacher training, a point alluded to earlier in this chapter. By contrast, other hub leads' perspectives were more grounded in their recent recruitment experiences:

*As a general rule, graduates of both conservatoires and university music departments are miles away from being ready for the modern music education sector. Invariably they have been taught one-to-one their whole lives, including at conservatoire. Our experience is that this teaching they have experienced is old-fashioned 'master says and pupil does'. We feel that conservatoires have a lot to do in order to address the quality of individual teaching and learning in their own settings – rather than just a focus on 'good players'. We see graduates with loads of potential who we either just can't employ or have to embark on a detailed, lengthy and costly training programme (H26).*

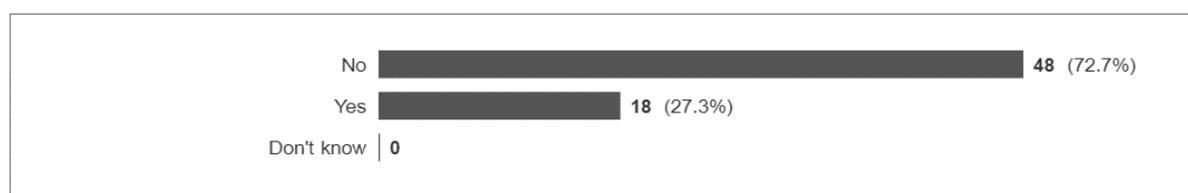
Given the criticism regarding students' apparent indifference towards investing in developing their teaching skills, it might seem ironic that the findings from this study suggest that some hubs did not appear to view training recent conservatoire graduates as a core role, instead regarding it as an imposition that '*stretches capacity*' (H1). However, these were understandable concerns, not only from a staffing point of view, but also from a financial perspective. Indeed, other hubs suggested that forming partnerships with conservatoires to provide or improve existing training would be a positive step and posed possible solutions to such challenges:

*It will be a struggle for us to help conservatories develop courses without some sort of funding to pay for our time and commitment. A simple option*

would be for conservatoires to develop reciprocal relationships with hubs to jointly deliver training whilst also getting students to deliver some tuition – we could develop an apprentice scheme, for example (H59).

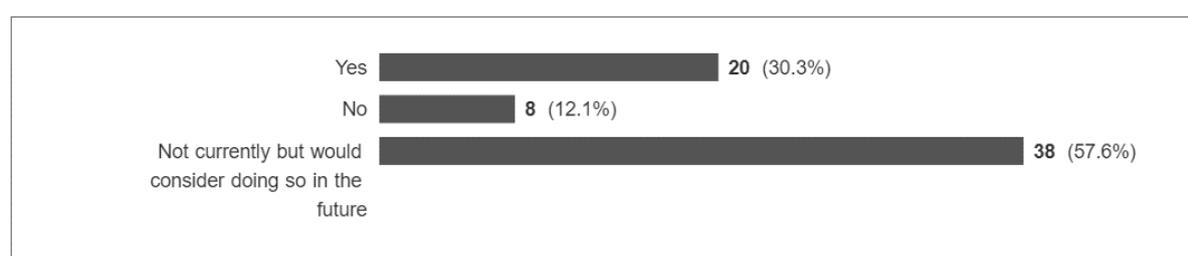
As shown in Figure 20, only a small proportion of hubs (27.3%) had previously been asked to contribute to undergraduate course development in conservatoires, with such involvement taking many forms, from delivering one-off lectures as part of pedagogy modules and offering talks at careers events to sitting on course validation panels.

*Figure 20: Have you ever been asked to contribute to undergraduate course development in conservatoires?*



Just under one third (30.3%) of hubs reported that they had worked in partnership with institutions to offer placements (see Figure 21), though this statistic was misleading since 13.6% of respondents referred to collaborations with university music departments rather than conservatoires specifically, and another 7.5% referred to PGCE courses as opposed to BMus modules. This is not to suggest that university music departments and PGCE courses are not of interest, but they fall outside the parameters of the current study.

*Figure 21: Does your music hub offer placements/training for undergraduate conservatoire students as part of their course?*



Representatives from 57.6% of hubs who had not previously collaborated with institutions concurred with H59 above and were keen to work with conservatoires in the future.

*This would be a great step forward in helping to forge career pathways for graduates and help us to guide them in the areas which would be beneficial for roles that they may wish to apply for in music hubs (H7).*

*We have not been approached about doing so but I would jump at the chance if offered. This is an area that interests me greatly and I can see so many mutual benefits (H58).*

Nevertheless, forging 'reciprocal relationships' with conservatoires was deemed a challenge by some hubs due to perceived institutional barriers.

#### **4.4 Perceived institutional barriers**

The qualitative data revealed that, in some cases, hub representatives had encountered disregard for supporting conservatoire students' development as teachers, with one hub perceiving '*a good deal of snobbery around teaching within conservatoires*' and suggesting that hubs and institutions should work together to '*break this down*' (H62). Taking the argument further, this participant believed: '*that it is essential that students gain an understanding of the job, [as well as] an understanding that it is highly likely that they will need to teach as it is almost impossible to survive on performance alone*'. Another hub concurred with this view:

*It would be lovely to be asked [to help]! We feel that we should be working closely with conservatoires in this field, as hubs are a major employer of musicians. There continues to be an identity crisis for the role of the 'peri' and we can turn this around if we can spend time with undergraduates shaping their understanding of this exciting and rewarding role (H26).*

The above reference to an '*identity crisis*' resonated with the student indifference described above and with issues raised by alumni in Chapter 7.2. Here, H26 seemed

to be implying that the root of the problem may lie at an institutional level, an issue of 'hegemonic culture' (Bruner, 1996) discussed in Chapter 1.3 where students' principal study (i.e. performance or composition) took priority above all else, creating tensions for students who might wish to choose a different path. Such a view relates to that of McClellan (2014) who, in considering tensions between performer and teacher identities, argues that identity as a music teacher is affected by the socio-cultural setting of the institution. The concept of an institutional barrier was further reinforced by the finding that, in many cases, hubs had not previously been approached by conservatoires and in some instances where hubs had offered their services to conservatoires, their support had not been welcomed or even accepted: *'Despite all the right noises being made this has never actually happened'* (H36).

*Due to the unpreparedness of students, my line manager and I have attempted to offer support for undergraduates in the local conservatoire. There is very little recognition of the extent of the problem there, and the support that our experience and knowledge could give. I have delivered a small amount of teaching for the students. That was organised by the careers department rather than those involved with pedagogy. Recently a more extensive scheme that we tried to organise jointly fell down due to lack of support from the conservatoire (H15).*

*I have approached conservatoires to offer to set up apprenticeship schemes for graduates. None took up the offer. One college intimated that they set up their own employment agency for their students who would not work for less than MU recommended rates of pay (H30).*

These multiple rejections of employer support by institutions are highly concerning, given the findings outlined earlier in this chapter that suggest that conservatoire graduates were seemingly unprepared by their institutions for instrumental teaching in a hub setting. Furthermore, the suggestion (by H30) that conservatoires might aim to work in direct competition with local hubs is troubling from a quality assurance perspective, contributing to England's 'patchy' music provision (Henley, 2011), especially since (as discussed above, including Chapter 1.1–1.2) there appeared to

be a scarcity of instrumental teachers trained to respond to the rewards and challenges of practices in instrumental teaching, which were likely to be very different from their own music learning experiences. Equally, it is plausible that the lack of regulation in place for the instrumental teaching profession at the time of this study may have led conservatoires to lack confidence in the quality of teaching within hubs, precluding the formation of collaborative relationships in a climate where conservatoires are subject to institutional quality assurance measures. Some hubs acknowledged other, more practical, 'barriers' to collaboration, for example, insufficient time in their nearest conservatoires' academic timetable (as confirmed by interviewees in Chapter 3.3). Additionally, inconceivable restrictions were posed by distance and travel costs where hubs did *'not have a conservatoire in the area'*, thus limiting the support the hub could offer to students (H59). This was an important point since there are just seven music conservatoires in England (including RBC) and these span a limited geographical area, as illustrated in Figure 22 below. However, some hubs worked around this situation by offering work experience opportunities to their own former hub students who chose to return home to complete placements as part of their undergraduate conservatoire training.

*Figure 22: Geographical locations of conservatoires in England*



## Partnership potential

Placements aside, hubs participating in this study believed they could potentially contribute to course developments in conservatoires and that they were *'an underused resource in conservatoire training [and were] in a unique position to know what is required of a conservatoire graduate'* in the professional teaching context (H58). This is highly pertinent since hubs revealed that they would not (or be unlikely to) employ a recent conservatoire graduate who had no teaching experience. Therefore, accepting offers of support from external colleagues who *'would dearly love to be involved with helping conservatoires to prepare the next generations of graduates for work with modern Music Education Hubs'* (H31) could be a positive step in helping conservatoires respond to government directives about employability (Ford, 2010), as considered in Chapters 1 and 3. One particular hub representative felt that forging positive relationships between hubs and conservatoires would be a most worthwhile endeavour since *'the best performing hub staff by a mile are conservatoire trained'* and that when recruiting, it was important to *'select those with growth mind-sets open to learn and continue to develop'* (H4).

## 4.5 Summary

These findings have revealed an overwhelming strength of feeling from employers in MEHs (OO participants) who perceived that *'students leaving conservatoires generally don't have many teaching skills'* (H55) since pedagogical knowledge and skills *'are the areas least required for success in conservatoire courses'* (H56). There was no acknowledgement from any employer of conservatoire graduates' four-year investment in intensive professional-level musical training. Instead, the majority view appeared to be that, in a teaching context, they were *'unprepared for most aspects of the role'* (H15), especially in a music hub setting, because *'generally, students' [conservatoire] training has not matched the demands of the job'* (H1). The extent to which students can rely on their principal study teacher as a role-model for their own future teaching was called into question, as was the value placed on teaching by conservatoires. In the context of all these challenges, employers perceived conservatoire graduates as incompetent and/or indifferent teachers (see Figure 23 below), though it is conceivable that employer indifference towards their 'unqualified' employees has yielded reciprocal indifference in conservatoire

graduates, discouraging them from committing to their employer or investing in their professional development.

It is ironic that perceived institutional and organisational barriers have prevented employers and conservatoires from collaborating to provide much-needed induction support and training for new teachers given that ‘improving teaching through appropriate professional development’ is one of the wider professional responsibilities set out in the Teachers Standards (DfE, 2011). Whilst employers proposed that mutually beneficial partnerships could help prepare conservatoire students to teach more effectively through nurturing positive attitudes towards teaching as a sustainable career path, conservatoires may have been reluctant to forge partnerships if they did not perceive MEH teachers as suitable role-models for their students, possibly resulting from insufficient awareness of the aims of pre-HE music education in England. Such a paradox poses a distinct barrier to overcoming the wider national challenges outlined in the Introduction to this thesis, not least in preserving the ‘pipeline’ of musicians who might eventually apply to study at conservatoires in the future (Whittaker et al., 2019: 3).

*Figure 23: Employer perceptions of challenges in preparing conservatoire students for careers in instrumental teaching*



As noted in Chapter 4.1, MEH participants were likely to have come from a wide range of backgrounds: furthermore, their ages and levels of experience would undoubtedly have influenced their outlook. For example, it is possible that participants' recollections of their own conservatoire training (where applicable) could have informed their responses, even though pedagogical practices are likely to have evolved since their own student days. While the data suggest that some employers were insufficiently aware of ongoing developments in conservatoire-based pedagogical training at the time of this study, but their collective insights will nevertheless be highly pertinent for conservatoires when developing curricula for instrumental teacher education in future. Indeed, the sensible way forward – from both perspectives and to mutual benefit – would seem to be to engage in much closer, ongoing dialogue.

Chapters 5 and 6 will examine ways in which undergraduate students at RBC learned to teach and facilitate music making through studying core and optional pedagogy modules across 2019–21. (These participants are classed as IN participants due to their capacity to offer internal perspectives as newcomers, preparing for the profession.) Some modules were delivered 'in-house' with involvement from external practitioners; others offered placements in conjunction with local MEHs and other professional partners, enabling students to observe and practise teaching, supervised by a professional mentor in settings such as SEND, WCET, small group lessons, large ensemble rehearsals and one-to-one contexts.

## **Chapter 5: Undergraduate assimilation of the unfamiliar through core pedagogy modules (Levels 4–5)**

Both this chapter and its subsequent ‘sister’ Chapter 6 serve to address research question 2: ‘How do undergraduate conservatoire students assimilate the unfamiliar as they learn how to teach and facilitate music-making?’ The current chapter will discuss students’ development in connection with core pedagogy modules delivered across Y1–2 (FHEQ Levels 4 and 5) of RBC’s undergraduate programmes, identified as Project 2a and b (see Chapter 2.3). Meanwhile, Chapter 6 will consider the impact of professional placements on students’ learning across Y3–4 (FHEQ Level 6; Project 2c). Across these modules, students encountered, explored and experimented with a range of pedagogical ideas and approaches useful in facilitating musical learning in school-aged children between the ages of 5–18 in instrumental lesson or workshop contexts. Alongside learning about the teaching and learning of young musicians less experienced than themselves, students were encouraged to reflect continually on their own development as music educators.

Both sets of participants were classified as IN in relation to the IONO model introduced in Chapter 2 (Figure 8), due to their ‘insider’ status and the fact that, whatever their stage of learning, they were preparing to enter the profession as newcomers. Through this part of the study, as Project 2, the aim was to give students a voice and to learn from their changing perspectives within various CoP both inside and outside RBC (AEC, 2010; Lennon and Reed, 2012; Healey et al., 2014). As already noted, the supplementary information relating to Project 2a, b and c is located in Appendix D (see pp. 29–36, 37–42 and 43–50 respectively).

### **5.1 Background**

This cohort of students began their undergraduate studies at RBC in September 2019, when newly validated programmes for BMus and BMus Jazz were first being rolled out. At that point, all incoming Y1 students were enrolled on a core module of 22 weeks duration entitled ‘Professional Portfolio 1: Community Engagement’. Subsequently, when these students progressed to Y2 in September 2020, they undertook another 22-week core module entitled ‘Professional Portfolio 2: Pedagogy

and Practice'. In the previous iteration of the BMus programme, modules with similar titles, but lasting just 11 weeks, had formed part of the core provision in Y2 and 3, though they had been optional for BMus Jazz students. However, the course review enabled RBC not only to extend core pedagogical provision but to bring it forward by one year and make it compulsory for jazz, as well as classical students. The rationale was to provide a solid foundation for all students to develop pedagogical knowledge alongside their principal study activity (performance, composition, music technology) and supporting academic studies (for example, aural training, analysis, harmony, history of music), whilst enabling greater interdisciplinary collaboration across departments. Students were thus given the opportunity to further their pedagogical training through active participation in professional placements within music education settings across Y3–4. Across each year of their four-year undergraduate course, students could then engage with multiple CoP (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998; 2018) within and outside the institution, including their peers and teachers, visiting professionals, employers and placement mentors.

The limited timescale of this doctoral study could not accommodate a four-year longitudinal study of the 2019-entry cohort, and as discussed, the pandemic in fact prevented a three-year following to discover the impact of professional placements on the learning of these students in particular. Therefore, the decision was made to involve a small group of participants who had taken the older version of the course and graduated in July 2020, having engaged in placements in conjunction with optional pedagogy modules across Y3–4. The findings relating to their experiences are explored in Chapter 6. For an overview of the pre-2019 pedagogy provision applicable to the new graduates discussed in Chapter 6 and to the revalidated provision for the 2019- entry cohort discussed here, see Introduction, Table 2.

## **5.2 Core pedagogy modules at RBC: aims and content**

One of the aims of the new Community Engagement module (which, during the course review, had been extended to include elements not previously offered in the former Y2 version) was to familiarise students with an important area of employability for musicians. Moreover, it aimed to support students in developing skills they might need in the future to facilitate music workshops and/or deliver interactive

performances in settings away from the formal concert platform, for example, in venues such as schools, hospitals, care homes, and rehabilitation centres. The rationale for moving this introductory pedagogical training from Y2 into Y1 was to ensure that students had the opportunity to develop skills relevant to careers in music education from as early a point as possible, enabling them to benefit from further pedagogical study across the entire four-year span of their course. Moving the module to Y1 also provided continuity for students who might already have gained experience through volunteering in education and community settings before coming to RBC, thus validating that prior experience as an essential part of their ongoing potential preparation for the profession.

Throughout this module, students across all disciplines (classical and jazz performers, composers, and music technologists) formed interdisciplinary workshop groups to engage in and experience diverse activities including conducting, facilitating group singing, improvising, composing, and global musical traditions and styles, whilst learning how to use musical, verbal and non-verbal communication techniques to lead musical warm-ups and games. To contextualise the workshops, students attended lectures from visiting practitioners and were encouraged to critique the work of peers and professionals both during the classes and through video footage, and to reflect on their own professional development in relation to the module. They were advised that, whilst all activity on the Community Engagement module would take place within RBC rather than externally, they would have numerous later opportunities to build on their learning in real-life contexts.

Subsequently, the Pedagogy and Practice module required and enabled Y2 students to focus on and develop skills relevant to the teaching of their principal study specialism through lectures and workshops organised within their specialist departments (keyboard, vocal, strings, woodwind, brass, percussion, composition and music technology). Within each department, one member of staff (the head of department or lead pedagogy tutor) took responsibility for organising taught classes that enabled students to engage with teaching resources and pedagogical principles in theory and practice through active learning, problem-solving and demonstration within their principal study discipline. Alongside these departmental sessions, all Y2

undergraduates came together for weekly lectures led by visiting experts in the wider music education field, including researchers, senior leaders from local MEHs and professional instrumental teachers. In addition, students participated in taster sessions in Dalcroze Eurhythmics, Kodály musicianship and cross-disciplinary workshops to develop their skills in improvising and devising original music. Most of the module delivery across 2020–21 was conducted online due to the global pandemic (see Chapter 2) but, nevertheless, the module aimed to create a cooperative, collaborative learning environment and to provide opportunities for students to demonstrate their awareness of professional responsibilities and etiquette.

### **5.3 Students' prior experience and aspirations at entry level**

From an autoethnographic perspective, it was apparent to me that students often came to RBC with previous experience of facilitating music-making in others (see Pilot study), but that the value of such experience had not always been acknowledged upon commencement of their studies, either by tutors, or less surprisingly by the students themselves. It is possible that an emphasis on principal study activity may have contributed to this lack of acknowledgement, alongside the absence of a pedagogy module in Y1. However, as discussed in Chapters 1 and 2 (Pilot study), it may also be that underlying institutional and societal discourses, values and traditions (Jackson, 1968; Triantafyllaki, 2010; Bennett, 2012; Blackstone, 2019) contribute to hegemonic culture and power (Bruner, 1996; Porton, 2020), implicitly controlling students' attitudes to aspects of the conservatoire curriculum (Bernstein, 1975). Either way, introducing Community Engagement in Y1 from September 2019 provided an opportunity to ascertain, amongst other things, the extent of students' work experience in the music education field at the point of entry to their course and to gather information about their future career aspirations. With this in mind, I had already trialled a questionnaire with Y4 students as part of the Pilot study, and minor modifications were made in light of their recommendations (see Chapter 2 and Appendices B, pp. 9–10 and D, pp. 29–30).

The revised questionnaire was distributed prior to the start of the Y1 core module, during an initial meeting held during the Conservatoire's Welcome Week (September

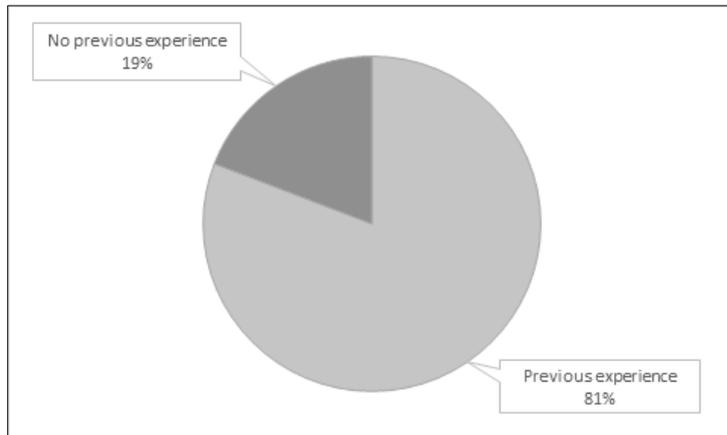
2019). Across the BMus and BMus Jazz courses, 95 of a possible 134 students attended the meeting, representing 71% of the cohort. 94 students completed the questionnaire, providing a sample size of 70%, which represented all departments. The most pertinent findings are discussed below, while details of students' musical backgrounds can be found in Appendix D, pp. 31–4. Alphanumeric codes have been used to anonymise participant responses, with part of the code identifying the principal study specialism, as shown in Table 16:

*Table 16: Alphanumeric anonymisation by principal study discipline*

B	Bassoon
C	Clarinet
CG	Classical Guitar
CO	Cornet
CP	Composition
DB	Double Bass
EU	Euphonium
F	Flute
FH	French Horn
JB	Jazz Double Bass
JDK	Jazz Drum Kit
JEB	Jazz Electric Bass
JG	Jazz Guitar
JS	Jazz Saxophone
JTP	Jazz Trumpet
MT	Music Technology
O	Oboe
OG	Organ
P	Piano
PC	Percussion
S	Saxophone
TBB	Trombone (Bass)
TBT	Trombone (Tenor)
TP	Trumpet
V	Voice
VC	Cello
VG	Viola Da Gamba
VN	Violin

Interestingly, the majority of Y1 students reported previous experience of supporting the learning of young people, whether musical or otherwise, as shown in Figure 24:

*Figure 24: Participants' previous experience of supporting the learning of young people*



Data revealed that most RBC students gained such experience between the ages of 14–20, with the modal age being 16. Many students reported involvement in numerous different guises, with *'assisting in a local school'* and *'supporting younger players in an ensemble setting'* being the most popular (see Figure 25).

As in the Pilot study, participants were asked to identify their career aspirations by choosing up to five options and ranking them in order of personal interest (with 1 being the career pathway of greatest interest to them and 5 being of least interest). In line with recommendations of Porter et al. (2004) the questionnaire was designed to be completed in less than fifteen minutes, in order to increase participants' engagement with the task at hand. Ironically, however, this left little time for students to reflect, and so their responses may not have been deeply considered. Furthermore, some participants selected more than one answer or indeed none at all, so that the percentages shown in Figure 26 below do not add up to 100%. Nevertheless, they do give an overall indication of students' interests at the start of their studies.

Figure 25: Y1 students' previous experience of supporting the learning of young people

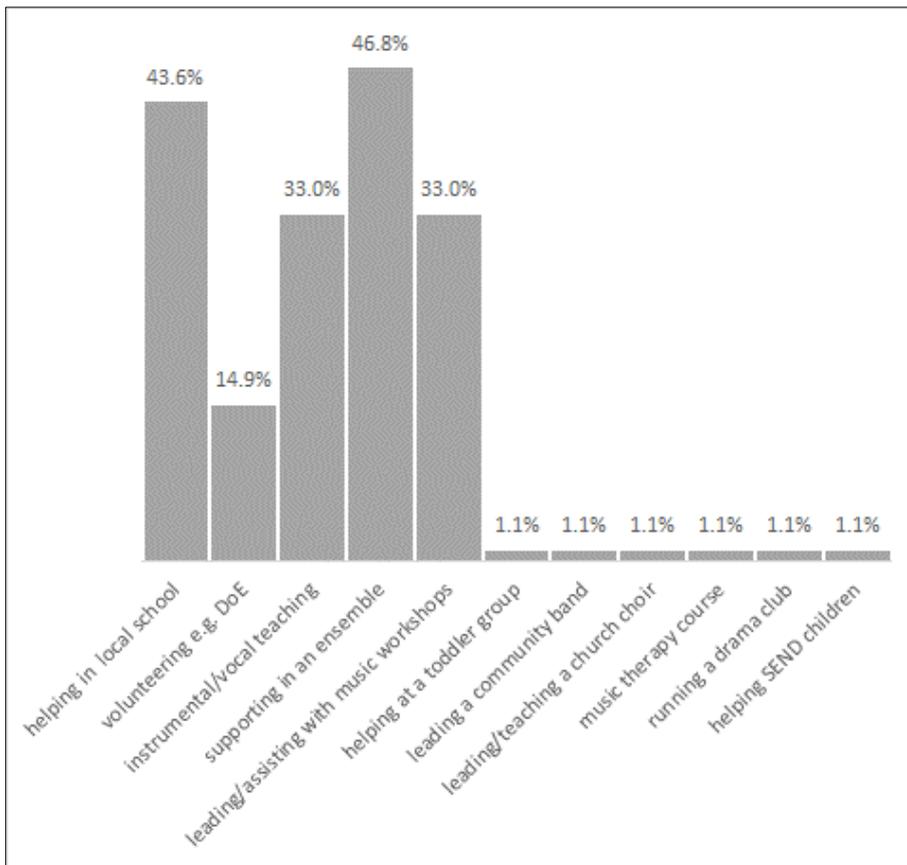
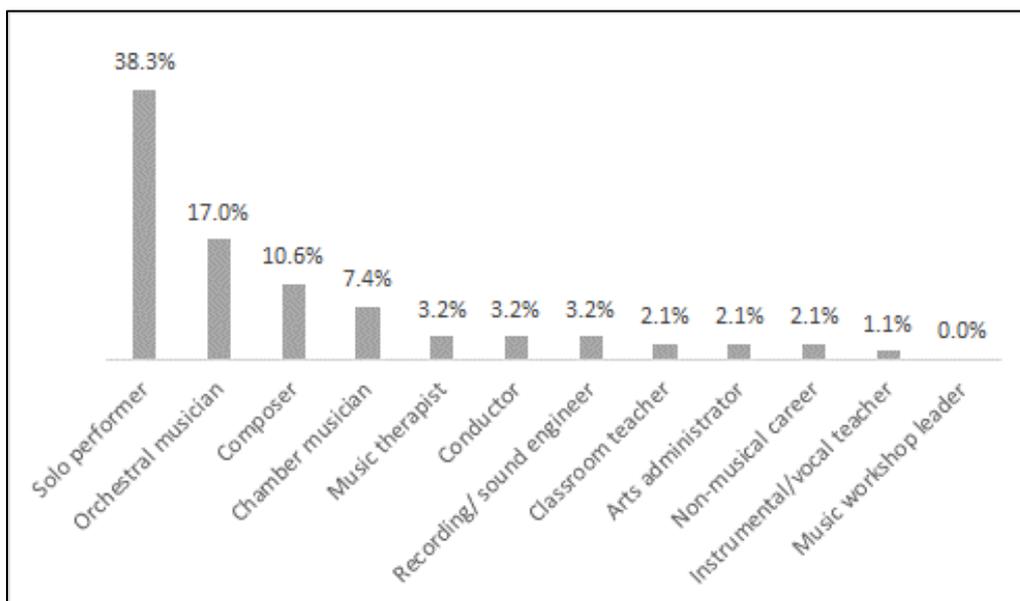


Figure 26: First choice career aspirations (across the sample)



Perhaps, unsurprisingly, solo performance was afforded the highest rating at 38.3%. Whilst composers rated composition as their first priority, and music technologists similarly selected recording/sound engineering, some of these students also leaned towards solo performance. On average, pianists, singers and brass and jazz players chose solo performance, whilst strings/classical guitarists favoured chamber music and woodwind players/ percussionists selected orchestral performance.

The responses shown in Figure 26 are cross-tabulated below for clarity (see Table 17) to indicate the number of students per department (as opposed to percentage), who chose certain careers:

*Table 17: First-choice career aspirations (number of students by department)*

Total no of students in dept	Principal study	Solo performer	Chamber musician	Orchestral musician	Composer	Conductor	Instrumental /vocal teacher	Classroom teacher	Music workshop leader	Arts administrator	Music therapist	Recording/ sound engineer	Non-musical career
14	Keyboard	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
12	Strings	1	3	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
3	Classical Guitar	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
14	Woodwind	1	0	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
12	Brass	8	0	5	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
1	Percussion	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
10	Voice	6	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
9	Jazz	4	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
11	Composition	6	0	0	8	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
8	Music Technology	2	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	3	0
	TOTALS	36	7	16	10	3	1	2	0	2	3	3	2

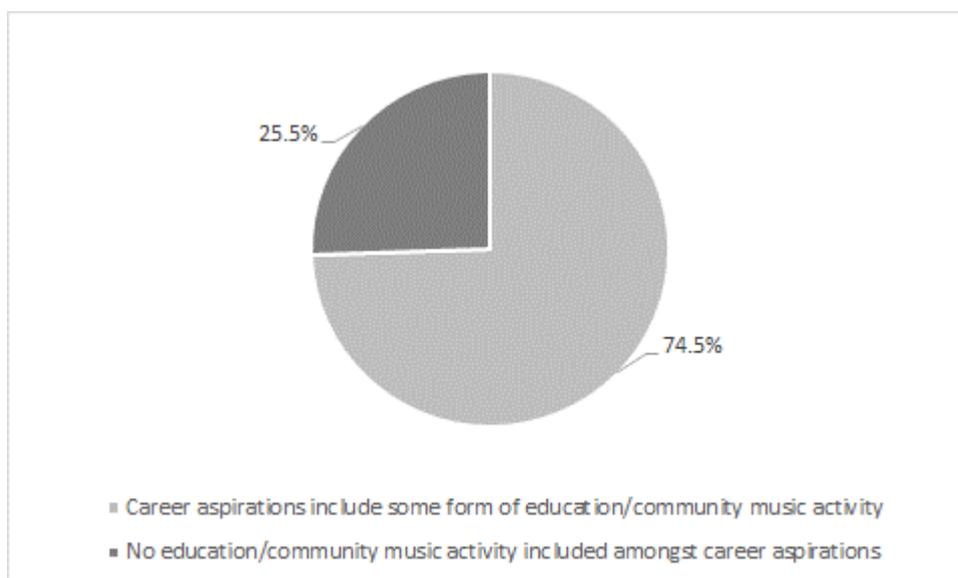
As the data in Figure 26 show, educational/community music activity (namely instrumental teaching, classroom teaching, music workshop leading or music therapy) featured far less strongly than performance-based activity as first-choice ratings. In descending order, we find music therapy (3.2%), classroom teaching (2.1%), instrumental teaching (1.1%), music workshop leading (0%). Preferences for these areas appeared to be low, seemingly under-reported, even though most participants did have prior experience of supporting musical learning in young people, as shown in Table 18, below. Nevertheless, as will be seen later in this chapter, students' attitudes towards careers in music education changed considerably during Y1, and it is pleasing that educational/community activity did at least appear amongst students' top five choices in 74.5% of cases (see Figure 27). Intriguingly, further analysis revealed that, of the educational/community activity in students' top five choices, instrumental teaching did indeed prove the most popular

with 66% of participants selecting it, followed by classroom teaching (27.7%), music workshop leading (25.5%) and music therapy (22.3%).

*Table 18: Participants with prior experience of supporting musical learning but no related career aspirations*

Participants whose career choices did not include any form of education/ community activity on entry to RBC	Did participant have prior experience of supporting musical learning in young people?
5P19	Y
7TBB19	Y
12JDK19	Y
13P19Y	Y
20TB19Y	Y
23TBT19Y	Y
26CP19	N
30S19	Y
36P19	Y
39B19	Y
46OG19	Y
49C19	Y
63P19	Y
67CP19	Y
70TP19	Y
72MT19	Y
76V19	Y
79MT19	N
80MT19	N
83CP19	Y
84CP19	Y
90CP19	Y
94V19	N

*Figure 27: Y1 students' career aspirations*



In response to a recommendation by Pilot study participants, the revised questionnaire also requested Y1 participants to indicate what they were most looking forward to during their course. Analysis of these responses revealed that 62.8% of participants were particularly interested in developing knowledge and skills in their principal study area, whilst a smaller proportion (25.5%) viewed collaboration with others as important. Notably, collaboration seemed particularly pertinent to students who had been self-taught or had only experienced one-to-one lessons prior to coming to RBC, though only 10.6% of participants had never participated in any group teaching activity that related directly to their principal study discipline. While it is possible that the questionnaire design may have influenced participants' responses, it was encouraging that 15.9% of students revealed that they were already looking to the future and considering aspects of the course that would help them forge their professional portfolio careers. To revisit a notion that had emerged from the Pilot study (participant 8), responses demonstrated 'maturity and open-mindedness', for example, a percussionist who was looking forward to '*making the most of the opportunities, facilities, people and city around me!*' (61PC19) and a jazz bassist who was most interested in '*gaining experience and becoming a versatile, adaptable musician*' (48JB19). Few students referred to educational/community music-related activity when considering what they were looking forward to, though one participant claimed to want to improve their teaching by learning '*how to engage people who might not otherwise have the opportunity*' to access and experience musical activity (22C19).

#### **5.4 Students' reflections on the Y1 Community Engagement module**

Towards the end of the Y1 module, students were required to submit a written assignment, part of which encouraged them to reflect on their learning during the module and their professional development in general. This material provided a means of triangulating the questionnaire data. As described in Chapter 2.3, informed consent was sought to quote from work submitted by students for assessment, based on the fundamental understanding that their decision to consent, or not, would have no bearing whatsoever on their assessment grade; further reassurance was given by confirming that, as researcher, I would not be involved in marking their

work. The original assessment guidance, as shown in Table 19 below, was intended to enable students to focus on areas of particular interest and significance to them, without being overly prescriptive.

*Table 19: Y1 Community Engagement assessment guidance*

<p><b>Personal reflections:</b></p> <p>Drawing on your independent research during the module and your personal experiences of music-making both during and before your time at RBC, what have you learned/in what ways have you developed as a musician as a result of participating in the Community Engagement module? <b>(500 words)</b></p> <p>To help you answer this question, consider some or all of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Has the module helped you to build on existing skills and/or develop new ones? If so how?</li><li>• How have you found the experience of collaborating with your peers in interdisciplinary groups during this module?</li><li>• What transferable skills have you developed and how are these relevant to your all-round musicianship and future career?</li><li>• Have your perceptions of how music can be used beyond the concert platform changed? If so, in what way(s)?</li><li>• How do you see your role as a musician impacting positively on the lives of others?</li><li>• Has participating in this module changes or affirmed your career aspirations? Why do you think this is?</li><li>• What is the most significant thing you have learned during this module?</li></ul>
---

Of the 94 students who had consented for their written reflections to be accessed for research purposes, 90 students submitted textual narratives, which served as qualitative data. These narratives were imported into an Excel spreadsheet, where a line-by-line thematic analysis was undertaken, similar to that employed in Project 1b, outlined in Chapter 4.1 (see Appendix D, pp. 35–6 for a sample of the initial coding process). Since student voice was a focus here (and across Projects 2b–c), readings also sought to uncover ‘hidden messages’ and ‘implied meaning’ (Denscombe, 2014: 288), akin to discourse analysis (Gee 2011a; 2011b). Overlapping codes were eliminated (as recommended by Creswell, 2012: 244), leaving a total of 64 generated codes, which were grouped subsequently into five categories (or sub-themes): skills, qualities, awareness, behaviours and values, as illustrated by Table 20 below. I interpreted these sub-themes as representations of students’ ‘developing pedagogical knowledge.’

Table 20: Project 2a – summary of themes

Overarching themes		Sub-themes	
Developing pedagogical knowledge	Developing skills	Collaboration Communication (verbal/non-verbal) Organisation Problem solving Facilitating singing Aural Leadership Behaviour management Improvisation	Composition Playing by ear Group teaching Running multi-instrument sessions Differentiation Conducting Breaking down concepts Preparation and planning Giving feedback
	Developing qualities	Resilience Adaptability Reflexivity	Inspiration Clarity Self-expression
	Developing awareness	Links with principal study Increased quality of life Equality Body language Audience as active participants Inspired by former teachers World music Connection Culture Interdisciplinary	Make a difference Learning by doing Peer learning Child development Musical development Policy context National curriculum Transferable skills Disabilities Reciprocal learning
	Developing behaviours	Confidence Overcoming anxiety Trust	Spontaneity Professionalism Responsibility
	Developing values	Selfish vs selfless (Egocentricity vs altruism) Importance of music education Create foundations for future Continuous learning Desire to prioritise, pursue or dismiss Concert platform hierarchy Open-mindedness	Inclusive Anti-elitist Achievement Progress not perfection Work outside comfort zone Process not outcome Impact and aspiration

### Developing pedagogical knowledge (DPK)

Consequently, developing pedagogical knowledge (DPK) emerged as an overarching theme that could then be related closely to Shulman’s Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) model (1986; 1987). As discussed in Chapter 1, PCK combines the specificity of Subject Content Knowledge (SCK) with the principles and strategies necessary for facilitating effective learning or General Pedagogical Knowledge (GPK). In a conservatoire, students continually develop SCK through principal study activity and supporting academic studies in music. The Community Engagement module could be seen as the first stage in the introduction of GPK, thus enhancing students’ specialist musical knowledge (the content) by combining it with pedagogy (why, how and when to teach the content). To elaborate, at this early stage in their course, students were introduced to the principles of curriculum design

and were able to experiment with lesson/workshop content amongst their peers. They were able to imagine scenarios with potential learners and contexts through role play, so demonstrating *'an awareness of the different needs of learners in different settings'* (1TB19), or an *'ability to be flexible'* (53V19) in preparation for when they would be given the opportunity to engage with real-life learners and contexts later in the course. It was apparent from the emerging sub-themes that students' knowledge of educational aims, purposes and values would constitute a positive outcome of the module.

Developing pedagogical skills, qualities, awareness, behaviours and values involves learning about learning or 'metacognitive awareness' (Shulman, 1986: 13). A search across all 90 student textual narratives uncovered 267 iterations of the word 'learn' and its derivatives 'learnt', 'learned' and 'learning'. In contrast to the questionnaire findings, most iterations in the textual narratives focused on the impact of the module on the students themselves (as one might expect, given the assessment task set out above), demonstrating students' increasing self-awareness of their own learning. However, some students also evidenced developing insights about learning whilst considering the perspectives of other learners. 'Other learners' included, firstly, Y1 peers, where it was perceived that participating in interdisciplinary groups with students from other departments had been beneficial to all concerned. In the second category, students attempted to understand how 'other learners' in schools or community settings, and from backgrounds different to their own, might react to their teaching or workshop facilitation approaches and what they, as educators, would need to consider to make the learning experience as positive as possible.

A singer's honest reflection shed some light on the reasons why conservatoire students might seem preoccupied with their own development, whilst also revealing how such attitudes might begin to evolve during a module such as Community Engagement:

*As a musician, community engagement has allowed me to perceive music in a different way to how I saw it previously. Music has been a constant feature in my life to the point where a vocal lesson or performance seems second*

*nature in quite a self-centred way. When performing for a room full of people you are obviously on stage to deliver an emotional state or feeling to an audience, but it is also quite selfishly drawing on a part of a musician's psyche to showcase how all the hours you have invested into a certain practice has paid off [...]. It is refreshing and fascinating to involve oneself in a selfless act that benefits people who are not able to, or not presented with the opportunity to, experience an art form one has decided to dedicate their life to (94V19).*

Indeed, the terms 'selfish' and 'selfless' as expressed above by participant 94V19 are useful in distinguishing between student perceptions that focus on themselves (egocentric) and those that are more outward looking (altruistic). Y1 students seemed to grapple with both states, often simultaneously. Therefore, 'Egocentricity versus altruism' will be considered, firstly, as an emerging theme in its own right, and secondly, in relation to other emerging themes.

### **Egocentricity versus altruism**

Many students felt that the Y1 pedagogy module had inspired them: 'opened my eyes' was a phrase used explicitly by 11 participants. Furthermore, the notion of openness or being 'a more open-minded musician overall' (40MT19), as a result of having taken the module, was expressed 55 times across the textual narratives. On the one hand, from what might be considered an egocentric perspective, students reported having become more alert 'to the massive range of career opportunities that involve music within the community (22C19)'. On the other, students demonstrated an altruistic outlook regarding 'the many ways in which [they could] make a positive impact on people, especially children, through music' (37V19). Even more importantly, perhaps, some students claimed that the module had inspired them to inspire others:

*every time I play publicly, whether in a concert, recital or interactive workshop, it is an opportunity for me to share my craft and inspire others. I was inspired by a musician who took the time to show and explain to me what a flute was, answer my question[s] about being a musician and demonstrate what the instrument can do. Without this initial exposure I may never have come to be*

*a musician. I feel that it is our duty as professional musicians to spread and share our talents and skills and to inspire as many people as possible (21F19).*

Extending the metaphor further, students' eyes were also opened to the extent that an instilled emphasis on perfection in their principal study discipline and/or in their former schooling had affected their overall outlook towards music-making, leading to what Hill et al. (2020) refer to as 'perfectionistic self-representation', as previously discussed in the Pilot study (Chapter 2).

*I felt quite inhibited and self-conscious [...] and was initially very nervous in workshops where we were asked to improvise. This could probably be explained by an element of perfectionism I have accidentally cultivated throughout my academic education, which led to fear and shame associated with perceived failure or embarrassment in front of others (86CG19).*

However, the module engendered more positive emotional responses for other students, who felt able to set aside notions of perfectionism. For instance, one singer '*felt particularly exposed during some activities*' but decided not to '*worry about musical perfection, but rather focus on the importance of learning*' (53V19) and a violinist came to realise that, in facilitating musical learning, '*the intention should always be exploration rather than shaping participants into perfect musicians*' (41V19). In focusing on progress as opposed to perfection, a percussionist felt strongly that young people '*should be encouraged to progress musically, as well as [being] supported to progress in other ways (i.e. transferrable skills, social skills) as appropriate. [Practitioners] should focus on all types of needs, interests and backgrounds [and] ensure everyone can find a pathway that is right for them*' (61PC19). From an egocentric perspective, the benefits of being released from the apparent emphasis on perfection in the principal study discipline were evident, with many participants perceiving module activities to be '*relaxing*' (19VC19).

*The most significant element of this module is how it has influenced my own playing and how I have learnt to present myself as a leader in front of a group*

*of people. I am beginning to become more confident in my solo performances as I feel more at ease when I play, consequently making me play better due to the fact that I feel relaxed and can breathe easier, which in turn makes the audience feel at ease too (29O19).*

### **Confidence, collaboration and communication**

Three most frequently occurring themes that emerged from the textual narratives were ‘confidence, collaboration and communication’. As suggested above, many students seemed aware that participating in the module had the potential to influence them positively, both personally and professionally. As well as building on existing skills, they had begun to assimilate previously unfamiliar concepts and ideas, gaining confidence through collaborative practice and varied communication methods. Often, two or all three of these facets appeared to work simultaneously in developing students’ skills, qualities, awareness, behaviours or values. The themes of confidence, collaboration and communication are now considered in relation to egocentricity versus altruism.

The word ‘confidence’ was cited 58 times across the textual narratives, though in 70.7% of cases, students reflected on the extent to which the module had engendered feelings of confidence in themselves, as opposed to considering the impact of musical engagement on the confidence of the learners they might teach in the future. Students commented that the collaborative and sociable nature of the module had helped them, as newcomers at the start of an academic year, to integrate into the conservatoire environment, and to ‘*share ideas, overcome problems and learn from each other*’ (24TP19). This view was echoed especially by international students: ‘*This module has been [...] helpful [...] because I am a shy person and [...] I cannot speak and explain stuff in my language, but it has helped me to know new people, see that there are many international students like me [and] to get more confidence*’ (16P19). Another student who initially had reservations about exposing less than perfect performance skills (reminiscent of Chapter 3, where participant 1 reflected on their former conservatoire training) had developed ‘*a certain degree of confidence to [improvise] in front of people [...] even if it sounds “not very good”*’ (13P19). Numerous similar examples of increased confidence were

offered by students in relation to skills such as playing by ear, singing, composing, conducting and public speaking. As suggested above, however, a much lower proportion of participants (29.3%) contemplated the potential for music-making to increase confidence in the young people they might teach. Nevertheless, one jazz guitarist's thinking was definitely of the altruistic variety: *'It was clear throughout these sessions that music education from an early age can be a way of developing an individual's confidence and decision making along with other skills, instead of just developing proficiency on an instrument'* (11JG19).

Similarly, of 55 references to 'collaboration' within the textual narratives, the majority were of an egocentric nature, focusing on the collaborative benefits for a student's own development, though *'social and collaborative aspects'* were acknowledged by a small number of respondents as being *'very important to young people'* (61PC19). Indeed, a singer was clearly willing to work beyond their *'comfort zone'* (a term used by several participants) to develop their own skills, whilst also showing empathy for learners:

*Working in interdisciplinary groups was interesting as we all shared our varying musical skills with each other, putting ourselves in the position of workshop participants. This gave us a better perspective of the musical learner in these situations, as well as developing our team working skills to not only utilise but evolve the way we approach our principal study instruments* (53V19).

As with confidence, and collaboration, 114 references to 'communication' demonstrated that students appreciated the value of the verbal and non-verbal skills they had practised during workshop sessions, some of which they perceived would enhance their future collaborations with fellow students in the principal study discipline. However, only 9.6% of students' references recognised communication as a two-way process between themselves as potential music educators and other learners: in other words, that communication needs to *'take place between'* individuals (80MT19) and *'awaken desires of self-expression in others'* (68CP19). As participant 9VC19 stated, *'I have [...] learned a lot about body language and*

*appearance and how that affects other people's perceptions of you and how they communicate back with you'. A composer concurred: through the module they had come to 'realise the importance of [...] the effect of verbal and non-verbal communication, and [even] the phrasing of a sentence, can have on a child's perception of a situation' (26CP19). In another instance, it was clear that a trombonist had taken on board that communication could be a significant step in an individual's learning experience: 'I have learned that for a [lesson] to be successful, you don't have to have every child performing higher level music than they were before the session; sometimes a child being able to communicate socially or verbally better is just as good a measure [of] success' (1TB19).*

In fact, even though the module was taught onsite (in contrast to optional modules across Y3 and 4 where students had work placement opportunities, see Chapter 6) it was suggested that the very act of role-playing workshop scenarios had helped students to develop appropriate communication skills to *'more easily empathise with [...] learner[s]'* (1TB19) across a range of settings. A jazz guitarist (11JG19) concurred: *'Working with peers has [...] shown me the importance of being able to adapt [my] teaching to best suit the way someone learns or works, as this may completely differ from the way I learn best.'* Being asked to *'put [them]selves in the [learner's] shoes'* appeared to have benefited many students, including a music technologist who *'ended up learning so much [more] about children'* than they had thought they would, including *'the way they act and think'* (35MT19). Similarly, a pianist reported that learning the principles of *'how to interact with different kinds of people ranging from children as young as three, to teenagers, elderly people or people with special needs'* was transferable to one-to-one and group piano teaching situations. In particular, *'I learned to be clear in the way I communicate and articulate, making myself more understandable to [those] I interact with. I also learnt how to differentiate the musical learning methods needed depending on the context and the people involved'* (17P19). Furthermore, *'learning how to break down the learning process into several stages'* had already impacted on this student's approach to practising the piano. This example of a student linking their learning on the Y1 module to their principal study discipline was encouraging, but was one of only a few examples, hence my decision to tailor assessment content to promote

broader reflection in Y2 (see Chapter 5.6). Communication was also considered in relation to adopting and adapting teaching activities or strategies learned during the module for use in different situations as well as *'not being afraid'* to adapt activities during teaching or workshop delivery *'if a session is not going to plan'* (10DB19). The following summary demonstrates a cornet player's appreciation that theoretical musicianship skills can be developed through creative, song-based approaches. The reference to a *'typical textbook approach'* below might suggest that this student was already beginning to reject a *'teach as they were taught'* pedagogy (as discussed in Chapters 3 and 4) as a result of engaging in this module during Y1:

*A new skill I have developed is being able to create songs which will teach young children the fundamentals of music most effectively and efficiently. I have learnt that you should use musical techniques such as call and response, chang[es] of tempo, dynamics and pitch all supported by physical actions [...]. The incorporation of these musical techniques must be relatively simplistic in order for the song to be memorable. [If] children [are] able to learn [...] without initially knowing what musical techniques they are using [...] this is more likely to engage them in the lesson than the typical textbook approach (42CO19).*

### **Impact and aspiration**

Another emerging theme that interacted closely with the notion of egocentricity versus altruism was 'Impact and aspiration'. An interesting finding, in common with the discussion about confidence, collaboration and communication above, was that in considering the module's impact, 74.4% of 86 references to the word 'future' focused on how the learning students had experienced during the module would impact their own futures rather than those of others. Just 25.6% of instances suggested that Y1 students had already begun to consider the impact their learning might have on the futures of the young people they might encounter in educational settings. Nevertheless, in terms of participants' evolving career aspirations, it is pertinent to return to Figure 27 above, which shows that approximately one quarter (25.5%) of participants' career choices did not include any educational/community music activity before the Community Engagement module commenced, despite most

having experienced supporting musical learning in young people before coming to RBC. In contrast, Table 21, below, illustrates that 86.9% of this proportion of participants (all but 3) revealed in the textual narratives that their aspirations changed within just a few months of studying the module:

*Table 21: Impact of Y1 pedagogical training on students' career aspirations*

Participants whose career choices did not include any form of education/ community activity on entry to RBC	Did participant have prior experience of supporting musical learning in young people?	Did participant's career aspirations change as a result of the first-year module?
5P19	Y	Y
7TBB19	Y	Y
12JDK19	Y	Y
13P19Y	Y	Y
20TB19Y	Y	Y
23TBT19Y	Y	Y
26CP19	N	Y
30S19	Y	Y
36P19	Y	Y
39B19	Y	N
46OG19	Y	Y
49C19	Y	N
63P19	Y	Y
67CP19	Y	Y
70TP19	Y	Y
72MT19	Y	Y
76V19	Y	Y
79MT19	N	Y
80MT19	N	Y
83CP19	Y	Y
84CP19	Y	N
90CP19	Y	Y
94V19	N	Y

This impact is evidenced further by the following range of participant comments, at least two of which show concern for the musical development of others:

*As a result of this module, I will certainly aim to teach music in some capacity during my career (12JDK19);*

*Teaching is a part of any musician's career, and this module has helped me realise many aspects of teaching music which I had not yet discovered (20TB19);*

*Being a teacher and composer who can use music to positively impact younger generations is something that I am aiming to achieve in life (90CP19);*

*I have come to find that it is very important to create a foundation for finding musicians of the future, by initially exposing them to music (26CP19).*

Many students appeared to have been inspired both by internal tutors and external visiting professionals (or ‘insider-old-timers’ and ‘outsider-old-timers’ as discussed in Chapter 2 – see Figure 8). As stated by a cellist, *‘I feel as though this module has taught me a sense of professionalism and an admiration of the resilience and passion of the musicians within this area of the industry’* (58VC19). Moreover, the act of reflecting on their experiences seemed to have supported students in consolidating and internalising some of their practical learning experiences.

It is nonetheless important to consider the Hawthorne effect (Denscombe, 2014: 70; Cohen et al., 2018: 321) and the possibility that some students, aware that their writing would be assessed by a module tutor, may have written what they believed might earn them a higher mark. Certainly, some seemed to have been enlightened by the module to the extent that they claimed that it had *‘affirmed [their] aspirations of a career in music education’* (11JG19), or that they wanted *‘teaching and community work to be a prominent part of [their] career’*, having become more aware of *‘how it can positively impact the lives of people who have not been as fortunate as [them] in having music as a large part of their lives’* (28O19). For another student, the module seemed to have provided a ‘reality check’ akin to that reflected upon by BMus 4 students (see Chapter 2: Pilot study), though this student did not appear to view this negatively:

*Community Engagement has made me realise [...] much as I would love to be a musician performing every night at prestigious venues, teaching will always be something I would [also] love to do in the future whether this is during my time at conservatoire, just after, or later in life. [It] has solidified my want to teach [...]. Conservatoire isn't just about becoming the best at your instrument*

*but about developing as a musician and [the module] has shown that there [are] different job opportunities for musicians (71TB19).*

In stark contrast, however, one student was entirely dismissive of the possibility that they might take on any responsibility for nurturing young musicians in the future. The implication that their time and energy would have been better spent on their principal study discipline is reminiscent of earlier discussion in Chapter 1, and strongly suggests that, unlike many of their peers, their values had not evolved at all.

*As composing was and still is my priority when concerning my future profession, I can assure myself that my goals as a musician will not be changing. However, I can completely empathise with those who I have shared many workshops with that might consider teaching children entertaining nursery rhymes a foreseeable career choice. Despite the loss of time that I could have put to a better use, I know now with more [...] confidence that I shall maintain my way of thought and interest. I shall continue to work the way that I work (84CP19).*

Participants who were less egocentric in outlook tended not to make such rather naïve assumptions about their career trajectories. In general, even where students believed that pursuing their principal study would take priority, they still expressed an interest in pursuing a career involving music education. For some students, though, there remained a perception that the two areas of work were essentially distinct from one another:

*Participating in this module has definitely broadened my career aspirations to the point where I could see myself volunteering in one of the situations we have covered, whereas before I looked down on these jobs as if they were not for musicians. However, even with this increased respect, it remains a distant possibility and not something I would solely pursue, rather a complementary interest (68CP19).*

Others, however, had begun to appreciate the significant overlap between working in music education and performance: *'Since doing an interactive concert it has made me realise the possibility of merging the two professions and still being able to perform'* (2TP19).

### **5.5 Reflections on the research with Y1**

The discussion above provides numerous examples of how, according to Moon (2004:19), 'learning powerfully changes personal beliefs or self-concepts that have become embedded' with many students recognising that 'learning can improve the way [they operate] in the workplace'. By contrast, however, a few Y1 students seemed to refuse to 'allow [their] cognitive structure to accommodate' new 'material of learning' and instead attempt[ed] to 'justify the[ir] rejection of the course material by developing arguments against its content'. According to Gomez and Johnson Lachuk (2017) there is a case for 'interrupting [students'] pre-conceived notions about so-called "others" and potentially replacing these with internally persuasive discourses that question previous assumptions about persons who are seen as less skilled, able, and well-intentioned than themselves.' This is important because 'identities [...] are shaped by the ways in which people are socially and historically located, and how they adopt various cultural customs and ideals (ibid: 457). The Y1 Community Engagement module led students to question 'dominant ideologies' (Brookfield, 2017: 11) regarding the purpose of their conservatoire training in such a way that beliefs and assumptions might previously have been 'accepted as normal and commonsense' were disrupted.

Thus, the Project 2a findings indicate strongly that running an education-based module in Y1 of a conservatoire undergraduate degree course contributes to the development of 'a performance-led music education workforce of the future' (Henley, 2011: 26) by beginning to raise students' awareness, from the earliest possible point in their studies, of how they could contribute to such a workforce during their career. This is pertinent for students' transition from school to HE, given that guidance on musical careers is not included in A-level music syllabuses at present (Whittaker, 2021). Additionally, where tutors are alerted to students' existing experience of facilitating music-making in young people, Y1 pedagogical training can guard against

'working from uninformed or outdated assumptions about students' prior learning' (Burland and Pitts, 2007: 290) and provide an opportunity to build on various forms of capital (Bourdieu, 1977) that relate to employability. However, the finding that many Y1 students still seemed more preoccupied with their own development than with any impact they might have on the learning of others led me to consider whether such perspectives became less egocentric and more altruistic over time (see Chapters 6 and 7). Edwin (2018: 61) offers an interesting perspective on this phenomenon:

Performing is a self-centering activity. It's all about me [...]. When I teach, however, it's all about my students. Self recedes into the background [...]. To put it more bluntly, my performer side doesn't really care about helping anyone at all [...]. My teaching side, on the other hand, is fully invested in helping and guiding a student's [...] journey from where the student is to where the student can be. Many performers recognize this duality and decide that they neither want nor need to teach. Others find joy and meaning in both [a]venues.

The next section continues exploration of the learning experiences of the 2019-entry cohort as they moved into Y2 of their course.

### **5.6 Why study pedagogy in a conservatoire? Joining the dots in Y2**

From an autoethnographic perspective, long before commencing doctoral study, I had been aware that many RBC students tended to view the conservatoire curriculum in a compartmentalised way, perceiving only their principal study training as relevant to their future careers. This view resonates with findings by Porton (2020: 110–11) where conservatoire alumni had observed a 'tug of war between academic and performing departments' and 'failed to see the relevance of the majority of the academic modules open to them, in relation to their identity as a performer.'

Consequently, this doctoral study offered an opportunity for intervention, enabling me as researcher to seek ways to support students in 'joining the dots' between the multiple facets of their musical training, thus countering institutional hegemony

(Gramsci, 1971; Bruner, 1996; Brookfield, 2012; Wright, 2015; 2016) and conflicting ideologies that might imply that certain areas of the curriculum were more important than others (Bernstein, 1975; 2003). Therefore, approximately half-way through the Y2 module, students were asked to complete another reflective task in the form of a 500-word statement to engage with the points listed in Table 22, below.

*Table 22: Y2 reflective task*

<p><b>Why is it important to study pedagogy in a conservatoire?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Consider how all the different elements of your course (e.g., principal study lessons, workshops, ensembles, forums, masterclasses etc.) and non-principal study activities, e.g., Language of Music (aural, harmony, analysis), Performance Traditions (history), Professional Portfolio: Community Engagement) contribute to your ongoing development as a potential music educator (e.g., instrumental teacher, workshop leader, conductor, classroom teacher, adjudicator and examiner, chamber music coach etc.)</li><li>• In what ways do you think developing your skills and understanding of music education (in its various forms) contributes to your overall musical development?</li></ul>
---

While this task was not assessed, it was presented to students by their module leader as an important means of supporting their preparation for the summative assessment (a viva voce) which was to follow at the end of the module. As before, ethical approval was obtained well in advance (see Chapter 2.3) and informed consent was obtained from 42 students to utilise their reflective statements for research purposes. For 38 participants, who had contributed to the research in the previous year, it made sense to retain the same alphanumeric codes to preserve their anonymity, whilst creating new ones for four students who had not previously taken part. Participants' statements were read multiple times in order to become familiar with the data before being transferred into an Excel spreadsheet where 100 codes were generated, again, through line-by-line thematic analysis, a similar process to that employed across Projects 1a–b and Project 2a). (It is worth noting that arriving at the round figure of 100 codes was completely coincidental.) Codes were initially grouped into categories relating to one-to-one principal study lessons, including those taken prior to conservatoire study (21 codes); collaborative principal

study activity, for example departmental workshops, ensembles, performance classes and masterclasses (18 codes); pedagogical training (49 codes); and other academic study, for example aural, harmony, analysis and music history (12 codes). Upon closer inspection of the data, and a consideration of possible underlying messages (Denscombe, 2014) it became evident that students had engaged closely with the task, acknowledging numerous connections between different aspects of the undergraduate curriculum that were pertinent to their development as the next generation of music educators. Where students focused on their own development in the principal study area and its relevance to their future teaching of that specific instrument or discipline, it was clear that they perceived their conservatoire training to have far wider benefits both for their learning and that of any learners they might teach in the future. Moreover, many statements reflected students' growing social and cultural consciousness in relation to providing opportunities and quality music education for all learners. Consequently, the separate code groups relating to different aspects of RBC curricula (discussed above) were amalgamated and reconsidered in light of the connections students had made. New codes were grouped into categories (which became sub-themes) and eventually just three overarching themes emerged: specificity, transferability and responsibility, as shown in Table 23 below. (Samples across the various stages of this coding process can be found in Appendix D, pp. 37–42.)

### **Specificity, transferability and responsibility**

In this context, the theme of 'specificity' reflects students' concerns about improving within their specialist principal study discipline, for example, becoming '*a better performer*' (29O19): thus, to an extent, specificity resonates with egocentricity. However, the Y2 textual narratives implied a gradual shifting whereby many students seemingly moved yet further away from an egocentric focus than had been the case in Y1. For instance, in reflecting on the collaborative aspects of principal study activity, discipline-specific concerns receded toward the background as students focused on the transferable characteristics of their musical training and its relevance for working in music education contexts, whilst at the same time, recognising the need to adopt a responsible attitude towards nurturing the next generation of musical

learners. Thus, the three emerging themes ‘specificity’, ‘transferability’ and ‘responsibility’ interrelate and are discussed in combination below.

Table 23: Project 2b – summary of themes

Overarching themes	Sub-themes
Specificity	Develop specific instrument knowledge Become an informed performer Build confidence in performing
Transferability	History: broaden awareness of performance practice/interpretation Apply pedagogical training to practising my instrument Developing/correcting technique in own/others playing Pick up teaching methods from principal study teacher Learning to teach ourselves/solve problems in own playing Develop people management/rehearsal strategies/conducting skills through ensembles Links between instrumental teaching and workshop leading Analysis/aural contributes towards ability to teach theory Social, communication and collaborative skills through group work Building knowledge of repertoire Learning about a wide variety of instruments Observing what works for other learners Diagnosing errors Giving constructive feedback Organising rehearsals Emotional intelligence
Responsibility	Effective management of groups Support all ages and abilities Important to adapt to different pupils' needs/environments/situations Awareness of socio-economic factors Nurture positive teacher-pupil relationships Awareness of lack of diversity within curricula Knowledge of methods from around the world important Awareness of business and legal aspects of teaching Break down concepts for learners Structuring/planning lessons vs flexibility in teaching Recollections of first (inspirational) teacher Encouraging fun and enjoyment Important to have awareness of issues in music education Desire to teach in the future - preparing next generation of musicians

Several students referred to the usefulness of analysing and reflecting on their own approaches to learning and progression, realising their need to become independent learners in their principal study areas in order to understand how to support others:

*It is vitally important that students leave [formal education] with the ability to teach themselves. To link this to one-to-one lessons, I am, for example, asked to prepare an etude. 90% of the learning happens independently in a practice room. In my lesson, I address with my teacher any remaining issues that I have. These issues remain because I do not possess the knowledge or expertise needed to fix them by myself. My teacher then breaks down the issue into as small a component as possible and teaches me how to address*

*that problem within my own playing. As we learn and become more advanced, we eventually reach the point where we can fix any problem that we may encounter in our playing by ourselves. Understanding how individuals learn and having a concept of how to explain and deconstruct large musical and technical challenges is a very important skill for us all to have (21F19).*

This statement implies that principal study lessons can help to prepare conservatoire students to teach their own instrument, though it does not necessarily follow that the deconstruction methods described above would be suitable or accessible for all learners at all levels. Nor would it be appropriate for everything learned in principal study lessons to be ‘*transmitted*’ to students’ future pupils in the same way that it was taught to them at college, as one pianist (17P19) seemed to suggest. Such a view would disregard any notion of learning as a social phenomenon where individuals make sense of their changing abilities and experiences through engaging in activities with and belonging to communities (Wenger, 2018). Nevertheless, the importance of reflecting on one’s own prior learning within the principal study specialism was advocated by many students, including another pianist who recommended that students should place themselves ‘*into the shoes*’ of their teachers (96P19) and a brass player who claimed that pedagogical training is important because

*it takes you back to the basics. [When] playing an instrument at conservatoire standard you don’t think about the small things like how your instrument goes together, how to buzz through your mouthpiece or where the notes are. It’s just done by habit. Studying pedagogy makes you realise these things are fundamental – for these to be taught, a lot of time needs to be dedicated for them to be fully understood (27TBT19).*

Another participant acknowledged that analysing the fundamentals of cello technique for teaching purposes had in turn benefited their own playing, helping them to uncover issues that had previously been undiagnosed:

*Sometimes relearning the roots of your knowledge is the best way to grow. Personally, I haven't thought about how to, for example, teach bow holds or hand positions as this now comes almost naturally to me. Going back and discussing how to teach and develop these building block elements has really opened my eyes as to how many different processes and steps there are to learning. This has really helped my musical development as I have revisited even the simplest aspects of my playing [including] tensions in my hands I was oblivious to until discussion (19VC19).*

Upon reflecting on being a victim of poor teaching, where incorrect posture and bow hold had been allowed to persist at an intermediate stage of their own playing, another string player expressed strong feelings about the importance for conservatoire students of developing the skills necessary to teach correct technique to their pupils from the outset: '*Pedagogy is a [subject] that all music students should study. Many students begin their musical education by learning from musicians with little teaching background which sometimes results [in] an inadequate foundation*' (10DB19). Another student argued, however, that it was possible to learn vital teaching skills by reflecting on and critiquing inadequate teaching approaches. Interestingly, this student had not included teaching amongst their career choices at the beginning of Y1, nor did their career aspirations change during the Y1 pedagogy module. The comments below suggest that this highly articulate student may have had a negative experience as a learner, but also that the Y2 module had led them to consider their own responsibility towards future learners:

*Many students will have arrived at a conservatory courtesy of the timely intervention of a good pedagogue, who taught with passion, but so too have we encountered teachers whose communication skills were lacking, or were overly critical, uninspiring or demotivating. Both good and bad examples become influences for our future teaching careers, as we hope to emulate the best methods and eliminate negative elements (39B19).*

Indeed, the importance of effective teacher–student relationships and building a rapport with learners was noted across a wide range of activity. While it was

suggested that masterclasses offer a broader perspective on teaching methods than one-to-one principal study lessons, since one could apply *'new teaching methods from different people all over the world [...] to your learning and the way that you teach your pupils in the future'* (49C19), students also appreciated opportunities to observe *'how different people learn from the same tutor'* (29O19). Similarly, when considering a performance class involving multiple learners, participants reflected not only on how they could *'pick up on the techniques the teacher uses to help the student progress'* (69B19) but also on how their teachers adapted their approaches to suit most appropriately students' differing needs. The positive and increasingly responsible attitude reflected in the following statement was particularly encouraging, given that this participant had previously not expressed any aspirations towards teaching:

*These questions encourage me to consider my teaching practice. For example, when one of my pupils is finding an aspect of a piece difficult, I try to emulate the flexibility of teaching I have experienced. I challenge myself to come up with new ways of explaining things and to be creative when a pupil doesn't learn something in the way I expect (36P19).*

Students claimed that participating in masterclasses, performance classes, chamber music coaching and rehearsals had helped them to develop greater knowledge of instruments and repertoire, whilst learning new rehearsal techniques that could be relevant to coaching or conducting ensembles in the future. In addition, such activities prepared them to receive suggestions and criticism from others whilst improving their critical evaluation and communication skills. The giving and receiving of feedback were also noted as being transferable to teaching children in group instrumental lessons, where peer learning is an important part of the process: *'In masterclasses we can see what has quick and noticeable results. The best masterclasses are where everyone is able to take something from the class'* (2TP19). When referring to performance classes and chamber music coaching, students reported that, invariably, they were offered invaluable opportunities to witness established professionals giving constructive feedback before being encouraged to *'practise articulating feedback in a clear understandable manner'* to

their peers *'in such a way as to be encouraging rather than rude or demoralising'* (56FH19). Consequently, according to a violinist:

*there will always be a bit of each of the professors we have studied with in the way we sing, the way we play, the way we conduct but [...] we not only learn from our teachers but also from our peers. Group work, any kind of group work, helps us to widen our horizon, to see how other people are thinking. But also, it allows us to leave our own box for a moment whether we are a singer, a cellist or an organ player, and to create something out of our differences* (55V19).

An increased appreciation of *'the social benefits and inspiration that comes from working with others'* was reported by a classical guitarist whose involvement in chamber music had contributed to *'a better understanding of how I might lead my own group workshops/chamber music in a music education setting'* (86CG19). In addition to learning how to give clear guidance to peers, other transferable skills deemed relevant by this participant included organisation and management, arranging parts for musicians, as well as planning, structuring and directing rehearsals. Interestingly, some of the employers surveyed as part of this research had perceived conservatoire training to be lacking in terms of enabling students to develop skills such as these (see Chapter 4.3), which in turn suggests a need for greater dialogue (see Chapter 8: Conclusions).

Participants also recognised the potential for many aspects of their academic studies to contribute to their development as music educators. For example, through the study of music history, *'we learn about the different forms, styles and performance practices that developed through time. [This] help[s] improve the understanding of the pieces we play and perhaps get closer to a historically accurate rendition authentic to the composer's intentions'* (63P19). Similarly, they perceived that studying aural and harmony helps to *'develop an analytical approach that can greatly aid in making informed decisions about interpretation [and] equip us to quickly analyse and understand music that we have never heard before, which is useful for situations like adjudication and coaching'* (51VN19).

It is worth emphasising that these statements allude to an increase in conservatoire students' contextual knowledge of music in the Western Classical tradition. But significantly, no participant referred to or seemed to realise the relevance of any global music traditions introduced to them during the Y1 Community Engagement module as part of this reflective task, though this may be because the intended interactive nature of world music sessions was disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, at which point, learning moved online. However, it remains pertinent that a composer had become more mindful of a *'lack of diversity within the scope of teaching music'* (26CP19), and a need to make music accessible to more people. This mature outlook relates strongly to a research report commissioned by Music Mark, in partnership with London Music Education Hubs (Spence, 2021) which aimed to instigate change in relation to issues of racism in music education and to become inclusive, diverse and representative within their work with, and for, children and young people. Nevertheless, on a related EDI theme, it was suggested that *'aural skills are some of the most important skills you can learn at a conservatoire'* (49C19) because teachers with well-developed aural skills have greater capacity to make music accessible to learners *'with limited notation knowledge or with special educational needs'* than those whose aural skills were less developed (22C19). Such notions of accessibility and inclusivity, along with the acknowledgments above regarding the delivery of constructive feedback and the nurturing of positive student–teacher relationships strongly suggest that the Y2 pedagogy module not only enabled students to assimilate skills learned from the Y1 Community Engagement module, but also to continue developing personal qualities, awareness of self and others, appropriate professional behaviours and values. An apt student summary, focusing on this final theme of responsibility, is offered below:

*Being a musician, we uphold the responsibility of bringing music to the next generation in the best possible way. Through the pedagogy course, I came to realise [that] we as musicians should aspire to improve constantly at being a music educator, as many attributes, such as how well we can effectively break down a problem; how well we can effectively communicate our ideas to the student and understand their problems from their point of view; how well we*

*adapt our teaching method towards the different types of learners etc., directly correspond towards the student's ability to progress and enjoy music, and ultimately their passion for it (96P19).*

## **5.7 Reflections on the research with Y2**

The findings that emerged from Y2 students' reflective statements indicate strongly that all aspects of conservatoire curricula can potentially contribute to students' development as music educators, but that many of the facets that support this development may be hidden (Pitts, 2003; Haddon, 2012), a view endorsed by this respondent:

*Students will subconsciously absorb approaches to teaching, and these will likely be reflected in the way in which peers give each other feedback in performance classes and collaborate on projects, and later teach their own students. In fact, many teach without even realising; teaching does not have to be formal. For example, correcting a peer [...] in a constructive manner is in fact teaching, albeit not 'officially' (41V19).*

Conversely, and further to the implication that masterclasses and one-to-one lessons can support students to develop teaching skills (Creech et al., 2009; Gaunt, 2008; 2010; 2011; Haddon, 2014; ucas.com) as discussed in Chapter 1.2, the Project 2b findings show that pedagogical training holds explicit and transferable value in strengthening students' development and understanding of their principal study discipline:

*Many of the skills and attributes associated with [...] pedagogy are closely intertwined with the skills and attributes needed in our own studies at the piano, an axiom of this being the greater our ability to explain an idea to others, the greater and clearer our own understanding of said idea becomes (96P19).*

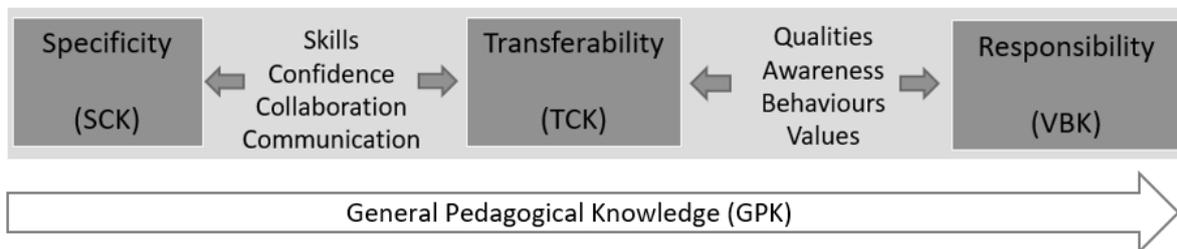
In turn, this stance suggests that pedagogical training is highly beneficial and that the visibility of the hidden elements of conservatoire curricula should be increased to

contribute to students' overall musical and professional development: *'It can be argued that every element of our study at a conservatoire is developing our skills as music educators but studying specifically education-directed subject matter helps us to refine our knowledge in this field and enables us to transfer our skills as performers into educational skills'* (51VN19).

### 5.8 An adapted learning model (DPK)

In Chapter 1.3, I argued that Shulman had omitted a social and emotional dimension from his model of teacher knowledge. At this juncture, I propose an additional or alternative adaptation to that already offered by Wolf and Younie (2019: 227): a 'Developing Pedagogical Knowledge' (DPK) model (see Figure 28). This model retains two of Shulman's original constructs (SCK and GPK) whilst introducing two new constructs that I have created in response to my emerging data: Transferability (TCK) and Responsibility (VBK).

Figure 28: Developing pedagogical knowledge in a conservatoire (DPK)



In particular, the emerging theme of 'specificity', associated above with the mastery of the technical skills necessary to excel in the students' principal study, relates directly to Shulman's Subject Content Knowledge (SCK), as suggested by the following student response: *'Through developing our own skill as performers, we are also developing our skill as potential educators; the greater our understanding of the logistics of performance, the greater our ability to transfer this knowledge to others'* (51VN19). As discussed in Chapter 1.3, Shulman (1986; 1987) argues that SCK alone is not, however, sufficient for effective teaching. Rather, he recommends that teachers also need General Pedagogical Knowledge (GPK) to understand why, how and when to teach aspects of their subject-specific knowledge. I previously suggested that conservatoire students accrue GPK by the time they graduate, but

that the nature of that GPK varies, depending on the pedagogical training offered by their institution and students' enthusiasm to engage with it. My adapted model illustrates the potential for GPK to develop gradually and continually from the earliest stages of students' undergraduate training, so interacting not only with SCK but also with Transferable Content Knowledge (TCK) and Values-Based Knowledge (VBK). Indeed, both TCK and VBK appear to be aspects of hidden curriculum (Pitts, 2003; Haddon, 2012) that foster students' emotional and social consciousness and underpin their developing musician identities (Davidson and Burland, 2006) in relation to becoming teachers. TCK encapsulates the wide range of transferable skills that students develop through principal study activity, academic study and pedagogical training in a conservatoire setting, enabling them to become confident communicators and collaborators. At the same time, VBK leads many conservatoire students to value their pedagogical training. Not only does VBK raise students' awareness of the professional qualities and behaviours necessary for engaging others effectively in music-making, it also nurtures a sense of personal and collective responsibility to forge positive relationships with and create stimulating learning environments for pupils from diverse backgrounds, so inspiring the next generation of musicians. I contend that it is this combination of SCK, GPK, TCK and VBK that is crucial in conservatoire students' early development as instrumental teachers and music educators.

## **5.9 Summary**

Chapter 5 has demonstrated that many RBC students benefited from core pedagogical training across Y1–2 of their undergraduate studies and that reflecting on learning experiences and course content was an important exercise in helping students to assimilate an unfamiliar notion: the importance of pedagogical study in a conservatoire context. Each year might be viewed as a reflective cycle, where students 'consciously take action as a result of the reflective processes [...] undertaken' (Jasper, 2013: 4) during their training, with the experience encountered at each stage building their knowledge and understanding. Moon (2004: 23), however, suggests that learning is not simply 'built up' or accumulated; it involves interaction or flux between 'internal experience' (that which the learner brings to the learning situation from prior experience) and 'external experience' (for example,

previously unknown concepts or ideas assimilated from outside the learner's current experience). As noted above, in Y1, students became aware not only of skills and qualities they had developed during the Community Engagement module, but also of appropriate behaviours and values surrounding music education in general and the facilitation of music-making in young people in particular. As such, students were able to demonstrate 'knowledge of the underlying concepts and principles associated with their area(s) of study, and an ability to evaluate and interpret these within the context of that area of study' in line with FHEQ Level 4 (QAA, 2014: 21). Moreover, during Y2, students were able to explore the specialist and transferable skills developed across the curriculum and their sense of social and cultural responsibility towards other learners undoubtedly began to develop. Even though students were not yet placed in external professional educational contexts, an increasing awareness of their transferable skills and the potential to apply these to teaching in the future was apparent. This finding correlates with FHEQ Level 5 (QAA, 2014: 23) where it is recommended that learners should be able to demonstrate an 'ability to apply underlying concepts and principles outside the context in which they were first studied' (this being the principal study area) and have 'the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and decision-making.' As Illeris (2007:40) states:

In assimilative learning, the learner adapts and incorporates impressions from his or her surroundings as an extension and differentiation of mental schemes built up from earlier learning [...]. In its pure form, assimilative learning is characterised by a steady and stable progressive development in which the learning products are constructed, integrated and stabilised.

Pedagogical knowledge developed across Y1–2 would seem to constitute the construction stage, whereby students are introduced to foundational principles of learning and teaching. Students were able to integrate and stabilise these foundational principles through collaborative peer learning activities that were 'scaffolded' (Wood et al., 1976) by experienced practitioners within a Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky, 1938). In completing a piece of reflective writing during each module, students were challenged to question their assumptions and

expectations, their habits of mind and frames of reference (Mezirow, 2018), whilst exploring their purpose, personal motivations and values (Renshaw, 2009) in relation to the profession they might be striving to become part of and belong to (Wenger, 2018). Indeed, through engaging with primary (already familiar) and secondary (previously unfamiliar) discourses in their reflective writing, students were also supported in coming to terms with their conflicting musical and professional identities (Gee, 2011a; 2011b). Furthermore, the core modules discussed above highlighted for many students in Y1 and 2 the need to ensure that classical music is not perceived as 'a niche and exclusive artform' but one that is accessible to all in order to 'instil a lifelong passion for music' in others (Burland, 2020: 2).

I maintain, nevertheless, that students cannot fully integrate and stabilise their constructed knowledge without access to CoP external to the conservatoire environment that can help them begin to understand why, how, and when to teach content to real learners in real situations. Moreover, according to Illeris (2007: 40) 'what is learned assimilatively is thus characterised by being bound to certain mental schemes, and this can have its limitations in a modern world where things change so quickly and unpredictably.' To use terminology adapted from Lave and Wenger's legitimate peripheral participation theory (1991), students need access to professional music education contexts and external mentoring either from long-established teachers (OO), or from those who are relatively new to the profession (ON). This vital stage of learning assists with 'accommodation' (Illeris, 2007: 41), where students learn to apply learning they have assimilated previously to solve problems and overcome challenges in a new set of unfamiliar situations. Such opportunities are offered to RBC undergraduate students across Y3–4 and are discussed in Chapter 6.

## **Chapter 6: Undergraduate assimilation of the unfamiliar through professional placements and projects (Level 6)**

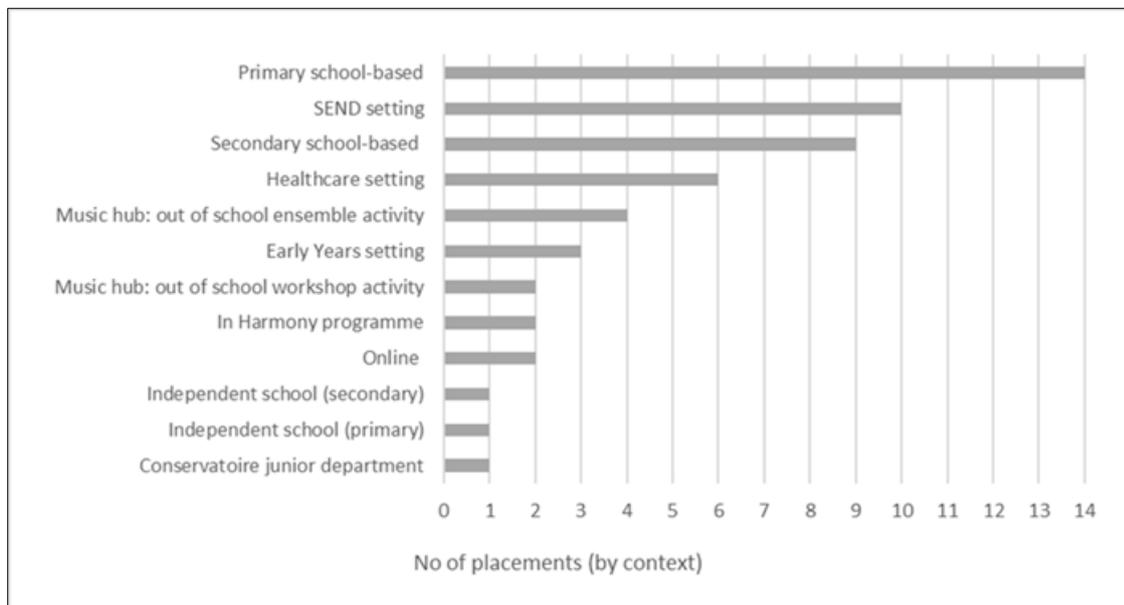
### **6.1 Background**

Like Chapter 5, this chapter addresses research question 2 (see Introduction). The focus here, however, is to consider the impact of professional placements and projects on students' development as the next generation of music educators. At RBC, students are able to undertake one or more placements in external music education settings across Y3–4 in conjunction with pedagogy modules and in partial fulfilment of a substantial self-defined project-based module, enabling them to engage with CoP outside the institution. As noted in Chapter 5, supplementary information relating to this project (Project 2c) is located in Appendix D, pp. 43–50.

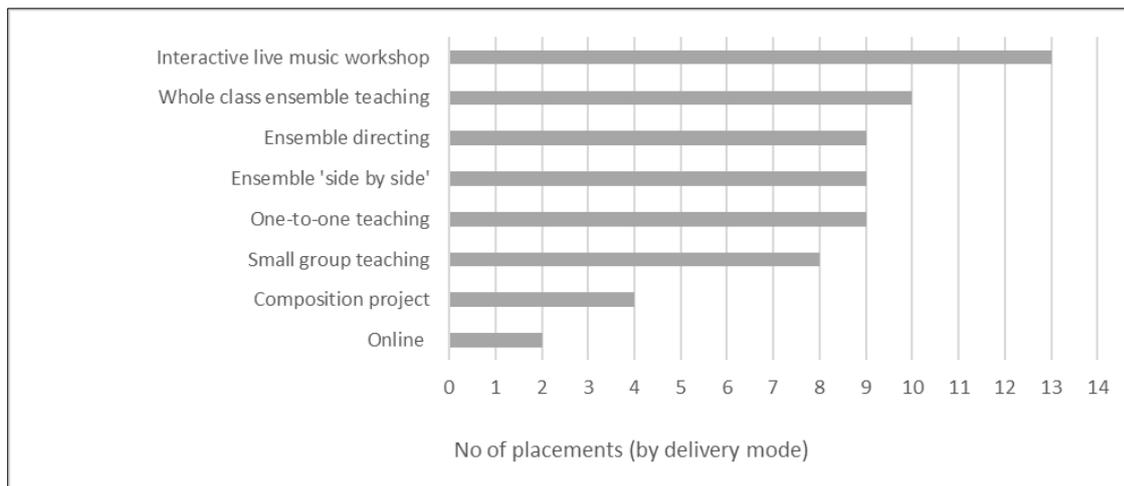
In July 2020, online interviews were conducted with new graduates who had completed the BMus course at RBC just one month prior. These graduates had begun their course before the revalidation that resulted in core provision for pedagogical training being embedded from Y1; hence, they had been required to complete core music education modules across Y2–3 as opposed to Y1–2. (Given these participants had not yet entered the profession at the time of the study, they are classed as IN participants, to distinguish them from the alumni/ON participants discussed in Chapter 7.) Since the aim of these interviews was to gain insight into the impact of placement activity on students' professional development, it was necessary to select participants who had experienced a range of delivery contexts and modes through observing professional practitioners as well as leading activities themselves, whether independently or under the supervision of a mentor. To establish which participants to approach, I drew up a list of new graduates who had taken optional pedagogy modules across Y3–4 and/or devised a music education-based project in the final year. From this list, six participants were identified who had completed not only the largest number of placements, but also the widest variety. This breadth of experience was important to increase the reliability of the research. Following the necessary ethical procedures (see Chapter 2.3), all six new graduates (who are henceforth anonymised in this chapter as NG1–6) gave informed consent to participate in the research. Figures 29 and 30 below provide an

overview of their placement activities across Y3–4, firstly by context, and secondly by delivery mode.

*Figure 29: Number of placement activities completed in Y3 and 4 across participant sample (by context)*



*Figure 30: Number of placement activities completed in Y3 and 4 across participant sample (by delivery mode)*



It is striking that most placement experiences appear to be within primary school and SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) settings, and that WCET (Whole Class Ensemble Teaching) features significantly, despite the reservations of employers (discussed in Chapter 4.3) who suggested that students were unable to

access such experiences during their conservatoire training. Furthermore, the comparatively low number of one-to-one teaching placement activities also challenges some assumptions set out in Chapter 4.3 where some employers perceived conservatoire students to have limited experience of teaching scenarios other than one-to-one settings, and little or no interest in developing their teaching skills. Tables 24 and 25 illustrate the range of placement activity undertaken per student: again, context and delivery mode are presented separately.

*Table 24: No. of placement activities completed per participant across Y3–4 (by context)*

<b>Context</b>	<b>NG1</b>	<b>NG2</b>	<b>NG3</b>	<b>NG4</b>	<b>NG5</b>	<b>NG6</b>
Online	0	0	2	0	0	0
Conservatoire junior department	0	1	0	0	0	0
In Harmony programme	0	0	1	0	1	0
Independent school (primary)	0	0	0	0	0	1
Independent school (secondary)	1	0	0	0	0	0
Early Years setting	1	0	1	0	1	0
Healthcare setting	3	0	2	0	1	0
Music hub: out of school workshop activity	2	0	0	0	0	0
Music hub: out of school ensemble activity	1	1	0	1	1	0
Music hub: primary school-based	5	2	0	3	2	2
Music hub: secondary school-based	4	2	0	1	1	1
SEND setting	3	0	3	1	4	3

*Table 25: No. of placement activities completed per participant in Y3–4 (by delivery mode)*

<b>Delivery mode</b>	<b>NG1</b>	<b>NG2</b>	<b>NG3</b>	<b>NG4</b>	<b>NG5</b>	<b>NG6</b>
Online	0	0	2	0	0	0
One-to-one teaching	2	2	2	1	1	1
Small group teaching	1	2	0	2	1	2
Whole class ensemble teaching	2	2	2	2	1	1
Ensemble 'side by side'	2	4	1	0	2	0
Ensemble directing	1	3	2	1	2	0
Interactive music workshop	7	0	2	0	2	0
Composition project	3	0	1	0	0	0

The discussion that follows draws on the 'lived experiences' (Charmaz, 1996: 30) of NG1–6, who were 'peripheral' participants in multiple CoP, where 'changing locations and perspectives formed part of [their] 'learning trajectories' and 'developing identities' (Lave and Wenger, 1991: 36). In order to contextualise the insights offered by these new graduates, it is important first to set out the parameters within which the interviews were conducted.

All interviewees were asked questions from a list of prompts, prepared as shown in Table 26 below. However, it was sometimes necessary to deviate from these prompts to maintain a conversational flow that demonstrated interest in and engagement with each graduate's particular experiences, since (as shown in Tables 20 and 21 above) placement activity profiles varied from participant to participant. Indeed, the first three questions needed to be asked multiple times, with slight adaptations depending on which placement was being discussed. The intention was for this approach to enable and encourage participants to speak freely, generating a significant amount of data which were coded according to Creswell's (2012) recommendations (see Chapter 2.3).

*Table 26: Prompt questions for interviews with new graduates*

- |   |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Please could you provide a brief summary and timeline of your placement experiences?</li><li>• How did you develop as a practitioner in [given settings]?</li><li>• What/how did you learn from pupils/participants?</li><li>• What/how did you learn from professionals/mentors?</li><li>• Are there any experiences on these placements that stand out for you as being particularly beneficial to your ongoing development as a music educator? Can you say why?</li><li>• Have any of the placements you completed during Y3 and 4 had a bearing on what you plan to go and do next?</li><li>• Would you recommend participation in placements to RBC students moving into Y3 and 4? Why/why not?</li></ul> |
|---|

When analysing this data, a similar approach was taken to that of Projects 2a–b, where textual data were transferred to an Excel spreadsheet, with interview

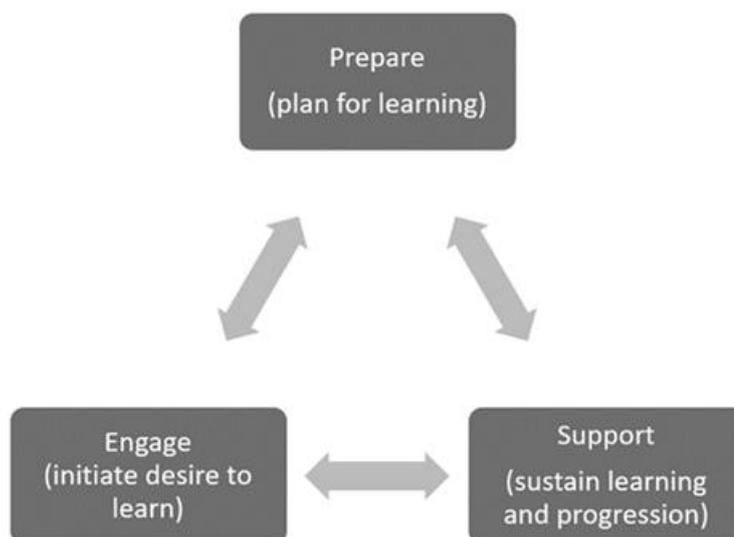
transcripts read carefully, line-by-line. Initially, this approach generated 184 codes, which were reduced to 111 following the elimination of duplicated codes. The remaining codes were then organised into groups according to similarity, whereupon overarching and sub-themes emerged. In both Table 27 and the discussion that follows, the first three overarching themes are grouped together to form a thematic cluster: ‘promoting learning’ (see Chapter 6.2) while the other themes remain undivided. Respective findings are discussed across Chapter 6.3–6.4. Illustrative samples from this coding process can be found in Appendix D, pp. 44–50.

Table 27: Project 2c – summary of themes

Overarching themes		Sub-themes
Promoting learning	Preparing for children's learning	Lesson/workshop planning (overplanning) Not making assumptions about pupils' level of understanding Inclusion Curriculum/progression Organisation Students' cultural backgrounds Pupil motivation
	Engaging learners (initiating the desire to learn)	Initiating a desire to learn – enthusiasm and creativity Acting – teacher confidence/teacher personality and energy/positivity Inspiring role model Effective communication and delivery style Non-notation approaches, singing, composing, improvising, conducting Pupil enjoyment and response – pupil-teacher interaction Instil pride in pupils regarding their music making
	Supporting learners (sustaining learning and progression)	Instilling a desire to progress/facilitating progress Breaking things down Building children's confidence Being adaptable/thinking on your feet Giving/giving feedback Developing technique (doing things 'properly') Inspiration vs perfection Not putting children off Keeping an open mind Building a rapport Online teaching Behaviour management Developing general musicianship Holistic learning Being caring
Benefits and drawbacks of placements	Professional development for mentors (reciprocal learning) Mentor feedback Influenced by being around a professional Combat performance anxiety Mentors can offer career advice Learning on the job (through observation/doing/questioning) Learning about learning Opportunity to teach/lead with and without a 'safety net' Experience different ages/environments/group teaching Promotes reflection Handling tricky situations Employability Need more time Mentoring not always 'educative'	
Evolving career aspirations	Transformed approaches to teaching Patchy provision Interest in teaching beyond placement Teaching integral to being a musician Love the job Differences between 1:1 and group teaching highlighted Hindsight/realisation of missed opportunities earlier in course Students as role models for other students Teaching vs performing	

The interviews revealed that the placements had led participants to reflect, both ‘in action’ (during teaching sessions) and ‘on action’ (after the event) (Schön, 1983). Furthermore, data unveiled a greater emphasis on, and interest in, the learning of others than in data gathered from Y1 students (see Chapter 5) where many responses, understandably, had initially been more focused on participants’ own learning. New graduates recognised and acknowledged that, as intending music educators, it would be important to plan for learning (prepare), to initiate pupils’ desire to learn (engage) and to sustain learning beyond the initial engagement stage in order ensure progress (support). Given that these three interrelated approaches to promoting learning in music do not follow any particular order or sequence and are likely to coincide or overlap depending on the particular learners’ needs, the environments in which learning takes place, and any other factors involved (see Figure 31), they are considered below as an overall approach to promoting learning rather than in a compartmentalised manner.

*Figure 31: Promoting learning model: Prepare, Engage, Support*



## 6.2 Promoting learning: prepare, engage, support

Planning was emphasised by participants as a key element that they had gained from their placements. It was suggested by NG1 that it was not possible to ‘overplan’, because doing so would enhance self-confidence when leading an actual

session. Similarly, NG3 had learned that having written prompts to hand whilst delivering workshops reduced nerves and ensured that they did not ‘freeze’ mid-session. There was a sense that participants had made real progress with planning and preparation during their placements, moving from a position where *‘At first [...] even though I’d plan really carefully, I’d feel like I’d still be tripping over everything and I’d be nervous if things started going a different way’* (NG6), to one where: *‘Sometimes it worked and sometimes it didn’t but [the placement] really helped me to be able to adapt to the situation when I need to’* (NG1). Indeed, participants reported that they had learned new approaches to planning through trying things out in a safe environment where they could receive instant feedback from their mentor, who would guide them through various repetitions and adjustments of the material until they began to feel more confident (an approach that is discussed from an alumni-mentor’s perspective in Chapter 7.3).

While the above discussion suggests that participants focused on the benefits of planning for their own self-confidence (as was the case for most Y1 students discussed in Chapter 5.2), in general, as suggested above, recent graduates appeared far less focused on themselves (egocentric) and, displaying relative maturity, much more focused on the needs of the learners encountered within their placements (altruistic). For example, it was acknowledged that making assumptions about learners’ needs and abilities was detrimental, and that instead, learning should be broken down into multiple steps, with differentiation built into planning to enable flexibility. One participant, who was presumptuous regarding the musical terminology that a group of learners preparing for GCSE in Music might know, needed to change their lesson plan on the spot having quickly found that learners’ vocabulary was actually rather limited. From this experience, the student learned that it was important to *‘start off really simple and then if you can make it more complicated then do, but don’t just jump in’* (NG1). Another participant who had completed several placements in SEND settings concurred, regarding *‘how simple things really needed to be’* (NG5), whilst acknowledging the *‘learning curve’* they had experienced regarding the need to plan flexibly and with an acute understanding of pupils’ individual needs: *‘I didn’t realise before how you can get everyone involved in different ways [...] if someone can’t speak, then they can’t do singing and [...] if*

*someone can't see, then they can't see your actions, so you have to think of different ways to present the same thing'* (NG5). Pacing and variety were also considered important by participants, especially when planning learning activities for large groups of young children: *'We never do anything for longer than five or ten minutes. If you went over the ten minutes, you'd absolutely lose them'* (NG3).

It was clear that participating in a variety of group-based teaching placements across Y3–4 had impacted on new graduates' approaches to facilitating learning in one-to-one instrumental lessons. Participants admitted that prior to their placements, they had not fully appreciated the value of planning for learning when teaching pupils individually, even though it had been discussed during lectures. NG5 reported that, since completing their placements, they had begun to adopt a more holistic approach to lesson planning and their pupils were more engaged as a result. For example, when introducing a new piece, interrelated components of the music (for example, key, rhythm and dynamics) would be explored away from notation through aural-based activities such as improvisation.

This increased awareness amongst participants of the need to engage learners across a wide range of ages and abilities through varied creative teaching approaches was deemed important in initiating pupils' desire to learn in the early stages of playing an instrument and in supporting them to progress. Participants spoke with enthusiasm about key moments in their placements, recalling teaching strategies that they believed were instantly transferable to their teaching in private practice: *'I remember in one of the classes the teacher sang along with the valves instead of using the instrument straight away. It was a way of developing their aural skills as well as practising fingerings before [playing] the instrument'* (NG1). Moreover, placement experiences had inspired participants to seek new and imaginative ways of engaging pupils and enabling their progress by appealing to their personalities and interests whilst taking into account how they might be feeling on any given lesson day:

*I teach an autistic boy and I have to tread carefully [because] he's very sensitive, so I'm always trying to make it look like something is his idea -*

*otherwise he doesn't want to do it. It's been a challenge to get him to work and be efficient but I [use] different techniques, like questioning him [whilst] giving him freedom, for example, 'next week I want you do to do a little composition [using] the black notes [and] these dynamics and pick a mood or a theme' (NG6).*

An awareness of pupils' cultural backgrounds was deemed to be highly pertinent when selecting appropriate repertoire to increase engagement and enable progression. With reference to an In Harmony programme, for example, it was reported that, 'We do such a wide mix of things – a whole range from Baroque all the way up to Billie Eilish (NG3)'. Furthermore, when discussing another placement context, where lessons were taught via video conferencing to young people in South Africa, NG3 stated

*the background of the kids is something we can't even imagine [...] I think it must be really difficult for them as young black people in Soweto to listen to music written by dead white men and this really got to me. So, in my lessons I talked about Kwela - their music.*

Indeed, NG3 had been led to question their own musical upbringing whilst on placement, realising that their skill set had been rather limited prior to engaging with teenagers in an out-of-school creative music-making project that involved

*thinking about ways to compose when I'm not fully confident in composing myself. They've got their own little bands and they're composing their own music. I've been brought through conservatoire in a very traditional classical sense where you're just taught to play what's in front of you. You don't necessarily have that creative side challenged.*

NG3's reflections reinforce the suggestion (see Chapter 5.7) that conservatoire students need to be encouraged to recognise the potential relevance of *all* aspects of the curriculum to their future careers, and that emphasising the principal study over other activity may not prepare students adequately for the workplace.

Elsewhere, there was a hint of a 'music college mindset' (a term introduced by an alumni participant in Chapter 7.2) when reflecting on their experience in a WCET setting:

*As a pianist I didn't think [teacher] had too much to offer and there's so many drawbacks in that when you've got 30 kids smashing the keys, [the teacher] can't possibly keep on top of everything they're doing so I helped a little bit. What I learned was that sometimes it's much more important to be really engaging [...] and just get the children doing something than it is to get them doing everything properly (NG6).*

While NG6 clearly appreciated the need to engage pupils, their suggestion that children cannot learn how to play their instrument 'properly' in a WCET setting appeared dismissive and possibly missed the point regarding the aims of the programme. Indeed, MEHs charged with the delivery of WCET employ two distinct conceptualisations: a) Music education starts with the instrument and (b) Music education takes place via the instrument, promoting a 'general music education [...] achieved through the mediating affordances of playing the instrument but also going beyond it' (Fautley et al., 2019: 248). NG1 had evidently grasped this concept, stating that the emphasis in many placement contexts was on '*how to incorporate general musicianship into instrumental teaching*' using '*things that weren't specifically related to the instrument but could be linked to the instrument*'. NG3 and NG5 also offered an opposing view to that of NG6, instead advocating the social and enrichment benefits of large group working, with its focus on inclusivity and inspiration as opposed to perfection.

*It's not about teaching the [instrument] absolutely perfectly. We're not there to breed the perfect technique. We're there to enjoy the sessions. [Children] love the singing and the actions. They think it's great when they can play something with a backing track and it sounds really good. What we're trying to do is to inspire people to carry on (NG3).*

*I think they just learn to like music. They were all really excited about being there, enjoying music, confidence, part of a big team as well. I think it's probably most focused on those things at the lower level than being good at your cello or your violin because some of them were putting it on the wrong shoulder! (NG5).*

According to participants, a significant factor in engaging pupils and motivating them to continue and progress in their musical learning was teacher personality. In particular, NG4 had been fascinated by the way their mentor seemed to take on different personae, depending on the setting they were teaching in at any given time. In WCET settings, their mentor had exaggerated their body language, and used a 'teaching voice', whereas when teaching small groups, 'a different person' with 'more of a warm character' emerged. Similarly, across their placements, NG3 had not only taken on board the need to adapt their tone of voice when speaking to pupils, but also to attend to their posture in terms of how and where they stood in the teaching space, describing this phenomenon as an 'aura [...] a kind of presence thing'. However, NG3 admitted to feeling less 'in their comfort zone' when working with 'cool' teenagers: 'I'm good at being excited and engaging for little kids but teenagers don't want someone who's like "YAY". They want someone who's more on their level.'

Learning how to handle energy levels in different groups was an aspect of the placements that certain participants found particularly valuable, especially in cases where pupils were less than enthusiastic about making music. NG2 had not anticipated that they might encounter pupils in their future career who did not actually want to learn and claimed that the placement had been revealing in that regard:

*Maybe I was presumptuous to think everyone who plays an instrument wanted to play an instrument. But it's not always like that, you know? You kind of hope it is but it isn't always. And I had no idea how to teach them cos I didn't necessarily think that was going to be a big factor (NG2).*

However, NG2 had found it extremely helpful to observe and talk to their mentor about *'how they had dealt with tricky situations in the past'*, including *'how to teach a student who doesn't necessarily want to be there, or groups of people who don't necessarily get along'*. Similarly, NG1 had benefited from *'using different activities to try and control that energy level and make it where you want it to be or need it to be'*, while NG5 had witnessed first-hand how young ensemble members responded positively when their conductor *'hyped them up'* when introducing new pieces or preparing for a forthcoming concert: *'they were told this is a big deal, and you have to do this and this and this, but they were really excited about it and proud to be part of their group.'*

Participants repeatedly suggested that one of the most important factors in engaging a large group was teacher confidence. However, unlike Y1 students who were frequently preoccupied with developing self-confidence for their own ends, for example, to improve their performance on stage or reduce their performance anxiety (see Chapter 5.4), the new graduates in this sample demonstrated a keen awareness of the impact their confidence levels as teachers and workshop leaders would have on the learning experiences of the young people involved in their lessons or workshops.

*If you're not confident and the pupils can see you're not confident, they're not going to respond to you [...]. When I had a chance to do a bit of teaching in my fourth-year placement, I think I was visibly nervous about it, so the pupils picked up on that. They were really great and I think it was fine, but the first couple didn't engage with me fully because [...] they could feel my nerves (NG1).*

NG1 went on to share details of a similar scenario in an ensemble setting where they had been given the opportunity to conduct, but had not been assertive enough:

*I led the warm-up before one of the sectionals. That was really telling for me in terms of things I needed to work on. I remember conducting and [...] I kept*

*changing my beat to fit them instead of keeping it steady so that was a learning curve for me. It was a really good experience! (NG1).*

Nevertheless, it was suggested that learner engagement and progress was increased by the presence of conservatoire students as role models in ensemble settings. Playing along in a 'side-by-side' capacity tended to build conservatoire students' confidence in relaying information to pupils in accessible ways, but more importantly, pupils also benefited from having someone not much older than themselves sitting close by, offering reassurance.

It has already been intimated that the general outlook of new graduates was rather different from that of Y1 students. To elaborate, when discussing the importance of providing ongoing support for pupils, new graduates seemed decidedly more altruistic than egocentric. For NG1, teaching and workshop facilitation placements had provided not only rewards for themselves (*'the things you can gain'*) but also benefits for learners (*'the things you can give'*). This view was corroborated by NG2 who described their experience as a trainee teacher on placement as experiencing learning from *'the opposite end'*:

*You're the one giving, you're the one motivating, and that's exactly what I want to do. I want to be on that end rather than the other end [...]. In the placements you're not just shadowing. You are it! You are inspiring these kids. You're their role model. You are who some of them want to be. It's motivating for me thinking 'you can give something back' and nothing will beat seeing the satisfaction and the smiles on their faces when they've learned something.*

Elsewhere, participants discussed 'giving' in the context of offering instruction and feedback, having learned about the need to give specific, focused and tailored comments to aid pupils' progression. NG1 reflected on improved communication in supporting students' learning: *'I've learned to become a lot louder [...] and clearer. The way I speak is quite wordy and quick, so I've really learned to scale that back.'* Equally, NG4 focused on the use of praise: having learned not to offer *'compliments*

*without reason*', they had seen a notable difference in pupils' progress when specific, targeted feedback had been given.

By contrast, NG6 had learned from a placement experience where the mentor had lacked patience with their pupils and the 'giving' element had been far less generous:

*When you're the teacher, it's your responsibility to have so many different ways of explaining one thing and if the child doesn't get it, it's probably your fault, not theirs, unless you know they haven't been working like they should. I just think that actually, it puts so many children off learning because they're scared to make mistakes (NG6).*

The above example resonates with Dewey (1938: 20), who claimed that not all experiences are 'genuinely or equally educative' and some may even be 'mis-educative', having the capacity to distort or restrict the growth of further experience. However, I argue that, if guided appropriately, students can take away something positive even from a negative learning experience on placement. Indeed, the new graduates in the current sample had been required to reflect critically on their placement experiences as part of their optional pedagogy modules and in rare instances where practices were questioned, the examples were problematised and alternative behaviours and strategies proposed.

### **6.3 Perceived drawbacks and benefits of placements**

As suggested above, not all placements experienced by the participant sample were deemed wholly successful. For example, NG4 expressed frustration with a placement they had organised themselves as part of a self-devised project, regretting that they had not negotiated a formal mentoring arrangement with the employer:

*It's understandable. They were so busy and so occupied that I was very much on my own there. They didn't have any effort left to mentor me at the same time. I was able to get involved when they needed it – 'oh can you come and sit next to so and so and help them through the music?' – [which] was useful*

*to a certain degree [and] I got used to interacting with musicians with disabilities. By observing them I could see how amazing they were and pick up on the small things they did. But I didn't really gain that much if I'm honest (NG4).*

Another participant reported having to learn by trial and error through an online placement, where again, mentor supervision appeared to be lacking or inconsistent. While it could be argued that the difficulties experienced by NG3 formed part of their learning experience, the following raised a moral question about the detrimental impact of the apparent lack of mentoring on the progress of the pupil in question:

*One thing I didn't realise during my whole first year of teaching is that my student had an insanely tense thumb. I just couldn't see that at all and it didn't occur to me at that point to check. And then when I saw her in person and could see the whole, I thought 'how have I taught you for a year and not realised that that's happened?' So, I've learned to checklist them better – so, we need to check that bow, we need to check every angle. We can ask them to move around, we can ask them to move the camera to try and make it work [better] for the pupil.*

Despite the drawbacks discussed above, the participant sample was extremely positive about the placement experiences and perceived many benefits. Seemingly, the most effective placements had been those where participants had observed taught sessions and subsequently been supported to teach under the supervision of an assigned mentor whose role was to model good practice, support each student by offering clear and targeted feedback on their teaching, and encourage them to engage in mutual dialogue, ask questions and reflect on their developing practice. Such an approach ensured that the pupils concerned were not mere 'guinea pigs' (or to use Dewey's terminology - being 'mis-educated') since a crucial part of the mentor's role during the placement was to 'establish a safe and stimulating [learning] environment' in which they were held 'accountable for pupils' attainment, progress and outcomes' (as outlined in the Teachers Standards (DfE, 2011).

*The feedback she gave me was always really quite precise and directed at a specific thing I had done, so I really appreciated that. If it was general, I don't think it would have been as useful cos I wouldn't have been able to pinpoint exactly what it was that I needed to change. When I asked specific questions, it became even more useful (NG1).*

Furthermore, the opportunity to undertake an extended placement across several days or weeks, for example, one that was attached to a module (and therefore credit-bearing), was deemed of greater value than a more ad-hoc opportunity.

*I tried to pick up on what he was doing and to do it myself and he'd give me a lot of positive feedback on it [...]. The moments that stood out for me were the moments when I was leading – the time I was at the front. I think the biggest thing I learned from was the experience of putting everything into context [...] and watching someone else put it into practice for an extensive number of hours (NG4).*

*I learned how to manage behaviour in a large group whilst also teaching an instrument. I learnt that it was incredibly important to make sure you set your expectations at the very beginning. If you do that it becomes very clear what you want from the children and what they should do (NG1).*

The opportunity to apply their pedagogy training in a real-life context was also appreciated by NG5 who had been required to teach an instrument other than their principal study whilst on placement:

*We had a session on each instrument which was helpful because if you end up doing some sort of peri work or something like that in the future, it's useful to know the basics of the oboe, the basics of the clarinet just in case [...]. If you're working with a group of musicians, it's helpful to have a working knowledge of each of the instruments.*

Participants believed that developing skills across a range of contexts, delivery modes and age groups had given them a foundation on which to build as they transitioned into their early careers as instrumental teachers. According to NG2, a music educator needed to acquire a 'base level' of skill, whether they were teaching in a primary school or at a conservatoire junior department. Participants also spoke of 'overlap' in their learning across different placement types: whether in WCET, classroom-based workshops or small group teaching, *'there are things like differentiation that are transferable'* (NG4). NG1 supported this view, stating that certain skills applied to both instrumental teaching and workshop facilitation, *'like pacing, ways to try and make things suit the pupil or pupils that you're working with. Also trying to think of different activities and being creative'* (NG1). Another participant even compared one-to-one and large group teaching:

*I'm not sure if you could be a good teacher without being a good workshop leader [...]. The skills are very similar I would say. There are differences and obviously when you've got one child it's a more personal relationship and you know the child better than if you have a group of 50, but I think for both, you have to have that same level of enthusiasm to get the best results* (NG5).

Although the above statements represent rather generalised viewpoints, the interviews showed that recent graduates appreciated the importance of tailoring their teaching to suit pupils' needs and the contexts in which they would be working in the future: *'all teaching is different, no teaching is the same'* (NG2).

#### **6.4 Testing the water: evolving career aspirations**

It was clear from the interviews that participants had viewed their former placements as a convenient way to 'test the water' regarding possible career paths whilst still a student:

*Even if you're not sure whether you want to do it, if you go for it anyway, you can find out whether teaching or music education is something that you want to do or whether you have that passion within you to want to do it. Even if you don't, I think there's still a lot that you can learn from it that you can take to*

*other parts of being a musician, like organising your time. Also teaching is another way of performing (NG1).*

One participant (NG4) spoke about being *'more switched on professionally'* as a result of engaging in placements and that this had surprised them. They recognised that *'being around a professional in the industry [...] rubs off. Their enthusiasm and professionalism just brings you up to their level. If right before [the placement] you're not quite on the same page, by the end of it you'll find yourself acting like them outside of the placement'*. Others felt strongly that more conservatoire students should be encouraged to engage in teaching placements during their course:

*I think it's a no brainer just because where else can you get that experience, guidance and training? [If] I didn't like what [teacher] was doing, it really made me think 'why didn't I like it? How would I do it?' Or if I really liked something, 'why was that effective? How can I incorporate that into my teaching?' So, it really encourages you to challenge yourself. And I feel if you don't have opportunities to observe other people's teaching, sometimes the only teaching you really see at that level is your own and how do you know whether it's actually good? So, I think the more you think about what you're doing, challenge yourself and see what other people are doing, it just helps you to solidify your teaching methods (NG6).*

In addition to providing much needed professional experience, graduates believed that placements had the capacity to transform students' perceptions about teaching as a career choice and the value of music education more broadly. For example, NG2 claimed that the backbone of their education prior to attending conservatoire had comprised playing in orchestras and competitions – *'you're there to achieve'* – but through the placements they had developed a passion for working with large groups where the focus was on enjoyment and developing wider musical and social skills. NG3 reported a similar change in mindset as a result of participating in placements, whilst also revealing that teaching and leading workshops had had a positive impact on their performing skills. It was intimated that a focus on *'enjoyment'* as opposed to technical ability when performing in workshop scenarios had helped

NG3 to 'combat nerves when on stage'. To this end, they felt strongly that 'everyone should do some sort of placement at some point'. Moreover, NG3 stipulated that 'you cannot be a performer and just do one thing. You have to have a more rounded view of music. You can't just say 'I'm a violinist: I'm only going to do the violin and that's it [...]. It's so out of touch with what music is.' Participants were acutely aware, however, that convincing some peers of the value of engaging with pedagogical studies and participating in teaching placements was not an easy task.

*Obviously, not everyone is inclined to that sort of work. However, I think teaching is such an integral part of being a musician that even if you're playing in the London Symphony Orchestra you're still going to have to teach at some point in your life and I think it's actually really useful to do it well [laughs]. There's nothing worse than a bad teacher! I think there's still a lot of 'we're here to do music, to be performers' [but] for every musician, [teaching] is going to play a part in your life, so you may as well learn how to do it well in my opinion. I'd definitely recommend [trying] it even if you don't think it's your thing cos you might find out that it definitely is! (NG5).*

The importance of taking up opportunities when offered was emphasised and advocated by NG2, who had regretted not doing so themselves on occasion. This view correlates with that of another graduate participant (M1, to be discussed in Chapter 7.3), who had been working as an instrumental teacher for two and a half years at the time of the research study and who, like NG2, acknowledged that they only understood the relevance of the opportunities offered to them as students in hindsight. Similarly, NG3 had evidently not understood the relevance of their pedagogical training to their future career planning as they progressed through the course:

*I've always really enjoyed this kind of stuff, always. I didn't realise it was something I could do as a career. I thought it was something I'd just have a really nice experience doing at college. I mean I knew people did it because I've seen you and [colleagues] doing it, but I didn't think I'd be the person to*

*be able to do that [...]. I've just been so fortunate that I've been lucky enough to get jobs out of it and that it can carry on as my career (NG3).*

These participant perspectives suggest that more could have been done to communicate and 'sell' alternative routes to performance across all departments at RBC. This finding relates to the need to change the 'messaging' within and surrounding conservatoires as discussed in Chapter 3 (participant 5). In contrast, NG1 seemed to have been more alert to the impact of their pedagogical training and its implications:

*When I first went into college, I was dead set on just being a performer [...] and then as I went through college that changed a lot [laughs]. I think the experiences I've had [...] made me realise how you can use music in a way to engage people [...] and create positive change [...] and I really enjoyed it (NG1).*

Conversely, NG6 had no intention of pursuing a career as a performer but had appreciated the chance to develop their experience of working with pupils with SEND across an extended period since they had ambitions to use their performance skills in a music therapy context. As suggested previously in this chapter, NG6 was far less enthusiastic about their music hub-based placements than their peers and stated that they were leaning towards one-to-one teaching in private practice:

*I think I'd probably want to steer clear of [music hub teaching] if I can help it. I think it's purely because the resources these teachers are given and because the situations they have to teach in are quite difficult. And I wouldn't say it was actually that fulfilling for a lot of people. I think you have to be the sort of person who absolutely loves kids and loves engaging them as opposed to someone who wants to see people progress on the instrument (NG6).*

The above statement is curious and perhaps misses the important point that engaging pupils is integral to enabling their progression. Equally, the challenging environments encountered within music hub settings and the contrast with their own

former learning experiences appeared to be precisely the antidote that spurred NG2 on. Indeed, the following testimony is a clear example of the habitus having been ‘confronted and disrupted’ (Wright, 2015: 84) as discussed in Chapter 1.

*The instrumental placement in Birmingham was an eye opener to me. I’d done one-to-one teaching but that doesn’t count when you’re in a school on a very rigid timetable, don’t have time to have a coffee from 9 until 5 [...] going from a massive library where you have a class come in every 10 minutes to pick out some new books to then teach in what is a cupboard with [...] a trombone in the next room. It really was fantastic! For me, it showed just how adaptable you have to be [...]. My fourth year pushed me into thinking this is definitely what I’d like to go into [...] and it was a switch [from] what I’d been brought up doing.*

Two participants revealed that they had entered RBC without any particular career aspirations at all, and NG4 claimed that their peers ‘*couldn’t comprehend that coming to college and not wanting to be a professional [performer] was something that could happen*’. However, the pedagogy provision at RBC, and in particular the placements, had supported them to gradually accrue teaching skills and the confidence to apply for jobs and teacher training courses: ‘*I’d say fourth year’s the one that set me on my way to being a teacher for sure*’ (NG4).

*I’ve really enjoyed the school setting [...]. I absolutely loved being at the front of a class and teaching them [...] I really want to bring music into schools because I feel like it’s a neglected subject. Being a primary school teacher is a way that I can at least do that with my class and hopefully influence the school to do it as well* (NG5).

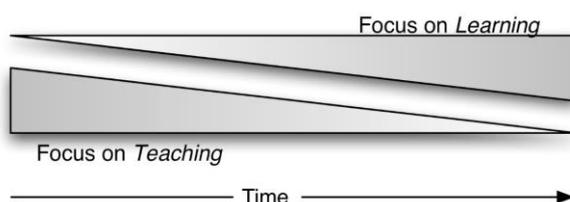
From NG4’s perspective, the BMus course at RBC had enabled students to gather experience and develop skills over an extended period, moving from an exploration of the principles of teaching in core pedagogy modules to observing and practising teaching in real-life settings as part of optional pedagogy modules. NG4 suggested that short placements had been beneficial, enabling them to ‘*get a little taster*’ of how

teaching works in various settings, while longer placements that spanned a number of days across several weeks, such as those incorporated into self-devised projects, had been helpful in extending and consolidating their learning.

## 6.5 Summary

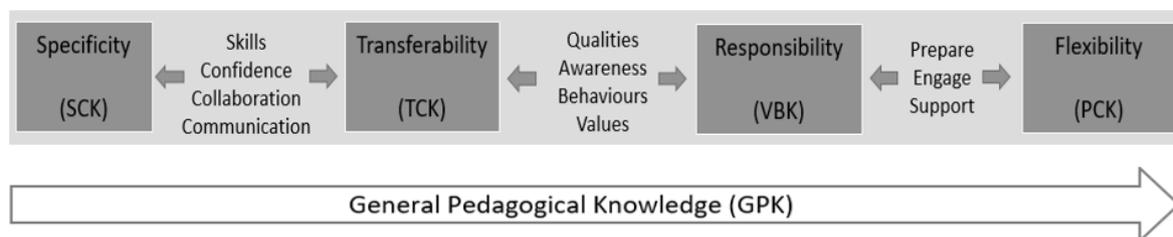
The findings discussed above suggest that placements are a valuable vehicle through which RBC students assimilate the realities of learning and teaching in professional music education settings with the principles of teaching and workshop facilitation explored earlier in the course (as discussed in Chapter 5). This integrated approach to pedagogical training enables students to interact with and learn from CoP both inside and outside the institution, especially in cases where placements are organised and approved by RBC and where mentoring forms an integral part of the placement. Such a training model is relevant because, as Lave and Wenger (1991: 47) state, learning is not a 'sharp dichotomy between inside and outside' but a complex interaction between the two. Furthermore, through their practical experiences, engagement with theoretical perspectives and personal reflection, students could 'try out' (Davidson and Burland, 2006: 478) a teaching identity. In the current research, it became evident that, as students progressed through their course, they became less focused on the impact of their pedagogical training for their own musical development (egocentric) and more interested in how they could utilise their developing pedagogical knowledge (DPK) to influence positively the learning of the young people they taught, or would yet go on to teach in the future (altruistic). This is reminiscent of findings by Fautley and Savage (2008: 156), who proposed that trainee teachers become less focused on their own teaching over time and more focused on how they will facilitate learning in others (see Figure 32):

*Figure 32: Shifting focus from teaching to learning (reproduced from Fautley and Savage, 2008)*



In light of the findings discussed in this chapter, I have extended the DPK model I introduced in Chapter 5.8 (see Figure 33 below) to reflect the fact that in engaging with professional placements and projects, students' learning broadened and they began to develop PCK (Shulman, 1986; 1987). When faced with learners in 'real situations' (terminology employed by alumni in Chapter 7.2), students built upon the theoretical knowledge gained during earlier core modules by developing 'flexibility', expanding their skill-sets well beyond the specific focus of their principal study specialism. Driven by a sense of responsibility, students employed their transferable skills to prepare for learning, and to engage and support the learners they encountered in a range of scenarios. These findings contest the hegemonic assumptions of those MEHs whose views of conservatoire graduates were pejorative (see Chapter 4.3), since these graduates were clearly interested in '*investing early on in becoming the best educator they can be*' (H33). Moreover, they would be unlikely to adopt an '*old-fashioned master says and pupil does*' style of teaching (as insinuated by H26) and instead understand the need for a child-centred approach. I argue that, whilst graduates who have participated in placements as part of their undergraduate training are still unlikely to emerge from RBC as ready-made teachers, their involvement in placements will have provided a firm foundation on which to build, in line with FHEQ Level 6 (QAA, 2014: 26) which states that learners will have acquired 'the learning ability needed to undertake appropriate further training of a professional or equivalent nature'.

Figure 33: Extended DPK model



In terms of student–professional transition, it is interesting to relate my DPK model to one devised by Moon (2004: 84). Moon proposes that professionals make a staged transition from 'superficial observation' (merely noticing and perceiving phenomena) to 'making sense' and 'making meaning' from their experiences. Given the egocentric

focus in many Y1 students (see Chapter 5.4), it could be argued that most of these students were still at the superficial observation stage, while the new graduates who completed placements across Y3–4 had moved forward to the 'working with meaning' stage, resulting in transformative learning (Mezirow, 2018). Since the new graduates who contributed to this research were selected precisely because they had completed placements across varied contexts and experienced a range of delivery modes, the sample was unlikely to be representative of the undergraduate population at RBC, or indeed of conservatoire student populations more widely. Nevertheless, it is clear that experiencing a range of professional educational contexts and delivery modes enabled participants to transition from 'peripheral' status within multiple CoP towards being 'full members of the [music education practitioner] community' (Lave and Wenger, 1991: 115). Transformative learning appears to include 'becoming a different person', since learning implies and 'involves the construction of identities' (ibid: 53). Indeed, RBC students' perceptions and values appear to evolve as they progress through their course in relation to what being a musician means and involves. These ideas will be explored further by alumni (ON) in Chapter 7.

## **Chapter 7: Conservatoire alumni contributions to developing curricula and pedagogy in instrumental teacher education**

### **7.1 Background**

This chapter responds to research sub-question 3: ‘In what ways can conservatoire alumni contribute to the continuing development of curricula and pedagogy in instrumental teacher education?’. It aims to begin to uncover the reality of what it is like to be a new teacher in the twenty-first century by learning about the ‘lived experiences’ (Charmaz, 1996: 30) of early career instrumental teachers, whilst engaging alumni as ‘pedagogical consultants’ (Healey et al., 2014: 50–51) with a view to informing future curriculum developments (Sturrock, 2007). In doing so, this study builds upon my previous research (Shaw, 2020), which involved 33 participants who graduated across 2012–17. While the previous study, conducted across 2017–18, obtained rich data via 31 survey participants, and observations and interviews with two further alumni, it did not require participants to interact with one another, thus missing the opportunity to examine the extent to which collaboration between alumni and students might impact on learning. By contrast, the current doctoral study considers alumni as role models for current students, firstly in the lecture room and secondly in professional contexts. It aims to triangulate the perspectives offered by conservatoire academics and employers (OO participants) in Chapters 3 and 4, and RBC students and new graduates in Chapters 5 and 6 (IN participants) by examining the impact of alumni contributions both inside and outside RBC. For the purposes of this study, alumni are classed as ON, though it is acknowledged that as former students and relative newcomers to the music profession, alumni are not merely outsiders, since they also bring valuable insights on their experience as former insiders to the research. As noted in Chapter 2, supplementary information relating to Project 3a and b can be found in Appendix E (pp. 51–3 and pp. 54–5 respectively).

Through ‘theoretical sampling’ (Denscombe, 2014: 110), I decided to work with just five participants who had completed their degrees across 2014–19 (a time span equal to that of the larger alumni sample described above). Three participants were invited to contribute to a workshop as part of RBC’s Y4 Further Pedagogy module

and to participate in a focus group afterwards and the remaining two were interviewed about their experiences of mentoring RBC students during a placement that formed part of the same module. Given the purpose of the alumni-led workshop was to provide context for the subsequent alumni focus-group, a decision was taken not to record and transcribe the workshop itself. Instead, my focus here was to note down the questions asked by current students, and to reflect on the ensuing discussion. Transcripts from the focus-group discussion and the alumni-mentors were imported into NVivo for analysis (see further details below). For an indication of where the Further Pedagogy module sits within RBC's pedagogy provision see Introduction, Tables 1 and 2. As noted in Chapter 2, supplementary information relating to Project 3a and b can be found in Appendix E (pp. 51–3 and pp. 54–5 respectively).

## **7.2 Alumni as role models in the lecture room: perspectives from early career experiences**

### **An alumni-led workshop**

In January 2020, a group of three RBC alumni (all former 'home' students, resident in the UK) was invited to lead a class for students who were studying the optional Y4 pedagogy module, Further Pedagogy, referred to above. The alumni graduated from the BMus course in 2017, 2018 and 2019 respectively and are therefore identified and anonymised as A17–19 through this chapter. Immediately prior to this class, preliminary information was gathered from the alumni via a brief discussion about their professional activity as music educators/facilitators. A summary of this information is provided in Table 28, below.

The alumni-led class aimed to enable current students to hear directly from professional musicians who had studied previously at the same institution and taken the final-year module they were now studying, and conversely, to discover what current students wanted to learn from their more experienced peers' early experiences of working in music education. The one-hour class was attended by 17 of a possible 19 students. As noted in Chapter 2.3, my involvement was as a non-participatory observer (Creswell, 2012: 214), though the focus here, as noted above,

was to provide context for the ensuing alumni-led focus-group discussion. Consequently, the alumni chose the room layout for the session and chairs were placed in circle formation around the edge of the room with the graduates seated as part of the group, rather than leading from the front. Their intention in suggesting this layout was to ensure that everyone felt as comfortable as possible and that the alumni would be viewed by the students as their equals rather than as superiors.

*Table 28: Alumni background information*

<p><b>A17 Pianist</b></p> <p>Living, working and studying locally. Also working a significant distance away from home as an instrumental (piano) teacher</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 days of teaching in an independent secondary school, c. 50 miles away</li> <li>• 1 day of teaching in an independent prep school, c. 90 miles away</li> <li>• Teaching in private practice</li> <li>• Had formerly undertaken music service teaching</li> <li>• Accompanying for graded music exams</li> <li>• Undertaking doctoral research</li> <li>• Performance opportunities arise from time to time within the schools above</li> </ul>
<p><b>A18 Singer</b></p> <p>Living and working locally. Also working in several surrounding towns and cities up to c.50 miles away.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Running 6 choirs – 2 in prisons, 2 in healthcare, 2 community choirs</li> <li>• Teaching singing in an after-school club</li> <li>• Leading music workshops for vulnerable young people through a nationally recognised trust</li> <li>• Leading workshops in conjunction with an international festival which has also led to some occasional performance work</li> <li>• Gained a salaried one-year graduate traineeship within the local music hub upon graduation</li> </ul>
<p><b>A19 Brass player</b></p> <p>Living, working and studying locally</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working for a local music service, undertaking a combination of WCET, small group, 1:1 and ensemble teaching/conducting</li> <li>• Conducts a local community brass band</li> <li>• Undertaking postgraduate study</li> </ul>

To begin the session, alumni provided an overview of their experiences of working as music educators since leaving RBC, following which, students had the opportunity

to ask questions, openly or anonymously. To facilitate the latter, postcards were used for written questions, subsequently collected, rearranged into random order and passed to the alumni who read out questions on the students' behalf. The questions posed by the students are shown in Table 29, below, after which, alumni responses are summarised in turn.

These questions revealed that students were both curious and concerned about the future in relation to establishing their professional identity and achieving a sense of stability in their work, particularly with regard to financial aspects, whilst demonstrating their awareness of the need for flexibility in their approaches to teaching and facilitating music-making.

*Table 29: Questions arising from the alumni-led class*

- What were the steps you took to build up a number of private students?
- How much time do you have available to dedicate to your work as a performer?
- Do you still perform as a soloist?
- Would you all class yourselves as musicians who teach?
- How did you get involved with a music service?
- Do you have a bank of things you call on if a strategy isn't working?
- What age range do you prefer to teach and why?
- Are you financially stable?
- What are your plans for the next few years?

*What were the steps you took to build up a number of private students?*

Approaches to gaining private students invariably involved advertising online via established websites such as [musicteachers.co.uk](http://musicteachers.co.uk), social networks, for example, Facebook and open platforms such as Gumtree, though some of their pupils had been recruited through word of mouth.

*How much time do you have available to dedicate to your work as a performer?*

A17 indicated that *'finding a balance'* in their early career had *'taken a while'* and they had to *'block out days and be quite strict'*, for example *'working out when to say*

*no*’ to offers of teaching work to preserve some time for personal practice. One of their peers concurred: *‘Don’t sign on to everything too soon. There’s a yes syndrome that sets in – it’s a kind of fear of missing out, but I’ve learned it’s important to leave space for non-musical things too’* (A18).

*Do you still perform as a soloist?*

This question elicited an immediate response: *‘I realised early on that performing as a soloist was not for me. Conducting is my interest’* (A19). Indeed, this participant had participated in the Pilot study (see Chapter 2) as one of eight questionnaire respondents, four of whom knew from the start of the course that they did not want to be a soloist. A17 also lacked interest in solo performance, preferring collaborative music-making and undertaking research: there was an acknowledgement that the latter was in fact a form of performance. Similarly, pursuing a performing career was not the priority for A18, though they noted that *‘leading a rehearsal is still performing’*. Having *‘ended up being in an opera’* through educational connections, they had realised that performance opportunities could *‘come through routes you’re not expecting’* and that they could be *‘more relaxing and worthwhile’* than the high-pressure situations they had become accustomed to whilst studying at RBC. These findings suggest that these graduates were developing continually the competences needed to carry out multiple roles as professional musicians (Lennon and Reed, 2012).

*Would you all class yourselves as musicians who teach?*

This question revealed current students’ underlying concerns about their musical identities: an issue raised again by alumni in the ensuing focus-group discussion (see below). While none of the alumni offered a clear or detailed response to this question, the suggestion, *‘That’s all part of being a portfolio musician’* (A19) related strongly to Burt-Perkins’s notion of a diverse employment portfolio (2008) and Bennett’s claim that *‘Musicians’ roles change throughout their careers as they adapt their practice to reflect personal circumstances and employment opportunities’* (2008: 69).

*How did you get involved with a music service?*

Current employment with the local music service was attributed to a combination of *'being in the right place at the right time'* (as a result of a teaching placement offered as part of a Y3 module) and personal initiative in speaking to the right people: *'The opportunity came up because I made myself known. I started off as an ensemble coach and it led to other things'* (A19). Other alumni concurred: *'Things start small but they naturally grow – sometimes you get lucky'* (A17), while the experience of A18 was similar in that simply turning up to observe rehearsals and meet teachers face to face had led to various avenues of employment.

*Do you have a bank of things you call on if a strategy isn't working?*

In addressing this question, the alumni appeared to sense the students' concern that they might find themselves in a situation where they simply did not know what to say or how to advise pupils. Once again, alumni were able to empathise: *'We are taught at the highest level here. You then go to an eight-year-old. You can't copy what your teacher taught you, but you have so much more to offer than you think. Have confidence and learn from the student'* (A18). This participant later used an analogy to add further reassurance: *'Doctors don't know everything like we think they should. It's fine if you don't. Keep it fun and not too technical and try not to compare students'*. Others offered slightly different perspectives: *'Sometimes, pupils just haven't had time to think and they get frustrated. Use their strengths in a way that benefits them'* (A17) and *'Never underestimate the power of peer teaching. Pupils will explain things to each other at their own level'* (A19). This last piece of advice was particularly pertinent, since it perfectly encapsulated what was actually happening in the room at that point in the research.

*What age range do you prefer to teach and why?*

Interestingly, and perhaps indicating a greater level of maturity over their younger peers, alumni did not express a preference for teaching one particular age or ability group over others. Instead, they focused on what they had learnt from teaching pupils of various ages. From the perspective of A18, adults were easier to teach than children, and while no specific reason was given for this view, there was a clear realisation that, for everyone, having music lessons was a social activity and,

particularly in the case of children, music-making was important for all-round development. When starting out as a teacher, A18 had *'felt really uncomfortable wasting time talking'* and perceived *'lessons were poor as a result'*, but having later realised that connecting with pupils in this way was crucial *'because they know you care!'*, they no longer berated their own teaching in this way. Meanwhile, they found teaching adults difficult because *'they tend to think they're not good enough'*. Mackworth-Young (2000: 100) attributes this way of thinking to the following behaviours:

[Adults] may suffer acutely from keying back into infantile emotions, yet knowing this seems ridiculous, worrying unduly what the teacher might be thinking about them, yet knowing this is absurd, and trying to hide all of those feelings(!) but needing the teacher to understand and help them into the adult part of themselves.

For others, teenagers presented different challenges: *'you are a sounding board and counsellor'* (A17). However, A18 appreciated that *'teaching a range [of ages and abilities] keeps you quite fresh'* and it was clear that they *'enjoyed taking pupils' individual interests further'*, with particular focus on *'a boy who likes composing'*. In some cases, the level of competence, alongside the extent of the effort the pupils put in, was considered more important than the age group: *'I teach years 9–13 [ages 13–18] and I have to change the way I speak and the way I explain things. I assume things are common knowledge, when maybe they've never heard of a crotchet'* (A19). Like their fellow alumni, however, A19 acknowledged the importance of social interaction: *'there's friendly banter – you're more than just a music teacher'*, whilst making clear that there are boundaries to be drawn: *'you are friendly but you're not their friend'*. Given employer concerns about the ability of conservatoire graduates to maintain professional boundaries (see Chapter 4.3), it was reassuring to hear these alumni passing on their wisdom to current students, thus reinforcing advice that had been given during the module.

A wider discussion about teacher–parent relationships ensued, where alumni felt the need to share what they had learned from some difficult conversations with parents,

who were keen for their children to take graded exams before they were ready and lacked trust in their child's teacher's professional judgement. One participant maintained that it was vital to *'stand up for yourself [because in the majority of cases] you know a lot more than the parent'* (A18). A17 identified with this stance: *'Dealing with parents is the biggest challenge [...] if they are pushy or unsupportive. Getting the pupil to articulate what they want is also hard'*. This discussion resonates with Creech and Hallam (2009: 102) who proposed that 'dissatisfied parents have the potential to contribute significantly to teacher stress' and where 'children of all ages welcome interaction between themselves, their parents and their teachers and need to be included in discussions and negotiations' (2011: 102).

A final response to the above question related to pupils with individual needs. In the experience to date of A18, schools had not communicated crucial information regarding pupils who struggled academically due to individual learning needs. It was perceived that such information might have been withheld for confidentiality reasons, but that was still important to investigate in order to attempt to support the pupil in question as effectively as possible. At the same time, alumni advised that early career teachers should not be afraid to admit that they are unable to support a student, and to recommend that the school seeks appropriate expertise.

#### *Are you financially stable?*

As suggested in the alumni focus-group discussion (see below), this question was (perhaps surprisingly) unexpected and caused some consternation. It was noted that, in the context of a portfolio career, *'you can't estimate an annual income. I am happy with my financial situation but any of my activities could drop at any moment'* (A18). Despite the financial unpredictability, others expressed some satisfaction with the flexibility offered: *'You can decide when you want to work and [turn it down] when you can't'* (A19), whilst being pragmatic: *'It's about being sensible really. Private students pay up front, so you have to be financially aware and responsible. They are not doing you a favour by employing you – you are offering a service'* (A17). While the original question was not answered directly, these differing perspectives provided insights into the financial challenges experienced.

*What are your plans for the next few years?*

Alumni aspired to continue working as music educators by doing more teaching, piano accompaniment work, conducting and workshop leading whilst, perhaps most importantly, aiming to ‘*carry on learning and developing*’ (A17). Future aspirations included examining, becoming head of an instrumental department in an independent school, and bringing their work closer to home, thereby reducing travelling, in an attempt to make the job ‘*more sociable*’.

### **An alumni-led focus-group discussion**

Following the Q&A session, the alumni remained behind to participate in a focus-group discussion without the students present, the aim being to gather further information that might inform conservatoire curricula. The rationale for my methodological approach was outlined in Chapter 2.3, and as discussed there, my own role in the discussion was intentionally minimal. I devised prompt questions (see Table 30 below), though most of the time, graduates were able to talk freely to one another and to digress to related areas of importance to them. Consequently, rather than addressing responses in turn, it is more appropriate to summarise key points arising from the prompt questions before moving into a broader discussion of the themes that emerged from the data (see below).

*Table 30: Prompt questions for alumni-led focus-group discussion*

- How did you all find the session?
- What did you think of the questions asked? Were they as anticipated, or did anything surprise you?
- Based on what you know from your early experiences of working as professional music educators, are there any questions you wished you had asked when *you* were undergraduates?
- Is there anything RBC could have done differently to help prepare you for your current music educator roles?
- What do you think alumni can bring to the development of instrumental teacher education/music educator training in conservatoires?

The alumni evidently found the preceding session worthwhile, not only to self-reflect and share their experiences with a like-minded group, but also to receive mutual reassurance and support:

*It was good to use the time to talk about what we actually do cos so often [...] we go in, teach, don't see anyone else music-related then leave, and it's not very often that you get the chance to actually talk, and it's nice to hear that 'ok, it's not just me experiencing this thing' (A19).*

At the same time, the opportunity to support aspiring music educators in their former institution seemed important to the three graduates:

*It is quite nice to know that you've done all this work and you can actually help someone else [to] not have qualms about certain things, or [...] to be in a position where you can actually [...] talk about your own work and [...] benefit someone else in some way you're not expecting. It's worth[while] (A17).*

The 'qualms' mentioned above proved to be central to the alumni focus-group discussion. Participants were open and honest about the work-related anxieties they had faced since graduating, which, like the students' questions, were often linked with notions of identity and stability. Alumni were mindful that their perspectives, informed by '*real music in real situations*' (A18), might influence students positively or negatively regarding instrumental/vocal teaching and other educator roles, but that it was important to prepare students appropriately and to guard against releasing them into the world of work with a '*music college mind-set*' (A18). Interestingly, these findings are closely akin to those of my previous research (Shaw, 2020) where graduates were keen to advise students to be adaptable and open-minded and to change their thinking about music to successfully engage others in music-making.

The coding process for the focus-group discussion (for which supporting evidence can be found in Appendix E, pp. 51–3) was completed using NVivo software.

However, before uploading the transcript, it was read through multiple times and annotated with my initial responses and interpretations to facilitate a methodical line-

by-line coding approach (in a similar fashion to that undertaken for Project 1a) once the transcript was imported. On this occasion, I also printed off the list of codes and annotated them manually with pen and paper. I found this to be a useful way to facilitate the identification of links and patterns within the data, and to support the elimination and amalgamation of overlapping codes (Creswell, 2012: 244). The emerging and inter-connected overarching themes: identity, stability, anxiety and reality are discussed below, and are illustrated in Table 31, alongside their related sub-themes.

Table 31: Project 3a – summary of themes

Overarching themes	Sub-themes
Anxiety about teaching	Balancing work and study Impostor syndrome when working with more experienced colleagues Financial security – travel costs and time
Concerns about stability	Dilemma of staying locally or moving further away Support or lack thereof) from employers Developing independence as a teacher
Developing and articulating identity	Reflection and self-awareness Performer vs teacher Continual professional development Learning from other professionals Personal qualities for teaching Independence as a teacher
Perspectives on reality	Reflections on RBC curriculum/placements Departmental emphasis on principal study insufficient preparation for 'real' working life Conservatoire perceived as a 'bubble'. Need for more reflection/self-evaluation Need to raise students' awareness of relevance of academic/supporting studies Need to acknowledge and celebrate careers in teaching and non-musical careers

## Identity

Musician identity was evidently important to students and alumni alike. A18 expressed the view that *'trying to explain'* the nature of their work to people outside *'the world of music'* could *'sometimes be weird'* due to the sheer range and variety of activity involved in a portfolio career. Furthermore, students' preoccupations with identity were evident in their questioning, as discussed above: *'Would you all class yourselves as musicians who teach?'*, *'Do you still perform as a soloist?'* and *'How much time do you have to dedicate to your work as a performer?'*. From the students' perspectives, there was some anxiety surrounding the balancing of performer and teacher roles, the amount of likely time dedicated to the former once they left full-time study, and how they would be perceived as professional musicians.

Nevertheless, initially, the alumni had expected to receive more student questions about aspects such as solo performance from the students, but realised that this particular group had chosen the optional Y4 pedagogy module out of '*a desire to teach*' (A18), with this part of their future identity being '*out of choice rather than necessity*' (A17). Illeris's view (2018: 172) is pertinent here, since the alumni had taken clear steps towards having their music educator identities recognised in a performance-oriented environment and were now well-placed to inspire their peers to do the same:

From a social perspective, it is clear that identities can be resisted, contested and negotiated by challenging the interpretative systems underlying identities such as traditions, rules of institutions, social norms, ways of talking about people and views of what is natural.

Indeed, for the alumni, there was more to 'identity' than a distinction between performing and teaching. Instead, identity could be viewed in relation to the specific nature of the education work that a graduate chose to engage in, for example, music service work was referred to as '*a certain kind of teaching*' (A17) avoided by some and actively pursued by others (as seen in Chapter 6.4). Furthermore, alumni reported a lack of self-belief about their identity as a music educator immediately after graduating, identifying '*Impostor Syndrome as 'a massive thing*' (A18), feelings that relate closely to those of school teachers in a study by Carrillo and Baguley (2011). According to Wilding (n.d., online), Impostor Syndrome can manifest itself in the workplace in numerous ways, including 'an inability to internalize achievements and downplaying accomplishments and 'a fear of being "found out" or being exposed as inexperienced or untalented'.

### **Stability**

Further questioning by students during the alumni-led session demonstrated that they were naturally concerned about future employment. The question, '*Are you financially stable?*', led alumni to recall their own similar feelings as final-year undergraduates: '*Well that's what I was thinking when I was sat in pedagogy [lectures]. Do you like...eat?*' (A18). This participant attributed their current

employment to their ability to 'make work' (akin to Latukefu and Ginsborg, 2019: 91) from connections formed during external placements taken during their course and was keen to advise students to maximise such opportunities whenever and wherever they were offered.

*It's very easy to just get consumed by this place [...]. It can be such a bubble. You see the same people day in, day out, and I felt I didn't realise just how much there was out there that I could be doing at the same time, and still do my degree. I think that's the thing I look back on and think I'm so glad [...] I started doing things while I was still here. I made sure that I was ok financially (A18).*

The bubble analogy is discussed further in relation to 'reality' below. Meanwhile, A17 similarly found that taking on teaching work (including private pupils, as discussed previously) whilst studying was a positive step, personally, financially and practically, but the transition into the music profession for conservatoire graduates was likened to the experience of 'taking the plunge' (Burt and Mills (2006) in the move from school into HE:

*I think I was quite lucky because when I was here during my undergrad, I was always working, so I kind of got used to juggling both [...]. I've always been conscious of trying to [put] the next steps in place already. But it's just terrifying isn't it? I guess it's like everybody going to university (A17).*

Conversely, when asked the question 'How did you get involved with [a local] music service', A19 claimed they found the transition into employment 'really easy' from a financial point of view. Having completed a WCET placement during Y3, they 'segued into basically doing what [they were] doing on the placement and then getting paid for it'. However, elsewhere in the interview (see below), it became apparent that this participant's transition was not in fact as smooth as suggested.

## Anxiety

The alumni-led session enabled participants to speak openly about the challenges they had experienced during their first weeks and months of being professional music educators. However, they expressed surprise that the students had not asked them for advice on how they should prepare for the world of work, nor about the struggles their more experienced peers had gone through post-graduation. An open discussion ensued about such issues, ranging from setting fees for the running of music workshops and choir rehearsals, to travel (including the expense of running a car and the impracticalities of carrying multiple tenor horns and euphoniums on a bus!). The perspective of A17 is included here as it relates to anxiety as well as [in]stability. These comments resonate with those of MEH participants who attempted to understand 'perceived graduate indifference' amongst conservatoire graduates (see Chapter 4.3):

*The biggest challenge of working for the music service (and the only reason I decided to look for other employment) was the logistics of only teaching for a small amount of time in each school and spending much of the day travelling. I found this to be rather stressful as I always wanted to be early so I could set-up correctly so that I could make the most of the (short) lesson time with students. As this was hourly-based employment, the financial benefit was not reflected in [the] travel time and so [I] found it difficult to rely on [it] as a source of income. Furthermore, I found myself teaching for [only] a couple of hours every weekday.*

Additionally, 'Believing you have something worth teaching so soon after you've been taught yourself' (A18) suggested that Impostor Syndrome (mentioned above) was another source of anxiety for alumni. In reflecting on commencing a new teaching position in an independent school and attributing their own Impostor Syndrome to youth, A17 found the anxiety eased over time.

*It took a while for me to feel comfortable, that I deserved to be there, and that actually, what I was offering was a good education that was grounded and that I had the skills to [...] do a good job [...]. I never had issues in terms of*

*what I was teaching. I felt quite comfortable in knowing that [but] I always felt that I was closer in age to the students than I was to my colleagues, even though they were really great about it. I think that was my insecurity – ‘Oh I’ve only just graduated. I’m not good enough to do this. I’m not good enough to be here.’ But I think over time, that has levelled out.*

This ‘levelling out’ is also pertinent to the ongoing development of professional identity which, according to Wagoner (2015: 28), ‘is influenced both collectively, as one is socialised within a group for a specific occupation, and individually, as one integrates the proposed professional roles with the sense of self.’

In contrast, A19 was fortunate in receiving employer support to help them to manage teaching-related anxiety and build self-confidence, particularly in whole class instrumental lessons. However, as discussed in Chapter 4 (and Shaw, 2020), such support is often not available to new teachers due to lack of funding, timetabling issues, non-availability of senior staff or other factors. However, the alumni acknowledged that transferable skills developed during their undergraduate performance training had helped them to manage teaching-related anxiety: *‘Obviously there are still some anxieties going in [to teach] and I don’t think those will ever go away, but I think that’s the same with performing. You always get a little bit nervous going in and performing, no matter what level you’re at’* (A19).

## **Reality**

Alumni were asked whether they felt RBC could have done anything differently to better prepare them for the transition into their current roles. Their suggestions are discussed below and will be elaborated upon in Chapter 8. A significant concern that alumni were keen to advise current students on was the challenging process of *‘leaving a small incestual department and going out into the real world’*, since *‘coming out of it was a real shock to the system’* (A18). Once again, several comments resonated with theoretical frameworks outlined in Chapter 1.3, for example hegemony (Bruner, 1996; Darder et al., 2003; Howarth, 2015; Brookfield, 2017; Porton, 2020); invisible pedagogy (Bernstein, 1975); and classification and framing Bernstein (2003), especially in relation to certain curricular aspects being

valued more highly than others within the institution. However, in this instance, the alumni seemed unafraid to question long-established systems, processes, values and beliefs, thus overcoming ‘historical bloc’ and ‘subalternity’: concepts originally introduced by Gramsci, as discussed in Chapter 1.3 (Howarth, 2015; Liguori, 2015).

For example, A18 felt strongly that departmental activity did not prepare them for their future career: *‘It felt like a lot of my [principal] study stuff wasn’t very real. And a lot of the things that were made to be the most important things like the operas, auditions [...] and final recitals [...] didn’t set us up for what it’s really like.’*

A18 also suggested that more could have been done to help students to make connections between principal study and academic aspects of their course; and to help students to understand the relevance of course content to their future professional lives: *‘There was a lot of fluff in my degree that I’m never gonna use [...]. My lectures in historical music didn’t go down the right route and should’ve been more about: ‘how am I going to use that?’ (A18).*

The above suggestion that students do not automatically make connections between the different areas of their course and that they need support to understand how these different elements might benefit their careers relates to the work of Haddon (2012), who uncovered hidden learning opportunities in a university music department (see Chapter 1.3). Coincidentally, at the time of the alumni focus-group study, Y1 students were being asked to explore such connections through a reflective assignment within the Y1 Community Engagement module (Project 2a) and plans were already in place to use a similar approach in the Y2 Pedagogy and Practice module in January 2021 (Project 2b). (See discussion of the findings in Chapter 5.4–5.5.)

Conversely, the pedagogy and community engagement strands of the curriculum were viewed positively by all three alumni as being highly relevant, helping them to make professional connections that proved beneficial on graduation:

*I very much enjoyed the teaching I did with [a] music service, which involved mostly small groups (4 or 5 pupils) and I had one one-to-one pupil. Group*

*teaching stretched and developed the way in which I approached [the] different abilities, personalities, and motivations of each student, by becoming quite creative in room layout, structuring lessons, use of resources and repertoire and with the independent work I set [for] each student. This was quite a challenge for me to begin with as I had to adapt very quickly to this type of teaching. The lessons I observed during my pedagogy modules helped prepare me for this [as well as] the way the schools were run, expectations of schools, and the involvement (or lack of involvement) from parents. In hindsight, I am so grateful for the skills I developed (more on a personal level rather than musical) from [my placements] as they provided a true overview of how instrumental music lessons work in state schools. The area I enjoyed the most (which came as a surprise to me), was the work I did at a local special school. I had not worked with a student with a disability before, but I found this to be (and still to be) one of the most rewarding and enjoyable experiences of my teaching career (A17).*

*I wouldn't look at [my degree] that positively and say I enjoyed it that much. I enjoyed my final year. Other than that [,] I found it a really bitchy, hard environment to be in. It almost turned me off music and singing forever. It was only finding these modules and finding my groove with them that made me carry on and take different routes. [The fourth-year pedagogy] module is so, so great at that - hats off to you, really great, and the community music, really great, going to the hospitals, going to the care homes – really eye-opening. Without that I wouldn't be doing all the work I'm doing now (A18).*

*It's worth noting that with these modules [...] we [were] actually taken outside of the Conservatoire building which [was] lovely (A19).*

However, the alumni felt strongly that more provision should be made compulsory for more students who may not yet realise that music education could be a worthwhile pursuit: 'A lot of people don't know they want to do it and think 'I want to be a singer in an opera so I will focus all my time on that and graduate and then I'll moan on Facebook about being bored and there's no work out there' (A18). Alumni perceived

that RBC could be more open-minded about students' career choices. The following perspective suggests that alumni were aware of hegemony amongst staff which tended to be transmitted to the student population: *'I remember talking to my peers about maybe going into something else [other than performance] and having an interest in other things [but] it was always kind of met with a 'well then, you're not taking it so seriously''* (A18). Alumni also implied that RBC should consider how to better support students who might not wish to pursue a music career since *'not everyone comes out of music college and goes into music'* (A18).

*I think some acknowledgement of that here would be really positive thing to help people find a career. Because I think it's all very well preparing students [for performance careers] but making people realise that these skills are so transferable [is important]. I think people think 'I don't want to do music so I have no skills, which is so not true* (A18).

Consequently, it was suggested that students could be supported in analysing their skill set and mapping it onto elements of a (non-musical) job description, perhaps as part of an assignment. It was also proposed that RBC might facilitate sessions whereby students could interact with alumni working outside music to discover how they experienced the transition from *'doing music all the time to not doing much at all'* (A18) and helping students to see that this did not constitute failure. The concept of transferable skills was also discussed in relation to students taking part-time jobs beyond music and how these had helped them to gain employment within the music education sector. For example, one of the alumna had *'had a couple of jobs come from talking to people'* at their external part-time workplace (A17), while another (A18) had found working in an environment unrelated to their instrument or music and talking to individuals there *'really useful'* in improving communication skills. Alumni also saw opportunities for self-reflection as limited at RBC and recommended more thought about how this could be integrated into the curriculum. (It is worth noting here that participants' observations about reflective practice and the need for greater recognition of transferable skills coincided with the Project 2a reflective task and pre-dated the emergence of TCK in Project 2b.)

It was apparent that all three alumni reflected continually as practitioners, but that *'real talk'* (A19) during the BMus course would have a positive impact on the conservatoire environment and students' confidence in developing independent professional identities. Participants felt that students could benefit from more alumni conversations in sessions similar to the one they had led. They believed that such activities would show students that there was *'light at the end of the tunnel'* (A17), as A19 joked, *'We've made it through and we're still alive!'* Adopting a more serious tone, A19 suggested that *'It would be useful for students to have access [to alumni] to ask questions. There will be some things that maybe I wouldn't have wanted to ask [staff], but maybe I'd have wanted to ask someone who'd literally just been through it, just to have an extra network.'* A18 concurred, whilst reflecting on the impact of several role-models encountered during the course, both formally and informally:

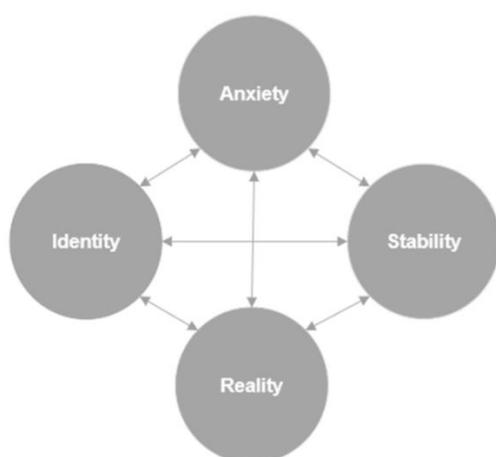
*I think I got a lot from [alumni] coming to deliver on Community Engagement, [...] showing [us] how they used the skills they got from [RBC] to do what they do now. [It] can be such an eye-opener for people to realise 'I studied the drums and percussion but I never even thought of [...] using it in that context.' [Then] in my second year I made friends with fourth-year singers who graduated as I went into my third year and it was [...] seeing the kind of jobs they went on to [that] helped me to realise that it's actually making connections outside the conservatoire that will get you the work and that the bubble of college suddenly stops when you leave and all support and structure disappears. The more I started to work/volunteer outside college, the more I realised how accessible music, especially singing, could be for everyone. Studying singing to degree level meant that it became so specialised that it was hard to see [...] other ways of using singing, for example in the community and in health and wellbeing settings.*

During the alumni-led class in the current study, questions asked by students (referred to above) such as *'Do you have a bank of things you call on if a strategy isn't working?'*, *'What age range do you prefer to teach and why?'* and *'What are your plans for the next few years?'* suggested that there was an appetite to learn

from recent graduates' experiences in the field and scope to increase this kind of activity within conservatoire curricula to raise awareness and help students to better prepare for the music education contexts they might find themselves working in, post-graduation.

To summarise the above discussion, the overarching themes identified in this study were identity, stability, anxiety and reality (ISAR) as shown in Figure 34:

*Figure 34: ISAR model*



These themes are interconnected and can be applied to the process of transition from conservatoire student to professional, in terms of the preoccupations and emotional responses experienced by both students and alumni. As previously discussed in Chapter 2 (Pilot study), students grapple with their musical identities both prior to entering the conservatoire and throughout their undergraduate studies (see Chapters 5 and 6). However, it would appear from the questions posed in the alumni-led class that students were balancing concerns about their emerging musical identities at graduation alongside the need to maintain stability in their future careers. Such preoccupations were likely to cause feelings of anxiety as the reality of professional life became more imminent through engaging with alumni already working in the field (and through participating in professional teaching placements during their course – Chapter 6). Meanwhile, alumni perspectives of reality appeared quite different from those of current students, most likely as a result of their experiences and the CoPs they had engaged with since graduating. While concerns

about financial stability were inevitable and likely to cause some anxiety, alumni appeared more emotionally stable and less preoccupied with their musician identities than their undergraduate peers, feeling settled in their various music educator roles, as A17 pointed out: *'We decided [...] not to perform as our main goals [...]. It's not that we didn't want to or that we couldn't, but that we chose alternative routes.'*

Albeit derived from a small sample of just three RBC alumni, the above findings corroborate aspects of my previous research (Shaw, 2020) where it emerged that alumni were keen to offer early career advice to current students. This strongly suggests that alumni who work as music educators have much to offer as professional role-models within institutions in helping to prepare students for the instrumental teaching profession. In contrast, the following section considers how alumni might also influence current students outside the institution.

### **7.3 A student–alumni cycle: the next generation of instrumental teacher-mentors**

As noted in the Introduction, in 2011, RBC began to formalise and strengthen existing links with local music education providers to create external placements for students as part of their pedagogical training. Local employers recognised the potential benefits in terms of future recruitment and professional development opportunities for employees who would be involved in mentoring RBC students. To provide further context; prior to taking on responsibility for supervising students on placement, MEH staff attend an induction meeting designed to familiarise them with the module aims and learning outcomes, and their role in modelling good practice for students. The emphasis has been on supporting the student to learn to teach through observation and experimentation in a safe learning environment where any mistakes signify opportunities for development, and where reflective conversations between mentor and mentee are important in order to facilitate ongoing progress. Following this training, mentors have found the process of interacting with RBC students in the professional context directly beneficial, enabling them to analyse and question their own existing practice. On successful completion of their placements, many RBC graduates have subsequently been employed by their placement providers, and some have been invited to mentor RBC students on placement.

Indeed, in July 2020, two such alumni were invited to take part in online interviews precisely because they had provided such external mentoring support for final-year RBC students. They will henceforth be referred to as Mentors 1 and 2 (M1 and M2) to distinguish these graduates from those in the first group (Chapter 7.2). A similar coding process to that employed for Project 3a is illustrated in Appendix E, pp. 54–5. However, on this occasion, I began coding in NVivo and then transferred to a manual process, having found this fruitful in Project 3a. Working through the text line-by-line and annotating printouts of the interview transcripts enabled a direct comparison of both mentors’ perspectives, especially since I worked on them multiple times in rotation. Each time a new idea or point of view emerged, these were tagged as codes. As in previous projects, these codes were categorised through a process of amalgamation and elimination as appropriate. The resulting overarching and sub-themes are shown in Table 32:

*Table 32: Project 3b – summary of themes*

<b>Overarching themes</b>	<b>Sub-themes</b>
Being appointed as a mentor	A rite of passage moment Nervous anticipation/excitement Impostor syndrome (novice or expert; peer or professional)
Benefits of mentoring	Reciprocal learning - develops critical thinking in both mentor and mentee Reflection in and on action Mentor comes to appreciate how their own skills have developed over time Both mentor and mentee develop confidence Valuable professional development: insufficient opportunities to network with colleagues Mentoring style develops through collaboration with/feedback from mentees
Challenges of mentoring	Compatibility of student availability with teaching timetable (communication) Building in time to discuss and reflect important but not always easy to accommodate Building mentee confidence
Approaches to mentoring	How mentees learn Personalised to facilitate mentee progress Observe first, discuss second Break down process, thoughts and strategies Modelling and experimentation Mentee-led reflection/feedback Sometimes a need to ‘throw them in at the deep end’ to apply prior learning in new context Allow mistakes to happen in supportive/‘scaffolded’ environment Maintain friendly but professional relationship Ensure mentee observes/experiences ‘typical’ challenges – share coping strategies Provide mentee with a starter toolkit – but not too complicated Challenges of mentoring
Reflection: own experience as student and early-career teacher	View that their own training as a graduate teacher had been insufficient Hindsight/regret not taking up more training opportunities as a student WCET biggest challenge when starting out as a teacher Graduate-level mentee understands student needs more than older mentee?

At the time of the interview, the first graduate (M1) was working as an instrumental teacher for a local music hub and had been doing so since graduating from the RBC

BMus course in 2017. M1 had been asked by their employer to act as a mentor for the first time in November 2019. The second graduate (M2) had also worked as an instrumental teacher within a music hub after graduating from the BMus course (2014) and, after completing a postgraduate course at RBC (2017), they had moved on to other part-time positions within the music education sector. Across 2014–20, M2 had mentored RBC students in both instrumental teaching and workshop facilitation scenarios across this variety of roles.

When asked how they had reacted to the invitation to mentor an RBC student for the first time, both participants disclosed feelings associated with Impostor Syndrome, akin to those of the alumni discussed in Chapter 7.2, (Carrillo and Baguley, 2011; Wilding, n.d., online), whilst, at the same time, feeling inwardly proud to have been selected for the role. For example, M1 questioned whether their level of experience at the time was sufficient: *'I had it in my head that [only] really experienced people would do it so I felt a bit like panicked when they asked me [...]. I [thought] I don't really know what I can offer but I'm up for it.'* Similarly, M2 reported a dip in confidence when invited to take on a mentoring role for the first time, feeling simultaneously that it was *'really nice to be asked to give back to the whole process'* and uncertain they were ready: *'It was a double-edged thing. I felt like it was a rite of passage moment – excited to be asked but also a little bit apprehensive.'* At the same time, however, M1 proposed that bringing their own relatively recent experiences as a graduate-level instrumental teacher to the mentoring situation might actually prove just as beneficial to a conservatoire student as working with a mentor who had been *'teaching for years and years: [While] it feels like I'm still trying to find my way a little bit, I [still] think it is useful to be able to share that.'*

The interviews led both graduates to discuss their experiences of mentoring current RBC students, the resulting responses from these students, and the associated rewards and challenges of mentoring. In addition, both participants were naturally drawn, without any prompting whatsoever, to reflect on their experiences of having been mentored themselves, as former RBC students. Furthermore, participants revealed a certain empathy, awareness and insight into how mentors might best

support emerging instrumental teachers, with hindsight also playing an important part in their recommendations.

### **Mentoring and being mentored**

Participants were invited to discuss their mentoring style and any influences that may have informed their approach. Whilst the outlook of M2 appeared positive to the extent that they sought to replicate aspects of their mentored experience, M1 was more inclined to question what conservatoire students needed from an instrumental teaching mentor.

It was clear that the approach of M2 to mentoring varied according to the situation and the student they were working with and that they had been much influenced by approaches used by tutors during their course. Initially, M2 reflected on the interpersonal perspective: *'From my personal experience, I tend to take on more if I feel [...] it's a friendly relationship. So, I've probably imprinted that in the way I approach my own practice.'* From a pedagogical standpoint, M2 recalled that their own learning as a mentee was scaffolded (Wood, et al., 1978), whilst being largely student-led: *'we would be informed of certain things [and] given the opportunity to explore them independently, and then feedback was an open thing and tended to be led by us.'* As a mentor, M2 appeared to adopt a similar approach, recognising that *'when it comes to reviewing and improving', individuals tend to 'retain information more effectively if it comes from them [...] rather than being told "this is how you do it".'*

*I encourage [mentees] to question my practice and why I [did] things a certain way [...]. More often than not, I'll give them a personal example from my own experience and then let them try it by themselves independently and then [...] I will get them to lead on reflecting. So, I'll ask a leading question such as 'how did you find that? Can you tell me some things that were really successful? Are there any areas you found challenging and if so, why?'* (M2).

This approach is reminiscent of recommendations by Starr (2011), who claims that good questions can unlock information and allow mentees to move forward if

questioning is simple, has a clear purpose, and can influence the mentee without being controlling. As stated by Kimsey-House et al. (2011: 63), 'Curiosity starts with a question [...]. Simply posing the question shifts the focus of the conversation'. In short, M2 believed that to gain the most from the mentoring process and achieve a positive outcome, mentees would be encouraged to critique their own practice and that of others, *but 'not in a detrimental way.'* By and large, the approach of M2 involved discussing the areas in which mentees felt confident, raising their awareness of aspects of practice that mentees '*needed to address in a slightly different way*', and finally, '*work[ing] together to address how they are going to move on from that point and progress*' (M2).

An initial challenge met by M1 was that at the start of the placement (completed across November–December 2019) their mentee had been unable to arrive prior to the start of the very first teaching session due to conflicting course commitments, and this left no time for any preparatory discussion.

*When we first met up, I had already started teaching because I was at the school and [mentee] joined a little later, so there wasn't an introduction. So, I felt a little worried about that. But they came in, sat down and took notes and we talked through it afterwards. It wasn't awkward really [...]. We'd had a text conversation [and] emails to organise it. But if I did it again, I'd maybe have a phone call just to explain the context of it cos obviously I couldn't speak to [them] as soon as they came in. However, that is how you start isn't it? So, in some ways it's quite real.*

While M1 clearly took responsibility for their oversight in not scheduling at least a telephone conversation with their mentee to explain the context for the placement in advance, it was suggested that the situation reflected the reality of '*being thrown in at the deep end*' when starting out as an instrumental teacher, soon after graduation. In reflecting on their own experience as a new employee, M1 reported negligible training and little time allowed for consolidation or reflection before teaching began whilst expressing surprise that '*the mentoring we had at college was probably the most learning I did*'. Even so, M1 appeared to acknowledge their own 'indifference'

as a student (see Chapter 4.3), and in hindsight, regretted not having taken full advantage of the training opportunities offered through RBC in conjunction with the local music hub, whilst admitting to ‘feeling quite nervous’ about taking some of them up:

*I know there was a whole class instrumental training scheme at college, but I didn't do it. I think when I was in college, I saw pedagogy as something I needed to do, but I didn't really feel enthusiastic about it. But [now] I'm [interested in] how the kids learn [...] and I'm keen for them to progress the best they can [...]. I didn't take that same level of interest [at college] but if I had, I would have made sure I'd seen whole class [teaching] because that was the biggest challenge for me going into work [...]. I think in college, I would probably have been thinking [that] standing in front of a group of 30 primary school children [wasn't for me]. But actually, most of my work [is] in primary schools now [and] I enjoy working in the primary school situation a lot more than I thought I would. It's about taking the opportunities you get, isn't it? And not writing things off until you've given things a bit of a go.*

In discussing their own approach to mentoring an RBC student, both alumni-mentors revealed similar approaches: a blend of modelling, experimentation and discussion. However, it was clear that M1 had been influenced, not only by methods employed by their previous mentor, but also their own experience of being an early career instrumental teacher and the challenges involved. A need to reconcile the ‘deep end’ element with a desire to scaffold the student’s learning emerges from the following reflection:

*I let [them] watch a good amount first and then threw [them] in at the deep end but with something I'd already done. So, I'd say something like, 'These are the warm-up steps I'd go through with a whole class. Do you want to just watch this time but then do an observation in another school and then lead the warm-up?' They wouldn't have met the kids but that would be the deep end element. Once I [had] let [them] go and do it I think I was tempted to control the situation but I just let [them] go ahead and see what happened,*

*even if I didn't think it was going to work, and then maybe if something didn't go quite as he thought it was going to go, [I would] then make a little suggestion [and] let [them] take that on board (M1).*

At the same time, the approach of M1 appeared instinctive and honest, stating that the aim was not to make their teaching seem easy or *'look good'*, but instead to ensure sure that their mentee *'was getting a realistic portrayal of how things were'*, including the challenges involved and how to overcome them: *'I just wanted to make sure that I mentioned all the things I found tricky and that [mentee] got a chance to see them.'* M1 also encouraged the student to formulate their own thoughts about a certain teaching strategy or situation before discussing the rationale and context surrounding it, and proposing solutions: a *'What? So What? Now What?'* approach to reflection originally proposed by Borton (1970) and further developed by Driscoll (2000) and Rolfe et al. (2001).

In justifying this approach, M1 referred repeatedly to the challenges they themselves had faced as a new instrumental teacher with a local music hub, emphasising lesson planning and behaviour management in particular, and that what they really needed from their mentor whilst still a student was *'just a little bit of a head start rather than flying down the road'*. Even though M1 perceived their student mentoring experience to be *'very valuable'*, they also felt unsure about the usefulness of much *'complicated'* information they had received at that time, sensing that their highly experienced mentor *'took certain things for granted'*. Moreover, whilst M1 indicated that observing *'someone who's got it sorted'* and seeing *'what teaching would look like if you were doing it really well'* was constructive, it was asserted that learning about the challenges involved in *'getting up and running'* as a new teacher would have been more relevant to their Y4 placement because *'there were [still] lots of things they didn't really expect'* when they commenced employment. M1 suggested, therefore, that it would have been better if their own mentor had considered *'the basic things'*.

It would appear, therefore, that of the four key themes outlined by Stewart and Joines (2006) for successful mentoring practice: procedure, professional, personal

and psychological, it was the personal and psychological aspects that needed more careful negotiation in this instance so that the needs of M1 could be met.

Consequently, having perceived a weakness in their mentor's approach, M1 appeared to resolve to be more effective in their own mentoring role, by giving their mentee *'a key arsenal of stuff that they could use'* as a new teacher. This would include, for example, tips for *'planning quickly [yet] thoroughly'*, what to do *'when kids get distracted'*, practical resources for whole class instrumental lessons and to be aware of *'the first things that are going to come up and some of the ways they could be managed'*. Through these recommendations, M1 demonstrated several of the positive attributes needed for successful mentoring, as described by Stevens (2008), such as being empathetic and respectful, collaborative and willing to help others in ways that are supportive to their needs.

### **Reciprocal learning**

According to Burley and Pomphrey (2011: 19) 'The professional learning which takes place within a mentoring or coaching relationship is constructed as a result of social interaction.' Both graduates reported ways in which mentoring RBC students had impacted on their own developing professional practice. For example, M1 suggested that the presenting and sharing processes involved in mentoring *'add[ed] another level of thinking'* to their practice, while M2 reported that in both instrumental teaching and workshop settings, mentoring had led them to *'think more critically'* and be *'a bit more mindful'* than they normally would be. Both alumni-mentors reported that whilst being observed by their mentees, their own communication skills had improved due to the need to *'break down processes, thoughts and strategies'* in ways that could be easily understood by pupils and later applied in their mentees' teaching. Moreover, opportunities for reciprocal learning, including receiving feedback from mentees, appeared to be highly valued:

*It's a two-sided thing. I'm always learning [...] because I will lead an activity and then watch multiple students lead their activities [...]. Sometimes things don't work and it's always really interesting to talk together about why. [We] try to piece together what's happening and why a certain delivery has resulted in a certain behaviour [...]. The nice thing about the music service setting was*

*[that] sometimes [mentees] would ask me questions about things I didn't even realise I was doing and hadn't even considered so that brought things to my attention – a different way of thinking that hadn't occurred to me previously [...]. I think one of the most joyful things for me is that even though [I'm] in a mentor role and I'm no longer in formal education, I feel I can constantly be developing my practice through working with other people who are still building theirs (M2).*

Brockbank and McGill (2006: 54) argue that the collaborative dialogue possible in a mentoring or coaching relationship adds 'external dialogue to the inner dialogue by providing another perspective, asking questions not previously considered and drawing on other experience'. In this case, it is clear that the mentor (M2) has benefited from such dialogue in equal measure to the student.

While one of the aims of the Further Pedagogy placement was that RBC students learned through observing their mentor's teaching, it was evident that M1 had also benefited from the mentoring process in developing confidence and self-belief. Whilst acknowledging that their own teaching skills might appear limited when compared to senior colleagues, M1 divulged that their own approach to facilitating learning had developed significantly since graduating. Indeed, observing their relatively inexperienced mentee in front of classes had led M1 to realise the impact that teacher confidence, or lack thereof, could have on pupils:

*When I was explaining things to [mentee], I had all of this information that I definitely couldn't have known [when] in the same position as them. So, I think [it was] a bit of a confidence boost [...]. If I'm feeling awkward, I'm not going to do that good a job because the pupil will also feel a bit awkward [so] it's worth being confident with what I know because that helps me to be myself and build a better rapport with pupils. I don't think I'd thought about that much until now, but the better I get on with a pupil and I can make a joke and it can be fun – that's a lot more engaging than [feeling] a little bit uncomfortable because I've not got as much experience [as senior colleagues].*

It was also suggested by M1 that mentoring was important for their professional development because they did not *'tend to see or interact that much with people on a similar level'* at work, and opportunities to share their early teaching experiences with other new teachers were few and far between.

#### **7.4 Summary**

The findings discussed in this chapter suggest that conservatoire alumni not only have the capacity to contribute to evolving curricula and pedagogy in instrumental teacher education, but that they also have the potential to make a significant difference to developing the future music education workforce by acting as role models for current students. RBC alumni approaches to supporting students reflect recommendations by Brouwer et al. (2017) that mentoring should be heterarchical and collaborative in nature, as opposed to hierarchical. This was played out, for example, in the alumni-led class where graduates chose to set up the space in such a way to enable discussion to take place on an equal footing. These graduates were able, through informal sharing of their own experiences, to draw out questions from students about what it was really like to begin a career as an instrumental teacher in the twenty-first century, whilst in the subsequent focus-group discussion, their in-depth reflections on the students' questions, suggested that they had also learned from the workshop; as Lave and Wenger (1991: 93) state, 'Where the circulation of knowledge amongst peers and near-peers is possible, it spreads exceedingly rapidly and effectively'. Furthermore, just as Brouwer et al. state (2017: 34), 'formal leadership titles are not a prerequisite to be[ing] a successful mentor', it appears that early career music educators have much to offer conservatoire students in one-to-one mentoring situations, whilst (according to one participant) long-established educators may be less empathetic or aware of recent graduate needs. Conversely, the RBC graduates in this study demonstrated insight resulting from their recent early career experiences, and hindsight in terms of what conservatoire graduates need when starting out.

These findings also resonate strongly with those of my earlier research (Shaw, 2020) whereby RBC graduates did not always feel sufficiently supported by their employer as new instrumental teachers. The emerging employer perspectives on the training

of conservatoire graduates, aired in Chapter 4 are also reflected here. However, whilst I have deduced that some employers perceive students to be indifferent to developing their instrumental teaching skills and knowledge, and that such indifference leads to incompetence, the alumni perspectives reveal inhibition as a contributing factor. In other words, even where institutions offer training opportunities in instrumental teaching, as in the WCET scheme alluded to above, students may not necessarily feel confident in taking them up. In some cases, there appears to be a lack of understanding of the relevance of such activities to students' future careers, which may preclude them from stepping forward for such opportunities. Other barriers preventing students from participating in training and work experience in this area might include the time students are required to spend on honing their skills in principal study activities, because these are seemingly emphasised as 'the most important things' (A18).

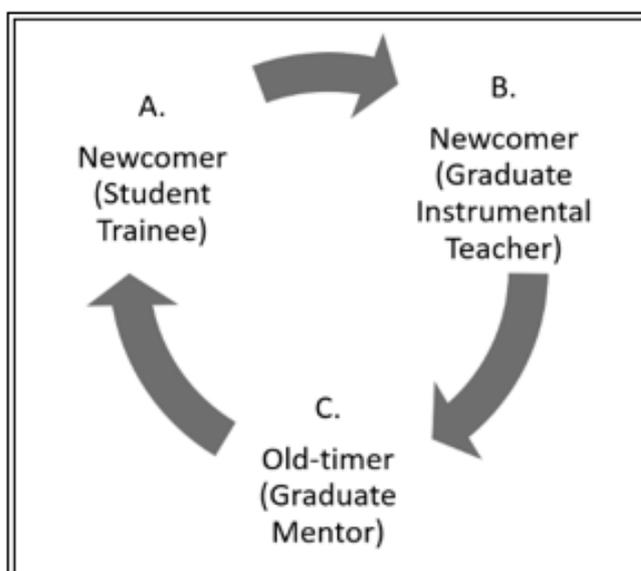
Whether supporting students in the lecture room or on placement, conservatoire graduates have significant potential to feed back into and improve curriculum design as argued by Sturrock (2007). Furthermore, it is important to give conservatoire alumni a voice so as to unearth underlying institutional hegemonic assumptions about career aspirations and pathways for conservatoire students and graduates (see Chapter 1.3: Student voice). However, even for those students who do choose to specialise in pedagogy at modular level, the situated learning students engage in during placements is limited to particular scenarios (Ponte, 2010) and therefore, students need maximal support in transferring and applying acquired knowledge to a range of other educational contexts. By modelling positive values, attitudes and behaviours for instrumental teacher education, alumni can potentially counteract institutional hegemony and also promote students' interest and enthusiasm in taking full advantage of training opportunities that will support them in building transferable experience and skills to begin their teaching careers with confidence.

As suggested in Chapter 1.3, alumni stand to benefit professionally themselves from supporting the learning of current students, especially where they spend most of their time operating 'in isolation from peers' (Bennett, 2008: 62). Moreover, the formation of mentor–mentee relationships between alumni and students may

potentially reduce teacher-related anxiety for both parties. This doctoral study has led RBC alumni to reflect in accordance with Brockbank and McGill's (2006) three-level professional learning model, offering opportunities to improve their own professional practice (learning for improvement); make sense of their own learning experiences (learning about learning); and question and challenge RBC practices (transformation).

Finally, according to Lave and Wenger (1991: 53), learning implies 'becoming a different person' and 'involves the construction of identities'. This 'process of adaptation' (Davidson and Burland, 2006: 487) is borne out by individuals who engage in instrumental teaching placements as students, gain employment and then further develop their skills and confidence by mentoring current students, who may then potentially continue the cycle (see Figure 35 below). This cyclic process could be described as: 'persons who engage in sustained participation in a community of practice: from entrance as a newcomer, through becoming an old-timer with respect to new newcomers, to a point when those newcomers themselves become old-timers' (Lave and Wenger, 1991: 56).

*Figure 35: Student–alumni cycle*



**Part III:**  
**Conclusions and Recommendations**

## **Chapter 8: Conclusions and recommendations – counteracting hegemony and increasing dialogue**

This doctoral thesis offers an original contribution to knowledge through its distinct focus on preparing conservatoire students for careers in instrumental teaching, as opposed to performance or portfolio careers more broadly. It incorporates multiple Communities of Practice into its methodology by merging insider/outsider perspectives (Reed-Danahay, 2016) and old-timer/newcomer viewpoints (Lave and Wenger, 1991) across four different demographic groups: conservatoire academics, employers, students and alumni. New insights into student–professional transitions in higher music education confront hegemonic assumptions about teaching careers, thus building upon the legacy of the late Janet Mills (1954–2007) who aimed to raise the profile of instrumental music teacher training in HE. My ‘Developing Pedagogical Knowledge’ model, an adaptation and expansion of Shulman’s Pedagogical Content Knowledge model (1986; 1987) constitutes an important part of the original contribution to the field, highlighting Transferable Content Knowledge and Values-Based Knowledge as significant outcomes of pedagogical training over a sustained period. In this final chapter, it remains to summarise the responses to those three sub-questions posed in the Introduction (0.1); revisit the interrelated theoretical frameworks discussed in Chapter 1 in light of the findings; reflect on the methodology; and discuss the limitations of my approach whilst considering next steps for future research. Finally, I offer recommendations for the development of instrumental teacher education that have national and international relevance, not only for HEIs and employers of music educators, but also for musical learners and their families, both current and future.

### **8.1 Responses to the research sub-questions**

1) What are the main challenges faced by the conservatoire sector in preparing students for careers in instrumental teaching?

As discussed in Chapter 3.5, one of the main challenges appears to be that conservatoires in England strive to retain their individual identities, important to marketing, by offering particular ‘strengths and specialisms’ (ucas.com), both within

and outside the curriculum. Consequently, however, I argue that instrumental teacher education at undergraduate level does not feature sufficiently in conservatoire publicity as one such strength or specialism. In turn, this absence of parity affects curricular cohesion, with an apparent lack of agreement across the sector regarding at which point in an undergraduate music course pedagogical training should begin or how long it should continue, as expressed by a conservatoire academic:

*There are quite a number of options for undergrads to experience teaching and learning first-hand, to reflect on it, and to get credit for all that work [...] but there's still work to do to finesse that and [...] to make a pathway through the four years a bit clearer (P5).*

While all conservatoires offer some pedagogical training at a departmental level, quality assurance is another challenge, since it is not clear whether tutors teaching on the modules have a teaching qualification, or even experience of the most recent developments in music education for learners under the age of 18. Findings also raise questions of parity within and across instrumental departments, and regarding mechanisms for monitoring provision through student feedback. Furthermore, in some conservatoires, there is little or no bespoke pedagogical training for disciplines other than instrument and voice. Provision also appears to be inconsistent in terms of the professional experience offered to students in the form of placements. While it is acknowledged that placement opportunities will vary across the sector due to geographical location, if no placements are offered at all, or if students' observation and teaching experiences outside the institution are limited to particular scenarios or cultures already familiar to them, their future employability will likely be severely restricted, especially since employers are unlikely to recruit recent graduates with little or no relevant teaching experience (see Chapter 4.4).

Another significant challenge for the conservatoire sector is the prioritisation of principal study activity above all else: a long-established tradition (embracing hegemony) that relates strongly to classification and framing theory (Bernstein, 2003) where curriculum subjects are viewed in a compartmentalised way, with some

taking precedence over others. This stance is one supported by a conservatoire academic participant:

*A conservatoire, historically, has been an institution to create performers: historically that's why they've existed. So, the teaching side of things is always a little bit of an additional area, definitely not central. So, one is, in a way, trying to chip away at some very fundamentally held views about what's going on here (P3).*

The subsequent focus on assessments that serve to preserve the hegemonic master-apprentice teaching model leaves insufficient space in the curriculum to include the range of learning activities necessary to prepare students for instrumental teaching careers in the twenty-first century. In the current doctoral study, conservatoire academics saw a need to break down perceived barriers between principal study and supporting/academic studies to benefit students' learning because *'there's still a certain amount of ignorance [...] as to what [instrumental teacher education] might lead to or why [students] should take pedagogy seriously'* (P4).

Equally, alumni participants suggested that more could have been done during their own studies to help students connect these apparently opposing elements of the course, and to understand the relevance of the course content to their future professional lives, since students do not automatically make such connections. These findings are consistent with Porton (2020) and resonate with notions of hidden curriculum (Pitts, 2003; Haddon, 2012) and invisible pedagogy (Bernstein, 1975). A related challenge raised both by conservatoire academics and alumni concerned the messaging and discourse (Ford, 2010) around conservatoire education. It was suggested that this should be reviewed because students' interactions with principal study tutors and other members of staff are pivotal in building up notions of value around teaching. Even though the conservatoire academics interviewed were committed to delivering instrumental teacher training, were open and honest regarding their own teaching philosophies and viewed instrumental teacher education as a means of 'shaping the future', there was a perceived need to

convince some colleagues of the value of instrumental teacher education so that, in turn, students would be influenced positively.

*The main challenge, as ever, is to negotiate the competing ingredients of a music undergraduate degree at conservatoire level because everyone wants a piece of the cake and there are certain skills that are considered to be essential and need to be covered, and yet it's all open to negotiation, you know? Do we need as much music history? Do we need as much musicianship? Do we need as much weighting towards principal study? Maybe yes, maybe no? Maybe that could change across the years. All these questions are questions that we can discuss, I think (P5).*

It transpired, however, that underlying hegemonic attitudes and assumptions (Bruner, 1996; Howarth, 2015; Brookfield, 2017; Porton, 2020) were not purely institutional, since Pilot study findings also showed that students began their course with preconceived ideas about what constitutes success as a musician: ideas that appeared to have been ingrained from an early age, within their respective cultures and family backgrounds. Indeed, musicians' developing identities also play a distinctive role in influencing their career trajectories and vice versa: 'Identities influence preconceptions about what it is to be a music teacher [and] are related to what [musicians] value in the profession' (Randles and Ballantyne, 2016: 231). The interrelated nature of cultural and institutional hegemony came into play for Pilot study participants who, on entry to RBC, thought teaching was tantamount to failure as a musician and who had evidently since grappled with their musical identities, as though daring to admit to themselves, their tutors or peers that they had a passion for teaching might disadvantage them in some way. This finding is consistent with a 'pigeon-holing' phenomenon identified by Porton (2020: 83), where alumni perceived that the 'hierarchical value of solo performance' excluded certain students who were 'not deemed talented enough' (ibid: 84). However, like the alumni participants in the current doctoral study, Pilot study participants acknowledged that achieving success as a musician could take many forms, not least becoming an inspiring music educator. This view is reinforced by the finding that alumni participants, feeling settled in their various music educator roles, appeared less preoccupied with their

musical identities than were their younger peers. Nonetheless, it still transpired that, like the Pilot study participants, alumni had become acutely aware of institutional hegemony during their own student years.

A further concern that emerges from this doctoral study pertains to the relationship between conservatoires and employers. The MEH questionnaire unearthed assumptions on the part of employers about conservatoire graduates' abilities and their capabilities and enthusiasms for teaching, with some employers claiming that conservatoire graduates 'teach as they were taught' and lack interest in investing time to develop their teaching skills. While this may be true of some students, negative generalisations such as this prove unfounded and indeed, student inhibition may be misinterpreted as indifference in some cases (see Chapter 7.4). The current study has revealed that with exposure to CoP in music education contexts outside the institution, student inhibition can diminish, career aspirations can evolve, and a passion for working as an instrumental teacher can grow, even in cases where that aspiration did not exist previously. Conversely, some employers considered that their attempts to reach out to conservatoires with the intention of developing training models and placements had been in vain. While a lack of response from conservatoires might be interpreted by employers as reluctance or reticence, conservatoires are however likely to have several institutional challenges to contend with (for example, staffing, timetabling, academic regulations, restrictive credit/course structures, financial constraints) that may prevent them forming partnerships even where the motivation to collaborate exists. Moreover, given that many MEH representatives in this doctoral study were critical of conservatoire provision for instrumental teacher training, the apparent reluctance of some MEHs to provide training to early career teachers may appear paradoxical: however, just like conservatoires, MEHs too face scheduling and budgetary challenges that may well preclude them from offering such support.

Nevertheless, as suggested in Chapter 4.5, it would seem highly appropriate for conservatoires and employers to engage in dialogue, not only about course developments and their relevance to the employment market, but perhaps even more importantly to emphasise the value of preserving and developing music

education for young musicians, some of whom will help sustain future recruitment into conservatoires. As stated by Whittaker et al. (2019: 3): 'Music needs to have begun in the early years, been developed through primary schools and on into secondary schools. Higher music education institutions cannot be charged with increasing access to their courses and simultaneously prevented from doing so by the pipeline upstream having been removed!' In fact, given the stark prediction that access to A-level Music could decline continually over the next twelve years to the extent that there will be no entries in 2033, posing a significant threat to 'the next generation of the music teaching workforce' (Whittaker and Fautley, [musicteachermagazine.co.uk](http://musicteachermagazine.co.uk), 2021), it is vital that conservatoires ensure that their graduates become part of a pipeline of music educators who are well prepared to engage and support future music learners.

To summarise the responses to this sub-question, my findings have revealed:

- underlying hegemonic assumptions regarding instrumental teaching and pedagogical training both within and outside institutions that need to be addressed due to the potential ongoing harm caused, not only to the future careers of conservatoire students, but also to music education provision in England across all ages and stages;
- inconsistent provision for instrumental teacher education across the conservatoire sector that would benefit from closer monitoring and overview, not just in terms of curricular content, but with regard to training for those conservatoire staff delivering provision who may not have a teaching qualification or be up to date with wider practices in music education;<sup>5</sup>
- insufficient communication and collaboration between conservatoires and employers even though more open dialogue would benefit both partners,

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<sup>5</sup> I was concerned to hear recently that a conservatoire tutor had (mis)advised a student that their degree qualification would permit them to charge £50 per hour for teaching one-to-one lessons upon graduation. One wonders how in touch this tutor was with music education at a pre-HE level.

students and graduates reputationally and educationally, especially given that senior managers from MEHs in England perceive conservatoire graduates to be insufficiently prepared for careers as instrumental teachers.

2) How do undergraduate conservatoire students assimilate the unfamiliar as they learn how to teach and facilitate music-making?

Firstly, with regard to the familiar, it is well known in the HE sector that students commencing an undergraduate music course in a conservatoire bring with them significant subject knowledge in music: performers especially are likely to have begun their instrumental training many years before they enter an institution. However, the findings of this doctoral study showed that 81% of Y1 students commencing study in September 2019 also brought with them varying degrees of prior experience of supporting musical learning in others and that this could be developed further, through a Y1 Community Engagement module. Equally, building on the familiar, a core Pedagogy module taught across Y2 enabled students to extend their pedagogical knowledge. It alerted them not only to the need to analyse technical issues within their specialist disciplines (SCK), but also to become more aware of 'hidden curriculum' (Pitts, 2003; Haddon, 2012) in the form of transferable skills relevant to their ongoing development as music educators (TCK).

Through a combination of lectures, workshops, audio-visual resources, peer-group discussion, group role play and reflective writing across Y1–2, these core modules introduced students to a range of teaching scenarios and led them to understand how they might apply their SCK and TCK to situations that were previously unfamiliar. Additionally, core modules nurtured a sense of professional responsibility (VBK) in the majority of students that would also be invaluable for careers outside music, yet another aspect of hidden curriculum (Pitts, 2003; Haddon, 2012). Indeed, there was strong evidence to suggest that many students transitioned from an egocentric focus (familiar) to one that was altogether more altruistic (previously unfamiliar). New graduates, interviewed in July 2020, brought into sharp relief the immense value to students of practising their skills in real-life music education contexts that required them to be flexible and adaptable (thus moving closer to

PCK), though placements were deemed more successful where a formal mentoring arrangement was embedded and agreed in advance. As stated above, part of my contribution to new knowledge has comprised an expansion and adaptation of the learning and teaching model of Shulman (1986; 1987) in this manner (see also Chapters 5 and 6).

Bourdieu's conceptual tools (Bourdieu, 1977; Maton, 2014) proved useful here in illustrating that, throughout their pedagogical training, students were presented with opportunities both within RBC (the internal field) and outside RBC (numerous external fields) that influenced their changing habitus. Such opportunities had the potential to transform students' existing habits and frames of reference (Mezirow, 2018) and to counteract hegemony by enabling them to accumulate different forms of capital, not least an enhanced understanding of the need to make music accessible to learners from all cultures and socio-economic backgrounds. Students accumulated social capital through building connections and networks with visiting professionals within, and employers outside, the institution, and their habitus evolved as they learned within new CoP (Wenger, 1998). At the same time students acquired symbolic capital from experiences gained during work placements (and in turn from the degree qualification they had been/would be awarded). I argue that the capital gained from work experience is potentially as important to employers as the degree qualification itself since it enables conservatoire graduates (and some current students) to accrue economic capital through employment, thus moving from peripheral to full participation in the CoP (Lave and Wenger, 1991).

However, as suggested in Chapter 6, even when graduates have specialised in pedagogy and received support from an instrumental teacher-mentor during their studies, the sheer volume of content across conservatoire curricula (already noted as a challenge) has implications for students who may be unable to put in the hours needed to gain sufficiently wide-ranging experience and knowledge. Nor does it follow that those who have taken advantage of training and placement opportunities will be adequately prepared for the profession if their experience has been 'mis-educative' (Dewey, 1938: 20). As Lave and Wenger (1991: 76) suggest, 'particular forms of apprenticeship can prevent rather than facilitate learning'. This statement is

particularly relevant where conservatoire students are given free rein to select their own placements, typically resulting in a narrow focus on ‘teach as they were taught’ approaches, where their experience of teaching is limited to teaching their conservatoire student peers (see Chapter 3.3), or where their reflections on learning and teaching are limited to their own cultural and educative experiences. However, with careful organisation, monitoring and training for mentors, mentoring initiatives provide a means, not only of supporting students’ transition into the music education workforce, but also of extending professional development opportunities to alumni (see below). Furthermore, I suggest that where conservatoires do not already embed L&P activity into credit-bearing modules, there is strong scope to do so, since this would address some of the overload issues described by conservatoire academics in this study, where students engage in L&P activity in addition to fulfilling their course commitments rather than as an integral part of them.

To summarise the responses to this sub-question, my findings have revealed that:

- many students enter conservatoire training with prior experience of supporting musical learning in others. Given the employment challenges students may encounter post-graduation (see Chapter 4), the opportunity to build on existing knowledge and skills via the curriculum, from Y1, in all principal study disciplines appears to be valuable;
- students respond well to learning about how the different elements of their course work together to prepare them gradually and cumulatively for careers in music education (TCK) and indeed elsewhere;
- students may build on skills, qualities, awareness, behaviours and values developed during core pedagogical training by engaging in (initially unfamiliar) external placements, thus extending their learning beyond their immediate frame of reference within a supportive CoP, as opposed to merely replicating how they themselves were taught. This could be extended to L&P activity which is not already credit-bearing;

- in addition to SCK and TCK, pedagogical training offers VBK, enabling students to understand their role as socially and culturally responsible citizens who have the capacity to nurture the next generation of musicians;
- engaging in placements does not enable students to emerge from institutions as ready-made teachers, but the experience is nonetheless vital in preparing them to undertake subsequent graduate-level instrumental teacher training.

3) In what ways can conservatoire alumni contribute to evolving curricula and pedagogy in instrumental teacher education?

This study has shown various ways in which alumni can contribute to evolving curricula and pedagogy in instrumental teacher education. Where students had the opportunity to learn about the early career experiences of three alumni during a workshop (January 2020), it was clear that they regarded recent graduates as peers and felt comfortable asking questions of them. Indeed, observing alumni-led activity also enables HE tutors to learn more about their students, so that subsequent teaching activities can be tailored to meet their needs and requirements. During the focus-group discussion, alumni also contributed by offering extensive feedback on their former learning experiences. I argue that such feedback is possibly even more valuable to institutions than that gathered from current students, since alumni bring perspectives from their professional experiences that can inform future course developments and teaching approaches. In addition to assisting with the practical delivery of pedagogical training within their former institution, alumni can make a valuable external contribution, sharing their early professional expertise by mentoring students in a range of placement contexts. Moreover, alumni who work as instrumental teachers have the capacity to offer feedback to course leaders about the relevance and suitability of their conservatoire-based pedagogical training for professional practice in the twenty-first century. Such an approach, based on critical pedagogy (see Chapter 1.3), enables the voices of former students to come to the fore so that their former tutors can learn from them (Renshaw, 1986; Apple et al., 2001; Sturrock, 2007; AEC, 2010; Gaunt, 2016).

To summarise the responses to this sub-question, my findings have revealed that:

- conservatoire alumni are keen to share their early career experiences with current students both within and outside their former institution. Current students relate well to alumni and view them as peers. In fact, alumni who graduated recently are potentially more suited to current students as mentors in the workplace than alumni who are long-established in their careers;
- conservatoire alumni can offer feedback on their pedagogical training and wider course experience in the context of their professional experience. Such insights are invaluable for future course developments.

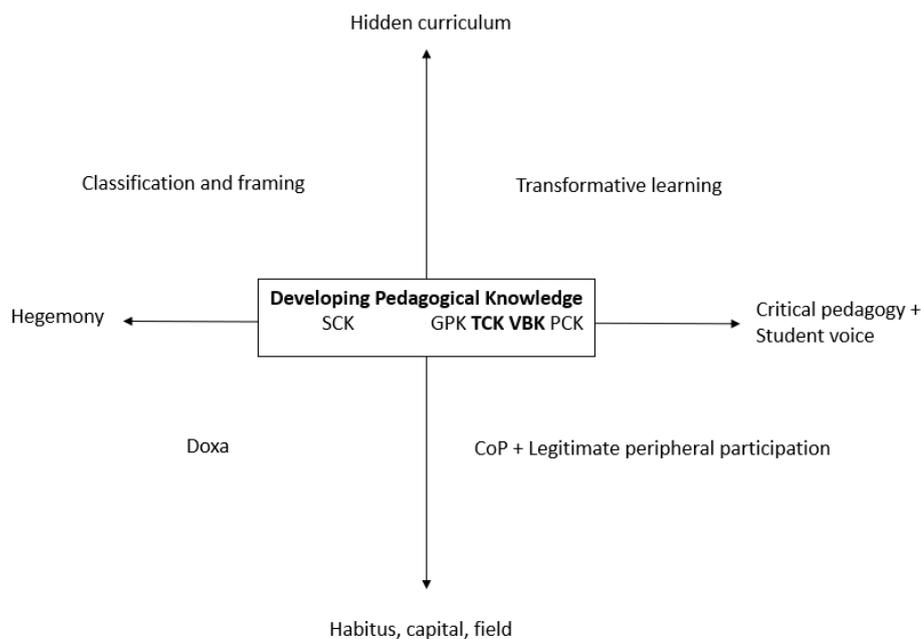
## **8.2 Theoretical frameworks that underpin and influence outcomes of instrumental teacher education**

In this section I revisit the interrelated theoretical frameworks discussed in Chapter 1.3. Figure 36 below illustrates how these frameworks, including my own adaptation of Shulman's PCK model (1986; 1987), underpin and influence the outcomes of instrumental teacher education at RBC, and potentially across the conservatoire sector.

At one end of the double-ended horizontal arrow, hegemony preserves the institutional and cultural status quo, where negative attitudes about instrumental teaching as a potential career path may have been established long before students commence their conservatoire training. In the absence of intervention, doxa, in relation to principal study, reigns supreme and its ideology is tacitly reinforced throughout a student's undergraduate musical training. Significantly, in this doctoral study, the hegemonic classification and framing of principal study has been the catalyst for transforming frames of reference and habits of mind in relation to pedagogical training through critical pedagogy/student voice, as shown to the right of the horizontal axis. Indeed, as students transition from legitimate peripheral participation in CoPs (Lave and Wenger, 1991) to full participation as alumni, they are able to uncover hegemonic aspects of their undergraduate studies in the context of their professional experience.

Hidden curriculum and habitus, capital and field sit at opposite ends of the vertical axis, intersecting with both the hegemonic and transformative aspects of the study, for example, where students are challenged to question their assumptions about their own learning and musical development. The hidden transferable skills, qualities, awareness, behaviours and values nurtured through pedagogical training counteract those hidden notions of hegemony and the compartmentalised, hierarchical viewpoints inherent in classification and framing, thus influencing positively the evolving habitus and the accrual of various forms of employability-related capital within the internal and external field, i.e., within and outside the conservatoire.

*Figure 36: Interrelated theoretical frameworks that underpin and influence outcomes of instrumental teacher education*



The new theoretical framework 'Developing Pedagogical Knowledge' (DPK) that has emerged from this doctoral study represents both a model ('developing' as part of a compound noun) and a process ('developing' as verb). It is complex, multifaceted, and underpinned by all the aforementioned theoretical frameworks and thus adopts a prominent position in Figure 36. In addition to developing further specialist musical knowledge (SCK), general pedagogical skills (GPK) and transferable skills (TCK), students accrue Values-Based Knowledge (VBK) as they learn about the importance

of becoming socially and culturally responsible citizens who can inspire the next generation of musicians. However, conservatoire graduates are unlikely to emerge from conservatoire training as ready-made teachers, so the DPK framework has the potential to be applied post-graduation and beyond, reflecting the notion that teachers never stop learning.

### **8.3 Reflections on methodology, including limitations and scope for future research**

The use of an eclectic methodology (Rossman and Wilson, 1994; Aluko, 2006) that combined multiple research methods offered maximum flexibility through this doctoral study. Grounded theory proved extremely useful in providing an overarching framework comprising three projects with seven components that aligned closely to the research sub-questions. However, given the potentially limitless flexibility, it was necessary to be self-disciplined and to restrict certain aspects of the data collection. For example, I had not originally set out to undertake research with employers, but the findings from the interviews with conservatoire academics led me in that direction. As noted in Chapter 4, whilst the wide range of experiences and backgrounds amongst the MEH participants was viewed as a strength in that it brought multiple perspectives to the research, I remain mindful that participants' ontologies were likely to vary depending on the nature and extent of their association with, and geographical proximity to, one or more conservatoires. Furthermore, the findings are likely to have been influenced by participant bias: whether or not MEH senior leaders were themselves conservatoire-trained, it would have been impossible for them to remain completely impartial about their own 'learning past' (Kegan, 2018: 39). In needing to be selective due to the boundaries of the research, it was not feasible to triangulate the MEH data by seeking the perspectives of directors of music from independent school music departments, even though these are another main source of employment for conservatoire graduates. Thus, this remains a potential avenue for future research (see below). I was grateful for the cooperation of academics in all the music conservatoires in England, since those interviews enabled the situating of the RBC case study in a wider context.

In offering the opportunity to all Y1 and 2 RBC students to participate in the research, I aimed to be as inclusive as possible and to give these students a voice. The questionnaire that was distributed to Y1 students in September 2019 generated a significant amount of data, originally intended to provide valuable context to which I could return at the end of a three-year longitudinal study. However, given the later decision not to pursue the longitudinal element beyond Y2 due to the global pandemic, some data were surplus to requirements. Nonetheless, baseline data regarding students' previous work experiences and career aspirations still proved valuable in contextualising the data generated later by the textual narratives. It was of course impossible to know whether Hawthorne and halo effects (Denscombe, 2014; Cohen et al., 2018) played a part in participants' responses but, as discussed in Chapter 2.3, every attempt was made to mitigate against this. The same could be said of the interviews with new graduates and with the alumni-led focus group, where participants may have been subliminally aware of power dynamics. However, the positives outweighed the negatives when giving students, both past and present, the opportunity to have their voices heard as part of the research. Participant numbers for Projects 2c (new graduates) and 3 (alumni) were small, though extremely detailed data emerged that offered contrasting perspectives to those of Y1–2 students.

Across the entire doctoral study, I contrasted a range of insider and outsider perspectives (OO, ON and IN) in an attempt to counteract my own inevitable bias as an insider-old-timer (IO), though, as outlined in Chapter 2.3, it was also appropriate to embrace that bias in an attempt to balance my positionality as insider researcher (in relation to RBC students and alumni) with that of outsider (when consulting conservatoire academics and employers outside RBC). While it would have been interesting to interview my own colleagues as fellow IOs, and even to observe them teaching pedagogy classes at RBC, the interviewing of academics in other conservatoires felt more appropriate in countering my bias and offering a fresh perspective. In terms of future research, however, there is clear scope to interview students and/or observe taught classes in other HE institutions (ONs and OOs). Indeed, a case study approach such as that employed within the current doctoral study could be replicated or adapted to explore the transition from student to

professional across other phases of education (for example early years, SEND, primary, secondary and further education) and in other performing arts disciplines, for example, dance and drama. As a result of the pandemic, I was unable to observe students and their mentors on placement but doing so in the future would doubtless be beneficial in triangulating participants' written or spoken perspectives. Similarly, it would be appropriate to undertake an in-depth attitudinal analysis of employers, with representation from a wider demographic to include independent schools (as noted above) alongside MEHs. Such a study could be conducted through face-to-face interviews or focus groups, as opposed to questionnaires, to facilitate the further exploration, clarification or expansion of viewpoints and ideas. Involving a much larger sample of alumni would also be beneficial in raising current students' awareness of career challenges and possibilities across a wider geographical area and/or range of settings, thus building on recommendations from my previous research (Shaw, 2020).

Given the need to set boundaries for the current research study, the focus was on the views of conservatoire students and academics in the UK, and England specifically. While other research has addressed some of the challenges experienced by early career teachers in, for example, Australia (Watson, 2010), Latvia (Gonzalez, 2012) and America (Conway, 2014), a longitudinal study of UK conservatoire graduates who go on to teach overseas could well be worthwhile. Furthermore, conservatoires could learn much from their international alumni, in terms of how to develop course content to suit the needs of future international graduates. Equally, given that this thesis has focused on conservatoires to the exclusion of university music departments, it would be interesting to extend the reach of this doctoral study to universities to ascertain the extent to which the findings are transferable.

Importantly, the grounded theory model used in the current project could prove useful in investigating the impact of EDI initiatives in conservatoires and other HEIs on instrumental teacher education over time. For example, a longitudinal study could examine the evolving attitudes of students as they engage in curricula and CoPs that are 'inclusive, diverse and representative' of the communities with whom they will go

on to work post-graduation (Spence, 2021: 15). It would be interesting to explore institutional hegemony specifically in relation to EDI, and even more worthwhile to evaluate the preparedness of conservatoire graduates to *'teach in multi genres'* (H15) as a result of EDI-related pedagogic interventions, thus addressing concerns of MEH representatives in the current study (see Chapter 4.3, Figure 18). In the longer term, aspiring music educators who benefit from a more diverse and representative curriculum during their conservatoire training could go on to become inspiring, culturally responsible role models for a more diverse pipeline of future musicians: thus, there are positive implications for widening participation in HE.

The global pandemic has brought significant challenges for practising instrumental teachers with teaching being moved online at short notice and practitioners and educational leaders being forced to adjust to new ways of working and alternative modes of delivery from those they had become accustomed to. There is certainly scope to build online pedagogies into instrumental teacher education provision in the immediate future, and to research the implications of such provision on training programmes for prospective instrumental teachers in HE. Indeed, valuable perspectives on early career resilience and the need for flexibility in learning and teaching could be gleaned from alumni-teachers who (to revisit a phrase from Chapter 7, participant M1) were *'thrown in at the deep end'* and forced to deliver their teaching online without prior training during the pandemic.

From an autoethnographic perspective, conducting insider research within my own institution has enabled me to reflect on my own practice in HE and to adjust my teaching approaches in light of perspectives that emerged from questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, observation or textual narratives. I have also been able to apply my research findings beyond the scope of the doctoral research project where participant stances have illuminated underlying institutional attitudes and behaviours of which my colleagues and I were previously unaware, for example, by introducing initiatives that raise awareness of and celebrate alumni successes in music education (see Chapter 8.4 below). The findings have also facilitated an evaluation of the new Y1–2 provision as rolled out across 2019–21. It is clear that, during the study, some of the research tools employed have impacted directly on students'

learning. For example, the reflective tasks in Y1 and 2 contributed to summative and formative assessment respectively, supporting students to reflect in depth on their development as music educators and to consider (and appreciate) the relevance of pedagogical training in a conservatoire (See Chapter 2: Project 2a and b). Similarly, the alumni-led workshop (Project 3a) encouraged students to reflect on which aspects of professional life they needed to be aware of as they approached the end of their course. Approaches such as these follow Denscombe's recommendation that research should be 'part of practice':

Research should not only be used to gain a better understanding of the problems which arise in everyday practice, but actually set out to alter things – to do so as part and parcel of the research process rather than tag it on as an afterthought which follows the conclusion of the research.

(2014: 122–3)

#### **8.4 Closing remarks and recommendations**

It has become increasingly evident throughout this doctoral study that hegemony in, and in relation to, conservatoire education creates barriers to facilitating the transition from student to professional and developing the future music education workforce in several ways:

- by negatively impacting the way students view teaching as a potential career pathway, due to messaging regarding the prioritisation of excellence in the principal study discipline (and the pressure that comes with that);
- by overlooking the potential to collaborate with MEHs, even though the reciprocal learning opportunities involved would potentially improve quality of teaching within hubs whilst providing more employment routes for conservatoire graduates;

- by failing to celebrate the achievements of students who may have significant strengths in areas other than, but still related to, their principal study specialism;<sup>6</sup>
- by missing opportunities to invite alumni to use their experiences and insights as early career music educators to contribute to course design and delivery.

Indeed, hegemony has impacted all the research sub-questions answered above to some degree. Firstly, it creates barriers that make preparing conservatoire students for instrumental teaching careers very challenging. Secondly, hegemony affects students in ways they may not even be aware of, instilling prejudices that prevent them from being open to learning and assimilating new ideas, and thirdly (to use metaphors employed in this thesis) alumni can contribute by helping to counteract hegemony in conservatoires, using their early career experiences to ‘open students’ eyes’ to ‘real situations’ beyond the conservatoire ‘bubble’.

It cannot be emphasised strongly enough that there is an urgent need for many more institutions and employers to develop bespoke training initiatives and mentor schemes that prepare undergraduate students and early career instrumental teachers for the realities of the specific contexts in which they will find themselves working post-graduation. Furthermore, as McClellan (2014: 303) states:

It is imperative that music teacher preparation programs engage the entire music department community in creating a supportive environment that encourages and shapes future music educators’ identity as music teachers [,] empower[ing] prospective music teachers to think critically, develop creative independence in music teaching [and] construct beliefs about themselves as music teachers.

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<sup>6</sup> During my doctoral journey, I was baffled by a comment from a conservatoire tutor: that allowing students to study a second instrument ‘promotes amateurism’.

I conclude that music education/music pedagogy should feature more prominently in the Subject Benchmark Statement for Music (QAA, 2019), especially given the TCK and VBK that emerges from pedagogical training across core modules, and that training in music education/music pedagogy appears to nurture most of the intellectual, practical and personal skills listed as 'benchmark standards' (ibid: 15–17). Given recent government proposals to reduce funding drastically for performing arts courses in HE from autumn 2021, it is becoming even more important for conservatoires and university music departments to justify their strong positioning in terms of enabling social mobility, not only for their students, but also for the future generations of young people that their graduates may go on to teach. Therefore, further to my sub-question summaries above, I make the following recommendations in light of my findings:

1. Conservatoires and other HEIs need to be alert to institutional values and messaging around instrumental teacher education and their impact. From the initial contact with potential applicants at open days and auditions, through to enrolment and graduation, it is crucial to advocate and communicate the importance and value of pedagogical training. Conservatoires need to take steps to eradicate disparaging remarks and negative attitudes towards instrumental teaching as a career choice and, instead, acknowledge and celebrate the achievements of students and graduates that result directly from pedagogical training,<sup>7</sup> giving them the recognition they deserve alongside, for example, successes in performance and composition, thus removing, or at least reducing hierarchical values in conservatoire curricula.
2. Where conservatoires and other HEIs do not already offer one or more substantial core pedagogy modules across Y1 and 2, they might consider exploring this possibility at the next course revalidation opportunity, or at the very least, justify their rationale for not doing so. In line with the point about institutional valuing above, the inclusion of pedagogical training as early in a

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<sup>7</sup> In January 2021, RBC introduced an alumni feature into the weekly newsletter for this specific purpose.

student's undergraduate course as possible helps to send a positive message to students about its importance. Not only does it enable students to build on their prior experience of supporting others' musical learning, and to share that experience with their fellow students who can then benefit through peer-learning, it also validates that prior experience, increasing confidence and helping to develop social and cultural responsibility in students over time.

3. Ideally one or more core modules would be followed by optional modules that enable students to gradually develop appropriate skills, qualities, attributes, behaviours and values across their course in a joined-up, structured way. However, in order to support students in gaining a foothold in the teaching profession, the knowledge and experience gained within the institution would need to be consolidated and extended, by offering opportunities to engage with approved CoPs outside, thus preparing students for the realities of professional life beyond the specificity of their principal study discipline.
4. Where excellent partnership practice already exists, conservatoires, HEIs and MEHs should ideally seek to learn from one another. The COVID-19 pandemic has introduced more flexible ways of working that may potentially remove or at least reduce any perceived barriers relating to distance or geographical location. Through such partnerships, training could even be extended to conservatoire and university staff. In the event that a conservatoire tutor's only source of instrumental learning has been via a traditional one-to-one master-apprentice teaching model, training initiatives might alert principal study tutors and academics to recent developments in pre-HE music education, thus raising their awareness of the contexts in which their students may go on to teach and assisting staff in supporting their students accordingly.
5. Through further development of structured mentor schemes and placements for emerging and new graduates, there is potential to improve teaching quality and engagement in music education careers for those who do not seek, or are unable to follow, traditional QTS routes. An ultimate aim would be to reach a

position in England where conservatoire students who aspire to teach are required to complete a minimum allocation of mentored placement activity during their undergraduate training. Such experience would ideally then be endorsed by employers in partial fulfilment of a specialist instrumental teaching qualification that could be completed across the first year of employment, under the ongoing supervision of a mentor. However, regardless of whether such a position is achievable, an extended period of initial training for graduate teachers ought to become a core role for MEHs, whether the graduate is employed or on a zero-hours contract. If more MEHs were able to invest in their new teachers in this way, it would help to improve the quality of learning for children and young people and reduce feelings of Impostor Syndrome and teacher anxiety in graduates (see Chapter 7.2) who may then feel more valued and more inclined to stay with their employer (see Chapter 4.3). Internship initiatives, such as already exist in a few MEHs, also provide ongoing professional development for established practitioners who can benefit from the reciprocal learning opportunities that mentoring offers through mutual reflection.

6. Finally, alumni have the potential to feed into all these recommendations. Raising awareness of alumni achievements in music education, whether through institutional marketing or by inviting alumni to contribute to module delivery, can disperse current students' pre-conceived ideas of what constitutes success as a musician. Alumni are more likely to relate to current students' anxieties about their musical identities, issues such as financial stability and the realities of life after graduation than their HE tutors, whose own school-aged teaching experience may be far less recent (see Recommendation 5, above). Indeed, through consultation, the early career experiences of alumni could directly inform new or revised module content, making it yet more relevant to the needs of twenty-first century graduates. Furthermore, when organising placements, institutions and employers should be mindful that students may benefit as much, if not more, from an alumnus/alumna-mentor who graduated relatively recently and understands the challenges of becoming a new teacher, than from a mentor who has been

established as a teacher for many years. There is scope to learn from alumni-led mentoring models offered by many UK universities where emerging professionals are supported across a broad spectrum of careers. The launch of a bespoke alumni-led mentoring programme across the conservatoire sector specifically for the purpose of promoting music education workforce development would be beneficial on both a national and international level.

To conclude, the following quotation from Brookfield (2017: 449) aptly reflects my state of mind at various points during this doctoral research journey:

When you begin to surface assumptions regarding power dynamics and hegemony, it's very easy to fall prey to a pessimistic despair as you realise the complexities you're dealing with. A sense of powerlessness develops if all you do is focus on intractable problems, unresolved dilemmas, and institutional and societal barriers to change. We need to celebrate the good things that happen, the small victories and unexpected breakthroughs that keep us engaged in [our] work.

As Kingsbury (1988: 56) stated, the 'general understanding that only a small minority of [conservatoire graduates] will be able to make professional careers as performing musicians' is 'only occasionally spoken aloud'. Attitudes uncovered in this thesis are just the tip of the iceberg but suggest there is an urgent need to counteract hegemony in conservatoires in relation to instrumental teacher education by changing traditional perceptions of failure into indicators of success. It is vital that, both across the UK and internationally, Music HEIs and employers support the full diversity of student learning requirements by offering bespoke training that gives students and graduates the best chance of developing a music educator identity over an extended period. Any lack of intervention in this regard poses a serious EDI concern, denying HE learners the opportunity to discover new passions and explore the full range of possible employment routes, whilst also depriving future generations of school-aged pupils access to a 'performance-led music education' (Henley, 2011). All of this has wider implications for the longevity and sustainability of music in HE, and arts and culture more broadly. However, on a much more positive note, the

consultation with other conservatoires in England, employers, RBC alumni and students has enabled multiple ontologies to come to the fore, raising a much-needed awareness of this under-researched area. Indeed, in my current senior leadership role, I am now in a strong position to respond to these findings, well beyond this doctoral study.

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