

The Learning Ensemble: Musical learning through participation

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**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of
Birmingham City University
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

November 2009

The Faculty of Education, Law and Social Sciences, Birmingham City University

Abstract

This thesis is an examination of the learning processes employed by adults who learn to play an instrument within an ensemble. The aims of the research were threefold. Firstly, to discover how a person learns in a group and what the role of the socio-cultural environment is in learning. Secondly, to investigate the role that identity plays in learning and whether the students regard themselves as musicians. Finally, to explore the role of the performance in the musical learning process.

The research has been carried out using case-study research and a four-year autoethnographic study. The theoretical framework is provided by literature from the fields of cultural psychology, music psychology and adult learning. Activity Theory has been used as the main analytical tool.

The discussion firstly considers the learning process in order to construct an activity system of musical learning within an ensemble. Then, using this activity system, the motivational factors inherent in the learning ensemble and the role of identity in generating motivation are considered. Through analysing motivation and identity in relation to the activity system, I have demonstrated how the activity system can be developed into a three-dimensional system by incorporating identity as a constituent, thus stabilising the activity system. A three-dimensional system then allows for multiple activities to be analysed through the construction of activity constellations.

The result of this study is a model of participative learning. Participative learning takes into consideration the purpose of learning and the socio-cultural environment so that musical learning is embedded in social music making. This then provides music education with a new model for learning a musical instrument.

Acknowledgements

This thesis would not have been completed without the help and support of a number of people. Firstly, thanks go to my supervisors at Birmingham City University. Richard Hatcher for introducing me to Activity Theory and his incredible way of getting me to pause for thought. To Martin Fautley for helping the seeds of my thoughts to germinate, for being on the end of an email in the early hours of the morning and for helping me to overcome my fear of words with four or more syllables. Most of all to Janet Hoskyns for keeping me on the straight and narrow, for knowing when to push me and when to leave me to it, for teaching me not to be quite so self-critical, for embracing both myself and my family, but mainly for her unwavering dedication to both my research and to my development as a researcher. It has been a delight to work with you.

Secondly, thanks go to my family. To Hannah, who was 18-months old when I started my research, and Adam, who was born during the course of the research, both of whom have kept my feet on the ground. To my husband Simon for his belief that one day he would introduce me as his wife, The Doctor. Finally to my sister Trisha, for help with proof-reading drafts and for being someone to moan to when it all looked like being too much.

I'd also like to thank Louise Annis for help with transcribing interviews, Ruth Powell for early proof-reading and Helen Coll for proof-reading this final draft.

Mostly I'd like to thank all who have participated in this research either directly, through observations and interviews, or indirectly through allowing me to try things out on them! These are the music-makers. May their music live on.

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I Introduction

As an instrumental teacher I often hear it commented that the best way to learn an instrument is through individual tuition. This comment comes from parents, children, instrumental teachers as well as schools. When I started instrumental teaching, this may well have been my view too; I had always been taught one-to-one and never experienced a group lesson. However, this view was very soon challenged when I saw the benefits of group teaching. Group teaching has now become standard practice in peripatetic instrumental teaching. What maybe started as a way to provide a cheaper option for parents has become recognised as a way of giving students a rich learning experience where they can engage with other students and make music together. The value of group teaching has been endorsed by organisations such as the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music, who have developed an assessment scheme aimed solely at assessing students who learn within groups. The purpose of the scheme is to

'reflect the special dynamics of group teaching, serve as a useful and versatile tool for group teachers, and provide a series of milestones to motivate and reward group learners on their musical journey.'

(Scaife, 2004; 142)

Originated by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES)¹ and the Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS), and backed by organisations such as the National Association of Music Educators (NAME), the Federation of Music Services (FMS) and Youth Music, the Music Manifesto provides a common agenda for the development of music education in the UK with five key aims:

- *To provide every young person with access to a range of music experiences*
- *To provide more opportunities for young people to broaden their musical interests and skills*
- *To nurture our most talented young musicians*
- *To develop a world class workforce in music education*
- *To improve the support structures for young people's music making*

(www.musicmanifesto.co.uk, accessed 24/04/09)

With the advent of Wider Opportunities schemes across the UK to fulfil these aims, instrumental tuition providers are rethinking ways of delivering tuition to a larger, broader audience. Many are using whole-class methods of teaching musical instruments.

¹ Now the Department for Education (DfE).

If these schemes work then the large majority of students filtering through schools into further and higher education will have had experience of group learning in some form or other, which in turn will provide a serious challenge to the view that one-to-one tuition is best.

Therefore research into how an individual learns music through participation in whole group learning programmes is needed. Also, if it is envisaged that every young person will have the opportunity to develop their musical skills, then perhaps providing an opportunity for adults to continue their musical pursuits after their formal education has ended would be beneficial; after all, these schemes are aimed at fostering lifelong learning. As more children receive opportunities to participate in music making, I have found that parents are becoming interested in how they too can gain access to learning a musical instrument. So research is also needed into how adults develop their musicianship through participation in active music making so as to inform providers and aid the growth of these opportunities for adults today, as well as laying the groundwork for continuing opportunities for today's Wider Opportunities students in the future. Therefore, the aim of this research is to both inform those who currently provide adult musical learning opportunities, and to aid the growth of quality provision by encouraging new adult musical learning initiatives.

This research project has arisen from a desire to find out why adults who learned to play their instruments within an ensemble environment were successful in their learning. This stemmed from being involved in such a project as a tutor. The project was set up in 2002 by a UK Music Service after the Head of Service saw an opportunity to give parents the chance to learn an instrument too. The project was set up with two groups and material using a 'band method' was selected. The 'band method' was developed in America in the 1920s after Charles Farnsworth reported on how large groups of children were being taught the violin in Maidstone, England. This coincided with the development of large community music groups outside of formal education. Large bands were considered an appropriate way of giving young people a purpose, and formed the basis of a social rationale for music education in America. This then paved the way for music education to be delivered in high school bands and orchestras (Lee, 2007).

As the adult learning project that I was involved in progressed, it became clear that this was a successful way of learning for the adult students. More groups were developed so as to provide a progression for students on the scheme and also to start more beginner groups as demand necessitated. After conducting an initial small-scale research project

on the students' attitudes towards learning in this way², I decided that more research was needed. This was to find out what the role of the society created by the ensemble was in the learning process so as to use the research to create a model of learning.

The research context for this project crosses the boundaries of both adult and school-age studies, something that is not unique. Green's (2008) recent work on bringing informal learning practices into the school has had an enormous impact on current key stage three music teaching. Her book *'Music, Informal Learning and the School: A New Classroom Pedagogy'* provides some of the rationale for the 'Musical Futures' project being undertaken by many UK secondary schools. In order to develop this classroom pedagogy, Green's research focussed on the learning processes of popular musicians and was carried out with adult musicians (Green, 2002). Davidson, McPherson, Evans and Faulkner (2008) are currently undertaking a longitudinal study of musical learning in Australia, following children through school and into adulthood, and their initial findings suggest that we should take a step back from schematic teaching of music and allow children to interact with music in the same way that adults do. There are also current PhD research projects looking at musical learning in the third age. Taylor's (2009) project looking at mature piano students and Gembris' (2008) project looking at musical activities within the third age are two such studies. Therefore a research project looking at how adults learn to play their instruments within a specific social environment fits well within current PhD research. Moreover, a model of learning through participation in musical activities should be of interest to adult educators as well as those who educate school-aged children.

Alongside this there is a growing amount of work within the field of musical identities; the identity that students give themselves whilst studying their instrument as opposed to identification as a follower of a particular genre. As well as various research into musical identity such as that of Hargreaves, MacDonald and Miell (2002) and Pitts (2005a, 2007), identity is of interest to PhD students such as Jordan (2007, 2008) who has recently undertaken research into the musical identity of singers. During my research project I too became interested in how the students viewed themselves as musicians and found a discrepancy between their view of themselves and the view of others. Therefore this research project also contributes to the discussion of the impact that learning an instrument in a social environment has on the identity of the student.

² I conducted this project as part of the Certificate of Teaching, Associated Board of Royal Schools of Music.

Early on in the research it became apparent that the performance was a key factor in student learning. The 'learning ensemble' is a performing group that offers instrumental and ensemble skill tuition as part of the group rehearsal process. It differs from a traditional ensemble in that it is purposely designed for learning rather than performing, although performance is in many ways an outcome of learning (discussed in some detail in the following chapters). At times the purpose of the group, i.e. learning or performing, changes, sometimes causing a tension between the two. With this in mind, I set myself a third research question in order to look at the relationship between learning and performing.

The research questions of this project are thus:

- How does the individual learn within the group environment?
- How do the students identify themselves as musician – at what point do they class themselves as musician?
- How does the dual function of learning tool and performing ensemble catalyse the students' learning?

Many subsidiary questions have arisen during the research process, such as 'are the students learning the music or about the music?', 'what motivates the students to learn in this way?' and 'what impact has learning an instrument had on the lives of these people?' These are posed during the discussion of the research findings.

It is my hope that this research project will be useful to music education practitioners as well as contributing to the field of music education research. It will also be of interest to anyone who is concerned with the relationship between learners and the social environment. With a learning model developed from in-depth research into learning through participation, and an insight into the learning processes of an individual making music in a social environment, this project can not only inform current music education thinking, but will also raise new questions that can fuel further research into this area.

II Theoretical Context

To provide a theoretical framework for this research, I have drawn on literature from a number of different areas. Not only does this research deal with educational concerns, it also deals with the sociological and psychological aspects of learning within a group environment. Therefore I have taken literature from a wide spectrum of areas within the disciplines of education, sociology and psychology including socio-cultural theory, musical pedagogy, adult learning, musical performance, instrumental¹ teaching, formal and informal learning and the social psychology of music. This literature falls into three main areas: cultural psychology, music psychology and adult learning. During the research process questions arose concerning motivation and identity (see *I Introduction*, page 1), therefore I have also drawn on literature concerning motivation and identity. In order to present the theoretical context for this research project I will review the literature for each of these five areas in turn.

II.1 Cultural Psychology

Ratner (2002; 3) describes cultural psychology as seeking to '*comprehend the ways in which psychological phenomena are part of cultural life and are interdependent with other cultural phenomena.*' In other words, our psychological processes are embedded within the cultural context in which they are placed. He continues that '*western ideology... tends to regard human psychology as an individual or universal phenomenon, equally unrelated to social factors*' (p.4). However cultural psychology places the social factors at the heart of a psychological phenomenon. The main concept is that even when we are undertaking individual activities, there is a social historical context that underpins our psychological actions; as Bourdieu (1986; 241) says, '*the social world is accumulated history.*' This is demonstrated by Small (1998; 201-6) using the example of how a solitary flute player creates relationships through the history of the instrument, the music and the '*sonic space*' created within the social context. In other words, the individual and the context cannot be divorced even when an activity is perceived as solitary, as Shweder's (1990; 1) explanation of cultural psychology shows.

¹ Instrumental teaching as in learning to play a musical instrument.

'A discipline is emerging called "cultural psychology." It is not general psychology. It is not cross-cultural psychology. It is not psychological anthropology. It is not ethnopsychology. It is cultural psychology... [It] is the study of the way cultural traditions and social practices regulate, express, transform, and permute the human psyche, resulting less in psychic unity for humankind than in ethnic divergences in mind, self and emotion. Cultural psychology is the study of the ways subject and object, self and other, psyche and culture, person and context, figure and ground, practitioner and practice live together, require each other, and dynamically, dialectically, and jointly make each other up.'

Cole (1996) traces the discipline of psychology from its beginnings in the late nineteenth century, outlining the split between "scientific psychology" and the "second psychology" where culture is recognised as entering into psychological processes. He considers how twentieth century scholars, including the early scholars Vygotsky, Luria Leontiev, Dewey and Judd, as well as his contemporaries Shweder and Bruner have attempted to regenerate this "second psychology". As a student of Luria in Moscow and through editing works by Vygotsky (1978) and Luria (1979), Cole came to the conclusion that what these scholars proposed was that 'all psychology would treat culture, along with biology and social interaction, as central.' Although he had reservations as to the Russians' methodologies in terms of cross cultural psychology, he 'began to see ways to combine key insights and methods of the cultural-historical approach with equally important insights and methods from American approaches' in order to build a cultural psychology (Cole, 1996; 107-8). The three key concepts of this are given in figure 1.

Figure 1 – Cole's three key concepts of cultural psychology

1. *Mediation through artefacts*: this is the idea that all human activity is mediated through artefacts such as language and symbols. (The original term for artefacts is tools. Both terms mean the same thing but for the purposes of this thesis, I shall use the original term 'tools' as to me it relates to an action, whereas an artefact implies a relic.)
2. *Historical Development*: Tools are passed down to future generations so that they do not need to be recreated with each generation. This process is called enculturation.
3. *Practical Activity*: The psychological processes of human beings must be grounded in everyday activities, as it is here that the tools that have been passed down through history can be seen.

(from Cole, 1996)

Boesch (1997) uses the '*sound of the violin*' to explain cultural psychology. He considers how the sound of the violin is mediated through the development of technique; '*a violin becomes really a violin only on being played*' (p.168). However, he explains that mediation is not just a physical process, but also a mental process. '*Motor skill is not sufficient, but requires support by a mental discipline. Mastery of the instrument, then, turns into mastery of oneself.*' (p.179). He discusses how the beauty of the sound of the violin is interpreted depending on the cultural perspective of the listener concluding that '*the sound of the violin, thus, is deeply embedded in cultural myths*' (p.178).

Cultural psychology encompasses psychological processes in terms of mediation, historical development and practical activity and these elements are embedded within socio-cultural theory.

II.2 Socio-cultural Theory

Barrett (2005) discusses musical communication from a socio-cultural perspective in relation to *Musical communication and children's communities of musical practice*. She too provides an account of how Vygotsky's '*version of socio-cultural theory, built upon by Soviet... and American... colleagues... has become most influential*' (p.262). She provides clear explanations of the theoretical concepts of Vygotsky's (1978) '*Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)*', Lave and Wenger's (1991) '*Communities of Practice*' and Engeström's (1999) '*Activity Theory*'.

II.2.a Zones of Proximal Development

The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is possibly the most well-known of Vygotsky's concepts. He developed the concept in an attempt to find an explanation as to why some children who were more mature in their development seemed to be held back when entering school (Del Rio and Alvarez, 2007; 277). Taken from a cultural-historical perspective, ZPD is concerned with the space in which the learning takes place and is rooted in Vygotsky's (1997; 106) genetic law of cultural development.

'We can formulate the general genetic law of cultural development as follows: every function in the cultural development of a child appears on the stage twice, in two planes, first, the social, then the psychological, first between people as an intermental category, then within the child as an intramental category.'

The cultural environment within which the individual is placed is equal to the internal psychological processes of that person. Therefore society plays an integral role in the development of the individual. ZPD characterises the learning space created by this society, as Vygotsky (1978; 86) says, ZPD is

'the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers.'

The developmental level of the others who share the same social environment as the individual determines the space between the two levels of the individual's development; the actual level and the potential level. If the others have a higher actual level than the individual, then the individual's potential development level will also be higher. In other words, learning takes place within the gap between actual level and potential level. Therefore the social environment is crucial in creating an optimum gap between actual and potential development levels.

II.2.b Communities of Practice

Barrett (2005; 266) explains how Lave and Wenger have drawn on the concept of ZPD in order to show how *'the individual may work in the ZPD through interaction with the cultural tools of the domain, as well as guided interaction with a more expert other.'* Lave and Wenger (1991), Wenger (1998) and Wenger, McDermott and Snyder (2002) describe a community of practice that involves *legitimate peripheral participation* in an activity that is shared by a group.

'Communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis.'

(Wenger et al., 2002; 4)

If a person is a member of a community of practice, for example the practice of a learning ensemble, then their learning will evolve alongside that of their membership of the group. Although, participation will always remain peripheral as the idea is that learning is constantly changing and that to reach the centre would assume a 'closed domain'. The member moves along different trajectories across and within the group as their learning expands and develops (Lave and Wenger, 1991). As individual membership of the group evolves from newcomer to old-timer, the dimensions of the

community evolve and the practice becomes integrated within its historical social context. The more experience the learner has of the group, the closer they are to full membership of that group. The different trajectories that they move along may take them away from the group or they may take them more fully into the group, but each holds a valid learning experience that is unique to the particular community of practice that they are part of (Wenger, 1998).

The community does not necessarily need to meet face to face on a daily basis, as communities of practice could exist entirely through the internet or, as Barrett (2005) and Green (2002) suggest, between an individual and recordings of songs. However, the community must function as something '*distinct from merely a social arrangement*' (Turner, 1987; 1). Turner (1987, 1991) suggests that there are three aspects that contribute to group functioning: identity, social structure and interdependence. This forms the basis of Social Identity Theory. Social Identity Theory explains the processes of group functioning based on '*the extent to which players come to see themselves as a collective or joint unit*' (Turner, 1987; 34) and conformity arises through interdependence. That is how far members are reliant on each other to reach shared goals (Turner, 1991; Stangor, 2004). In the context of communities of practice, '*instead of social co-operation producing the group... psychologically the group is the basis for co-operation*' (Turner, 1987; 34). The community must function so as to allow co-operation and therefore create a ZPD between the individuals and other group members.

II.2.c Activity Theory

At the core of activity theory is Vygotsky's concept of mediation; that people use tools in order to carry out activity. Wertsch (2007; 178) says that '*mediation is a theme that runs throughout the writings of Vygotsky*' describing it as follows

'Instead of acting in a direct, unmediated way in the social and physical world, our contact with the world is indirect or mediated by signs. This means that understanding the emergence and the definition of higher mental processes must be grounded in the notion of mediation.'

Mediation can occur explicitly in the form of tools that are intentionally introduced into an activity, but it can also occur implicitly as '*signs in the form of natural language that have evolved in the service of communication and are then harnessed in other forms of activity*' (p.185). So, during the process of teaching, a teacher may introduce a way of assimilating information so as to instruct the student as to how to organise the information to gain meaning. For example, a music teacher may teach a student a

rhyme so as to remember where the notes of the stave lie. Once these are remembered, the student can then organise this information and realise it through playing their instrument. The rhyme is an example of a tool of explicit mediation. Over time, the student internalises this tool until the process of reading music becomes what Hutchins (1995; 310) calls an '*automized skill*'. This skill has been mediated by a rhyme, however with continued interaction between the student and the notation, the rhyme has become obsolete but the process still exists. When the student is asked how they read music, they may not be able to articulate the exact reasons why as the tool of mediation has now become redundant to them.

The example Wertsch (2007) gives of implicit mediation is thinking aloud. When thinking and speaking at the same time, a person is exploring their thought processes through the tool of spoken language. In musical terms, an example of this is when a student is trying to learn a tune that they know by working out the notes aloud against a tune in their head. They are exploring the musical sounds in order to find the ones that they want to fit in with the tune, the internal tools mediating the activity as it progresses.

The crucial factor of mediation is that individual cognitive factors and environmental factors (including other people and their cognitive factors) are not separated, but are integral to each other. Furthermore, environmental factors are culturally and historically developed, therefore the individual cannot be separated from the cultural historical context. So, mediation allows us to see the processes that are used in the interaction with the social and physical world in order for learning and development to take place. It enables us to view mental, social and historical processes together, allowing us to understand these processes in a holistic way. Cole (1996; 103) tells us that

'The dual process of shaping and being shaped through culture implies that humans inhabit "intentional" (constituted) worlds within which the traditional dichotomies of subject and object, person and environment, and so on, cannot be analytically separated and temporally ordered into independent and dependent variables.'

The idea of psychological processes being culturally embedded was central to Vygotsky's views on cultural behaviour and how this affected mediation. Cole (1992) gives the example of tying a knot as an external way to control memory, highlighting the point that tools are culture-specific in that if they were in a different context, they would be used in a different way.

Activity Theory has been developed by Engeström (1987, 1990, 1993, 2005, 2007) and continues to evolve as a theoretical concept (contributions by Davydov, Lektorsky and

Fichtner in Engeström, Miettinen and Punamäki, 1999; Rubtsov, 1999; Daniels and Warmington, 2007; Cole and Hatano, 2007; Engeström, 2008 for example). The triadic model of Activity Theory put forward by Engeström, called an activity system, is a framework for viewing mediation, historical development and practical activity in terms of subject to object mediated goals within the context of the social environment. It is a way of *'examining the relationships that hold between the individual and her environment'* (Barrett, 2005; 264). Engeström (1993; 67) describes the activity system as incorporating

'both the object-orientated productive aspect and the person-oriented communicative aspect of the human conduct. Production and communication are inseparable.'

Therefore the functional aspects of activity can be viewed in relation to the social aspects of an activity. This enables analysis of how activity is taking place without separating individual cognitive processes from the socio-cultural context.

Within Activity Theory *'the unit of analysis is not the individual, not the environment, but a relation between the two.'* (Nardi, 1997; 71). Russell (2004; 312) elaborates on this by saying that the unit of analysis

'is not a collection of individuals and stimuli. Activity Theory suggests we focus on a group of people who share a common object and motive over time, and the wide range of tools they share to act on that object and realise that motive.'

In other words, the unit of analysis is the activity itself.

This then provides an excellent way of analysing how a person learns to play an instrument within a group. It means that the focus can be on the processes employed by the individual within their group in order to achieve personal understanding as well as contribute to group functioning. It means that we can treat physical and cognitive tools as well as individual usage and group usage of these tools on the same plane. It also allows us to view the context as integral to the activity so we need not be side tracked by attempting to separate out individual and group activity; the context is both the individual and the group. Through the activity system (presented in *IV.1 Chapter 1 – Introducing the Subject*, page 83), Activity Theory gives us a way of viewing the processes employed by the student as an individual and as a member of the group simultaneously. Russell describes context as a *'web or network of sociocultural interactions and meanings that are integral to the learning.'* Activity Theory enables us to look *'beyond the individual learner, the interface and the 'material' to understand the*

social and material relations that affect complex human learning' (Russell, 2004; 310).

He continues

'Activity Theory prompts us to ask how we can 're-mediate' our interactions by changing our tools or the ways we share them with others.'

(p.311)

Hutchins (1995; 292) says that *'learning must be a consequence of interaction with an environment through time.'* If the environment changes through time, a flexible way of looking at that changing environment is needed.

'Activity Theory holds that the constituents of activity are not fixed but can dynamically change as conditions change' and that 'changing conditions can realign the constituents of an activity'

(Nardi, 1997; 75).

Therefore Activity Theory also gives us a flexible framework for looking at the type of changing and developing activity involved in a culturally embedded historically created learning environment.

Daniels and Warmington (2007) proposed three issues that they feel are important to address in the development of Cultural-Historical Activity Theory: contradiction and labour-power, subject positioning and identity within activities and emotional experiencing in personal transformation. The introduction of the concept of 'labour-power' can *'enhance critical understanding of the pervasive presence of contradictions within activity systems'* (Daniels and Warmington, 2007; 380). Labour-power is the potential of the combination of the individuals within a situation. In other words, it is the potential of the group. By introducing a 'meta-object' to the activity system, an object that can be reached through labour-power, as well as the object reached by the individual, the contradiction of marginality and centrality can be more readily understood.

The second issue of Daniels and Warmington is concerned with subject position and identity in the activity system. They say that

'The way in which subjects are positioned with respect to one another within an activity carries with it implications for engagement with tools and objects. It may also carry implications for the ways in which rules, community and the division of labour regulate the actions of individuals and groups.'

(p. 382)

Within an activity system a person may interact with their tools and objects differently depending on the other people that they are carrying out their activity with. If this is the case, they also may interact with the other constituents of the activity system in a different way. This raises questions as to how stable the activity system is and what the implications of using an unstable system are, and these will be addressed in this thesis.

The final issue is concerned with the contradiction of the '*lived experience*' (p.288) between the people who are trying to implement change and the subject's control over the actual amount of effort that they are willing to put in. Therefore, the activity system may not represent the full capacity of a person to interact with its constituents and the potential for it to become volatile as a person actively resists change is highlighted.

Burnard and Younker (2008) give a succinct history of the application of this model in their paper on the investigation of children's musical interactions within composing and arranging. They say that '*in music education, however, Activity Theory research remains relatively under-represented*' (p.62) citing Welch's (2007) study of female choristers as one of the few examples. Another example can be found in Burrow's (2004) exploration of the interactions between musicians within an improvisation. Therefore, by using Activity Theory as my main analytical tool, this thesis presents a new approach to the in-depth analysis of musical learning processes.

II.3 Music Psychology

In 1985 Sloboda wrote his seminal book *The Musical Mind the cognitive psychology of music*. Stating that '*theoretical developments in the psychology of music have been slow*' (Sloboda, 1985; V), he wrote the book in order to fill a gap in the contemporary literature. The reasons for this slow development were put down to various reasons, including the fact that psychologists were either not extensively musically trained, or they divorced their musical knowledge from their scientific work. He also saw that previous psychological work in music had not been interdisciplinary in nature, it had either been aimed at psychologists or music educators, but never at both. Therefore, the literature did not cross the boundaries of psychology or music education and research. Covering topics concerning music, language and meaning, the performance of music, composition and improvisation, listening to music, musical learning and development and the cultural and biological context of the musical mind, the book was an attempt to provide a psychological insight into music, based on the experience and practices of the musician.

In 1986 Hargreaves attempted to bring together theoretical concerns of music education with pedagogical concerns in his book *The Developmental Psychology of Music*. He pointed out that unlike the fields of mathematics and science, music education seemed to be based purely on practice rather than being underpinned by any developmental theory. Therefore his aim was to '*define and describe a new and emerging field of study: the developmental psychology of music*' in order to pull together the different constituents of developmental psychology and music psychology through research carried out on children and adults alike (pp.1-2).

Since the 1980s the field of music psychology has grown extensively. In 1996 Hargreaves referred to the fact that there has been a rising interest in the psychology of music over recent years stating that '*we are now much more likely to refer specifically to the cognitive psychology of music, or to the social psychology of music*', and referring to Farnsworth's (1969) book *The Social Psychology of Music* for the latter discipline. He continues to suggest that there should be a third discipline added to this, the developmental psychology of music, and he provides a survey of the '*developmental foundations that can be identified for music education*' (p.49). In 2005 Sloboda also acknowledged this continued growth, commenting that his work '*has been hugely helped by the increasingly numerous and increasingly focussed outlets for music psychology*' (Sloboda, 2005; XX).

Hallam's *Music Psychology in Education* (2006) provides an overview of the many topics that have emerged within Music Psychology. She takes an holistic approach to the subject starting with a discussion of the relationship between music, the brain and learning, she moves on to issues surrounding what music ability is, the teaching of music in schools, both curriculum and through instrumental lessons, and she covers assessment of music as well as considering the impact of musical learning throughout the lifespan. She also presents a discussion on motivation and musical identity.

With such a large array of topics on offer, it is easy to see the extent of the field of Music Psychology. Therefore, in order to focus on the literature relevant to this study, I have considered the literature that takes a socio-cultural perspective and I have presented this in four areas: Musical knowledge and experience, the social context of music, formal and informal learning strategies and musical participation.

II.3.a Musical Knowledge and Experience

Throughout the late 1980s and the 1990s Keith Swanwick addressed questions relating to how a music curriculum could cope with such a broad range of musical styles and diversity in an educational environment that places value on '*respecting musical traditions, individual creativity and social relevance*' (Swanwick, 1988; 17). He placed music education within a psychological and sociological context, discussing concepts that related '*strongly to the nature of music itself, to human psychology and to social settings*' (Swanwick, 1988; 17). This enabled him to consider the value of arts education, what makes music musical, how musical skills are developed in childhood and issues surrounding cultural exclusiveness and music education within an inter-cultural society. Swanwick continued his research into musical learning by considering the multi-layered nature of music (Swanwick, 1994; 2). He brought together three strands of research concerning what musical knowledge is, what musical experience is and what musical learning and teaching is and considered the place of these within music education in Britain. Swanwick's emphasis on the psychological and social context of music throughout this research enabled him to develop an educational philosophy based on placing music at the heart of musical learning, presented in his 1999 work *Teaching Music Musically*.

Swanwick's emphasis on sound is echoed by Odam (1995). In *The Sounding Symbol: Music education in action* he considers the '*lack of emphasis on real musical experience in the practice of music education*' (p.1). By discussing issues surrounding musical language, meaning and how musical experience is embedded in both the brain and the body, he presents a case for teaching music, in particular through learning a musical instrument, in a way that allows students to develop an individual musical response. Odam also proposes that musical learning should help students to develop problem-solving skills through positive self-criticism that will enable them to continue in their musical development throughout their lives (p.103).

Small's concept of 'musicking' was developed through his work during the 1980s and 1990s. First published in 1977, *Music, Society and Education* considered music education both within and outside of Europe in order to present a model of music education that could impact on education as a whole. His philosophy that '*learning is not a preparation for life but a basic experience of life itself*' underpinned his belief that confidence can be gained by engaging in music and that music education should be concerned with each moment at a time rather than long-term aims, so that '*skills develop as they are needed*' (Small, 1996; 213). Musical engagement is paramount to 'musicking'. Small (1998; 2)

states that *'music is not a thing at all but an activity, something that people do'* and that through the activity of music, be it listening, performing, creating or re-creating music, we can view the fundamental aspects of the social world. In other words, musicking can show us the complex relationships that exist between humans and the world around us. The importance of this being that if we understand the relationships that occur within the world around us, our life experience is enhanced.

II.3.b The Social Context of Music

Miell, MacDonald and Hargreaves (2005) presented research from across the spectrum of music psychology in order to consider how and why people communicate through music. They look at how music is represented and communicated through discussions of issues surrounding notation and the constraints of communication, how communication is embodied and the physical nature of musical communication, how communication occurs in a learning environment and lastly, how communication differs in different cultural environments. The emphasis of the research presented in this book is that music exists in a social environment and through placing it within the social context, and considering the environmental factors that facilitate musical interactions between people, we can understand more fully how music is communicated and therefore how we can learn to communicate through music.

Nerland (2007) addressed the historical-social context of musical learning when looking at one-to-one teaching in a conservatoire as cultural practice. She compared two case studies in order to explore the cultural context of advanced music teaching of orchestral instruments and consider why lessons are *'an arena for the maintenance of particular cultural practices'* (p.399). Through an analysis of the two different sets of teaching strategies employed in the case studies, Nerland concludes that the teachers *'have gained their expertise by participating in certain social practices, and as musicians they are embedded in practices for which they as teachers operate as cultural agents'* (p.412). In other words, the practice that the students are working within requires highly advanced, individualised technical ability. The historical practices of music performance for which the students are being trained also require individuals to always strive to go beyond what they and others have reached. Therefore the individualistic orientation of conservatoire teaching requires students to interact with cultural agents, i.e. performers who have been successful in achieving a highly advanced state, and that those cultural agents form their teaching strategies to allow their students to go beyond their current advanced state. However, within this, Nerland did find that often teachers bring others into the lesson so as to *'work with the student's performance in its authentic musical*

context' (p.407). So, although the notion of one-to-one tuition is strongly upheld within conservatoires, it does not mean that students are isolated from the social and cultural environment of the practice of performance.

Gaunt (2008; 230) also found that although one-to-one relationship between teacher and students in a conservatoire *'was viewed universally as an indispensable, intense and intricate part of instrumental/vocal learning'*, group teaching was also valued. The opportunity to engage students in constructive critical evaluation as well as share interpretational ideas was considered to be beneficial to advanced students. However, unlike Nerland's study, Gaunt's study focused on the perceptions of conservatoire teachers rather than case studies of teaching strategies. She found that one-to-one teachers often had little knowledge of the wider context of their students' learning and that teachers had very different views of practice in terms of how students should use their practice time. Gaunt concluded that although the one-to-one lesson is a powerful tool for advanced music tuition, *'it may also inhibit the development of self-responsibility and an individual artistic voice'* (p.240).

Folkestaad (2006; 135) said that most research into formal and informal learning situations is based *'on the assumption that musical learning results from a sequenced, methodical exposure to music teaching within a formal setting.'* The problem with this is that it does not take into account the wider context. Studies such as Soderman and Folkestaad's (2004) work on how hip-hop musicians learn, Cope's (2002) research on the role of the session in learning folk music and Jaffurs' (2004) ethnographic study of the cultural context created by a garage rock band all place social context as vital to the learning process. Cope (2002; 102) says that *the social context is a critical feature of the musical meanings which emerge and of the learning which is taking place.'* In other words, the social context is not only fundamental in the learning process, but also paramount to the style of music being made. Hip-hop, folk and garage rock may be recreated in the classroom, but without its social context the music loses its meaning. Westerlund's (2006) research into garage rock bands examines the apprenticeship model and she concludes that

'there seem to be sound reasons to think that garage rock bands – and popular music practices in general – can show music educators how to create knowledge-building communities and expert culture'

(p.123).

One of the main components of the learning process in Westerlund's study is teamwork (p.122), teamwork that is a natural part of the functioning of the social community.

What seems to be important in all of these studies is the community that is generated as a result of the musicians making music with each other. Community musical learning has been highlighted in studies of the Tower Hamlets Project, where large groups of children learnt string instruments together at a music centre (Nelson, 1985). This project also saw how adults could be involved in community music making as parents were invited to learn a musical instrument too whilst their children attended their lessons. The role that the community plays in brass bands has been discussed in terms of historical and social context (Herbert, 2000) and also the music making that occurs in brass bands that is relatively hidden amongst the traditions of Western Classical music (Finnegan, 2007). Dally (2006) outlines the importance of community in Javanese musical learning. He gives an insight to the learning processes employed in Java and discusses how gamelan is learned through a process of musical exploration in a communal environment. The *'music becomes communal property'* (p.15). He too believes that formal music education can learn from more informal learning processes, stating that *'we need to forge a pedagogy which combines the best of, but also goes beyond, both Javanese and Western ways of teaching'* (p.6). To Dally, the best of the Javanese way of teaching is the essence of gamelan, participating in meaningful music making.

The role of the social context of music and issues surrounding cultural context and social environment is prevalent in the work of Green. In 1987 Green published her work *Music, Gender and Education* where she presented her research on musical meaning and women's music making and how gender issues can be addressed in music education. Within this, Green (1987; 33) considers the role of style in music stating that *'style is the medium by virtue of which we experience music'* and by unpicking the ideology surrounding musical style, she is able to discuss issues related to school musical experience, meaning and learning. This led on to further research into musical meaning and education with a focus on musical ideology (Green, 1988). The emphasis on style in Green's work also led to research into musical learning outside of formal education. *How Popular Musicians Learn* (2002) presents research based on the learning practices of popular musicians. Green explores the learning processes involved in band rehearsals, learning from listening to CDs, learning from instruction books and how musicians develop technique without a perceived formal musical training. She considers why popular musicians who also teach, teach differently to the way that they themselves learnt (p.178), paving the way for developing a pedagogy based on the learning processes employed in these more informal ways. Her 2008 book *Music, Informal Learning and the School: A new classroom pedagogy* presented this and became the

core of the *Musical Futures* initiative bringing informal learning methods into the classroom.

II.3.c Formal and Informal learning strategies

The inclusion of informal learning strategies in formal music education was purposely done as part of a popular music course in an Australian conservatoire. Lebler (2008) says that this was done as

'simply to incorporate popular music as content and deal with it in the same largely transmissive and hierarchical way as other musics in conservatoires would have failed to acknowledge the active role learners usually play when developing ability in popular music'

(pp.195-6).

Lebler recognises that developing the musicianship required to become a popular musician must be done within that specific context. Gullberg and Brändström (2004) studied the informal learning of rock musicians in order to investigate if there is a difference between non-formally trained rock musicians and rock music students in their approach to creating a song from a given text. They observed that *'rock music lives its own life, apparently unaffected by what happens in music lessons at school'* (p.163). In other words, as with Lebler's recognition of the learning context being vital to the genre being studied, without the specific context, something of the musical learning is deemed to be lost. Therefore, whatever the purpose of learning, learning is maximised when that purpose is reflected in the context.

Other studies have shown how informal learning strategies are being used in higher education. Young, Burwell and Pickup (2003) studied teaching strategies employed in instrumental teaching, highlighting a move away from the traditional conservatoire model of learning that coincided with widening participation in higher education in England (p.140). Reid's (2001) study of the experience of musical learning of students in higher education explores the different learning environments that the students are part of and how they develop their own meanings within those environments. She urges higher education providers to develop learning environments that suit the particular meaning and understanding that the students are trying to develop. So, students who are embedded in technical practice are offered a learning environment that allow this to flourish and students who are looking for political and social meanings in music are offered a learning environment where this can flourish (p.40). Kai Wen Cheng and Durrant (2007) presented a case study of an instrumental teacher working in a number

of different contexts. They found that the teacher adopted different strategies depending on the context of the learning and that there are intricate networks of factors, ranging from strategies that are considered to be formal to strategies that are considered to be more informal, that make learning successful. These studies all show that what has been described as formal and informal learning strategies can be viewed as part of the same spectrum and often they can be employed simultaneously so as to facilitate successful learning.

Pitts' (2003) work has also found that formal and informal learning coexist in a number of different musical learning contexts. In her study of the hidden curriculum in a higher education music department she explored the '*social and personal aspects of the curriculum*' (p.283) so as to ascertain the true experience of higher education and the role that the formal elements and informal elements play in musical learning. In 2004 Pitts studied the learning environment of a music summer school in order to view musical learning outside of the institutional setting (2004a) and also the social context of a musical theatre festival so as to explore the experience of performers as well as the role and experience of the festival audiences (2004b). These two research projects were brought together with two more projects, a study of musicians and audiences at a chamber music festival and a study of first year undergraduate music students' transition into higher education, in her book *Valuing Musical Participation* (Pitts, 2005a). Using these four case studies, Pitts draws out what participants in musical activities value, the role that individual experience and group experience play in musical participation and issues surrounding becoming a musician. She found that in the non-institutional settings, although students did reveal doubt in their abilities, those that were participating in music for pleasure showed a greater confidence in their musical expertise and self-concept than the students in a formal educational setting (p.119). Pitts discusses the role of independent learning in non-institutional settings and suggests that *the challenges of connecting that independent learning with the aims and constraints of formal education have proved difficult to resolve*' (p.127), and she speculates on the role that outreach programmes offered by orchestras can play in finding the middle ground between formal and informal learning environments. Following on from this, Pitts (2007) conducted a study of extra-curricular musical participation in a secondary school. Through this she discovered that although the forum of a school musical production occupies '*an increasingly contested middle ground between classroom teaching and the informal or self-directed learning*', there was evidence that the sharing of responsibility for the production between teacher and sixth form students has '*potentially long-term benefits as well as offering valuable peer role models for other*

pupils, and is a strategy that could be further developed in activities of this kind'
(p.163).

11.3.d Musical participation

Learning through participation in a specific community has been discussed in relation to a number of social contexts. For example, Lee (2007) gives an overview of the American system of music education and how learning through the 'band method' brought about social cohesion. Taylor (2008) provides an insight into the role of the masterclass in the musical learning of older students and how they used the community as support for their learning and their personal growth. Silber's (2005) research shows how a choir in a women's prison enabled the prisoners to engage in music and the therapeutic impact this had on them. Kokostaki and Hallam (2007) documented how higher education music students viewed participating in active music making in terms of musical meaning, social participation and skills development.

The Music Practitioner: Research for the music performer, teacher and listener aimed to 'engage music practitioners and demonstrate the many potential links between research and practice' (Davidson, 2004; 1). It draws on a wide range of research topics across the spectrum of music psychology in order to demonstrate and encourage the application of emerging theories to practical music making. The book is divided into five sections covering the different ways in which practitioners can use research, different research approaches centred on perception and cognition, how practitioners have explored their everyday work, musical identity and innovative research approaches. Within this, different perspectives are given from researchers, academics, performers and musicologists, many of whom work within musical performance but others who work as physicists and software engineers. Therefore a complete range of viewpoints on the application of theories of music psychology is presented. In 2007 Lehmann, Sloboda and Woody (2007) also sought to bring the academic field of music psychology to practising musicians. Their book *Psychology for Musicians: Understanding and acquiring the skills* focuses on aspects of music psychology that

'should offer some points of reference for musicians in their activities as teachers or performers, or in their everyday lives at home where they practise, rehearse or play for their own entertainment.'

(p.5)

The book is presented in three sections covering musical learning, musical skills and musical roles, allowing the music practitioner easy access to a psychological perspective

on the area of music making of most interest to them. Interestingly, in their introduction they state that '*musical skills are highly culture-specific*' (p.6), acknowledging the importance of the social context of music from the outset.

In discussing musical performance, Davidson (1997; 211) states that '*sociocultural circumstances which have produced musical forms and styles have equally contributed to musical performance behaviours.*' She goes on to discuss the role of others in performance behaviour, suggesting that other people, whether in the form of an audience or a teacher, are vital to facilitating a good performance. Davidson, Hare and Sloboda (1997) also discuss the role of other people in the learning of musical performance, stating that '*the role of other people is vital in the music learning process*' (p.197). Their findings suggest that in order to develop musical performance skills, specific environmental factors are needed, including the opportunity to access a conducive practice environment. This is echoed by Hallam (1998) and she goes on to suggest that the purpose of practice is vital to the way the practice session should proceed (p.136). Pitts, Davidson and McPherson (2000) presented three case studies of young musicians in order to ascertain what practice strategies are used in the first year of learning. They found three very different approaches to practice. One case study showed a conscientious student who maintained enthusiasm throughout the practice sessions, one time-wasting student who filled the practice session up with activities such as changing reeds rather than making music and one uninterested student who appeared to be unenthused and unmotivated during her practice. They concluded that parents were vital in supporting children in practice and that teachers should give careful consideration as to what practice is. Whilst research continues to show that parents do play a vital role in the musical development of children (McPherson, 2009), Mills (2007; 174) also warns of the implications of misguided practice. She states that '*one thousand hours of the wrong sort of practice is (at least) one thousand hours of wasted time.*'

Therefore, through considering musical participation, we are reminded of the importance of the social context to music making. Within an informal learning environment, practice is *practise*. Within a formal conservatoire learning environment, practice is rooted in the historical and cultural practices of the genre being studied. Within a non-Western tradition, the activity of practise is synonymous with learning. Reviewing the literature within the field of music psychology shows the complexities of applying theory to practice. Although many different perspectives have been discussed, the overlap in terms of socio-cultural influences on musical understanding is paramount. In Hargreaves' definition of the developmental psychology of music in 1996 he gives a useful explanation of the areas of cognitive psychology, cognitive-developmental psychology

and behavioural psychology but he maintains that there are two main guiding principles to the application of these - that research should be theory-driven and that '*cognitive, social and affective aspects of development cannot be considered in isolation from one another*' (Hargreaves, 1996; 50).

II.4 Adult Learning

Hargreaves used research based on both school-aged children and adults to form his concept of the developmental psychology of music. The literature discussed above provides examples of research carried out on adult learners as well as school-aged and higher education music students. These studies have been taken from a music psychology perspective, showing how the learning process allows learners to engage with music. However, literature from an adult education perspective presents research on how music can be used by adult learners to engage with the learning process, therefore the adult musical learner is presented with an emphasis on being a learner rather than on the music. Two such studies are Kaltoft (1997) and Aspin (2000). Kaltoft's research, first presented in 1988, focused on how music facilitates adult learning. The aim of the study was to conduct preliminary research to discover '*how music can be used to foster the learning process and how music serves as a catalyst for social action*' (Kaltoft, 1997; 212). Three community education programmes were selected for the study which demonstrated '*how music can be used as a catalyst for change, as a facilitator of personal empowerment, and as a medium for fostering the appreciation of cultural heritage*' (p.212). A strong theme throughout the research was the participants' feelings of social connection through the programme of study, and the project highlighted a number of research questions surrounding whether this would occur in other community education programmes or whether it was unique to music. Kaltoft continued her research and presented the findings in her dissertation *Music and Emancipatory Learning in three Community Education Programmes* (Kaltoft, 1990).

Aspin (2000) presented a discussion of the role of arts education in the changing learning environment of the 21st Century. He argues that as employment trends are changing and more people are finding themselves in part-time, short-term or contract work, '*our society is going to need to find ways other than full-time paid employment to occupy the time, energy and aspirations of significant numbers of its population*' (p.76). Not only this, but communication and information technology have significantly changed the way in which people engage in learning. Learners have access to information day and night and can retrieve and collate information far more quickly and easily than ever before. This being the case learners now have more time to '*construct new thought*

worlds for themselves: innovative, imaginative and creative' (p.77), which has implications for the arts. He puts forward the case that arts programmes allow people to become involved in their community and engage in lifelong learning because of their opportunities for *'social interaction and the practical enjoyment of creative activity that they offer'* (p.79).

Both of these studies demonstrate the use of music within adult education and they both argue a case for engagement in adult learning programmes in order to engage with the socio-cultural environment. However, adult learning theories do not always come from a social perspective. Jarvis (1995) provides an overview of theoretical perspectives on adult learning, discussing andragogy as a popular concept in adult education as developed by Knowles (Knowles, 1973, 1978, 1984, 1990; Knowles, Holton and Swanson, 1998). Andragogy was an attempt to provide a *'unifying theory'* of adult learning (Cross, 1981; 220) and is based on five key assumptions centred on the suggestion that adults learn differently to children (Knowles, 1990). These key assumptions highlight the individualistic tendencies of adults; children *'expect the teacher to firmly direct their learning, motivate them, and be responsible for assessing all the learning'*, andragogy is *'more learner centred'* and the adult learner possesses *'self-direction, autonomy, responsibility for decisions, resources of experience, performance of social roles and immediacy of application of action'* (Deveci, 2007; 17-18).

However, these definitions of how children and adults learn do not seem to allow for any cross-over: can an adult learn through pedagogy and can a child learn through andragogy? There is no discussion as to why a child cannot be self-directed and why an adult cannot be teacher-directed. Neither is there an allowance for adults who do not fit the assumptions.

Knowles, Holton and Swanson (1998; 153) responded to these criticisms by stating that *'the andragogical principles are powerful but incomplete descriptions of adults' learning behaviour'* and that in practice the principles are flexible, outlining three new perspectives on adult learning that help to explain andragogy. These are

- Taking into account individual differences, such as cognitive controls, dependence, interdependence and personality.
- Consideration of learning how to learn through three dimensions: different kinds of learning such as personal learning and natural learning; aspects of learning defined as emotion, reason and action; and domains of learning given as technical, social and developmental.
- The application of life-span development perspectives that outline the different approaches and attitudes to learning at different stages in life.

(from Knowles, Holton and Swanson, 1998)

Although a reference to the social dimension is made, within andragogy *'the focus... is the adult learner's experience, considered to be the foundation and most important resource for learning'* but

'There is no recognition that selves might be socially located and no recognition that self and others are mutually constitutive within relations. All social relationships are seen as inherently manipulative functioning to distort the autonomy and agency of persons.'

(Usher, Bryant and Johnston, 1997; 95)

Rodgers (1986; 99) states that *'learning is individual'* yet continues to talk about how most of us learn in groups. However, andragogy rejects the role that others play in learning.

'The rejection of otherness means that andragogy cannot have a conception of experience as culturally constructed, pre-interpreted, complex and multi-stranded.'

(Usher, Bryant and Johnston, 1997; 96)

The above discussion of musical learning has shown that the socio-cultural environment is paramount to learning. Therefore, a theory that does not take into account the complex, cultural construction of experience also does not consider the importance of the social self and how learning occurs in the social plane. Moreover, if we are analysing learning using activity theory, where the unit of analysis is the relationship between the individual and the socio-cultural environment, a theory that places the individual at the centre cannot be used.

Other theories of adult learning do take into consideration the socio-cultural environment. Like andragogy, Mezirow's (1991) theoretical perspective places

experience at the centre of learning, although it is the ability of an adult to reflect upon their experiences, taking into account the social environment, that enables learning to take place. Freire (2000) also takes experience of the socio-cultural environment into account in his theory of pedagogy, however his viewpoint is that the socio-cultural environment is oppressive and individuals transform through oppression created by the environment. White (2005) discusses experiential learning in relation to adults, highlighting the link between the individual and their society. He says that social change can occur as a result of the learning experience as *'individuals and society become empowered through the relationship between personal learning and public participation,'* also that personal development stems from interpersonal experiences (p.34).

Fenwick and Tennant (2004; 55-6) present three assumptions about adult learning.

1. *No one theory is better than another as there is no generic adult learner.*
2. *Learning does not occur in a vacuum.*
3. *The learner is not separable from the educator.*

With these three assumptions in mind, they present four processes of learning.

- *Learning as acquisition.*
- *Learning as reflection.*
- *Practice-based community learning.*
- *Learning as an embodied co-emergent process.*

These learning processes place learning firmly within the socio-cultural context. Learning as acquisition focuses on knowledge and strategies and how these strategies are formed through interaction between the individual and the environment, raising questions of how knowledge is transferred amongst groups and then reconstructed. Learning as reflection places the interpretation of lived experience at the forefront of learning, considering how people construct their own unique knowledge. Practice-based community learning is centred on communities of practice and legitimate peripheral participation (see *II.2.b Communities of Practice*, page 8). Learning as an embodied co-emergent process focuses on the connection between individuals in the social environment and that learning emerges as a result of this (Fenwick and Tennant, 2004).

II.5 Motivation

'The most frequently asked question a motivational psychologist hears in the school is 'how can I motivate my students?' The same question, however, can be asked in a different way, namely; 'How can I create the conditions under which students can motivate themselves?'

(Reeve, Deci and Ryan, 2004; 53)

In Wristen's (2006) study of what motivates adult piano students, she considers whether a community piano programme can provide the same motivational stimulus as a choir or a band programme by studying the goals, attitudes and motivations of the students in the programme. Her findings suggest that there is a strong link between the behaviours of the instructor and student motivation and also that the group environment was *'overwhelmingly deemed to be a positive experience'* (p.402). She concludes that *'more research concerning the social motivation of group music participation is warranted'* (p.403).

As discussed above (*II.2.c Activity Theory*, page 9), Activity Theory provides a lens through which to view activity in terms of the interactions between an individual and their object through mediation using tools. The activity system as presented by Engeström (Engeström, 1999; 31) allows us to view these individual interactions alongside the interactions that occur between the individual and the social context. Within the activity system, a person may interact with different aspects of the socio-cultural environment whilst attempting to fulfil a personal object. The socio-cultural environment is as important as the individual. Nardi (1997; 73) says that *'actions are goal-directed processes that must be undertaken to fulfil the object.'* So, if this is the case, activity theory must accept that in undertaking actions to reach an object, a person is setting themselves goals. The outcome of this is the achievement of these goals. The discussion of the motivational theories used to underpin my research presented below firstly looks at personal motivation. Personal motivation needs to be understood in order to understand the basic level of the activity system, the interactions between the subject, object and tools. Secondly, a discussion of motivation theories that are concerned with achievement and goals is presented, drawing out the elements of these theories that relate to the socio-cultural perspective of achievement. Finally, a discussion of motivational theories that are concerned with aspects of the concept of 'self' is presented. In terms of this study, the 'self' is interpreted as the 'social self' and I shall demonstrate the aspects of these theories that place the 'self' firmly within the socio-cultural environment.

II.5.a Personal motivation

Personal motivation has many factors ranging from individual thoughts and beliefs to experience within the socio-cultural environment and many theorists have presented frameworks within which to view these. Early theories of motivation were concerned with initial ideas of hedonistic motivation, motivation through pleasure and pain, and drive motivation based on basic needs such as hunger (Latham, 2007). In the early part of the century, drive motivation theories were based on experiments with rats (such as Simmons, 1924). These experiments showed that when rats were starved, they were able to solve a maze to reach food quicker than when they were not starved. Tolman (1925, 1932) suggested that as the rats behaved differently depending on the type of food and whether or not the food completely satisfied their hunger, there must be different motivational factors based on the value the rats placed on the end result. These initial theories of Tolman influenced drive and expectancy/value theories. Hull (1943) and Spence (1956) developed the theory that need deprivation was a driving force and motivated behaviour according to the specific need. For example, when someone is hungry, they need food. They will then eat food in order to satisfy their hunger. The more their hunger is satisfied, the weaker the drive is; so as the need deprivation decreases, so does the motivation. Lewin (1938), on the other hand, developed Tolman's ideas by suggesting a motivational sequence of need, incentive and behaviour. He introduced the concept of incentive in terms of expectancy and value. Skinner (1953) developed a motivational theory again based on the initial experiments of Simmons but coming from the perspective that you cannot know how someone will react to satisfying a need, or achieving a goal, if they have not reached that goal yet. Therefore his reinforcement theory is based on drive theory but introduces reinforcers - consequences that follow an action or behaviour.

These theories however are centred on individual drive and needs and do not take into account the socio-cultural environment. For example, if a person is hungry, they are motivated to eat, but what if the person is not hungry but is within a social environment where the cultural-historical practices of that society deem that they eat as part of a social act? The motivation to eat moves from being for personal need to being for social need.

Maslow (1954) developed a hierarchical needs theory of motivation based on 17 propositions. These include unconscious motivation, means to end motivation, multiple motivations, the impossibility of listing drives, satisfactions generating new motivation, environment and integrated action (pp.3-30). Maslow's theory is that there are five

different types of need that motivate human behaviour, arranged from lowest to highest (figure 2). The lowest needs must be fulfilled before the higher needs can be. The highest need, self-actualization, is the recognition that *'a musician must make music, an artist must paint, a poet must write, if he is to be ultimately happy. What a man can be, he must be'* (Maslow, 1943; 382). This can only be satisfied when the other needs have been satisfied. In other words, a person will be what she must be when she is fed, watered, in good health, safe and secure, loved, belongs and has self-respect and respect for others. Therefore, these needs are motivators for behaviour.

Figure 2 – Maslow’s hierarchy of needs

Highest	Self-actualization	Acceptance of facts, morality, spontaneity etc.
	Esteem	Confidence, achievement, respect etc.
	Belonging and love	Friendship, family, sexual relations etc.
	Safety	Security in family, health, employment etc.
Lowest	Physiological	Food, sleep, to breathe etc.

Whilst the two poles of this hierarchy of needs are concerned with individual need, moving from dependence on physiological needs to independence in becoming what one must be, safety, belonging and love and esteem are all based on needs that can only be gained by interaction with the socio-cultural environment. Safety and belonging place the individual within a social unit such as a family or a workplace and esteem is gained by positive interaction with this social unit. Vernon (1969; 95) says that

'the tendency of human beings to form and belong to social groups is aimed fundamentally at the attainment of security [but] group membership undoubtedly affords much more than protection against insecurity; it gives positive satisfaction and pleasure.'

Once a person is secure and satisfied within the social unit, they can pursue self-esteem by utilising the environment around them. Malsow (1997; 22) says that *'self-esteem is based on deserved respect from others.'* Interaction with socio-cultural practices in a way that is deemed as positive by others is vital in creating this respect.

Therefore, Maslow's hierarchy of needs can be viewed as pursuit of independence through self-actualization by embedding oneself in the socio-cultural environment. In striving for personal independence, a person is also striving to achieve ultimate happiness. Therefore, as Vernon (1969; 121) says, *'independence and achievement are closely related together.'*

II.5.b Achievement and goals

McClelland (1961) outlined three different types of motivational need: Achievement Motivation, Authority/Power Motivation and Affiliation Motivation. Within this, he acknowledged subconscious motives as important factors in Achievement Motivation. His main work centred on Achievement Motivation, the key being the selection of realistic goals. Four motivational factors influence the attainment of these goals: competition, reaching the goal, evaluation of performance and working towards long-term goals. When a person sets themselves a goal, firstly it needs to be realistic in order for the motivation to be strongest. Then, through interaction with competition, the ability to evaluate progression towards the goal, actually reaching the goal and then being able to use this to set a sustainable, long-term goal, a person will be motivated to continue with the pursuit of the goal. Fundamental to Achievement Motivation is the premise that achievement is an incentive. People take pride in their achievements and that then motivates them to achieve. How the person expects to achieve, and what value they place on their achievements will affect the outcome. If a person has a low expectation of success, and they succeed, the outcome will be enhanced pride, and therefore motivation will be higher. Individual motives also have an impact on the amount of motivation that is gained from achieving a task. The other side to this is avoidance where a person will actively avoid a situation for fear of failure.

Vernon (1969) built on these ideas in relation to social groups. He says that *'children and adults are motivated to behave in such a way as to seek the society of others and to attain social approval and acceptance'* (p.94). He put achievement motivational factors into the context of membership of groups, discussing:

- Competition between group members as well as with oneself.
- How performance can be evaluated in the group situation and the effect this has on self-esteem.
- How aspiration motivates people to achieve their goals.
- How sentiment for a group helps to maintain pride and protects people from contempt, disapproval and frustration thus helping them to achieve their goals.

This provides a framework within which to view the motivational factors related to achievement within the group context.

A more recent model of achievement motivation has been developed by Dweck and Leggett (1988) in terms of a social cognitive approach to motivation. They say that *'the goals individuals are pursuing create the framework within which they interpret and react to events'* (p.395). These goals are divided into two categories, performance goals and learning goals. *Performance* goals are the result of people wanting to gain favourable judgements of their competence and *learning* goals are where people want to improve their competence. Their investigations centred on why people in the same situation embarked on different types of goals so as to present a model of motivation based on an individual's pattern of response to goals and the set-up of goals based on individual self-concept. They then applied this model to the social domain investigating the types of goals in terms of whether social competence is fixed or malleable. A key concept in their social cognitive model is the interpretation of the social world by the individual. They say that *'individuals hold implicit theories about the characteristics of other people, places and things, and that these theories will predict the goals that they adopt vis-à-vis these external variables'* (p.271) and therefore the social environment is a key factor in the pursuit of different types of goals.

These two strands of achievement motivation, McClelland's approach/avoidance perspective and the more recent social cognitive perspective of performance/learning (or mastery), were brought together by Elliot and Church (1997). They conducted two experiments to test a framework of mastery, performance-approach and performance avoidance motivation that was a combination of the two strands. Their findings demonstrated a hierarchical model based on the two fundamental motives of achievement motivation and fear of failure. This model was further tested and developed by Elliot and McGregor (1999, 2001). The 1999 study applied the model to students undertaking examinations and in 2001 a 2x2 achievement goal framework was presented, placing competence at the heart of achievement motivation and taking into account a fourth element of mastery-avoidance goals. The resulting framework of mastery-approach, mastery-avoidance, performance-approach, performance-avoidance goals was tested in three studies and was found to be supported in each test (Elliot and McGregor, 2001)

Dweck and Elliot (2005) drew together recent research on achievement motivation, placing competence as its core concept. They presented the research in five areas, the

centrality of competence, developmental issues, contextual influences, demographics and culture, and self-regulatory processes. Within self-regulatory processes, Wheeler and Suls (2005) discussed social comparison and how this affected self-evaluation of competence. They consider the role of 'superstars' and 'superflops' and the assimilative or contrastive effects that they produce and conclude that *'perceptions of competence and motivation are strongly influenced by social comparisons'*, however

'every social comparison presents both the pull of assimilation and the push of contrast. Which process predominates depends upon the person's degree of freedom and flexibility to make strategic comparisons.'

(p.576)

In other words, a person will build their perception of whether they will succeed or fail at a task, and therefore determine which type of goal they will set themselves, based on comparison with others in the social environment.

Other theories also take into account the role of other people and the social environment in achievement motivation. Attribution Theory is based on the perceived attributes of the success or failure of a task. There are two strands; intrapersonal motivation and interpersonal motivation. Intrapersonal motivation relates to how a person expects to succeed or fail and encompasses emotions concerned with self-esteem, shame and guilt. Intrapersonal motivation relates to other people's perceptions of how a person will succeed or fail and is concerned with emotions such as anger and guilt. The *'two motivational systems are closely intertwined and interactive'* (Weiner, 2004; 21) and a person will judge success or failure based on whether they were in control (I should have passed the exam, but did not), which may generate guilt or shame, or whether the failure was uncontrollable (I was not prepared enough by my teacher for the exam, so I failed), which may generate anger. These attributions then generate motivation according to the perceptions of the individual and other members of their socio-cultural environment:

'Culture, demographics, personal history and the like determine for example, the goals for which one is striving; the definition of a success and failure; what is expected and important; what information is used to determine causality; the causes salient to the person; where a cause is placed in dimensional space; and so on.'

(Weiner, 1994; 23)

Linked to this is goal setting theory. Goal Setting Theory is *'based on the premise that much human action is purposeful, in that it is directed by conscious goals'* (Locke and Latham; 1994; 14), and explains motivation through the ability of a person to set an

attainable goal. As with Dweck and Leggett's (2005) study above, goals are categorised as either *performance* goals that show competence, or *mastery* goals (called *learning* goals by Dweck and Leggett) that develop competence. Through the mediation of goal effects on intrinsic motivation, it has been demonstrated that different people react differently to each type of goal and that goal setting can enhance interest in enjoyable activities (Elliot and Harackiewicz, 1994). However, unlike Achievement Motivation, it is based on *'the relationship to aspiration rather than the relation of outcome to expectation that determines affect'* (Locke, 1967; 125). The content and the intensity of the goal are important factors in the achievement of the goal. *'People with very specific goals show less variation in performance than people with vague goals'* (Lock and Latham, 1994; 16) and when people believe that they can achieve the goal, and they feel that the goal is important, commitment is enhanced. Within this, feedback from others within the social environment is a vital part of the goal setting process as a person will use the feedback to ascertain whether they have met the standard that they set themselves (Lock and Latham, 1994).

II.5.c The 'self' and the 'social self'

'A person is intrinsically motivated if he performs an activity for no apparent reward other than the activity itself. Extrinsic motivation, on the other hand, refers to the performance of an activity because it leads to external rewards'
(Deci, 1972; 113).

Deci (1971, 1972) found that intrinsic motivation changed when *external reinforcements* were introduced. When a reward such as money was introduced to an activity that had been instigated through intrinsic motivation, then intrinsic motivation reduced. However, rewards such as love and social approval did not have the same effect. This began the development of Cognitive Evaluation Theory, explaining how external reinforcements, or events, affect intrinsic motivation. Alongside this is Basic Needs Theory, based on a person's psychological need for:

- *Autonomy*: the need for experiencing behaviour as coming from the self.
- *Competence*: the need to be effective in interactions with the environment
- *Relatedness*: the need to establish close bonds and secure attachments with others.

These two theories have been used to form a continuum of motivation known as Self-Determination Theory. The continuum moves from amotivation (not self-determined), through extrinsic motivation to intrinsic motivation (fully self-determined) and a dialectic framework is presented showing individual and socio-cultural factors that determine

where a person lies in the continuum (Reeve *et al.*, 2004). This theory also shows the integration of the socio-cultural context into self-determination theories.

Bandura (1997; 160) argues that *'people's level of motivation, affective states, and actions are based more on what they believe than on what is objectively the case.'* Self-efficacy is concerned with people's beliefs of how well they can perform. Successes raise self-efficacy whereas failure can lower it. Self-efficacy comes from four areas:

- ***Mastery experiences:*** if someone masters something, they will believe that they can continue to master it - failure can undermine this.
- ***Vicarious experiences:*** when someone sees their peers succeeding at something, they will believe that they also can succeed.
- ***Social persuasion:*** when someone is told that they can do something, they are more likely to believe that they can succeed.
- ***Physiological and emotional states:*** emotional states such as stress and tension will affect a person's belief in what they can do.

Self-efficacy has been linked with personal goal setting in that if a person perceives that they can succeed in something, they will set higher goals for themselves (Locke and Latham, 1994). Self-efficacy is also fundamental to Social Cognitive Theory in that through self-efficacy, people can control events and behaviours (Schunk and Pajares, 2004). It is important to note the difference between self-efficacy and self-esteem. *'Perceived efficacy is a judgement of capability; self-esteem is a judgement of self-worth. They are entirely different phenomenon'* (Bandura, 2006; 309). Self-efficacy has also been linked with Goal Setting Theory. As Bandura shows that self efficacy has a direct effect on performance, Locke and Latham (1994) also report the same direct effect on goals:

Self-schemata and possible self theories deal with how judgements about the self guide behaviour and motivation. *'Self-schemata are cognitive generalizations about the self derived from past experience, that organize and guide the processing of the self-related information contained in an individual's social experience'* (Markus, 1977; 63). People will develop self-schemata based on their own opinions of themselves. These opinions will then guide the behaviour of the person in future events. For example, if in the past a person has not been frightened when faced with a spider, others may have told that person that they are brave and so the person will look at their past behaviour and will consider themselves as brave. Therefore, if a similar situation arises, that person is more

likely to act bravely, and remove a spider from someone who is frightened by the spider. The information that the person has of their previous behaviour in this situation acts as a basis for future judgements on how to act in the same situation. It is organised and categorised so that the person does not have to process complex information before acting. Self-schemata has also been linked with Attribution Theory in that a person will be able to make a judgement on the attributes of reaching a goal based on self-schemata (Markus, 1977). The concept of possible selves is based on self-schemata. A possible self is a mental image that a person will form of who they could be in the future; I am *now* a doctoral student, I *could be* a professor. These images will be based on self-schemata developed through socio-cultural experiences and will influence future behaviour providing '*the essential link between the self-concept and motivation*' (Markus and Nurius, 1986; 954).

Recent criticism of motivation theories have been aimed at their individualistic nature. McInerney and Van Etten (2004; 1) claim that '*many theories of motivation and learning appear to be written in a sociocultural vacuum.*' However, '*motivation is not independent of context*' (Galloway *et al.*, 2004; 89) and although on the surface these theories are based around the self, they are fundamentally rooted in the socio-cultural environment and looking closely at the theories as outlined above, they cannot exist without the socio-cultural environment. Weiner's Attribution Theory is based upon intrapersonal theory and interpersonal theory; if interpersonal theory is based on how others think, feel and behave then surely this is embedded in the socio-cultural environment. Self-Determination Theory has socio-cultural factors built into its framework, enabling a person to move from amotivation to intrinsic motivation and back again. Self-efficacy takes into account social persuasion and schemata are built from experiences within the social world. In the same way that activity can be viewed from an individual and socio-cultural perspective in activity theory, individual and socio-cultural factors are not divorced when considering motivation in this thesis.

II.6 Identity

Taylor and Hallam (2008) discuss motivation and identity in relation to research on mature adult piano students. They present a case for linking together musical learning, motivation and adult musical identity through a discussion of the value that adults place on their own musical skill (self-efficacy) and how they construct their own musical identity, stating that '*during their learning they can shift themselves from music-listener to music-practitioner, a huge shift in identity*' (p.287). They conclude that

'adult musical identity can be expressed, constructed and sustained when lifelong musical experience, expectations and understanding actively feed into musical participation and learning and are enhanced by it.'

(p.301)

If this is the case, identity must be taken into account when discussing the learning processes involved in musical participation.

With the rise of research into the psychology of music (see *II.3 Music Psychology*, page 13), research on identity within music and music education has also increased. MacDonald, Hargreaves and Miell (2002) bring together previous research and present a collection of articles covering issues concerning the importance of developing musical identities so as to show the role that music plays in self-identity. These cover issues of musical identity related to the performer, asking the question 'What makes a performer?' (Davidson, 2002) and the impact that performing in the school environment through extracurricular activities has on perceptions of identity (Lamont, 2002). Also, issues of how identities are developed through music are covered, such as the challenges that national identity defined through music pose for music education (Folkestaad, 2002) as well as youth culture and how research on individual identity status contrasts with that concerning social identities (Tarrant, North and Hargreaves, 2002).

The relationship between musical identity and different social and cultural groups has been explored widely in recent years. Sutton (1991) explored regional identity through an analysis of the different traditions of Javanese gamelan music. He found that although there is a strong sense of regional identity shown through the different traditions of Javanese music, when a musician from one region plays music from another they are not attempting to reconstruct their identity, but merely engaging with the music purely for its musical qualities. Therefore, although different traditions are linked to different areas, they are not the sole defining feature of the identity of a musician from that area. Musical meanings can span geographical boundaries and be recontextualised by musicians with different regional identities (pp.239-240).

Recent interest in musical identity has surrounded music and the creation of national identities. Knapp (2005) looked at the American Musical and considered the roots of the genre and how it has developed, the role of the musical in defining America and how the Musical has dealt with social issues such as race and ethnicity and war. Similarly, Applegate and Potter (2002) consider the role of music in the creation of the German national identity. They present a collection of studies looking at a wide range of issues from the intimations of utopia in Schumann's late choral work, American Jazz and the

Cold War, Postwar German popular music and the role of opera in constructing a Germanic musical tradition so as to ascertain how music came *to be so closely associated with Germany or 'Germanness'* (p.2). Taking a different angle, Biddle and Knights (2007) drew together research on world popular musics and the effect of globalisation on identities so as to examine the role of the nation in the musical identities created by the music. They say that within an environment where globalisation, territorial breakdown, transmigration and the formation of cultural hybrids, *the nation remains a crucial but ambivalent category for understanding how cultural texts function in the construction of personal and collective identities'* (p.1). Whiteley, Bennett and Hawkings (2005) focus on popular music culture and national identity is an acknowledgement that, in searching for social and cultural meanings in popular music, an examination of the urban and rural space is also needed. They present research on national culture in terms of the role of music in the creation of identities in the Balkans, Crete and a discussion of reggae and rastafari as well as the role of rap and hip-hop in creating cultural identity and of gender-related musical identity issues in the technological environment of music production.

Other studies within popular music culture have shown the impact of different genres of music on social groups in terms of developing an identity. Pillsbury's (2006) study of the rock group *Metallica* looks at the group's role within the genre of thrash metal in terms of the development of a performing style and how artists target social groups so as to form an identity in order to sell their recordings. Leonard's (2007) perspective on rock music deals with issues related to gender. She traces the development of girl-power and considers the role of the media and the internet, including self-promotion, in the creation of a socially constructed female identity. Kaminski and Taylor (2008) look at the role of music in relation to the identity of drag artists and how different songs formed multiple identity functions. They discuss these songs in terms of the ritual of performance and the interpretation of these rituals within the culture that they are performed. In other words, the meanings associated with the songs themselves and the performance of the songs that are specific to the community within which they are performed. They found that when drag artists moved from the 'gay community' into 'mainstream community', the *'music enables the drag performers to highlight the differences amongst audience members while creating a space for the coexistence of disparate collective identities'* (p.69). As with Sutton's (1991) study above, Kaminski and Taylor show that music has different meanings to people from a different socio-cultural environment, but that it can also be used as a tool of social protest by constructing collective identities.

Rentfrow and Gosling (2007) look at the stereotypes about fans of different genres of music. Through two studies of college students, they considered what the stereotypes are and whether they were accurate. They found that there are *'robust and clearly defined music-stereotypes associated with a range of musical genres'* and that *'many of these stereotypes also possess grains of truth'* (p.323). If there are grains of truth in the musical stereotypes amongst college students, then it may be possible to understand the identities of followers of certain genres of music.

In order to gain a deeper understanding of young people's music identities, Hargreaves and Marshall's (2003) investigation into musical learning in and out of school used the concept of musical identities to explore a falling trend in the take-up of optional school music courses. Using two studies, one of students' attitudes of curriculum music and one of teacher identities, they placed students' musical identities alongside teachers' musical identities to ascertain whether there was a correlation between how closely linked the identities of both the students and teachers were and the take-up of school music courses. They suggest two applications to their findings, firstly so as to understand people's musical behaviour from an 'inside' perspective and secondly to develop models of how music education may work in the future. The model that they propose (2003; 273) has

'three types of outcome, namely musical-artistic, personal and social-cultural, and describes some potential overlaps and interactions between these three broad types. These all converge at the centre of the model towards self-identity.'

Stating that *'this might be seen as the ultimate outcome of music education.'* In other words, rather than identity steering young people towards or away from music education, music education should steer young people towards developing their own identity.

What these studies all show is that identity and specifically musical identity is constructed in relation to the socio-cultural environment. From the definition of a national identity through musical theatre in America to the role of girl-power in rock music, different genres bring with them different identities. However, it is clear that music can have different meanings in different cultures. Moreover, music can bring together disparate identities in one collective musical identity. The significance of this to a study of the learning processes within an ensemble is that within the ensemble there may be a mixture of different identities, but through the music people can be joined together and a new collective identity specific to the socio-cultural environment of that

ensemble can be built. The music may have different meanings for different members of the group, but it is still the same music and therefore, the music is the binding factor of the group.

II.6.a Identity within a socio-cultural framework

Through this discussion of the literature, I have presented the theoretical context for this thesis. The examination of the learning ensemble through this research takes a socio-cultural perspective, and identity is a key theme running through the literature. The elements of cultural psychology used are Zones of Proximal Development, Activity Theory and Communities of Practice. Within this, *'issues of identity are an integral aspect of a social theory of learning'* as *'the concept of identity serves as a pivot between the social and the individual'* (Wenger, 1998; 146). The creation and maintenance of identity within the community of practice is a key aspect of participation in that community and Wenger (1998, 149) draws parallels between practice and identity, summarising that identity is characterised as:

- *Negotiated experience*: we define who we are by the ways we experience ourselves through participation as well as by the ways we and others reify ourselves.
- *Community membership*: we define who we are by the familiar and unfamiliar.
- *Learning trajectory*: we define who we are by where we have been and where we are going.
- *Nexus of multimembership*: we define who we are by how we reconcile our various forms of membership into one identity.
- *A relation between the local and global*: we define who we are by negotiating local ways of belonging to broader constellations and of manifesting broader styles and discourses.

This being the case, if the purpose of this thesis is to discuss a social theory of learning, identity must be an integral part of this.

It is clear to see the role of identity in discussions surrounding formal and informal learning environments. Many of the social contexts of music learning are also discussed in relation to musical identity. For example, Westerlund discusses the apprenticeship model used by garage rock bands and Leonard talks of the spread of the 'riot grrrl

network² through bands performing with and learning from each other. Identity also features in the work Green (2001) and Pitts (2005a). As discussed earlier, Pitts discusses in detail the formation of musical identities and compares the identities of undergraduate music students with adults who are participating in music outside of institutional music education. Green (2001) also considers the construction of music identities in relation to the careers of popular musicians. Marshall (2008) developed a framework of continuums of formal and informal learning to explore whether a school pupil would be likely to opt in or out of school music. This was based on his previous research into musical identities, discussed above. Therefore there is a close link between issues of identity and interaction with the social learning environment.

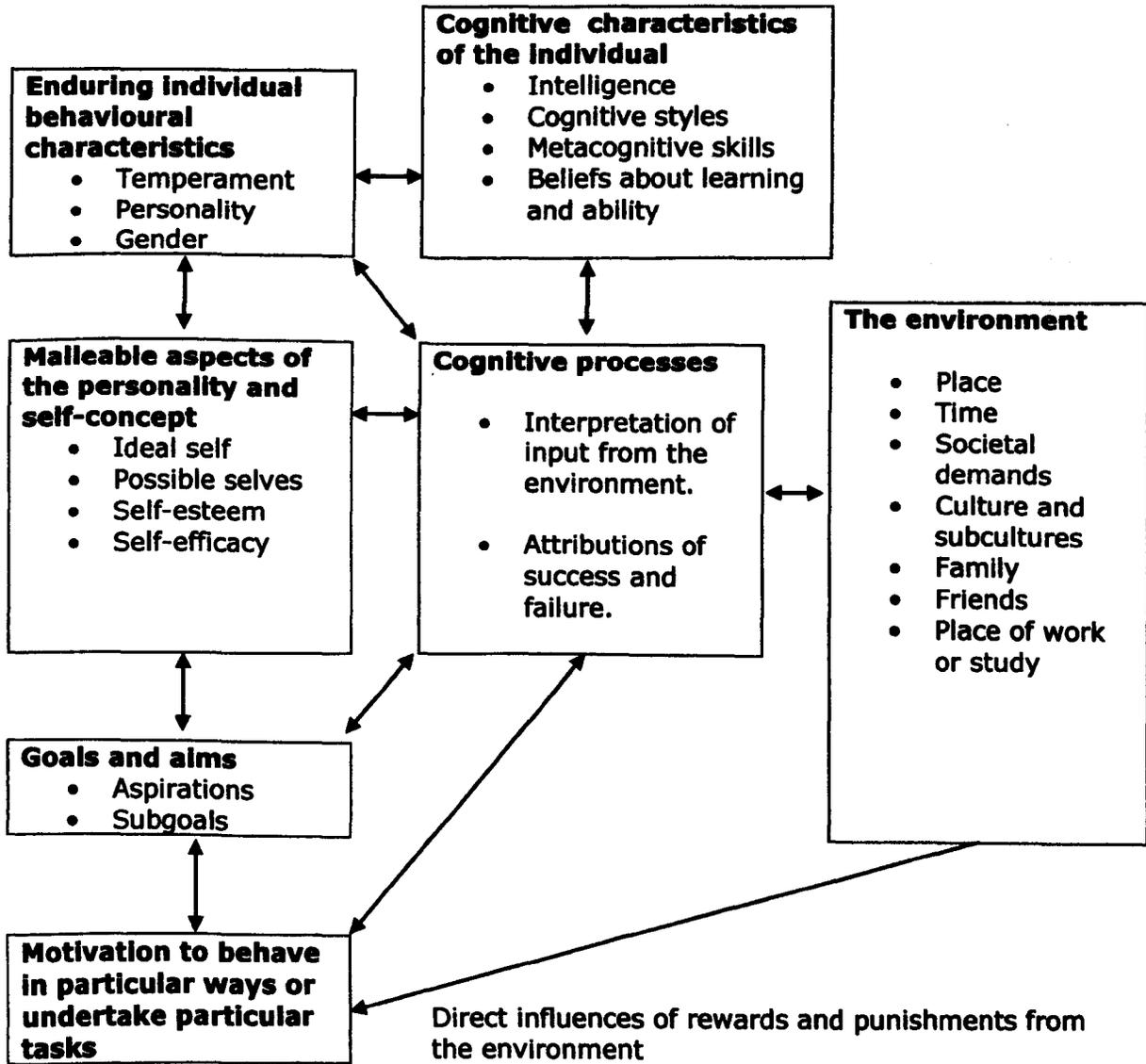
An integral part of many theories of motivation is identity. Self-efficacy is fundamentally about self-belief, within self-belief there must be a construct of identity. Wigfield and Wagner (2005) have discussed identity in relation to Achievement Motivation stating that *'adolescents' identity development has important implications for the development of their competence and motivation'* (p.223). In this discussion they considered the role of the social environment on identity construct and self-efficacy and how this affected adolescents' views of their own competencies. The role of identity is also significant in Possible Selves and the relationship between motivation and identity in terms of temporal comparisons is considered to be a key factor (Strahan and Wilson, 2006). Similarly with Attribution Theory and Goal Setting Theory, they must involve a person constructing an identity so that they can assess their expectations, know what a realistic goal looks like and so on. As discussed above, these theories also acknowledge the socio-cultural environment as a contributing factor in motivation. Therefore, if identity is integral to motivation, it too has to be embedded in the socio-cultural environment. What is identity other than your view of yourself within a given context and how you think other people within that context view you?

Hallam (2002) synthesised research on musical motivation, encompassing identity in terms of self-concept, in relation to the participation in musical activities. She suggests that *'much of the research on motivation in music has not been embedded within motivational research paradigms or theoretical positions'* (p.232). She presents a model of motivation in music based on a synthesis of motivational theory showing the interactions between individual and environmental factors determining motivation,

² The 'riot grrrrl network' was a feminist network of indie rock bands that was developed in America during the 1990s in response to criticisms of the masculine culture of indie-rock music. Promoted through gigs and events, the network comprised bands from the 'underground' music scene and aimed to encourage females to assert themselves through underground music.

shown in figure 3. Within the context of the learning ensemble, Hallam's framework would suggest an interaction between the group and the individual through a complex set of ideals and aspirations relating to the individual's position, or identity, within that group.

Figure 3 – Hallam's model of motivation



(Hallam, 2002; 233)

This study then embraces identity as an integrated feature of the socio-cultural environment. By taking into account the social perspective of identity, I can view the subject both as individual with an individual identity and as social with a social identity in the same way that the activity system accepts that activity is both individual and social.

Ratner (1997; 53-4) states that

'Since positivistic methods are inadequate for cultural psychology, better methods are required that will reveal the cultural quality of psychological phenomena. Qualitative methods, developed by humanistically oriented social scientists, have the potential to serve this function... Qualitative methods are useful for understanding meaning, context, individuality or subjects, unanticipated events, and processes by which events take place – rather than simply depicting outcomes.'

The theoretical viewpoint taken in this thesis is from a socio-cultural perspective. As stated in the introduction (see *I Introduction*, page 1), the purpose of this research is to discover the processes by which learning takes place within the socio-cultural environment of a learning ensemble, paying attention to the role of performance and the construction of identities within learning. Therefore, in order to understand the cultural context and meaning of a learning ensemble, and to uncover the cultural quality of learning in this way, my methodology uses qualitative research methods.

III Methodology

III.1 Research Approach

The aim of this research is to look in depth at the social environment surrounding learning to play a musical instrument within an ensemble, so as to understand how the learning takes place within that environment. An ensemble is a social construct with the primary purpose of creating music through the efforts of a number of individuals joining together. There are rules, values, norms, expectations, assumptions, pre-requisites and beliefs that are vital to the functioning of the ensemble; some being generated, modified and developed by the members of the ensemble, others applied to the ensemble by external sources. They have been constructed through the activity of the ensemble; some may be explicit, some implicit, and most codified in some way that an outsider might not understand. The members of the ensemble interact with each other socially and each member constructs personal meanings for these interactions in order to justify membership of the ensemble.

Any ensemble will involve complex social interactions which can be viewed as a forest. The older and more established the ensemble, the more the branches of the trees intertwine, sometimes fighting against each other for a place within the sunshine so that they can grow and flourish. Within a new forest there is plenty of space for young trees to blossom, however the longer they spend together, the more entwined they become. The aim of this research project is to look at the trees and how they as individuals grow to become a forest, but also how they exist as unique entities within that forest and still flourish. As a researcher, my task is to discover how the individual interprets the social interactions that take place within the ensemble, so as to allow their own learning to take place. In other words, it is to '*understand the multiple social constructions of meaning and knowledge.*' Therefore I have taken a 'social constructivist' approach (Robson, 2002; 27).

III.2 Flexible Design

The research questions as outlined in the Introduction to this thesis (page 10) have been formulated throughout the process of research. When I started the project, I had one broad aim of finding out what the relationship was between the individual and the group in terms of learning an instrument within an ensemble and why this method of learning seemed to work for adult beginners. As the project progressed, the research questions

developed as they were informed by the data and the further I went into the research, the more I could define what I was researching. This was crucial in taking a constructivist approach as I had no experience of the social fabric within a learning ensemble from a student's point of view and therefore rather than having a specific set of questions that I wanted to answer through experimentation in the field, I wanted to embark on a voyage of discovery informed by the data. Therefore the methods for collecting data in this project have been designed using a qualitative, or as Robson (1993) prefers, flexible approach. He says that

'All of these approaches show substantial flexibility in their research design, typically anticipating that the design will emerge and develop during data collection.'

(p.164)

He continues to say that there are *'three influential design traditions within flexible design research which appear to be of particular relevance for real world studies: case studies, ethnographic studies and grounded theory studies'* (Robson, 1993; 164). Using this flexible approach, the design for this research project has been an organic process emerging through the research itself. What has actually emerged is a triangulation of all three design traditions.

The flexibility in the design is one of the strengths of this research project. Had I not allowed the design to emerge during the process of research, I would not have been able to gather such rich data and my project would have been one-dimensional. The ability to design and re-design as I went along has allowed me to identify and use my strengths as a researcher and also as a *'researcher-as-instrument'* (Robson, 1993; 167) to produce a robust piece of research.

III.2.a Case Studies

Denscombe (2002; 146) says case-study research allows the researcher to gain *'greater depth to their research, more attention to the dynamics of the situation, better insights that come from a detailed knowledge and understanding of a specific example.'* The purpose of my research is not to assess whether students are able to learn within an ensemble, it is to find out why students can learn in this way, therefore a detailed knowledge and understanding of a specific example will allow me to look deeply into the learning process. Moreover, it accepts that our world is social and within that every person interprets, responds to and behaves differently. Therefore there cannot be just one reality, one process. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000; 181) tell us that 'case

studies can establish cause and effect, indeed one of their strengths is that they observe effects in real contexts, recognizing that context is a powerful determinant of both causes and effects.' So, by conducting case-study research I can view each case within its own context and then draw out the common aspects so as to create a generic model of learning that can be adapted to suit each particular situation.

My starting point was a pilot study conducted as a case study. As I had decided to adopt a flexible approach, I felt that I needed a pilot study in order to generate some initial data from which to initiate the research process (Maxwell, 1992). Not only this, Robson (1993; 167) tells us that the *'quality of a flexible design study depends to a great extent on the quality of the investigator.'* By conducting a pilot study I was able to trial and evaluate my ability as a researcher and highlight the effective qualities of my research skills to help determine the course of the design.

Bell (1999; 11) says that the strength of the case study is that it

'allows the researcher to concentrate on a specific instance or situation and to identify, or attempt to identify, the various interactive processes at work. These may remain hidden in a large-scale survey but may be crucial to the success or failure of systems or organizations.'

In my forest, each tree entwines with its surrounding trees in a unique way: they grow for themselves yet they all co-exist as a forest. In this initial case study I found that I was able to look at the forest as a three-dimensional picture, viewing not only the relationship between the trees from the front, but also seeing the hidden structures of the forest by looking at it in depth. The further into the forest I went, the more I could see how the trees were supporting each other in their quest for sunshine, nutrients, water, soil and other elements essential for growth and survival. Therefore I decided to continue with case study research in the main phase of the research.

Denscombe (1998; 40) highlights five disadvantages of case study research:

- Credibility of generalizations can come under scrutiny.
- Perceived as producing 'soft' data.
- Boundaries of the case can be difficult to define.
- Negotiating access can be a problem.
- The observer effect detracts from the normal situation.

Schofield's (1990; 98) view of case studies is that they create *'a picture of the current educational scene that can be used for understanding or reflecting on it'* but it is essential for the researcher to ensure that cases reflecting the *'typical situation'* are chosen. Denscombe (1998; 40) suggests that the researcher must be wary of generalising across case studies without being able to *'demonstrate the extent to which the case is similar to, or contrasts with, others of its type.'* Whilst Schofield is concerned with ensuring that each case study highlights a typical situation, Denscombe accepts that case studies may contrast with each other. As long as the researcher can demonstrate the differences and justify the reasons for generalising, this criticism can be addressed.

Criticisms regarding the negotiation of access have been overcome by the adoption of a flexible design. I started the main phase of the study with three potential case studies, and I introduced a fourth and fifth at later points in the research. Participants in one of the case studies were unforthcoming (this was not an acrimonious withdrawal of participation and the reasons for it are discussed in III.4.b Ethics, page 75). Therefore in response to this, a fourth case study was introduced. The fifth case study was introduced because I had an opportunity to conduct an interview with a group of learners that had not been obvious at the start of the research (see III.3.f Sample, page 67). Had I adopted a fixed design, I would not have been able to do this. Similarly, criticisms regarding the observer effect in case studies have also been overcome by adopting a flexible research design. As the design evolved, I was able to introduce a second dimension to the research in the form of an ethnographic study that would work alongside the case studies and provide a different angle from which to collect data.

III.2.b Ethnographic Research

The introduction of an ethnographic approach into the main study was a direct response to concerns over the students' perception of me as a researcher and a musician (see III.4.a Insider/Outsider Research, page 73). Not only did I feel that my status as a musician may have produced a barrier between myself and the participants (Henley, 2006), I felt that I needed to bring myself closer to the participants in order to really *'find out how the members of the group... understand things, the meanings they attach to happenings, the way they perceive their reality'* (Denscombe, 1998; 69).

Silverman (2000; 37) says that *'anthropologists argue that, if one is really to understand a group of people, one must engage in an extended period of observation.'* If

I am to really understand how the trees move and support each other in order to coexist, then I need to be part of the forest. Not only this, but if I am to go deeper and find out how they can also obstruct, compete and push each other out of the sunlight, I would need to be a full member of that forest. Therefore I incorporated an extended period of ethnographic research into my design.

The ethnographic study involved me joining a learning ensemble. Robson (1993; 187) says that *'the focus of an ethnographic study is a group who share a culture. The task is to learn about that culture; effectively, to understand their world as they do.'* The difficulty I faced in joining a learning ensemble was that I am already embedded in the learning culture but from a different perspective: that of teacher. Also, I wanted to become a complete participant so that I could really experience the social realities of learning an instrument in a group but I was concerned about whether doing so would be in conflict with my ethical code (see *III.4.b Ethics*, page 75). This presented me with two problems; how would I become a participant and what level of participant would I be?

In January 2005 a community gamelan was set up in my home town. This provided an opportunity to join a learning ensemble that was from a different tradition to my own musical learning, therefore I could experience learning a new tradition of music as an adult in an ensemble. Not only this, but as the group was new, I was able to join as a full member from the beginning which gave me a unique insight into how a learning ensemble establishes itself and develops over time.

As Bell (1999) points out, ethnographic studies take time and I was prepared to put the time in so as to gain as much as I could from the experience. When I originally joined the gamelan I anticipated being a member for approximately 18 months, but in the spirit of my flexible design this was not fixed. As the research progressed and I became immersed into the group, I found that this aspect of the research not only made a significant contribution to the evolution of my research questions, but also to my understanding of the complexities of learning an instrument in this way, so much so that I continued the study for four years.

In discussing the difficulties of ethnographic research, Robson (1993; 187) says that *'researchers have been known to 'go native', resulting in them either discontinuing the study, or moving from the role of researcher to that of advocate.'* The danger of conducting such a study for a four-year period is that I might become so immersed in my participation that I move from the position of researcher, but my intention was to go completely native. The point of the ethnographic research was to research myself; to

see how I learnt to play an instrument in a group as an adult, to see how I interacted with the community, the realities that I created in order to understand that community and the meanings that I attached to the behaviour of myself and of the others around me. It was an autoethnographic study (Coffey, 2002; Ellingson, 2009). I was not there to covertly watch my peers and try to reconstruct how they acted within the ensemble; I was there to watch myself. Therefore, not only did I intend going native, but also I believe that I was native from the very beginning. Being native from the outset was vital to this study. I felt that my involvement in the group should be natural and therefore that it should not be seen by me as something purely for research. It was something that I was doing because I enjoyed it and I wanted to participate for the sake of just participating. These two factors are the things that give me a connection with the rest of the group and justify my involvement as a full member of the group.

Denscombe (1998; 74) says that one of the characteristic features of ethnography is *'the significance it attaches to the role of the researcher's 'self' in the process of research.'* This is what makes my autoethnographic research project a unique project. Throughout the research I have opened myself up in order to look deeply into my learning processes and also how I engage with others in a social environment. This has often meant dealing with difficult issues, both on a personal and social level. However, I have not been afraid to confront these difficulties and being anything but honest has never been in question. Bringing the 'self' into the research project has allowed me to bring a different perspective into the research. Silverman (2000; 39) says that ethnographic studies are partial and that partiality is an important part of the process, something to be celebrated. What is crucial to this research is that I am using the autoethnographic study alongside case studies so that I can present both partial and impartial data, giving me a full spectrum of views and experiences of this type of learning.

Bell (1987; 13) suggests that a criticism of ethnographic research is *'the problem of representativeness. If the research is studying one group in depth over a period of time, who is to say that group is typical of other groups which may have the same title?'* As the focus of the research is how I act within the group, this raises two questions: is my group representative of other learning ensembles and am I a good representative of the group? Firstly, as discussed above with case studies, my aim was not to find similarities across typical groups so as to make generalisations about how the learning takes place, but to look at contrasting cases so that I can view in depth the learning processes that the students engage in. By doing this I can present a model of learning that is based on different cases and my own experience. The point of the autoethnographic research is

that the data works alongside that of the case studies, therefore strengthening any theory that is generated from the data as it is grounded across five case studies and one autoethnographic study (see *III.2.c Grounded Theory*, page 50). Secondly, this does lead us to the question 'what is typical?' If typicality is based on a skeleton outline of how a learning ensemble operates; students join, they play music, they perform music and they progress, then all of my case studies and my autoethnographic study are typical. If typicality implies deeper similarities in the functioning of the group such as who participates, where they take place, how much they cost, why they were set up, who runs the group, how quickly the students learn, then none of my case studies or autoethnographic study are typical as none of them share any of these things. This can also be applied to my representativeness as a student of a learning ensemble. Within my learning ensemble I am not the only music teacher who has joined the group therefore I am not unique. However, whether I represent the group in terms of demographic profile is a different matter. The members of my gamelan are all different, which is the beauty of the group. I would venture to say that the individuals in all the groups that I have had contact with are all different and therefore no one person is a typical representative of a learning ensemble student. We are all typical and all unique at the same time and as long as I accept this, and make it explicit that I am not trying to give a picture of how every learning ensemble functions, then the problem of representativeness is not an issue.

Denscombe (1998; 72) says that

'A challenge to the idiographic stance within ethnography comes from those who question the value of producing numerous stand-alone descriptions if there is no attempt to derive something from them which goes beyond the specifics of the situation and which can, in some way or other, link to broader issues.'

Although my autoethnographic approach was to provide data from a unique point of view based on my own experience of learning within an ensemble, I also wanted to use the data in conjunction with my case studies. Therefore, in order to integrate the autoethnographic study with the case study research, I have conducted a case study of the students in my gamelan. This link is vital in joining the two elements of the research together. As Robson (1993; 190) says, ethnographic research 'can help provide valuable understanding which can then guide later research using other approaches.' By linking the case studies to the autoethnographic research, I am able to use a grounded theory approach across both elements of my research in order to generate theory.

III.2.c Grounded Theory

Strauss and Corbin (1990; 23) tell us that

'A grounded theory is one that is inductively derived from the study of the phenomenon it represents. That is, it is discovered, developed, and provisionally verified through systematic data collection and analysis of data pertaining to that phenomenon. Therefore, data collections, analysis, and theory stand in reciprocal relationship with each other. One does not begin with a theory, then prove it. Rather, one begins with an area of study and what is relevant to that area is allowed to emerge.'

As previously discussed, the purpose of this research is to explore the learning processes within an ensemble so as to present a model of learning. In order to do this, I need to develop my own theory of learning so as to support the model, rather than just describe the learning that is taking place. Strauss and Corbin (1990) give a definition of both theory and description stating that the defining point between the two is the interpretation of the data. By adopting a grounded theory approach I can provide a firmly grounded interpretation of the data, allowing the theory to evolve during the process of research. Therefore developing theory based on concepts that interrelate and support each other.

The main elements of grounded theory used in this research project have been in the organisation and coding of data. As I was allowing the research design to unfold as the project developed, I needed to have a systematic approach to data collection and analysis so as to remain in control of the project. Although flexibility was vital to my research, this needed to be balanced by a methodical system for dealing with the data. Strauss and Corbin (1990; 57) outline the reasons for this.

'The analytical procedures of grounded theory are designed to:

- 1. Build rather than only test theory.*
- 2. Give the research process the rigor necessary to make the theory "good" science.*
- 3. Help the analyst to break through the biases and assumptions brought to, and that can develop during, the research process.*
- 4. Provide the grounding, build the density, and develop the sensitivity and integration needed to generate a rich, tightly woven, explanatory theory that closely approximates the reality it represents.'*

By using a coding process that allowed me to view the data at each stage of the research, I was able to make decisions as to where the research should go next. As Tesch (1990; 95) says, *'analysis is not the last phase of the research process; it is*

concurrent with data collection or cyclic. Both analysis and data collection inform each other.' However, Silverman (2006; 96) says that *'used unintelligently, [grounded theory] can... degenerate into a fairly empty building of categories or into a mere smokescreen used to legitimise purely empiricist research'*. Therefore I needed to ensure that the coding process was not merely an exercise in assigning labels to events, but was one that initiated and supported the analytical process.

Bryman and Burgess (1994; 5) say that

'another key element in grounded theory is 'memo writing', whereby the analyst is constantly writing memos, perhaps relating to codes or to connections between emerging concepts, which elaborate the data and which represent the first step in the emergence of theory'

During the research process I kept a book of my thoughts, ideas and plans. This book is a working account of my research; I can look back and see how the theory evolved during the course of the research and see changes in my understanding and conceptualisation of the data. In this book I have written memos, drawn diagrams, developed my codes, planned presentations and papers as well as recorded research seminars, conferences and any discussions about my research. For me, this book is not only a record of the research process, it is a hard copy of my thinking through which I can trace the evolution of my theories.

To facilitate this analysis I have written a number of conference papers during the course of the research (Henley, 2006, 2007a, 2007b, 2007c, 2008a, 2008b). The purpose of these papers has been two-fold. Firstly they have enabled me to focus my thoughts and formulate my theories, moving the analysis of the data on from the memo stage to the theoretical development stage, as Ellingson (2009; 12) says *'analysis and writing intrinsically intertwine.'* Secondly, they have given me the opportunity to test my theories within the academic community. Strauss and Corbin (1990; 226) say that *'often researchers present materials orally as a trial run, to see how a given audience will react to these presentations.'* Through the process of writing conference papers, I have been able to consolidate my thoughts, gain a different viewpoint on the research and confirm or alter my interpretation of the data. This has been invaluable in exploring my interpretation and developing my theory. In other words, it has allowed time for *'theoretical reflection'* before collecting more data from which to test my *'emerging theory'* (Bryman and Burgess, 1994; 4). Moreover, it has enabled me to keep my participants satisfied that they have taken part in a real research project and that their

participation has been valued, as they can see an outcome to the research without having to wait for the final thesis (Bryman and Burgess, 1994; 4).

The coding processes used are discussed below (*III.3.e Coding*, page 61) and I used the same process for both the case study research as I did the autoethnographic research so as to integrate the two. The grounded theory aspect of the research project has been used to join together the research project as a whole and give it robustness while allowing it to be flexible and in some ways reactive to the data.

Robson (1993; 116) outlines the characteristics of a 'good' research design:

1. *Rigorous data collection procedures are used.*
2. *The study is framed within the assumptions and characteristics of the flexible (qualitative) approach to research.*
3. *The study is informed by an understanding of existing traditions of enquiry.*
4. *This tradition need not be 'pure', and procedures from several can be brought together.*
5. *The project starts with a single idea or problem that the researcher seeks to understand, not a casual relationship of variables or a comparison of groups.*
6. *The study includes detailed methods, a rigorous approach to data collection, data analysis and report writing.*
7. *Data are analysed using multiple levels of abstractions.*
8. *The writing is clear, engaging, and helps the reader to experience 'being there' ... accurately reflecting the complexities of real life.*

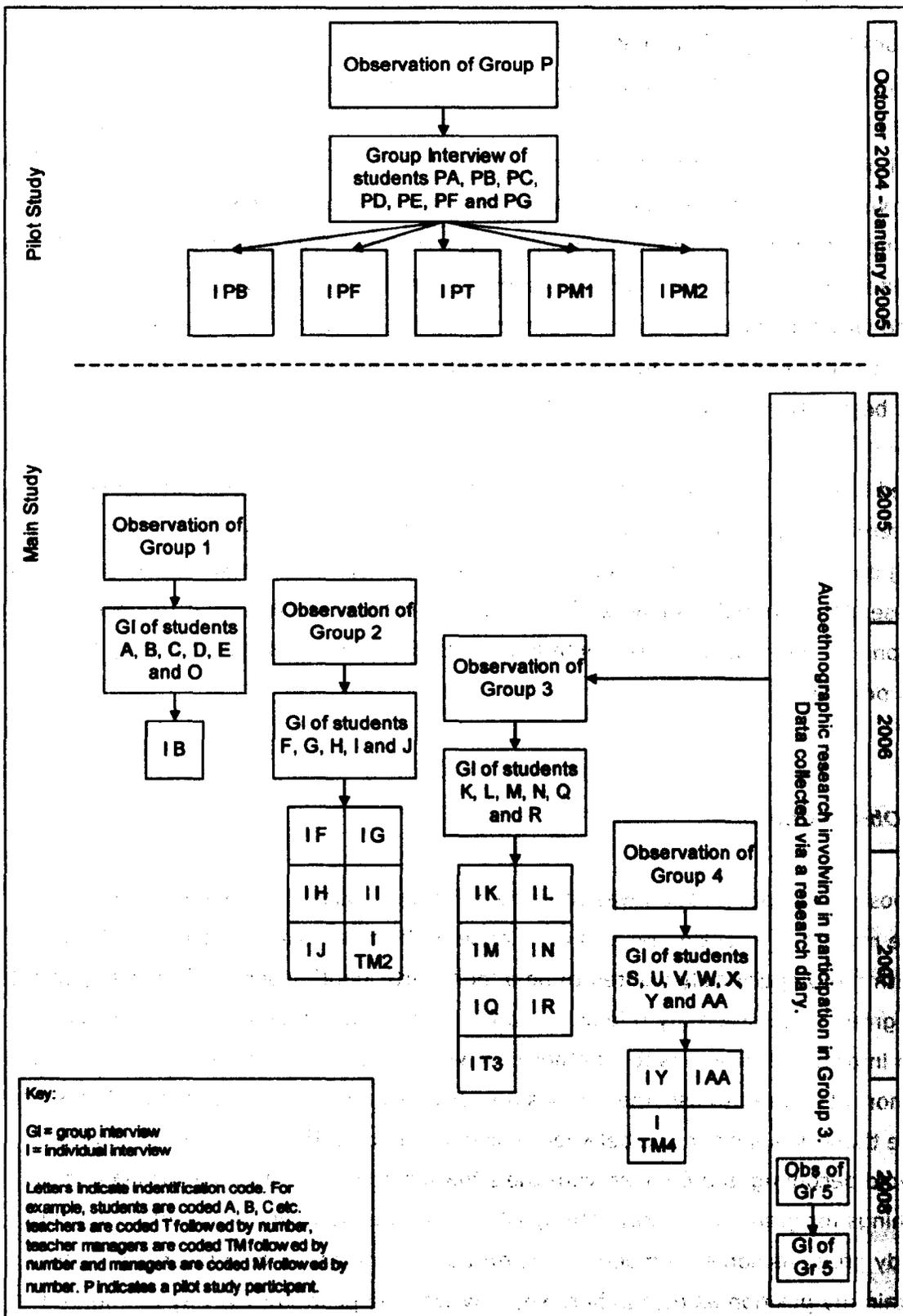
In all, I believe my research project fits in with Robson's description of what a good flexible research project should look like, and that the research approach that I have taken is appropriate to the aims of the research.

III.3 Data Collection Methods

Figure 4 shows an outline of my research design. It shows how the pilot study, case studies and autoethnographic study relate to each other and highlights the data collection methods used. As with the research approach, I have used different data collection methods in order to gather and triangulate data. Robson (1993; 224) suggests three simple rules of thumb of data collection.

- *To find out what people do in public use direct observation.*
- *To find out what they do in private, use interviews or questionnaires.*
- *To find out what they think, felt and/or believe, use interviews questionnaires or attitude scales.*

Figure 4 - Research Design



As previously described, the aim of this research was to find out how people learn music within the specific social environment of the learning ensemble. Therefore I would need to find out what people did in public and so incorporated observation into my data

collection methods. However, the learning environment extends beyond the ensemble and many people will continue their musical learning in their own homes in the form of practice or other groups that they have formed. So I would also have to find out what they did in private. The decision to use interviews for this rather than questionnaires was influenced by two factors: firstly, I felt that I should use my strengths as a researcher and as I had previous experience of interviewing, this was a good option; secondly, I felt that interviewing would allow me to explore the phenomenon of musical learning within a group more deeply than would a questionnaire. The information that I wanted was concerned with the experiences of the students, how they felt about learning within their group and why they believed that the learning ensemble was a good environment for learning rather than simply collecting facts about their groups. Therefore, interviews were the best option (Denscombe, 1998).

I designed the pilot study to have three phases of data collection; initial observation, group interview and individual interview. This proved to be not only an effective way of collecting data, but also to be effective in allowing the data to generate questions for the next phase. After an initial analysis of the pilot study data I decided that this was a good way to conduct the case study research and so used this as my skeleton during the research process.

III.3.a Observation

The purpose of the observation was three-fold. Firstly, I used the observation to introduce myself as a researcher and familiarise both myself with the group and the group with me. I specifically wanted to be a 'non-participant' observer. It was important that the group understood my role as researcher from the outset so that they could make an informed decision as to whether they would participate in the interview stage. Furthermore, I wanted to assume the position of outside researcher from the start so as to ensure there was a clear line between researcher and participant. This was so that I could avoid becoming '*too familiar*' with the situation opening me to bias or leading to taking things for granted (Hockey, 1993; 202). This was particularly important for the pilot study group as some members of the group recognised me as a tutor and I wanted to maintain my position as researcher. Not only was the pilot study a way to initiate the research, it also served the purpose of developing my research skills. Therefore I needed to stay in the position that I intended so as to allow my skills to develop. Once I was confident enough in my research skills, I could then move across the boundaries of inside/outside research (see *III.4.a Insider/Outsider Research*, page 73).

The second purpose of the observation was to get some initial data from which to draw out interview questions. Marshall and Rossman (1999; 107) tell us that *'through observation, the researcher documents and describes complex actions and interactions.'* Therefore an initial observation allowed me to view the actions of the students so that I could have something to base the interviews on. Data was collected from the observations using an observation sheet (see Appendix I, page 219) so as to record events and reflect upon them as the observation proceeded. As the participants knew that I was a researcher, I did not feel it inappropriate to note things as I was going along. I decided that an observation schedule would not be necessary partly due to the fact that the observation was an opportunity for me to get a feel for the group, but also as it might distract from the flow of events. The emphasis on having an emergent design allowed me to use the observations to help design the next stage of research and I could not do this without an open mind at the initial stage of the research (Denscombe, 1998). The one group where I did not conduct a non-participant observation was Group 3, the gamelan group. As previously discussed, I was already a member of this group and therefore the observation was done as a participant.

The third purpose of the observation was to recruit volunteers for the group interview stage. Mason (2002; 87) states that in order to carry out observation you *'need to prepare yourself not just for the process and technique of observance, but also for social interaction.'* Each observation entailed sitting in with the learning ensemble and viewing what they were doing, but also chatting to students during their coffee break. This function of the observation was vital for introducing myself to the students, telling them about the research and gaining their trust so that they might be willing to participate in interviews. I found that most students were more than willing to talk about themselves and many were fascinated by the research. As the students were interested in what I was doing, they were happy to volunteer for interview.

III.3.b Group Interview

Wisker (2008; 182) says that interviews can *'provide both the detailed information you set out to collect and some fascinating contextual or other information.'* So, as the research was to be carried out using a flexible design that allowed research questions to develop through the research process, interviews provided a good forum in which to allow this to happen. When planning my data collection methods I decided that I initially wanted to interview participants in groups. As the main focus of the research is how individuals learn in a group situation, the interaction of the individual within the group is

very important. Therefore I thought that by interviewing groups I would be able to gather data not only on individual thoughts and feelings, but also I could see how the group agreed and disagreed and therefore tap into the workings of the social environment. This being the case a group interview would not only provide me with individual data in the form of statements from individuals about their learning, but also group data, in the form of conversations between group members, about how the group functions.

I used a semi-structured approach that would allow me to steer the group discussion to cover the areas that were identified by the observation whilst giving control of the conversation to the participants, enabling them to ask their own questions. I was then able to identify new areas that I could draw out in individual interviews alongside the original themes from the observation. I used an interview script for the group interview containing six general questions and some prompt words (see Appendix VIII, page 289).

An important factor of using semi-structured group interviews was that through the position of chair I could give the ownership of the interview to the students, reducing the risk of bias from my part. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2003; 121) highlight the sources of interviewer bias as

- *The attitudes, opinions, and expectations of the interviewer;*
- *A tendency for the interviewer to see the respondent in her own image;*
- *A tendency for the interviewer to seek answers that support her preconceived notions;*
- *Misperceptions on the part of the interviewer of what the respondent is saying;*
- *Misunderstandings on the part of the respondent of what is being asked.*

By allowing the interview to proceed as a group conversation, my attitudes, opinions and expectations were diluted by those of the group interviewees. It would have been harder for me to uphold an expectation if a number of people were challenging it rather than being challenged by just one person. It would also be far more difficult to see each student in my own image or to seek answers that support my own preconceived notions, particularly when they disagreed with each other. This also reduced the possibility of misperception and misunderstanding as the interview flowed as a conversation, therefore the students were able to clarify, question and argue with each other giving me either a clear indication of feeling or a range of points of view surrounding a particular issue. The semi-structured nature of the group interview also reduced the risk of 'leading questions', as at times the students were questioning each other. The group interviews were recorded as I wanted the interviews to flow naturally and felt that note

taking would not allow this to happen (Sapsford and Jupp, 1996). This also meant that I could fully transcribe the interviews, making it easier to refer back to conversations at a later stage.

Cohen *et al.* (2003) also suggest a long list of difficulties with group interviews, more or less all of which are attributed to how good a chair the interviewer is. As stated above, I felt that one of my strengths as a researcher was in my interview skills and that my chairing skills were strong enough to overcome these difficulties. The group interviews were followed up by individual interview. This allowed me to clarify, question and cross-examine any of the points highlighted in the group interview.

III.3.c Individual Interview

To get a rounded view of how the group functioned I decided that the individual interviews should have three layers of participants: students, tutors and managers. The students would provide the main body of data but I decided that as I was looking at a social group, I must consider the perspectives of all members of that group, including the tutor. This would give me some interesting data to cross-reference the students' data. The third layer was the manager of the group. I decided to include this so as to enable me to put the group into context in terms of provision of adult learning opportunities and to gain an insight into the aims of the group from the provider's point of view.

The individual interviews followed up themes identified from the group interviews, again semi-structured in nature so as to allow the participants the freedom to explore their own thoughts and feelings on themes suggested by myself and allowing me to identify new themes to take forward. This being the case, I felt it important to conduct the interview less as a formal interview where the *'interviewer behaves as much like a machine as possible,'* than as an informal interview *'in which the shape is determined by the individual respondents'* (Bell, 1999; 137). This was because the purpose of the interview was to explore the themes raised in the previous stages of research. By this point I had already conducted a preliminary analysis of the observation data and also a deeper analysis of the group interview data. Therefore I was taking my interpretation of the data back into the field in order to challenge it and verify it. Bell (1999; 137) talks of more formal structured interviews being easier to *'aggregate and quantify'* results, but the problem with having a very structured interview is that the researcher is asking the questions rather than the respondent. In an individual situation, where I had no group to challenge my own views, I felt it important that the individual led the interview. Whereas

in the group interview I could allow the students to have conversations with themselves about the issues that were raised, in the individual interviews the conversation would need to be between the participant and myself therefore the individuals were more open to bias than the group interviews.

Robson (2002) outlines how bias can be a threat to flexible research designs in terms of both researcher bias and respondent bias. In any research project where the researcher is interviewing participants there is a danger of bias and as Bell (1999; 139) says: *'it is easier to acknowledge the fact that bias can creep in than to eliminate it altogether.'* In choosing the methods of data collection it was important to devise a design that would keep bias to a minimum. This was done by using open ended questioning so that the respondent could raise issues and steer the conversation. Closed questions were used for clarification and to cross reference questions with the group interviews, referring back to previous responses (Cohen *et al.*, 2000). The only way I could do this was to record and fully transcribe each interview and ensure that I had coded group interviews prior to conducting individual interviews. Preparation for individual interviews was done by reading through transcripts and picking out themes that seemed particularly relevant to each participant. I used a generic interview script containing prompts (see Appendix VIII, page 289), but also relied on my skill as a researcher to personalise each interview so as to pitch the interview at the right level for each participant and collect the best data possible. This way I could use the interview not only to make new discoveries, but also to verify what I had already interpreted, reducing the risk of bias on my part.

Robson (2002; 172) explains that prolonged involvement in a group helps to *'reduce both reactivity and respondent bias.'* By the time the participant reached individual interview, I had come into contact with them at least twice before, once in the observation and once in the group interview. Through participation in the observation and group interview stages of research, the students had developed a trust of both me and of the research. Therefore in order to reduce cost and time, I decided to conduct some of the individual interviews by telephone. Telephone interviewing was appropriate to the interview style as it facilitated a normal conversation. The telephone calls were arranged in advance at a time convenient to the participant and were paid for by me so the participant did not have to make a financial contribution to the research. More importantly, it meant that the interviews were conducted outside the ensemble situation. There were no tutors or other students around so it allowed the participants to be very frank and open about their experiences. Also, this avoided any non-verbal signals from myself that could influence the interview. The participant was in their own home in all of the interviews (the participants with whom I conducted a face to face individual

interview were the ones that lived closest to me, I conducted the interview at their house at a time again agreed in advance), therefore they were in comfortable, safe surroundings making the interview more relaxed from their point of view.

As with the group interviews the individual interviews were recorded. The first interview that I conducted, the group interview of the pilot study, was recorded using a mini-disk recorder and microphone. However, I recorded the individual interviews directly onto a laptop for subsequent interviews. I felt that the laptop was less intrusive as it is a more normal situation to hold a conversation with a laptop to one side than to have a microphone between two people. For the telephone interviews I used an MP3 recorder, the participants in the telephone interviews could not see the MP3 recorder, making it less intrusive. I asked permission to record each interview before starting, but having the recording equipment not visible perhaps made them feel more at ease during the interview. The participants were also assured of confidentiality. This being the case, I did not feel that they had any cause to be deliberately misleading, or to withhold information for fear of other people finding out what they had said, thus reducing the risk of respondent bias in the interviews.

III.3.d Diary

Whilst I have been concerned with reducing the risk of bias in the case study element of the research, the autoethnographic element of the research celebrates my biases and allows me to use them in order to understand more deeply how I learn within a social environment. Therefore I needed a method of collecting data that allowed me to talk honestly and frankly about my learning and give a record of my activities within my learning ensemble over a period of time. McGhee and Miell (1998; 45) say that whilst diary methodology does not employ a single technique, the common characteristic of diaries is that the *'participant completes some kind of written statement about what they have experienced in their social interactions.'* Bell (1999; 147-8) agrees that *'diaries are an attractive way of gathering information about the way individuals spend their time'* and that they *'can provide valuable information about work patterns and activities.'* However she warns of problems with modified behaviour, time consumption and instructions about what should and what should not be recorded.

One way that modified behaviour can be overcome is through longevity. Whilst this is also a criticism of diary research, in that it can become an arduous task to fill in a diary over a length of time, this can also ensure that any modified behaviour balances out over the course of the diary. If, for example, I was asked to fill in a diary about my

newspaper reading over a week I might modify my behaviour so as to look interesting or intellectual i.e. I might choose to read the Guardian that week instead of Heat Magazine¹. However, if asked to do this for a year I would probably get bored with reading the paper that I normally do not read and revert back to my usual read. Either that or I would find that I actually enjoyed reading the Guardian and continue to do so as part of my normal behaviour, which in itself is interesting and would give the researcher an insight into how behaviour patterns are established.

My autoethnographic research was carried out for four years and I feel that this was long enough to balance out modified behaviour and to trace my biases, seeing how they have changed over the course of the research. This data can then be cross-checked against interview data to ensure that my biases are not being transmitted to the participants in the case study research.

Truthfulness, time consumption and knowing what to include and what not to include were not a problem. I wanted to record my emotions in my diary so as to unpick how I related to the social group, and I did this quite freely; there are moments of complete frustration recorded in my diary as well as total elation. Through systematic coding, I have been able to examine what has caused these emotions and how they have affected my learning. The diary was open in the sense that I recorded whatever I thought and felt at the time. As it was my own research project, I had the motivation to keep the diary as best as I could. I have also been able to trace the development of my relationships with my peers and how my perception of my place within the group has altered, and what has caused it to alter. As I have employed the same coding as in my interviews I have been able to draw comparisons with other data and also draw out the differences and attempt to interpret why these should occur. Most of all, I have an intimate record of my own behaviour which at times has shocked me when looking back at it. Through using the diary as a medium, I have been able to interview myself and present my 'learner self' rather than my 'researcher self'. Ellingson (2009; 62) says that in autoethnographic studies *'the author incorporates the "I" into research and writing, yet analyses self as if studying an "other".'* The benefit of using a diary to collect the autoethnographic data is that it has allowed me to code the data alongside my interview transcripts so that I can treat the "I" as an "other".

III.3.e Coding

¹ The Guardian is a reputable broadsheet paper whereas Heat Magazine is a celebrity gossip magazine.

The coding process that I used is shown in figure 5.

Figure 5 – The coding process

Data type	Coding used	Transcript Shown
Observation – Pilot study	Open coding: Labelling actions and thoughts in terms of concepts.	Appendix I – page 219
Group interview – Pilot study	Participant coding: using letters Open coding: using key words to identify concepts. Axial coding: using colours to identify categories.	Appendix II – page 235
Individual interview – Pilot study	Coded using colours and list of concepts drawn up after group interview, reviewing codes to allow for new concepts to arise.	Appendix III – page 247
Write up of pilot study	Data collated for each concept and memos written resulting in a list of research questions for the main phase of research.	Appendix IV – page 257
Group interviews – Main study	Coded using colours and list of concepts drawn up after pilot study, reviewing codes to allow for new concepts to arise.	Appendix V – page 259
Individual interviews – Main study	Coded using colours and list of concepts drawn up after group interviews, reviewing codes to allow for new concepts to arise.	Appendix VI – page 279
Write up of main study	In the form of a story line for each category.	
Conference papers	Using literature to inform data analysis.	Attached to thesis

I initially began with an open coding procedure (Strauss and Corbin, 1990), the first stage being to label the observation data from the pilot study. The concepts that were used as labels at this stage were based on the actions of the students and teacher that I observed and also on my thoughts noted at the time. I did not have a pre-determined list of concepts that were applied to the data, but I coded all actions that I felt contributed to the learning that occurred during the observation. The concepts that emerged from the first observation data concerned actions surrounding the tutor’s role, individual actions, group dynamics, notation issues, physical aspects of playing, peer learning (where it appeared that students were helping each other), the students’

previous relationship with music (where they could use prior experience in order to understand something new) and how success was measured. Figure 6 outlines the codes used and a set of coded observation notes can be found in Appendix I (page 219).

Figure 6 – Codes used for observation data

Label	Action/Thought
PL (Peer Learning)	Students talking to one another about the music/instrument and helping each other out.
TR (Teacher's Role)	Teacher giving specific instruction to a student or group of students. Seeing some students get no teacher time and others getting lots.
N (Relationship with notation)	Seeing students asking other students what signs and symbols mean. My thought: Do they need to understand all of the notation to understand the music?
PM (Previous Musical Experience)	Seeing how students reacted to musical language, some understood, some didn't. My thought: How much musical background do students have?
S (Measure of success)	Seeing how the students reacted when they got something right and when they got something wrong.
PA (Physical aspects of learning)	Seeing students struggle with instruments, complain that their backs/arms/fingers ache.

These concepts led to the questions devised for the group interview. The questions were designed to allow the students to discuss the issues surrounding the concepts that arose during the observation as well as offer any new topics.

The pilot study group interview was fully transcribed and to begin with, I coded the people using letters. This changed to numbers after the main study began so as to distinguish between the pilot study participants and the main study participants (a full list of participant codes is given in Appendix VII, page 287 **Error! Bookmark not defined.**). I then coded the data by assigning a key word label that gave a general description of the particular statement or conversation. For example, when students were talking about hand or finger position, I labelled this 'physical aspects'. At this stage

I felt that it was important to code all the data as even if a concept only appeared once in the pilot study interview, it was worth pursuing in individual interviews. I linked together these concepts through axial coding (Strauss and Corbin, 1990) and three categories emerged, shown in figure 7. I then assigned each category a colour and colour-coded the keywords as to which category they belonged to. This colour coding was an invaluable time-saver later on in the data analysis process as I could easily search through the transcripts in order to find the relevant data for each category.

Figure 7 – List of categories and codes after the pilot study group interview

Category	Concept
Individual Learning	Learning Notation
	Physical Technique
	Developing Skills
	Difficulties
	Child Adult Comparisons in Learning
	Reinforcement of Learning (relearning)
	Direct teacher input
Support	Teaching Style
	Peer Learning
	Peer Support
	Safety
	Time Out
	Anonymity
	Social
Motivation	'Same Boat'
	Hear the Next Step
	Realisation of Learning
	Measurements of Success
	Mental Stimulation
	External Motivation

After coding the pilot study group interview, individual interview questions were prepared for the students, the tutor and the past and present managers. Again, the questions were designed so as to allow participants to discuss the concepts that arose during the group interview and also offer new concepts. The individual interviews were again fully transcribed and coded using the concepts that arose during the group interview and adding new concepts as they appeared. Tesch (1990; 87) tells us that 'a category is not untouchable once it has been developed.' Coding should be systematic not rigid, therefore the codes and categories used evolved through the coding process and I was able to merge concepts and create new codes as the coding process progressed.

After a comparison of the concepts that arose in each interview, I decided to change some of the codes to better describe the data. I merged learning notation and physical technique into skills, changed difficulties into challenges, changed direct teacher input into teacher/student interaction, changed reinforcement of learning into pace and changed measurements of success into success/achievements.

The decision to change these was made after exploring literature surrounding the learning process and was influenced in particular by the literature concerning Activity Theory. At this stage I was beginning to explore Activity Theory as a way of viewing the learning process and as my understanding of the theory and how it can be applied grew, so did my understanding of how my concepts and categories linked together. As I became more familiar with the idea of mediation (See *II.2.c Activity Theory*, page 9) I began to see that aspects of learning notation and developing physical technique were all part of the skills used to fulfil the object. I later understood these to be the tools of the activity system. Similarly, I began to see what I had labelled as 'difficulties' as being the fundamental core of an objective, and so labelled these as 'challenges'. I later understood these challenges as being objects of activity. As I began to understand the division of labour involved in the learning process, I changed my 'direct teacher input' concept into teacher/student interaction, later realising how the level of interaction changed depending on where the students were in their learning. Reading literature surrounding differentiation (Philpott, 2001d) caused me to view 'reinforcement of learning' as 'pace of learning'. This later evolved into how the community is able to support differentiation in terms of the activity system. Finally, the transition of 'measurements of success' into 'success/achievement' was the result of gaining an understanding of the role of the outcome in the activity system.

During the process of coding the pilot study individual interviews, I also found nine new concepts. These were aural training (added to skills), confidence and learning style in the Individual Learning category, sub groups in the Group Interaction category and external teaching/learning, other musical activities, performance and goals in the Motivation category. I drew up a final list of categories and concepts after the pilot study and produced a check list so that I could see which interview contained which concepts. This list is shown in figure 8.

After coding the individual interviews in the pilot study I wrote up my initial analysis of the data. I took each concept in turn, collated all of the data that fell into each concept and looked for links and possible explanations based on the literature that I had read at this point. This served to start to formulate theory based on the data that could then be

developed through the main phase of the research. The result of this write up was a list of research questions (see Appendix IV, page 257) and these formed the basis of the next phase of observations and interviews. This also prompted me to explore literature surrounding motivation as, although my standpoint was from a social constructivist point of view, individual motivational factors emerged very strongly within the data. Therefore I needed to explore motivation as a concept and align it with my cultural psychological perspective so as to explain what the motivational forces that occur within a learning ensemble are and how they are used in the social environment (a discussion of the literature surrounding this and how it has been used is given in *II.5 Motivation*, page 27).

Figure 8 - List of categories and codes after the pilot study.

Area	Theme
Individual Learning	Skills
	Challenges
	Teacher/student interaction
	Confidence
	Comparisons
	Pace
	Learning style
Group Interaction	Social
	Reinforcement of Learning
	Peer learning
	Peer support
	Anonymity
	Teaching style
	Time out
	Safety
Motivation	Sub groups
	Same boat
	Hear the next step
	Realisation of learning
	Success/achievement
	Mental stimulation
	External motivation
	External teaching/learning
	Performance
	Goals
Other musical activities	

The coding process adopted in the pilot study was repeated with the main study. As interview transcripts were coded existing concepts were reinforced and new concepts emerged. During this phase a new category labelled Musical Identities emerged. This was a result of questions regarding how the students saw themselves as musicians that

came out of the write up of the pilot study. I also merged child/adult comparisons into success and achievement as the main reason for making a comparison was to discuss how the students were achieving and measuring their success. A final list of categories and codes was established (shown in figure 9) and a checklist grid was then used so that I could highlight which concepts appeared in each interview and easily cross reference data. This made analysis and writing up easier as I could go directly to the transcripts that contained the data that I needed.

Figure 9 – Final list of categories and concepts

Area	Theme
Individual Learning	Skills
	Ensemble Practice
	Challenges
	Personal practice
	Confidence
	Teacher/student interaction
	Material
	Pace
	Learning style
Group Interaction	Social
	Peer learning
	Peer support
	Anonymity
	Competition
	Teaching style
	Time out
	Safety
	View of self within the group
	Sub groups
Motivation	Same boat
	Hear the next step
	Realisation of learning
	Success/achievement
	Mental stimulation
	Performance
	Playing with others
	Producing music
	Goals
	Why do it
	Love of group
Musical Identities	Previous relationship with music
	Self opinion
	Others' perception
	View of a musician
	External teaching/learning
	Other musical activities

This process led to the bringing together of the data in the form of a story line developed through selective coding (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). The process by which this story line was developed involved writing a description of the axial coding process (Robson, 1993). I then produced a conference paper on the main theme. In total I did this six times, satisfying myself that the data did not produce any new categories. These conference papers allowed me to integrate my understanding of the learning process gained from exploring the literature with my analysis of the data. During the process of writing conference papers I was able to use activity theory to view my data, serving the purpose of firstly securing my understanding of activity theory, but also developing my own theory through the application of activity theory. As I brought my data together in a story line, I found that my concepts aligned with the activity system. The four categories that had emerged represented the four stages of the activity system. 'Individual Learning' represented the basic activity system, the interaction between the subject, the tools and the object. 'Group Interaction' represented the second level of the activity system added by Engeström (1999), the interactions of the rules, the community and the division of labour. 'Motivation' represented the application of the activity system as a whole and how the students use the activity system in order to continue on their learning path. 'Musical Identities' became the key to understanding how a student can use different activity systems simultaneously, resulting in the transformation of the two-dimensional activity system into a three-dimensional activity system. The final stage in the coding process was therefore to transform my list of concepts into the discussion of the data using the activity system, as seen by the chapter headings and sub-headings of *IV Discussion*.

III.3.f Sample

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000; 92) tell us that:

'Researchers must take sampling decisions early in the overall planning of a piece of research. Factors such as expense, time and accessibility frequently prevent researchers from gaining information for the whole population. Therefore they often need to be able to obtain data from a smaller group or subset of the total population in such a way that the knowledge gained is representative of the total population (however defined) under study.'

The decision as to how big my sample should be was made at the same time as the decision to use case study research. Initially, my view was that I would need one group to form a pilot study and then a number of groups to form the main study. The main decision was whether to use a larger number of groups so as to produce broad data or whether to use a smaller number of groups so as to produce deep data. I decided that I

wanted my case studies to be a deep study of the intricacies of learning within an ensemble (see *III.1 Research Approach* and *III.2 Flexible Design*, page 43) and therefore it would be more appropriate to use a smaller number of groups but study the groups in more detail.

The first group I set up was for the pilot study. The group I chose was a group that I knew I would have access to and was located very near to where I lived. I felt that this was important at this stage because the purpose of the pilot study was to test the field and develop the methods of data collection alongside the research questions. Therefore if I had difficulties in access and travel it might cloud my view of what the actual research might produce; I wanted to make the first exploratory stage as easy as possible. However, Denscombe (1998; 17) warns that '*convenience sampling is hard to equate with good research.*' Therefore I drew up a list of criteria, shown in figure 10, for my sample groups in order to satisfy myself that this group fitted in with the requirements of the research. I decided that all groups involved in the research must fit each criterion, but I wanted to ensure that I viewed complementary groups as well as similar groups. I purposely did not put any restrictions related to style of music learnt, instruments involved and geographical location. As I have previously stated, I did not wish to define my cases too narrowly in terms of typicality (page 44). Instead I wished to be able to present each group as a unique case, underlining the similarities between the cases in order to develop a model of learning. Therefore a method of purposive sampling was employed (Cohen *et al.*, 1993).

Figure 10 – List of criteria for selecting groups to participate in research

- Offers a learning programme within an ensemble
- Open to adults without audition
- Specific learning aims identified and made explicit
- Acts as both a performing ensemble as well as learning group
- Has regular weekly rehearsals
- No restriction to entry (i.e. no minimum period of previous experience)
- Self-selecting membership

The pilot study group was a small string ensemble with approximately 20 members. It was part of an adult learning initiative that I had worked on, but I had not worked with the particular group that I chose. Therefore I knew the tutor, the premises and the basic

structure of how the group operated. This was important at the pilot stage as not only did I want to focus on the actual research rather than the difficulties of gaining a sample, I wanted to appear as a confident researcher so as to gain the trust of the participants. For my first round of data collection I did not want to be dealing with unknown situations. When I had conducted the pilot study and gained confidence both in my research and my ability as a researcher, then I would be able to walk confidently into an unknown situation.

The group I interviewed consisted of seven students. They were a good representative sample of the learning ensemble that they belonged to in terms of age and instrument played but there was a difference in gender representation.

During observation the group comprised 66% female and 33% male participants yet the group interview comprised 43% female and 57% male. Participants were recruited on the basis of who wanted to take part. This was so students did not feel pressured in any way to participate in the research. This was a conscious decision on my part and I knew that it meant that I might not get a representative sample of students in terms of demographics. This decision however, although seemingly small, has shaped the entire project. The approach of this research, as stated earlier, is that people are individuals functioning within a society by finding meanings within that society. My concern is with those meanings, how both the individual and the group interpret them and how they allow the learning processes to take place. No two people who participated in my research are the same and for each person a different reality as to how their learning takes place exists. However, they are connected by their learning ensemble, which in turn has its own reality as to what its role is to the students and how it functions. Therefore I am working in multiple realities. If I turned my attention to a comparative study of gender, age, race and sexuality, for example, I would get side tracked from my initial concern. If I spent my time analysing what type of trees make up my forest, and consider why my forest only contains certain types of trees, I would be distracted from how they intertwine, grow and survive together.

From the group interview, two participants self-selected for individual interview. The interviewees were one male, one female. One student had individual lessons outside the group and one did not. One student was a cellist and one was a violinist. These were not the basis for selection from my point of view, but when I asked for volunteers for individual interview the participants decided together who would be good representatives of their group. This in itself says something about how this particular group functioned and was unexpected. Had I set criteria for selecting participants for individual interview,

I would not have found this insight into this group. Therefore I decided to employ this method of selection for individual interview. Where self-selection did not take place, I interviewed everyone that volunteered.

After the pilot sample proved successful, I recruited three groups using the same criteria. The groups were recruited through various means; one through a posting on the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM) adult learning online discussion forum, one through a contact made at a research seminar at the Royal College of Music and the third was linked in with the autoethnographic element of the research. The groups are all very different in terms of instrumentation, level of playing, music played and geographical location. The purposive sampling of unique groups has allowed me to construct a generic model of learning that can be flexible and tailored to each individual learning situation. If I had based my model on groups that were identical, then that model would only be useful to those specific types of groups.

Group 1 is a large string orchestra. The group is well established, having been in existence for over twenty years. The group is split into different levels, with a clear progression through each level. I used a group of Level Two students. The students had been playing for a least one year and so were able to comment on their participation in the group over a reasonable length of time. Group 2 is a medium sized orchestra that was established eight years prior to the first observation. This group is aimed at players who have already gained some technical ability and who want to learn how to play as an orchestra. Group 3 is a gamelan. It had been established for approximately a year before the first interview. This group was the link between the case studies and autoethnographic research.

In January 2006 I decided to bring in a fourth group. The reasons for this were two-fold. Firstly, after an initial analysis of the group interviews it appeared that there was far more correlation between the data than I had first expected. Therefore I wanted to bring in a fourth group to see if this was still the case, thus strengthening any developing theory as it would be firmly grounded in four case studies rather than three. The second reason for bringing in a fourth group was that although all the students in Group 1 had given me contact details to arrange individual interviews, only one student replied to the invitation to participate. Also, although very enthusiastic about an interview, the tutors were difficult to pin down to a time and place. I decided that to keep within my ethical code of not pressuring participants, I should not pursue the participants further (see *III.4.b Ethics*, page 75). Group 4 is a wind band. They had been in existence for two years prior to interview and had recently undergone a change of tutor. I was able to

interview the new tutor, but unfortunately the previous tutor had left in order to work as a musician aboard cruise liners, therefore he was not available for interview.

In July 2008 I brought in a fifth group. This group was very different to the other cases as it was a group of women prisoners who had participated in a week-long gamelan workshop as part of a prison education scheme. I came into contact with this group through my autoethnographic study and I decided to ask for permission to interview them. Permission was granted and I was able to conduct a single group interview with a selection of the women involved in the project. This interview was not recorded due to constraints on taking recording equipment into the prison and I did not go on to interview the women individually for reasons of access and ethics.

In all, during the pilot study I interviewed seven students in a group interview, two of which were followed up with individual interviews. I also interviewed one tutor and two managers. During the main phase of the research I interviewed 32 students from five groups in group interviews, 14 of which were followed up with an individual interview. Three tutors, two of which were also the manager of their group, were interviewed. One of these tutors was interviewed along with a group of students. Although participating as a student, I have identified him as a tutor as he is an experienced player who offers support to the group (see *IV.5.a Learning with and from each other*, page 129). In all, 46 participants were interviewed in 28 interviews during the course of the research.

III.4 Validity and Reliability

Silverman (2000; 175) says that

'Unless you can show your audience the procedures you used to ensure that your methods were reliable and your conclusions valid, there is little point in aiming to conclude a research dissertation.'

With such strong words of caution, I was keen to ensure that I monitored the reliability of my methods and validity of my data at each stage of the research process. As part of the write up of the pilot study I conducted an evaluation of the effectiveness of my research skills in order to assess the reliability of the research. As I had fully transcribed the interviews I could see how I acted in each of the interviews and check that I was not asking leading questions (Cohen et al., 2000). One thing that I noticed was that my character changed in each of my interviews and it can be seen quite strikingly at first glance of the transcripts.

During the group interview I maintained a role as a facilitator for discussion. As previously described, the aim of the interview was to allow the participants to discuss the issues themselves, with probes from me if necessary. This is apparent in the transcripts as my interjections are short, sparse and mainly form a short question. Comparing the group interview with the individual interviews shows how my character as a researcher changes. Looking at the interview with Student P2 (see *Appendix III*, page 247) there is a full page of data from the student after the first question.

Figure 11 – List of qualities of a good interviewer

- **Knowledgeable:** Has an extensive knowledge of the interview theme... the interviewer will know what issues are important to pursue, without attempting to shine with his or her extensive knowledge.
- **Structuring:** Introduces a purpose for the interview, outlines the procedure in passing, and rounds off the interview.
- **Clear:** Poses clear, simple, easy, and short questions; speaks distinctly and understandably, does not use academic language or professional jargon.
- **Gentle:** Allows subject to finish what they are saying, lets them proceed at their own rate of thinking and speaking. Is easy-going, tolerates pauses, indicates that it is acceptable to put forward unconventional and provocative opinions and to treat emotional issues.
- **Sensitive:** Listens actively to the content of what is said... seeks to get the nuances of meaning described more fully. Is empathetic and feels when a topic is too emotional to continue.
- **Open:** Hears which aspect of the interview topic are important for the interviewee.
- **Steering:** Knows what he or she wants to find out. Is not afraid of interrupting digressions from the interviewee.
- **Critical:** Does not take everything that is said at face value, but questions critically to test the reliability and validity of what the interviewees tell.
- **Remembering:** Retains what a subject has said during the interview, can recall earlier statements and ask to have them elaborated, and can relate what has been said during different parts of the interview.
- **Interpreting:** Manages throughout the interview to clarify and extend the meanings of the interviewee's statements; provides interpretations of what is said, which may then be disconfirmed or confirmed by the interviewee.

(Kvale, 1996; 148-9)

Then the interjections become more frequent, although still no more than two or three per page, and the questions longer. Looking at the transcript of Student P1's interview, a different interviewer character is seen again. The interjections are mainly short but they are more frequent than in the previous interviews. It is important to note here that I did know the participant and as a result the manner in which the interview was conducted was more informal than other interviews. It was my intention to be more informal with this participant as the knowledge that I had of him allowed me to use a character that could get the best response; I knew he would not respond to a very formal structured style of interview. The informal tone of the interview is clearly heard on the recording, again something that a paper transcript cannot show. In contrast, the tone of the interviews with the managers is formal. The interview with the tutor shows a different character again. The recording clearly shows this a 'chat between friends' more than a formal interview, the participant being a colleague of mine.

At the time of conducting the pilot study interviews I felt that I should act the same in each interview, group and individual, so as to validate my data. However during the interviews I sensed that I needed to change my way of questioning to suit the person that I was interviewing so that I could elicit a natural response.

Looking back, the transcripts show that this was a good decision as the more natural the conversation, the richer the data. Kvale lists the qualifications needed for an effective interviewer, shown in figure 11 (page 72). After evaluating my effectiveness in the pilot study I decided that I could be all of these things as well as adapting my character to suit the person who I interviewed, and in fact I should adapt my character in order to be all of these things. Therefore I decided that the consistency of these qualities in the interviews, along with the rigour with which I coded, categorised, compared, re-tested theory and consistently analysed the data, rather than the actual words that I used in the interview, was the key to making my data valid and reliable.

III.4.a Insider/Outsider Research

The evaluation of the pilot study was crucial in the evolution of my interviewing technique. The ability to change character to suit the participant, and the importance of doing so in order to produce rich data depended on how well I could utilise my position as an insider or outsider researcher. LeGallais (2003) suggests that researchers should explore their position along a continuum of 'native' and 'stranger'. During the pilot study, my position as an insider or an outsider changed depending on who was being interviewed and as I changed character to suit the participant, I used this position to my

advantage in order to obtain the best data I could. By being aware of my position along LeGallais' continuum, and changing my interview character to suit each position, I was able to *'utilise the best aspects of both roles to inform and enhance the research experience'* (LeGallais, 2003; 3). However, when I looked critically at my researcher position in the evaluation of the pilot study, I found that I not only moved along this continuum, but I also appeared to be in two positions at any one time.

As an instrumental teacher, I have been directly involved in an adult learning ensemble project. As previously stated, the group used in the pilot study was one known to me and was part of the same project. This put my position as the researcher towards the insider end of the continuum. However, the group that participated was not a group that I had worked with, so to the students I was an outsider. Therefore I was both insider and outsider at the same time. Furthermore, within the group, one participant was a parent of one of my students. This added an extra dimension to the interview. Similarly, another participant was a parent of a previous student who is now a colleague. This participant was also an individual interviewee. As a researcher I was initially concerned about interviewing this participant, and tried to assume a position as a researcher during the interview. However, prior knowledge of the interviewee helped in adopting an appropriate interview style and although during the interview the participant made comments such as *'as you know,'* I do not think that this compromised the quality of the data received.

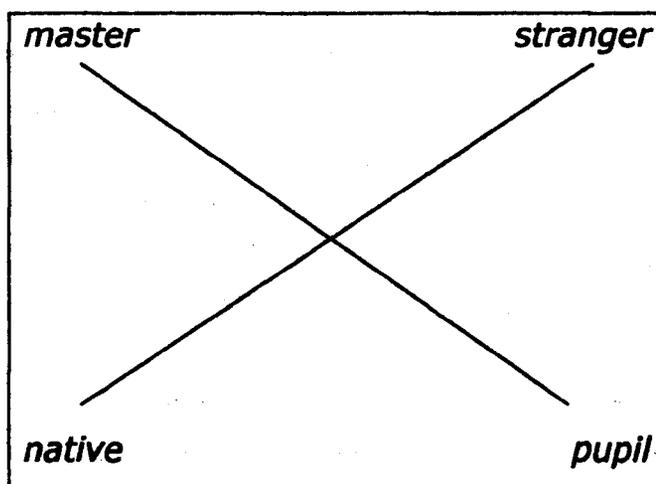
Interestingly, there are some contradictions as to my role of the researcher. As a musician who plays an orchestral instrument I am in an insider position. However, I have no experience of playing a stringed instrument. This also makes me an outsider. I deliberately chose a string group for the pilot study for this reason. Although it is impossible to eliminate all bias (Bell, 1999), I wanted to attempt to be as objective as possible and felt that by using a group where I was more a stranger than a native, this would help.

The second contradiction is regarding my experience as a teacher/pupil. As a musician I was clearly in an insider position, having knowledge of music theory and music teaching, but as an advanced player rather than a beginner I was an outsider. I had no experience of what it is like to be an adult learning music for the first time since school and therefore could not put myself in the same position as these adults. When I analysed the transcripts of the pilot study I became very aware that to the students there was a clear distinction between themselves and 'a musician'. The realisation of this caused me some concern. I am a musician, so to a student who knows me as a 'musician' am I someone

who is perceived as far more accomplished than they? If so, would this affect my relationship as an interviewer and could it create a barrier in interview?

This was addressed in the main phase of the research by the introduction of the autoethnographic study. In terms of insider/outsider research, I am now able to place myself along a continuum of 'stranger' or 'native' as well as a continuum of 'master' or 'pupil' in order to view the data, as shown in figure 12. This gives me a much wider angle from which to view and analyse my data as well as an extra dimension to my ability to be knowledgeable and sensitive to the participants.

Figure 12 - Positions from which to carry out insider/outsider research



(Henley, 2006; 105)

III.4.b Ethics

Cohen *et al.* (2000; 56) state that

'Social scientists generally have a responsibility not only to their profession in its search for knowledge and quest for truth, but also for the subjects they depend on for their work. Whatever the specific nature of their work, social researchers must take into account the effects of the research on participants, and act in such a way as to preserve their dignity as human beings.'

Pring (2004) discusses ethics in educational research projects in terms of the moral decisions that a researcher must take during the course of the research. For me these fall into two categories: permissions and respect.

In terms of permissions, these include the following:

Permission to:

- access groups
- observe participants
- interview participants
- record and fully transcribe interviews
- write about participants
- use quotes from the participants in any written form
- publish anything written about participants or that uses participants' quotes

I did not assume that once a person participated in an interview or an observation, then that was consent for me to use that contribution as I wished, so these permissions were all gained at each stage of the research (Mason, 2002). Participants were fully informed of what was expected of them before participating in observations and interviews. They were told when the interview would take place, how long it would be and the format that the interview would take (Bell, 1999). A letter explaining the research and outlining the confidentiality code was given to each participant. The confidentiality code being:

- All information given in interview is in confidence.
- No reference to names or places will be made in any written or verbal account of the research.
- Participants have the right to withdraw at any stage of the research.

This was reinforced at the beginning of each interview. Interviewees were told that nothing in the interview would be discussed other than in academic writing or presentation, that they would not be referred to personally in any academic writing or presentation and that they could contribute as little or as much as they liked to the interview, withdrawing at any point. Consent to participation and acceptance of the confidentiality code was asked for directly prior to switching on recording equipment. In order to record consent for group interviews (Wisker, 2008) I asked each participant to state his or her name at the beginning of the recording. To record consent for individual interview, I made a statement that recording equipment was switched on and active and participants were asked if they were happy to continue. Participants were given the option of listening to recordings and reading transcripts if they wished. No participant requested this.

In order to gain consent for participation in written accounts, each participant involved was contacted and informed of my wish to use their contribution in the paper. Once permission was granted, copies of the relevant paper were sent to the participants before publication or presentation. Participants had the opportunity to alter, contradict or withdraw from these papers at any point. No participants withdrew their contribution or contradicted anything that I had written.

In terms of respect, my main concern has been with the difficulties of 'speaking for others'. Ellingson (2009; 37) says that

'Reframing our participants' words within our theoretical frames benefits us far more than them, and may even serve to harm participants. Certainly, no matter how well intentioned, the process of representing other's experience remains fraught with significant challenges.'

One paper I wrote was based on four students' stories (Henley, 2008a). I used the students' stories to show how students used the concept of 'possible selves' to motivate their learning and it involved a narrative of the students' history and participation in their learning ensemble. In order to guard against making any assumptions about the students, and to keep within my code of permissions, I sent the paper to the students involved prior to presenting it. I had changed the names of the students in the paper to keep within my confidentiality code and three out of the four students commented on how 'spot on' I had got their stories and how they could relate to their character. All students were happy to be used for the paper.

My method of asking permission and sending out written accounts to the participants not only adds to the validity of the research, but has also enabled me to show the participants that I respect their contribution, keeping them actively involved in the research process. One of the benefits of conducting a research project that uses both autoethnography and contrasting case studies is that I can present a multi-voiced opinion on a topic. Throughout this thesis I have presented differences of opinion and used these to form my arguments. In this way I can show respect for the participants' differences of opinion and use them in a productive way.

One major decision that I had to make in terms of ethical considerations was whether I told the members of my gamelan group what I was doing. Would I be showing the participants in the research disrespect if I were covert about my autoethnographic study? On the other hand, if I were open about it, would this alter their behaviour? After careful consideration about the aims of the autoethnographic study, I decided that there

was no reason why I needed to be covert. As discussed previously, the point of the study was to research myself and how I reacted to learning in an ensemble. Therefore there was no reason why the members of the group should not know what I was doing. This also made it easier to keep my ethical code consistent in the case studies; I could not see how I could conduct a case study that included observing and interviewing whilst being a covert researcher within the group. In terms of respect for my participants, it is important to stress that the data in my diary is my reality and not an attempt to reconstruct that of the other members of the group. It is my view of how I interacted with other people and it is completely partial and biased. I am not attempting to represent a point of view of the others, nor am I trying to second-guess what the others might be thinking or feeling. The point is that it documents what I was thinking and feeling at the time so that I can analyse my experiences in the same way that I can analyse others' experiences via the interview data. There are instances in the diary where I observe the behaviour of two or more members of the group and then put my own meaning to that behaviour, but these are absolutely crucial in my understanding of how a person constructs a meaning within a social group. That meaning may be completely different to the intended meaning of the others but as it is my own construction, it is valid as I have always ensured that the diary relates back to me; what I thought, how I reacted. My diary shows both moments of joy and of frustration. Being part of a social group, these naturally involve other people. I do not see a difference in referring to other members of the group in an account of my own experience and the other participants referring to other members of their groups in their accounts of their own experience; therefore as long as I have kept within my own confidentiality code, I see no reason to exclude data that refers to other group members.

In all, the participants in this research project have been more than willing to contribute. Whereas some participants have decided not to continue with their contribution to the research, no one has withdrawn any contribution. The participants have been happy to be part of the research process and have been very forthcoming in their contributions. They have allowed me to video them to provide further support for the research (although not part of the research process, I have used video footage in oral conference presentations). This has made the research process easier and the ethical code that I have worked in has produced a mutual respect for researcher/participant. This has been invaluable in the research process.

III.5 Presenting the research

What I have described above is a research project that takes a social constructivist viewpoint, uses a flexible design with a combination of case study, autoethnographic and grounded theory approaches. I have attempted to collect both partial and impartial data so as to provide a spectrum of experiences that can be analysed. In order to draw all of these different methods and approaches together, I have presented the research as a crystallized project. Ellingson (2009; 10) suggests that *'crystallization manifests in qualitative projects that*

- *Offer deep, thickly described, complexly rendered interpretations of meanings about a phenomenon or group.*
- *Represent ways of producing knowledge across multiple points of the qualitative continuum, generally including at least one middle-ground (constructivist or post positivist) and one interpretive, artistic, performative or other creative analytic approach; often crystallized texts reflect several contrasting ways of knowing.*
- *Utilize more than one genre of writing (e.g., poetry, narrative, report) and/or other medium (e.g., video, painting, music).*
- *Include a significant degree of reflexive consideration of the researcher's self and roles in the process of research design, data collection, and representation.*
- *Eschew positivist claims to objectivity and a singular, discoverable truth in favor of embracing knowledge as situated, partial, constructed, multiple, embodied, and enmeshed in power relations.'*

Ellingson (2009; 8-9) puts forward a qualitative continuum (shown in figure 13), suggesting that rather than a dichotomy of art/science, there is a continuum at which art anchors one end and science anchors the other. Most qualitative researchers occupy a point between the two ends and what crystallization does is allow the research to move along this continuum in order to utilise a variety of different viewpoints to produce the best research (Ellingson, 2009). The points related to this research project have been highlighted in red. It is easy to see that although mainly situated in the middle ground, there are strong elements of the art/impressionist end of the continuum and some elements of the science/realist end. Therefore I have utilised different viewpoints so as to present this research in the most effective way.

Figure 13 – Qualitative Continuum

	Art/Impressionist	Middle-Ground Approaches	Science/Realist
Goals	To unravel accepted truths To construct personal truths To explore the specific To generate art	To construct situated knowledges To explore the typical To generate description and understanding To trouble the taken-for-granted To generate pragmatic implications for practitioners	To discover objective truth To generalize to larger population To explain reality "out there" To generate scientific knowledge To predict and control behaviour
Questions	How do we/can we cope with life? What other ways can we imagine? What is unique about my or another's experience?	How do participants understand their world? How do the participants and author co-construct a world? What are the pragmatic implications of research?	What does it mean for the researcher's point of view? What is the relationship among factors? What behaviours can be predicted?
Methods	Autoethnography Interactive interviewing Participant observation Performance Sociological introspection Visual arts	Semistructured interviewing Focus groups Participant observation/ethnography Thematic, metaphoric, and narrative analysis Grounded Theory Case studies Participatory action research Historical/archival research	Coding textual data Random sampling Frequencies of behaviours Measurement Surveys Structured interviews
Writing	Use of first-person voice Library techniques Stories Poetry/Poetic transcription Multivocal, multigenre texts Layered accounts Experiential forms Personal reflections Open to multiple interpretations	Use of first-person voice Incorporation of brief narratives in research reports Use "snippets" of participants' words Usually a single interpretation, with implied partiality and positionality Some consideration of researcher's standpoint(s)	Use of passive voice "View from nowhere" (Haraway, 1998) Claim single authoritative interpretation Meaning summarized in tables and charts Objectivity and minimization of bias highlighted
Researcher	Researcher as the main focus, or as much the focus of research as other participants	Participants are main focus, but researcher's positionality is key to forming findings	Research is presented as irrelevant to results
Vocabularies	Artistic/Interpretive: inductive, personal, ambiguity, change, adventure, improvisation, process, concrete details, evocative experience, creativity, aesthetics	Social constructionist /Postpositivist: inductive, emergent, intersubjectivity, process, themes, categorized, thick description, co-creation of meaning, social construction of meaning, standpoint, ideology	Positivist: deductive, tested, axioms, measurement, variables, manipulation of conditions, control, predication, generalizability, validity, reliability, theory driven
Criteria	Do stories ring true, resonate, engage, move? Are they coherent, plausible, interesting, aesthetically pleasing?	Flexible criteria Clarity and openness of processes Clear reasoning and use of support Evidence of researcher's reflexivity	Authoritative rules Specific criteria for data, similar to quantitative Proscribed methodological processes

The research is presented as a report layered with autobiographical accounts and personal reflection on the experiences encountered by myself as a participant and also by myself as a practitioner within the field of learning ensembles. The crystallization of

the research allows the audience to see the multi-faceted nature of the enquiry and allows myself as a researcher to use writing as a creative process in order to analysis my data and present my theories, whilst keeping within the traditional reporting framework of a social constructivist research project.

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IV Discussion

IV.1 Chapter 1 – Introducing the Subject

The discussion of the findings of this research falls into two parts. In Chapters 1 to 8 I shall discuss the learning process found within the learning ensemble in detail. This discussion will look at each aspect of the learning process in turn. Then, in Chapters 9-13, I shall combine all of these aspects looking holistically at the musical learning process in order to discuss motivational factors within the learning ensemble and the personal transformation that occurs as an outcome of learning in this way. For the discussion of the learning process I will use Activity Theory, and so before introducing the subject, I shall briefly discuss the application of Activity Theory to musical learning.

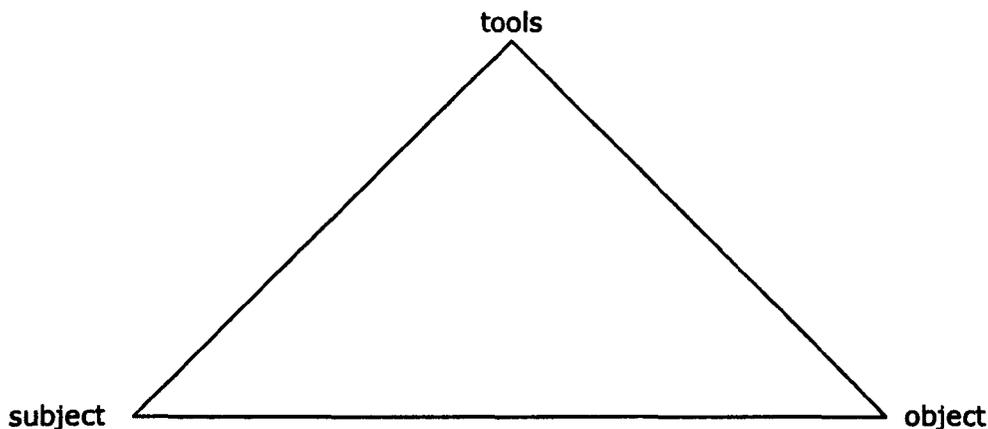
Activity Theory is a way of looking at learning in terms of the interactions between the person undertaking the activity (the subject), their object (or goal) and the tools that they use to carry out that object. Nardi (1997; 73) explains:

'Actions are goal-directed processes that must be undertaken to fulfil the object.'

Learning a musical instrument can be seen as a series of actions undertaken by the student so as to reach a specific goal. For example, a student may wish to learn to play a tune in the key of D major. In order to do so, the student must become familiar with the technical aspects of playing in D major, i.e. playing a sharp F and a sharp C. They must know how to physically produce these notes on their instrument and also know what they sound like in relation to a natural F and a natural C so as to identify whether the note has been played correctly. To do this they may decide to learn the scale of D major. This action is specifically directed towards the goal of learning how to produce the sharp notes within the context of the key in order to fulfil the object of playing a tune in D major. Activity Theory maps out the different factors involved in these interactions and provides a lens through which to view these processes.

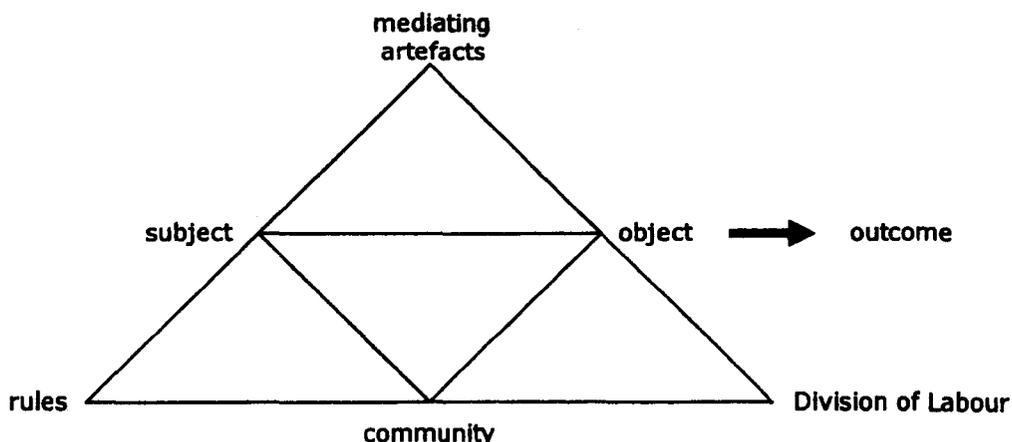
The traditional model shows the interaction only between the subject, the object and the tools (also called mediating artefacts) in the form of a triangle and is described as an activity system, shown in figure 14 (page 84). The subject is the student; the object is to play music. The subject uses tools such as the instrument and the notation to fulfil this object. The notation or the instrument cannot play the music without the student, and the student cannot produce the music without the tools.

Figure 14 - A basic activity system



However, this process does not happen in social isolation and Engeström (1999) presented another layer to the activity system, shown in figure 15, to reflect this. Three more triangles represent the interactions between: the subject, the rules and the community; the subject, the community and the object; and finally the community, the division of labour and the object. So we are able to view the context within which the D major scale has been learnt, and see how the student has interacted with this in order to learn. It is this model of the Activity System that I shall use to discuss the learning processes occurring within a learning ensemble.

Figure 15 - Engeström's activity system



(Engeström, 1999; 31)

Engeström also added the outcome to this activity system, representing the fact that the outcome is separate from the object. For example, the object might be to play 'Ode to

Joy' on the violin so as to secure the D major scale, and the outcome might be a performance of this piece.

IV.1.a Leisure musicians

The musical learners in this research are different to those found in either a semi-professional amateur ensemble or learning in isolation. These people have chosen to play in an ensemble where they can learn the skills involved in playing their instrument within a social environment. I have previously described these learners as *leisure musicians* (Henley, 2007a). These adults are turning to instrumental learning purely for the joy of making music. Their intentions are not to make a career out of playing; there are no obvious connections with their jobs or any opportunities to use this learning as part of skills training for their employer, they have undertaken the activity for the primary purpose of wanting to play a musical instrument for their leisure. Within this, there are of course many reasons for wanting to do so. Some students did not have the chance to learn as a child and always wanted to play, like Student P1.

'I just didn't play anything [previously], even when I was at school. It wasn't a musical school anyway, it just wasn't a subject that I pursued or anyone did. So it wasn't until my daughter started that inspired me to start really.'

Student O joined her learning ensemble because she simply wanted a new hobby:

'My children all play through the local authority's music school and they seem to get a lot out of it. I was kind of looking for a new hobby, I heard [about the group on a] radio programme... last year, and I applied to join.'

Like Students P1 and O, other students' decision to join a learning ensemble has been influenced by their children. Student Y joined her learning ensemble because her son was involved in a music centre. She describes why she chose the clarinet.

'I didn't have any formal musical education much at school other than singing classes... then I'm actually a teacher and at the first school I worked in had a big choral society... so I discovered I could sing by accident... and so I started singing. And... five years ago I had serious health problems and... prior to that I'd actually acquired a flute but because of the nature of the illness I had I lost a lot of strength in my left arm and found I couldn't play the flute and didn't do any more about it until, my son was at a music centre, this is how I knew [about the group], and I thought I would be alright with an instrument that was straight down instead of having to hold something up.'

This then inspired her husband, Student AA, to join. However, he joined a little after the beginner group had started and found it quite difficult at first.

'Well I didn't have any instrument to start with, and I wasn't sure I wanted to do it and then because my son and wife were doing it I thought 'I'll give it a try'.

Didn't you get the book yourself and get yourself up to speed?

I did. I got the book and I went through all the exercises and got to almost the same point that she was at and then the big shock was when I had to come and play with a group of other people.

Oh really?

Oh yeah, that was a real problem. Sitting in my room here playing away was quite OK. As soon as I came to play with other people it was like 'They don't stop when I can't remember how to play that note!'

The students above all say that they had no musical training at school. Student B on the other hand did learn to play the violin at school and she has returned to it through her learning ensemble.

'I hadn't really thought about taking up the violin again for a long time. I hadn't played for about 25 years, and if you'd asked me three years ago if I could have envisaged spending every Saturday doing four hours' worth of playing again I would have said you were mad, I couldn't actually see any way back in. And I had vaguely been thinking of it simply because I had found my old violin at my sister's house and I'd gradually been doing things, I'd taken it to the local violin shop and got it fixed up. But I was totally puzzled about, I didn't know if I had the drive or the energy or anything, or even the time to really do it. And in fact it was on one of the forays to the local violin shop that I saw a poster for it. As far as I was concerned it was a real lifesaver.'

For a student like Student B who has played an instrument previously, the learning ensemble provides the perfect forum in which to refresh skills and continue learning. Also, the level that she reached at school did not allow her to play in many local orchestras. Therefore her learning ensemble is not only allowing her to refresh her skills, but also pick up from where she left off, playing at a level that is comfortable for her but with the opportunity to develop when she is ready.

For the players of Group 2, where the learning is pitched at an intermediate level and prior instrumental skill is required, an outlet for students who like Student B have reached this level but want to play without the pressure of a demanding auditioning orchestra is provided, as Student H explains.

'The good thing about it is that it's completely non-judgmental, you don't audition to get in.'

Many amateur orchestras operate at a fairly advanced level and have audition procedures. They can be over competitive or critical of someone who is not quite at the level of the other players, as Student G found out.

'I started two years ago and I thought I would never be able to get to play with people for years and years and years and I tried some other group and my view was confirmed. Then I spoke to someone who plays and she said try [Group 2], and I expect it's the wrong word, but I've been tolerated cheerfully [laughter] and that's important for somebody in my position... I'd already tried another small orchestra thing and it didn't work at all, in fact I rather resented the fact that I was told that people that didn't stick it didn't have any gumption. I felt that at my age and my time of life and after all I'd done, I didn't need some formidable woman who'd never done music in her life telling me about gumption. So I was very relieved to find somewhere that I could at least get started. Because playing with others, especially for an adult, is not that easy a thing to achieve.'

For members of Group 3, the reasons for joining their learning ensemble are slightly different because of the different style of music, and the gamelan attracts students with highly developed musical performance skills alongside those with no previous experience of playing a musical instrument. Student K has a strong musical background:

'[I was] brought up by parents who loved classical music primarily, my mum sang in choirs, amateur choirs, and they were great concert goers so they encouraged their two children to learn instruments. So I started piano at six, cello at seven, always wanted to play double bass so started that at nine.'

She went to Music College and she now plays professionally. When I asked her why she joined her learning ensemble she said that she *'was intrigued by it'*. She continued

'When I was doing my Master's degree [my tutor] said go off and do as many bizarre cultural experiences as you can while you are here [laughter] so we have this thing called BCE, Bizarre Cultural Experiences in our house [lots of laughter] and we try to collect as many as possible. So when we heard there was a gamelan...'

Student R joined the group purely because a group of friends were going.

'I went along not knowing what it was at all. I'd heard a description of it but I didn't really know what it was. And I went along with about five other friends and I think we suddenly boosted the group by about half because there were only about five people there at that time. And I thought it sounded relaxing and I thought I'd had a really stressful day at work and yet I felt really calm after it. Even though I couldn't do it, it didn't seem to matter very much. It just

felt, with all the sounds coming from the people who could play even if I couldn't keep up, it felt like a kind of therapy really more than a lesson.'

And then students M and N joined because of past experiences. After a music degree at university, Student M moved to London and *'was involved in various experimental groups as well as orchestras.'* Within his *'experimental groups'* he played a lot of Messiaen's music (Messiaen was greatly influenced by gamelan) so when the chance came to join the gamelan, he took it. Student N also came to gamelan through an interest in Messiaen and had experience of Balinese gamelan in the 1970s, as he explains.

'Actually gamelan and me go back a long way, like [Student M] I did a lot of Twentieth Century stuff and I was really interested in Messiaen and, this is when I was at University, this is, you know this is back in the late 70's which is before universities in this country had gamelans... but I still got to hear lots of records. And then when I discovered that my then best buddy's girlfriend was going off to Bali to do a bit of research for what was going to be a PhD in Balinese music and he said why don't you go along and hang on, so it's like you know Balinese music, you can keep her company. So I went, the end result was that I ended up marrying her [Laughter]. We did spend a month and a bit in Bali together back in 1980 and so I learnt some Balinese gamelan then... being 1980 when we came back, there was no work for gamelan players or teachers really in England then, so we went back to our freelancing in early music but always... in the back of my mind was that I would always like to get back into gamelan. When I lived in London, although there was gamelan playing in London in the 90's, 80's and 90's, I just didn't have time. But then, moved here and then when I heard that the town was getting its gamelan I thought, Ok, right, here's my chance to get back into it all these years.'

Family members who play an instrument are a strong influence. Other influences include playing an instrument at school and wishing to *'dust off the cobwebs'* and wanting to learn a new skill. Student P2 explains why she joined her learning ensemble.

'I started because my son started to learn the cello and to keep him motivated I said that he could try and teach me to read music and to play after his lesson. I was quite taken with it so... I decided to hire a cello of my own to keep on learning and... I started getting lessons then one-to-one with my son's teacher.'

However, she found that *'as an adult and as a beginner there aren't very many forums where you can practise and have a go at stuff.'* Her teacher told her about the learning ensemble and she decided to join. When asked how she found playing in the group after having individual lessons she said:

'it gave you a whole load more freedom and the ability to see how other people were doing and how quickly they were learning.... Doing one-to-one when I just don't know, I've never played an instrument, I can't read music and I don't know how people sound when they do well apart from you know Yo Yo Ma,

people like that... I don't know whether I'm doing well, whether I'm getting on reasonably or if I should give up now. It just gives you an opportunity to sort of... doing it amongst other people that are learning to try and gauge the right sort of speed...'

To this student, the experience of learning alongside other people gave her the chance to place her own learning in context with other learners and also to ensure that she is learning at a 'normal' pace. Unlike school children who are often more able to compare themselves to others around them who are also learning an instrument, this student had felt isolated as an adult beginner cellist until she joined her group. She continued:

'I find that [in my individual lessons I] was going too slow... I don't want to sit down and play Jingle Bells... I want to try and stretch and do some hard things, and I don't mind if I don't do them well, but I want to keep the interest up by trying to do hard things and I don't feel... that the way that I am being taught one-to-one is keeping my interest as an adult whereas this group does do that.'

It is clear that this student feels that she does not get as rich a learning experience from her individual lessons as she does learning within her group. So, what is it that the group provides that keeps her learning alive, and why can she not get this from an individual lesson?

IV.2 Chapter 2 - Social Music Making

Traditionally within Western Classical music, instrumental learning has been carried out on a one-to-one basis, 'expert' teacher to 'novice' pupil (Gaunt, 2008). In many people's eyes, parents included, the more 'expert' the teacher, the better the learning experience is perceived to be. Recent years have seen a shift in instrumental teaching towards group teaching. Young, Burwell and Pickup (2003; 140) commented on this shift '*from the conservatoire model towards a more eclectic, inclusive one.*' In Nerland's (2007) discussion of different teaching strategies employed in one-to-one teaching she explains that '*teaching is heavily bounded in the historical practices of music performance*' (p.399) The teaching and learning in academies of music is centred on the one-to-one teaching of a principal instrument where '*the positions of teacher and student are institutionally regulated*' (p.400). If this is the way high-level music academies teach the elite of the performance world, the role models for many learners, then it is easy to see why the view that the best way to learn an instrument is through one-to-one lessons is held by so many. However, for an adult learner, this may not be the case.

When asked "Why provide a learning opportunity for adults as a learning ensemble?" Manager A said

'Most of the things we do in life are done as groups, you know, we survive as families in groups, we don't always get on, but we survive. We work in the work place generally in groups and when you look in the group context, the best groups are those that can interact together and move forward together and pupils in school are used to working in groups, in groups of 30, sometimes in smaller groups, so why is it that in instrumental teaching there is a mentality amongst teachers that of course we can teach in groups but we are not going to get the same standard?'

This is a very interesting question. Moreover, as Lave and Wenger (1991; 35) say

'learning is an integral part of generative social practice in the lived-in world.'

The idea that a person learns through the situation that they are in, and that the learning is a fundamental ingredient of the social world that they are a part of, is the essence of the concept of legitimate peripheral participation developed by Lave and Wenger (1991). In relation to adult learning ensembles, the key factor to the learning is what the practice of the community is. If the learner wishes only to learn for the sake of learning an instrument and has no desire to participate in the social creation of music, then being part of a community of practice where the practice is that of learning an instrument on an individual basis may suffice. However, if the learner wishes to be part

of a musical experience with others and join an ensemble, performing music in a social context, then they can only do so by being part of the practice of the social creation of music. To a leisure musician the idea of the act of learning an instrument may not be the motivation for learning, but the desire to create music and play with others may provide a far greater stimulus; they do not want to learn an instrument, but they want to be able to play the instrument (whatever words they use to express this desire). So, whatever their reasons for wanting to do so, they all have the same object of social music making. By engaging in the learning of a musical instrument through a learning ensemble, they are entering a community of practice of social music making.

IV.2.a The practice of practising

Davidson, Hare and Sloboda (1997; 192) claim that in the development of musical performance skill *'the most directly effective activity for skill acquisition is deliberate practice'* and the need for practice has been widely discussed in relation to how musicians learn (Miklaszewski, 2004). Furthermore, the opening statement of Hallam's (1998) chapter on Practice in *Instrumental Teaching* is *'all musicians practise'* (p.135). However, to many students who are members of a learning ensemble, personal solitary practice is not necessarily something that they want to participate in or may not have time for, as Student D states, *'practising is a problem actually too.'*

If practice is a problem, why is it necessary? Hallam (1998; 136-7) explains

'Practice serves a number of functions. These depend on the level of expertise of the musician and the preparations required for particular performances. For beginner musicians practice is required to develop a range of musical skills: the technical skills for playing the instrument, listening skills to monitor whether the music is being played appropriately and skills concerned with reading and performing music.'

Practice for novice musicians is particularly important for developing automaticity. Many of the skills involved in playing a musical instrument are carried out, by expert players, with little conscious effort. They have been repeated sufficiently often for them to be undertaken automatically, rather as many aspects of driving a car become automated as experience is gained. The advantage of skills becoming relatively automatic is that attention can then be focused on other aspects of performance, for instance, playing musically, synchronizing playing with others, or following a conductor.'

If this is indeed the case, practising skills are vital to musical development and this is something that all students should be aware of. However, Student D's view that practice is a problem is not a unique view and most students felt that they should be doing more practice, feeling guilty when they did not, as Student D and O explain.

D I get frustrated because I can't play.

O Yes.

Do you?

D And I'm cursing myself because I didn't...

A Yes, yes, yes. Exactly and you feel guilty.

D You do feel guilty to read the newspaper...

O Yes it's on a guilt trip.

D It's a guilt trip isn't it?

O Yes.'

Student O goes some way to explain why the students feel that they need to practise more.

O Most people are probably between you know, thirty and seventy really, there's a whole range, but by that time you've kind of got your adult life organised [agreement] and most people who come here are a fairly self selected group [agreement] who manage they own lives or feel reasonably content and... [are competent] in their work life, and to actually come here and find you are not very good at something, it's quite hard... It's quite a hard thing to manage...[agreement] if you're... so used to being on top of your...

C But then again for me it's like, what I put in is what I get out ...

O Yes, that's absolutely right.

C And I think there is an onus on all of us to, to do personal work...

A Well we all know that don't we. What we do and what we should do...

[general agreement and laughter]

O This is what it comes down to.

A It's not the same thing.

O It's the guilt thing isn't it, I mean at home, if I need to do something at home I do it. If I hadn't finished something I needed to do for work I'd take it home and deal with it, I wouldn't be sloppy about work. But it's leisure so I don't do it. I feel I put in that four hours here I don't think I've ever missed, there's one session where I was ill apart from that I haven't missed anything. But when I get home I tend not to do anything else. And I mean to, I mean to go and practise during the week and I don't and I come back here week after week and there's this feeling of guilt and, and, but not guilt exactly but this feeling of failure [agreement] for not having done something...

A Disappointment in yourself.

A *Disappointment in yourself, that's right.*

B *But it's entirely self ...*

A *Yes, yes.*

B *Self generated isn't it?'*

It appears that these students are putting a great deal of pressure upon themselves to practise so that they can improve their playing. They all feel that practice is necessary but actually motivating themselves to do it is where the difficulty lies. Student D highlights where her motivation for practice lies.

'And there's concerts and they always, ok, got to practise now.'

Student E shows that she is aware of the relationship between practice and progress and uses it rationally as a way to resolve her own issues regarding achievement.

'E But there [are]... sort of advantages. If you know that you haven't really practised all week then it doesn't, then you sort of think that's the reason that I'm not very good.

A *You know where if you had practised...*

E *If I had practised I'd be really good.'* [laughter]

Student O adds to this

'Somebody who started the same time as me who's also a beginner, who's also middle aged with grown up, she's effectively just a grown up in a household, I mean she did practise every day and there's no doubt that when we get these [sings] she can just whiz through them ...'

The interesting paradox here is that whilst the students feel this tremendous amount of guilt about not practising, it is entirely created by themselves; they are fully aware of why they do not practise enough.

'O But I think perhaps is an issue for most of us, I mean effectively I hardly say I do anything when I get home, very occasionally... I mean there are people who, and there are different lifestyles one of the cellos I think he played as a child and when he came I think he said he wanted to become really good and he gets in from work at 5.30 and he has his cello sitting there and I think he practises every day from 5.30 to 6.30.

B *Wow.*

O *And that's what he does when he gets in. Now I don't have either the, I say it at the time but I basically I don't have the inclination because I suppose I could move all of my lifestyle. I mean I don't get in that early I must admit. I suppose I could move my life schedule back where I could say I could do it from nine to ten, but I don't have the sort of life where I would be prepared to?*

C *There's also other family commitments ...*

O *Yeah that's right.*

C *... Myself living in a part of a household it's like, they don't want to hear me ...*

A *No, no [laughter]*

C *... I've been practising for a while and they keep going, and it's just like, it's very off putting for them. I'm embarrassed.*

A *Yeah, yeah.*

D *I brought a very expensive big fat mute [laughter] hoping that would help.'*

Although perfectly understandable, these are all reasons that could be changed by the individual if they felt strongly enough to do so. The only musical reason for not practising enough was given by Student D.

'... because you always have a part..., you never have a tune that sounds good on its own.'

Here is an absolutely crucial difference between learning as an individual and learning within a group. As an individual learner, the student will mainly learn tunes that can be played as an individual, there may be an accompanying part, but the student will practise the melody and in most cases, this will stand up on its own as a piece of music. This makes practice a pleasurable experience. However, as a member of an ensemble, unless you are playing the melody line, quite often your part is not only an accompaniment, but also a part within that accompaniment and can often make little musical sense if practised on its own. This can make practice for the individual who is learning within a group very difficult.

In contrast to the above students, one group of students do not have to undertake any personal practice, as the nature of the group does not allow it. Within a gamelan the instruments are never separated, the instrument of gamelan is the collection of instruments itself. In other words the music cannot exist without one of the components and therefore cannot be played on an individual instrument without the others. In Java the gamelan is a community instrument and remains together, players do not take their

individual instruments home to practise and instruments within it are not owned separately. As Student L says

'What I like about gamelan as a concept is it's an ensemble by definition and therefore what you're playing is part of an entity.'

The following extract from my learning diary explains how the music works through the integration of all parts of the gamelan.

'11 October 2005

Interestingly too, [the tutor] was telling us that in the gamelan there is always a tune that is never heard until all parts are playing together. You can't go and practise your instrument, you have to play together... people don't practice in Java, they just play together and correct themselves as they go. It really is a community thing.'

This being the case, the students learning gamelan actively do not carry out personal practice. Student L explains why this is a good thing for himself as a learner.

'L It's absolutely wonderful not having homework. [laughter] Knowing that nobody else has done better homework than you have. That's a really nice experience. The fact that nobody has practised beforehand, and they come back and oh yes, I can do that, and you are thinking, I didn't have time over the week and I actually have a busy life and this is my allocated time. I really enjoy coming here and being just as useless as I was last time. [laughter] And developing onwards from there.'

The progress made by the gamelan students has been made entirely through practice within the playing sessions, yet their level of progress has not been slow. The nature of the music is that the other parts are needed in order for an individual to progress. However, to the orchestral students it seems that their view is that progress is made as an individual, on an individual basis despite the fact that they are learning as a group. Although both sets of students are progressing individually, the orchestral students seem to think that progress only happens when playing individually and have not actually realised that when they are rehearsing in their ensembles they are in fact also practising, which in some cases is for four hours a week.

Hallam (1998; 137) states that

'The development of automaticity requires repetition. Repetition does not occur only in practice. Every time that the individual plays their instrument skills are being repeated and enhanced.'

Green (2002) discusses practice in relation to popular musicians and the interviewees in her research had similar constraints on personal practice time due to external pressures. So '*practising and playing become one and the same thing*' (p.88). Folkestaad also holds this view. In his discussion of formal and informal learning practices he quotes Bob Dylan's (2004; 16) view of practice:

'I could never sit in a room and just play all by myself. I needed to play for people and all the time. You can say I practised in public and my whole life was becoming what I practised.'

What this then demonstrates is that the people who have chosen to learn within an ensemble rather than as an individual have done specifically as it fits in with their lives. The point is that although they do not perhaps realise it, they are practising, but unlike other students, their practice does not consist of spending time on their own to acquire a sound technique before entering into ensemble playing, it consists of playing with others from the outset. The idea that practice is finite and it is simply a matter of frequency that allows a student to accelerate (see Davidson *et al.*, 1997 for a discussion on the relationship between exam grades and practice hours) means that the students in learning ensembles will progress over time, and it is precisely this longevity that '*provides learners with opportunities to make the culture of practice theirs*' (Lave and Wenger, 1991; 95), in other words that will take them deeper into their community of practice.

Fenwick and Tennant (2004; 63) state that

'Learning is rooted in the situation in which a person participates, not in the head of that person as intellectual concepts produced by reflection. Knowing and learning are defined as engaging in changing processes of human participation in a particular community of practice.'

Therefore to a *leisure musician* whose focus is on the social creation¹ of music rather than the technical mastery of an instrument, as Dally (2005) says of gamelan playing, '*gamelan instruments are not to be mastered but to be cooperated with*'; no matter how well a student could grasp the intellectual concepts of learning an instrument within an individual lesson, their learning must be grounded in the social context of playing with others if that is what they want to do ultimately. This is not to say that people who learn within a learning ensemble do not practise by themselves, some practise very regularly, particularly leading up to a performance. Student Y told me:

¹ Rather than the term creation of music being the composition of original music, I have taken creation here to mean the musical sound created when playing an instrument. If playing from notated music, some would term this the recreation of music.

'I certainly don't practise every day but it would be a bad week if it was less than 3 or 4 practices... in the week.'

But her practice is not centred on mastering the particular passages given by a tutor. When I asked her if she practised things from the band rehearsal she told me

'No, that's something I thought of doing and would like to do but time is of such a premium. But I brought... other books to work through. A tutor [book] and I've got a book of studies and my husband brought me a couple of books for Christmas. And you know, I'm playing quite a lot of different sorts of things. Which you can do quite a lot with CDs... you can get a CD accompaniment so that you know that you are playing in time.'

This shows that this student is learning to play her instrument so that she can go and play other things, and enjoy what she is playing rather than spend valuable time trying to tackle a tricky passage for her band rehearsal. Therefore strengthening the view that the object of learning for her is to be able to *play* an instrument rather than *learn* it.

Student H recognises that the more he plays, the more practice he gets and this is the reason why he attends a summer school with a different group to his own.

'the reason I go is that I like the selection of music that we play. Plus, it's more practice for me ... it's more practice on more pieces.'

Student B told me

'A lot of people say 'oh gosh I don't have time for practising in the week' and stuff like that and that's true of me as well to an extent, I would like to practise more than I do. But I think as it goes along you automatically find yourself doing a little more [practice] because the more complex the music becomes, the more interested you become in being able to play it really well.'

So whether the students undertake personal practice or not, they are practising within their ensemble and they all share the same overarching desire to learn to play an instrument within a social group, and this is the object of their learning. As Student I states *'[the reason I joined my groups is] to learn to play with other people'*, and this is the common factor that binds all of these different people together within their community of practice.

IV.3 Chapter 3 – Creating A Community

Turner (1987; 1) poses the question *'how does a collection of individuals become a social and psychological group?'* In the context of this study we must ask ourselves how does a group of individual instrumentalists become an ensemble and, furthermore, how does that ensemble facilitate the learning of the individuals? In other words, how is the community of the ensemble created and then allow the students to interact with the tools so as to fulfil the object?

Firstly we must ascertain what type of group the ensemble is. Turner's (1987; 1-2) definition of a psychological group is

'one that is psychologically significant for the members, to which they relate themselves subjectively for social comparison and the acquisition of norms and values, which they privately accept membership in, and which influences their attitudes and behaviours ... it is a reference group and not merely a membership group as defined by outsiders.'

Within an ensemble the members need to accept and share the same norms and values in order to function. For example a large ensemble, such as an orchestra, string orchestra or wind band, normally operates with direction from a conductor (Durrant (2003) discusses the role of the conductor in learning). The members of the ensemble must know what the role of the conductor is in their particular context and how to follow the strokes of the baton or hands in order to keep in time, therefore keeping the music together. This is something that is acquired through membership of the group and that an outsider would not necessarily understand. Moreover, each conductor brings a specific style with them to their group and any member must familiarise themselves with that style in order to play together with the group. Members with more experience of different conductors may find it easier to integrate, but nevertheless a period of adjustment may still be needed in order to ascertain the downbeat and therefore establish membership of the group. For some, this may be the first note of the first bar of the piece, for others this may be the first playing of a piece of music, or longer.

In the production of a piece of ensemble music, different layers occur simultaneously. These layers may be independent, for example a melody line, or they may be entirely dependent on other parts to make musical sense such as the middle notes of a chord, but all layers are integral to the musical functioning of the piece. The conductor may wish for a certain part of the music to become quieter and so will gesture to the ensemble in order to elicit a suitable response. Therefore, to produce a cooperative

response to the conductor, a common interpretation of gestures is needed by the members of the group. The behaviour of the members of the group needs to be influenced by the specific norms and values held within that group, e.g. where the downbeat is, what the conductor's left hand is saying when it is raised palm up, or else the music could not function.

The ensemble must also have a point of reference. Members are not merely people who are in the same room as one another at the same time each week, but they are collectively engaged in the same activity. The members of the groups studied in this research are engaged in two activities, firstly music and secondly learning. Therefore the members must be 'musicians' and 'learners' as they are engaging in both activities at the same time. However, as later discussions will show, labelling a group of adult instrumental learners as musicians is not a simple task, but all members of the group do consider themselves to be learners. The values that the members of the group hold are synonymous with the fact that they are learning to play their instruments. They know that they may get things wrong, they understand that others will make mistakes, they are aware that the conductor may stop them and explain a musical term or a new musical symbol that they have not come across before, and this will shape their rehearsals. So the psychological group that the members of a learning ensemble belong to is a group of learners.

Rodgers (1986; 102) defines a group of adult learners as a reference group and says that *'most adult education groups seem to work most effectively as small primary groups.'* In other words, they work best when the group is small and the primary function is that of learning. But the learning ensemble is often large and it can be argued that the primary function of the group is making music. Within the norms and values that define the group there are also processes that the members as individuals engage in so as to develop their musical skills. As the members become more proficient on their individual instruments these processes will change, for example an elementary student might spend more time interpreting written notes and finding the appropriate fingering for that note, whereas a more advanced student may pay more attention to the tone produced by their instrument and controlling the quality of sound. So, the psychological group of the learning ensemble is a group of learners, but the practice of the community that facilitates this learning is making music with other people. Wenger (1998; 149) says:

'Developing a practice requires the formation of a community whose members can engage with one another and thus acknowledge each other as participants.'

In order for the ensemble to be a community through which the practice can be developed, i.e. that enables the subject to interact with the tools used to fulfil the object, the members must be able to engage with one another.

IV.3.a Engaging with one another musically

Within the ensemble there is a requirement for members to engage at multiple levels. Firstly a player must mutually interact with the other members of their section. For example, a flautist within a wind band would be in the flute section. The flute section must operate as one, playing together and producing a unified sound. The flute section may be divided into smaller sections: the first flutes, the second flutes and the piccolo. More often than not these parts will be clearly related to each other, for example the second flutes playing in close harmony with the first flutes, the piccolo doubling the first flute part an octave higher and the first flutes usually playing a melody or a decorative figure. Therefore the second flutes need to engage with the first flutes and piccolo in order to produce a unified, harmonious flute sound. The flute section will then need to engage with the other upper wind instruments- the oboes and clarinets. These sections often have parts related to the flutes and sometimes have a shared line. Therefore the sections need to be not only aware of one another, but also responsive to each other. This process of engagement will happen throughout the wind band; the upper winds need to be engaged with the middle section (horns and saxophones) as well as the low woodwind and the brass. The whole band will need to be engaged with the percussion who will keep rhythmic unity. If a conductor is directing the band, all of this multi-layered engagement will happen through the direction of the conductor. So, at any one time, members need to be engaged with one another and acknowledge each other as participants in the group in order for the music to function.

This process of engagement is more distinct within a gamelan where members need to constantly interact in order to know where the piece is going. The gamelan operates in three sections: the 'tune' instruments, the structural instruments and the drums. In the gamelan the drummer provides the direction and will signal changes by different drum strokes, each member of the gamelan needing to be aware of what the different drum signals mean and what to do when they hear them. This is crucial to the functioning of the gamelan. The structural instruments indicate certain strategic points within the piece and signpost the tune to where it is going next. For example, a tune may have repeated sections within it (6, 5, 3, 2; 6, 5, 3, 2; 2, 3, 2, 1; 2, 3, 2, 1) and the gong will always

sound at the end of the tune (on the note 1) so that tune players know exactly where they are.

Gamelan pieces often work around a tune that is repeated many times and therefore this interaction with the structural instruments is vital in order to keep on track. The most important instrument for the tune is the *bonang*. This instrument signals where the tune is going by anticipating the strong notes of each *gâtrâ* (group of four notes), therefore it is possible to play the tune purely by listening to the *bonang*. The example in figure 16 is taken from *Landrang 'Sumyar' Pelog Barang*.

Figure 16 – A section of tune from Landrang 'Sumyar' Pelog Barang

Bonang Paneris	7	3	7		7	3	7		7	2	7		7	2	7	
Bonang		7		3		7			7		2		7			
Tune				7				3					7			2

The tune players can hear each of their notes before it is played.

Throughout a gamelan piece the music will change gear. When this happens the tune will slow down and the elaborating instruments will be doubled. For example where the tune is played over 16 beats in one gear, it will change to 32 in the next and 32 beats will change to 64 at the next gear change. When this happens the *bonang* and the *bonang paneris* speed up to fill in the gaps left by the tune and, depending on which gear they are in, may signal the important notes by playing an *imbal*. This is done by firstly playing a tune shared between two instruments as shown in figure 17.

Figure 17 – A section of imbal from Landrang 'Sumyar' Pelog Barang

Bonang Paneris	2		5		2		5		2		5		2		5	
Bonang		7		3		7		3		7		3		7		3
Tune								7								6

Then they will play a *sakharan* to end on the important note, the last note of the *gâtrâ*, shown in figure 18.

Figure 18 – A sakharan

Bonang Paneris	2	7	6	3	5	6	7	6	6	7	6	3	6/2		6/2	
Bonang	6		3		6		1		2		6	1	6	1	2	
Tune								7							2	

(6/2 indicates that these two notes are played at the same time)

This will happen over a period of four tune notes so that the tune players have time to recognise the *sakharan* and therefore which note it is indicating and ensure that they are playing the correct *gâtrâ*. It is these intricacies of mutual interaction that make the gamelan work.

Wenger (1998; 152) continues

'practice defines a community through three dimensions: mutual engagement, a joint experience and a shared repertoire.'

We have ascertained that the learning ensemble is a community of practice as it allows for mutual engagement, and we have defined what the practice is. We can assume that members of the learning ensemble are engaging in a shared repertoire by the nature of the production of music through the ensemble as described above, but what of the joint experience? Are all members of the learning ensemble experiencing the same thing?

IV.3.b Engaging with one another socially

Students within an ensemble support each other as a natural part of a functioning learning group. The members show respect towards one another and have a genuine interest in motivating and supporting other members of the group.

This conversation came from Group 1.

'A You see, that's what I like about [the group] and that because whenever you make a mistake it's so obvious because you are like this, yes it was me [laughter]. Whereas in a professional orchestra, everyone's going who was that? You know [more laughter]. Whereas here we're all so conscious that we're not [like that]. Do you remember [the tutor]... said that? It was really funny, he said that's what I love about you, you're all so obvious [when you've] gone wrong...

C Everyone takes responsibility.

A *Everyone is so conscious of what they're doing wrong. [agreement]*

B *One of the things that I really, really like about this is the way that I have felt, and it was really difficult coming into a group, not having played for 25 years, and just sitting down and just taking the damn thing out and then putting bow to string, it was one of the most terrifying things I've done for a long, long time.*

D *Yeah.*

B *And one of the things I found nicest about it was the way that I felt there wasn't any sort of judgement at all, the way that everyone sort of accepts that you are the level that you are you know, that you can do as much as you possibly are capable of doing, that you will be encouraged to do that [agreement].'*

Student B suggests that there is an element of risk involved in joining a group. For her, the community within her group has supported her by providing a non-judgemental environment for her to play at her own level. Moreover, she is encouraged to do so. Members of Group 2 echo this.

G *That's very important as well and not feeling as if you are not really up to it else otherwise it's an impossible mountain to climb. I started two years ago and I thought I would never be able to get to play with people for years and years and years and I tried... some other group and my view was confirmed. Then I spoke to someone who plays and she said try [Group 2] and I've, expect it's the wrong word, but I've been tolerated cheerfully [laughter] and that's important for somebody in my position.*

I *I think I've realised that there are other people who are as bad as me. [laughter] Which is not a very nice thing to say is it?*

J *There are some people if they are very good players, they would be irritated*

...

I *Yes.*

J *Like a tennis player, not everyone but some people would play with you even if you can't play tennis very much, they are quite happy to play with you though they like to play with good players as well. And so it's very good here that there are people that are better than us that are willing to play with us.'*

As well as being supported in this way by the community as a whole, individual members of the community can offer support in different ways.

'5 July 2005

The gamelan was laid out differently... so I could hear different instruments but not hear instruments that I was used to hearing. This was hard as I couldn't hear the Peking and I needed to for Wilujeng. But I could hear [another student] and that made Wilujeng really easy. The performance went really well.'

The student that I could hear was not necessarily aware that he was supporting me, but just having the knowledge that I could hear where my part fits in during a situation where everything sounded different to what I was used to was enough to give me the support I needed to perform well. The community gave me the support I needed so that I could interact with my tools so as to make music; in other words, it gave me musical peer support.

This diary extract shows how musical peer support allows the group to continue playing without the direction of the tutor.

'11 October 2005

Anyway, we did the song a couple of times and the last time we did it, it was really good. I find it quite amazing that there is a complete mixture of people in the group, with different western music abilities, yet in the space of six months we are able to keep a pulse together without the drum, when [the tutor] is helping out with others, he stops playing.

This support from the community manifests itself in different ways for each student. Student A shows one way that her community supports her.

'I suppose it's easier in a group in a way because you can kind of hide [laughs] and you can't with a teacher [in an individual lesson].' [laughter]

It can be argued therefore that students are all engaged in a joint experience as they are all experiencing support from one another, but it is the forming of a community that allows this to happen that is vital.

Rodgers (1987) outlines the forming of the group through a series of stages, forming, informing, storming, norming and performing. However this is not a one off process. The group constantly evolves and therefore needs to be reformed, particularly in a learning ensemble where students are free to join at any time. For the learning group to function there must be a delicate balancing of the personalities involved. Each learner brings with them a different set of values, views, assumptions and expectations as well as a perception of their own ability and these need to be accepted by the other learners for the group to be cohesive. Although these qualities are not always transparent- I may not reveal my assumptions of gamelan playing, of my peers, of my tutor straight away and in fact, if at all, but they are present and may cause me to act in a particular way. For each member of the group there must be a volatile period where their own views and values clash with another person's views. These moments may be internal and not made

explicit to the group, i.e. somebody does something that annoys me but I don't let it show. Or they may be external, I do let it show and the other members of the group experience my annoyance. There may be many small moments like this, possibly going unnoticed, or they may be large and explosive, either way they are the moments at which the individual decides whether to stay within the group. They are 'make or break' moments. Once these moments have passed, and the individuals have either privately altered their own values or conformed for the sake of the group (Turner, 1987), or have left the group, the community has reached a stage in its evolution where it can 'perform' better.

The following diary extract shows a clash of personalities derived from one student's assumption about another student's needs.

23 May 2006

It was funny really, as [the tutor] was showing us the tunes by repeating them over and over, everyone had their own way of remembering it. I was singing the numbers, others were remembering the pattern of left and right, and [one student] was being really annoying and singing out loud and playing an imaginary bonang. As he was getting it he was singing louder and louder as if to say 'I've got it' and when other people were having a go he was singing the numbers for them and it was not helping. I must admit I was tempted to help out once but then I remembered that you've got to let everyone do it in their own way. He really annoyed [another student], she ended up saying 'yes I know it's a 3 I just need to find out where the 3 is.'

This situation arose out of a misinterpretation of the need for help by the first student, who incidentally is a flute teacher, and his natural reaction was to help out, but to both students this was a 'make or break' moment. Each student could have decided at that point that they could not work with each other, but they did not, they rose above it in order to maintain group cohesion. This moment helped to stabilise the relationship of the two students involved and the community as a whole as each student defined their status within the group (Turner, 1987).

These moments occur throughout the group and are an important aspect of the concept of the community of practice. Barrett (2005; 268) explains that

'whilst 'communities of practice' involve shared social practices and goals for the individuals within that community, this does not necessarily imply that these communities are characterised by a sense of 'harmony' or concord between all participants.'

A community of practice has 'no single core or center' (Lave and Wenger, 91; 36) and the students always remain on the periphery of the community. If the student was central to the community then the 'make or break' moments could not aid the evolution of the community as, although occurring between two members, they do involve the community as a whole. Also, if the student at the centre of the community decided to leave as a result of a 'make or break' moment, the student-centred community would end. As Lave and Wenger say, peripherality is 'a way of gaining access to sources for understanding through growing involvement' (p.37). In other words the student becomes more involved in the community by experiencing the 'make or break' moments, which takes them along a trajectory of deeper understanding of how the community functions, and therefore an ability to gain understanding of the practice through the community. It is important to note at this stage that the community of practice is not constituted entirely of students, the tutor or tutors play an important function in this community and are not exempt from 'make or break' moments.

The following conversation came from Group 1.

B *You live with it because you can answer back and you just you know, that's his way.... No, I mean I know he can be, I think I talked to someone who found him quite disturbing...*

A *Yes, I'm the same.*

B *... But I really find him. [everyone talks at once]*

Who is this, a tutor?

B *Yes, he's very passionate and I think it works I think it's brilliant because I think you do just you do caught up in the enthusiasm and yes you feel like an arsehole sometimes because you do something really stupid but, I like that kind of directness...*

E *I think we are kind of divided about that [agreement] I can't stand that...*

B *Oh really.*

A *Yes.*

E *Hectoring us [laughter] treating us like we are five year olds, I don't like that.*

O *No I don't like that*

E *I simply don't like that I think it's very rude.*

Yes.

B *I just think it's funny.*

D He's very rude yes.

E I think his way is...

B But I like the rudeness.

E He's not at odds with [the group]

O Yes I wouldn't disagree with that.

B And I know he's...

A But he's quite, oh [looks over shoulder]

D I'll warn you when he is there.

There's nobody there.

A He's quite different in the, when we do our orchestra bit our ensemble he's quite different, he's really funny and I usually like really laugh at him because he's just so humorous and witty, but I find in the technique class and I've just done level 3 technique with him now, this is like my third term with him and I do find it a bit... scary actually, I almost dread coming...

C Really.

C Wow.

D When he's conducting the orchestra I find him very annoying, normally I like him...

C Oh really.

A No, I don't mind that...

D When he's doing the orchestra...

A No, no.

D I really want to kill him [laughter] I really want to kill him.

B I find him very entertaining.

C and I had to change when I first had him I was, oh no, I've got technique...

A Yes, yes.

C But then I did realise I can match his style, it's not that he had to change his it was that I had to change how I perceived it, and now it's like, oh he's going to come up and tell me to change this and I'm not going to be able to do it but...

A Yes, Yes.

C And it's like, who cares.

C *But I learn though, I actually do learn.*

O *I think it's very productive...*

E *I think it's terribly productive.*

O *But I think it's productive, it's just that you've kind of got to put normal things on hold, normal relationships. I mean, I wouldn't...*

B *I just think you've got to take him with an enormous pinch of salt and just think he's being funny. I think he thinks, I'm sure he thinks he's being funny.*

O *Yes, that's just him [laughter]*

E *I'm just glad I don't learn the violin.*

B *I think he's great. You know, as you say people are divided.'*

In this situation the tutor's way of interacting with the community amuses some students whereas others actually find it frightening. Nevertheless, they all agree that they learn whilst they are within his group. The students are rising above the 'make or break' moments for the sake of their learning. This shows that there does not always need to be complete cohesion in the group in order for the learning to take place, which then suggests that the learning is of more importance to the students than the community itself.

Turner (1987; 32) says that levels of co-operation within a group can be increased by 'explicit instructions to adopt a co-operative rather than competitive or individualistic orientation.' But within a learning ensemble competition can be a healthy motivator (discussed in detail in *IV.9.a Competition*, page 167). Moreover, students seem to be able to tolerate interpersonal differences for the sake of the music. Student B highlights this.

'The individual tutors are very, very different in their approach. And I know that some of them rub people up the wrong way, but I think that you would not be dealing with human beings if there weren't. That's a question of personalities and the benefit of the situation that exists is that if people really do find it difficult to deal with one particular tutor, there's almost always room for them to move elsewhere. There's generally a couple of tutor groups in each level, so I think if people really feel uncomfortable... And I don't know that they do. I sometimes get the feeling, and this comes out of my experience of working with PTAs and other groups of people on a volunteer basis, I sometimes feel that there are people who simply love to have something to moan about. And it wouldn't really matter if you gave them individual tuition and stood on your head while you were giving it to them, and made sure they had some champagne flowing all the time, they would still find something to moan about.'

What is interesting about the evolution of the community in terms of the learning ensemble is that the nature of the group can generate social cohesion where personalities may be against it. Turner (1991; 30) says

'the greater a person's uncertainty about the situation they are in, what they are feeling and appropriate ways to behave, the stronger the tendency to affiliate with similar others for social comparison purposes.'

So by keeping the students in a position of uncertainty about the situation they are in, i.e. by keeping them at the brink of their understanding, the students will be more likely to consider themselves peers and therefore conform to and remain in the group. Student L, who was interviewed after he left his learning ensemble, highlights this.

'That jump from playing the tune instrument all the time to playing something else was a really liberating moment. You feel 'oh [the tutor] thinks I'm able'. If you're still playing the tune instrument you know, six months, a year, and then still you're playing them and you're thinking everyone else is playing something else does that mean I'm not able to do it? Especially if you are a kind of natural self doubter.'

Although not the only reason for leaving his group, the repeated experience of being on an easy instrument and therefore not feeling comparable to other members of the group led him on a trajectory out of his community of practice. Therefore, whereas students do not necessarily need to like each other, they do need to feel comparable in order to remain in the community. So, is it the tutor's role to ensure this?

Although it may seem that the tutor is using a different set of tools to fulfil a different object to the students, the tutor is in fact using the same tools as the students in the same community of practice- the social creation of music, but as a director rather than a player. The tutor is more skilled in using the tools than the students, and must demonstrate this in order to build a strong tutor/student relationship (Davidson, 1997). The students work with the tutor within the community to develop their usage of the tools. The skill then of the tutor within the community of practice lies in allowing the students to interact with the community so as to engage in the use of the tools (fulfilling the object), but to keep the students at a point where although the tools are being used successfully, there is still scope for better usage. Therefore the tutor must encourage the students to set themselves progressively more difficult objectives.

IV.4 Chapter 4 - Using the Tools

The students participating in a learning ensemble are members of a learning group who form a community of practice. The practice of the community is the social creation of music. For most of the students, what they saw as 'the learning' was in fact the interaction between themselves and the tools in order to reach their object. The tools of the students of the learning ensemble are a mixture of physical tools, such as instruments and notation, and cognitive tools, such as the ability to listen and to assimilate information. In order for these things to function as tools, the subject has to develop certain skills to allow the tools to operate. These skills include

- The physical ability to put fingers and/or lips onto an instrument in order to produce a musical sound.
- Being able to 'feel' a set pulse and then organising rhythmic units with and against this pulse in order to play in time.
- The ability to listen to the sound being produced by oneself, as well as by others around them and to assess whether or not the sound being produced is what is required.
- Being able to understand how the music functions so as to know what part is being played by each member of the group.

Hallam describes the process of learning music as a balance between enculturation and the development of generative skills (Hallam, 2001). Throughout this research project it seemed clear that the students viewed skills development as an individual thing and that they felt that they could only concentrate on the development of one skill at a time, as shown by this comment by Student P2.

'When I'm trying to concentrate on doing the notes right I can't get the timing as well [general agreement] but I get one right and then try and concentrate on the next aspect.'

However, the students were all aware that in order for them to play their individual instruments they needed to simultaneously apply 'a whole sphere of skills' (Student P1), based on a combination of interactions between the physical instrument, the visual representation of the music through notation and their own cognitive skills, such as listening and 'feeling', or internalising, the pulse.

IV.4.a Using notation

The most fundamental skill that the students referred to was that of reading, understanding and interpreting notation and the physical realisation of the notation into sound. This also caused the most frustration to the learner. Student O said.

'I can do it in my head but my fingers are... you know, half a bar behind'

She has accepted that she has the cognitive skills to read the notes but needs to develop the physical skills in order to put her note reading into action:

'I have to sit there and it takes me about five minutes to work out how the sharps translate into the position [of my fingers]. How the sharps translate into the key, into what key it's in and then how that key translates into where I put my fingers.'

However, this student seems to underestimate the complexities of realising a form of notation through the physical playing of an instrument. The student feels that she is taking a long time to work out the notation but she is in fact assimilating compound theoretical knowledge of tonal music. In order to translate the relevant sharp notes into her finger position she needs to firstly understand why the sharps are there, what the music sounds like without the sharps and in what way her fingers need to be corrected in order to play the sharp. If she were playing alone the part that she played would form one melodic line. If a sharp was missed then the student may not necessarily notice; the music may be modulating for example. But within an ensemble situation her part will also form part of a harmonic progression and that missed sharp may be crucial to this progression and the tonality of the whole piece. For example, it may change a major passage into a minor passage, altering the overall sound of the piece. Therefore the student needs to have some form of harmonic understanding, however basic, in order to translate that sharp into her finger position so that it sounds right. Whereas the student believes she is concentrating on one skill at a time, acquiring the knowledge she needs to play her instrument, she is in fact interacting with an array of tools in order to reach her object of getting her fingers in the correct position.

Green (2002) discusses this acquisition of technical knowledge in relation to the learning of popular musicians. She refers to the theoretical understanding of music and how this relates to the students' understanding of playing their instrument. In the case of the popular musicians used in her research, she found that although they said that they did not know about musical theory, they were all using complex theoretical concepts within their music making. The musicians did not necessarily use notation in their playing, but

they were still creating music within the traditions of Western harmonic, melodic and tonal structures. Moreover, the study also highlighted an interesting relationship between the popular musicians and the use of musical notation. Although a variety of different notations were used, such as tablature, chord symbols and traditional notation, they never relied on it; it was there as an 'aide memoir' or menu rather than a script. One musician described an account of being thrown into a situation where at a session he was forced to use notation to play and how 'nerve wracking' it was to have to interpret the notation in full, on demand (p.38).

This would suggest that there is a spectrum of producing music through notational and aural means along which students can place themselves at any given moment in their learning, and that the students have a comfort zone along the spectrum where they are best able to produce music. This comfort zone seems dependent on how they initially learnt their instrument, on their community of practice. For example, the student in Green's study is comfortable at the 'no notation' end of the spectrum and to be suddenly forced to the opposite end of the scale, although perfectly capable of producing the music through this means, caused him discomfort.

An interesting position on this spectrum can be seen in Group 3. Some of the members of this group are accomplished musicians in the Western Classical style, one of them being Student N. Here he recalls how he has relied on notation throughout his musical career.

'Although I like jazz, I've never been a jazz player and so all my playing has really been in the classical notated field and so I'm just used to notation. And you know, give me a piece of music, I can read music on a number of different instruments, in a number of different clefs. I'm happy [laughter]. But once the notation is taken away and it's all memory stuff I find, you know back in 1980 in Bali, [my wife] would be trying to do things on her Gundair, I'd be listening, I'd want to write it down first before I played it, I'm the same here.'

Interestingly, he is interacting in the same way with his tools as he did learning similar music over 25 years ago. Student M is in the same situation.

'I feel exactly the same thing yeah... I'm a reader. I mean the instruments are easy enough to play the notes but it's a question of rhythm, using musical notation I find it much easier.'

Student K has also used notation for a long period of time, however she has had experience of improvisation and therefore has a different viewpoint from Students M and N.

'I really like this opportunity to do it a different way. I think it's really nice to have the opportunity to develop the memory. It's like using the other side of your brain or something.'

This then raises the question, 'does learning music through reading notation create a dependency and if so, how willing are the students to break this dependency?'

It would seem that students M and N do have a dependency on notation forged over a long period of time through their community of practice. Both students have been reading music to a high level for a number of years and have had little experience of creating music outside of this. Student K, on the other hand, has been using notation to create music at a high level for some years but has also had the experience of musical creation without it. Therefore she does not have the same dependency as Students M and N. However gamelan is a completely different musical genre for Student K, and this is what she says about learning without notation.

'The first time I ever did bonang, it was a piece that wasn't like anything we'd done before, it was one of those strange ones that we sometimes do. And I did not know what I was doing at all. [The tutor] didn't tell me what the notes were, he didn't tell me where the 1, 2 and 3 were. He just patted them and he said 'Did you get it?' 'No!' It was a 16 or 32 note thing, and he went through it and I just couldn't remember that many things without anything to hang it on. Without any numbers or writing it down or anything. I could have written it down, but he said 'No, I'm not going to tell you where the numbers are and you're not writing anything down'. And that was hard for me because I'm such a literate person, not to mention musician, but written word is where I live, I write lists all the time and things like that. So to try and do something without writing anything down is a challenge.'

She continues.

'[Playing without notation] made me feel frightened as if I was trying to speak French to a French person and feeling terribly embarrassed, you know it was that type of feeling. Which is something that scares me about learning. Usually I love to learn things, but there are certain situations where you think 'I'm just making a fool of myself here' and that's embarrassing really, that's the embarrassment. But it makes you think 'Ooh, I just want to go and hide in the corner'. But it's only happened once and I think [the tutor] probably changed his tactic because later on he let us write down the next bonang thing and we found it together, as a little team and he let us write down, he told us what the pots were, where the numbers were and he let us write it down and he let us write down what we were playing as well.'

Like Student K I took a mid-way position on the notation/aural spectrum as these extracts from my learning diary show.

'13 May 2005

I found that when I was playing something different I really needed to look at the 'score' and see where my bit fits in.

24 May 2005

I had to play a natchã, which was an improvisation over the top landing on the fourth note of each bit. I thought it would be quite hard but actually it was ok, I just followed the lay of the tune.'

Within the gamelan group the tutor uses numbers to notate the basic tunes and then, depending on what instrument you are playing, you have to memorise how the elaboration of that tune works. So the music is not entirely created from memory but there are memory elements to it. The comment from 13 May shows that when I was elaborating a tune I had to concentrate on the basic numerical notation of that tune and fit my part into it, whereas the 24 May comment shows how at ease I was purely improvising over the top of the tune. Again, like Student K, I too have a great deal of experience of improvisation, which may have made me at ease with the natchã. However, I have little experience of playing a piece from memory and although getting better at it, it is something that still scares me as a performer (and something that is of course very different to improvising); no matter how well I know what I am playing, I still rely on written notation in order to support my playing.

To answer the above questions, the students in the gamelan group who have learnt through notation clearly do have a dependency on it and some are willing to break the dependency in a learning situation, others are not. However, it is perhaps not a question of willingness but more of being mentally able to cross over barriers that in some cases have been very long established. In the case of students M and N, they have used classical western notation for over 40 years and they are the students who find they have a real dependency on the notation. Whereas for Student K and myself, who have used classical western notation for around 30 years, and who have also had experience of the creation of music without notation, there is not quite so much a dependency. Similarly, at the opposite end of the spectrum, it seems from Green's study that the longer the dependency on memory and improvisation, the more difficult it is to cross over to using notation.

Here Students M and N tell of how frustrating they find it not using their conventional notation.

'N I just do find it hard to do things without, of course here we have got a lot more notation learning here than back in Bali where in our lessons we didn't have it at all, it was all copying, watching copying... but then there would have been more time there if I had have stayed and done it properly. Within the gamelan set up here yes notation is used more so it's more, it's easier, but I still find the memorisation thing and the fact that I haven't got my familiar crotchets and quavers... is disorientating.

Yeah? Do you find that?

M I feel exactly the same thing yeah. I'm a reader. I mean the instruments are easy enough to play the notes but it's a question of rhythm, using musical notation I find it much easier.'

The frustration is caused by being used to using notation to interpret rhythm whereas with gamelan there is no rhythmic notation and so the students have to rely on their memory.

At the end of the day does it really matter if we are notation dependent or aural dependent? The following conversation between Student K and I shows when we started to write things down when learning gamelan and why.

'Tell me about that first concert...

I was just lost, I didn't know what I was doing. I think maybe it was because the instruments were all in different places. Instead of being a little room it was this huge great big place. And then there were all the people around as well, the whole audience and they'd all come to do workshops. And I was late as well, as usual, so I wasn't quite ready at the beginning, I wasn't there for the little rehearsal, I came in when he declared it was actually starting. I was probably looking for the people I'd brought, to see if they were still there and things like that. And I hadn't written anything down because at that point I hadn't written down anything for the gamelan at all, not even words, not notes, not rhythms, not anything because I was trying to go for it as an intuitive musician who never writes anything down, as a bit of a challenge.

I did exactly the same thing you know. I started and I didn't write anything down. And I thought I was cheating if I was writing it down. I felt like I wasn't learning in the right way or as a gamelan person would learn. I thought 'Right I'm going to go for this'. And then I started writing stuff down. It took me a while, but I started writing stuff down.

I'm not as systematic still as some people. Some people have their little gamelan notebook and everything's in it so they can just reproduce it the next time. And I think that's not quite in the spirit of the thing. I'm not just trying to learn how to play the piece, because it's played, I'm trying to learn the culture in which you don't write stuff down and you've got it all in your head as well.

Some things I have got written down. I don't know if you call it means end ordering, but most of it I'm into gamelan for the means which is the means by which you do things and kind of the process. But the end is actually getting the thing right. So if I can do both, if I can get the nice means where you have it in your head and it's like part of you and it kind of gels and you don't write anything down, and get the piece right that's what it is, I've got both. But if I'm playing the bonang I don't have a chance of getting to the end unless I cheat on the means and use my own culture to write it down.

Is that cheating though?

Well I think it's legitimate, there's nothing wrong with it. It's just a way of doing things. It may take longer to get to be able to do things without writing them down if you write them down all the way, possibly I think. Because you're not training your memory up. I know I'm compromising, but it enables me to actually play the bonang without [the tutor] telling me again if I write it down the first time.'

Therefore, it is not necessarily a case of which tools we are using that is important, but how we use them. This will depend greatly on our prior experience and how we apply it to our current learning.

IV.4.b Prior experience as a tool

It is a widely accepted fact that all '*learners bring prior experience*' into the learning process (Hallam, 2001; 63). Within any learning group each individual will have had a different experience with the learning matter and this will affect the way the individual interacts with the tools. Student O is aware of this and gives it as a reason for not progressing as quickly as others.

'Either because they were taught it when they were young or because they've been more diligent or because they are a higher stage will know the sharps and they can actually do it.'

However, it is not always apparent to the learner that they can use their prior knowledge, as I found when starting to learn gamelan.

'3 May 2005

I've tried really hard not to count and not to use my known ways of learning music, but I find that it is the only way that I can keep from losing it. And actually, it's ok to do that. I felt very much at first that it might be cheating but it's not, it's just my way of learning and coping with the new material.'

So whereas two of my fellow students were frustrated that they could not interact with the music in the same way that they have done previously, initially I was purposefully not interacting in the same way as I felt it was somehow cheating.

Once I discovered that it was perfectly legitimate to apply what I already knew, I was able to overcome my difficulties.

'13 May 2005

I found that when I was playing something different I really needed to look at the 'score' and see where my bit fits in. I think that must be the way that I work as I am always used to looking at scores and hearing where my bit fits in.

I found it really hard to pick up the anticipating off beat, I really had to concentrate and sing in my head the notes that the others were playing alongside the notes that I was playing, to see how my part fits into the overall tune.'

This strategy of staring at the score intently was also noted a few weeks later.

'7 June 2005

I've found today that I really need to look at the 'score' of the main tune when I am doing something different. I was playing a note above everyone in the sanpak and I couldn't do it unless I was staring intently at the score of the tune.'

This is something that is directly attributed to my own experience of learning and making music prior to learning within the gamelan. Another example of this was noted in my learning diary on 20 September 2005.

'We did some singing today, which I really enjoyed. I wanted to have a go at a song before but it looked really complicated. I found it really easy to sing from the numbers. I even found that I could play the tune on the sarong and sing the song at the same time! I think it might be because it's related to singing from tonic sol-fa in the way that numbers are used. I really enjoyed it.'

This extract shows how I was able to link my current learning to prior learning and use my experience of a technique of learning notation to help me. Therefore, the relationship between the two notation systems, Gamelan and Western Classical, fused to produce a system that I can understand instantly. If I had not have had choral training as a child, I would not have been able to make the same correlation. Therefore, my prior experience was a tool that mediated activity.

'*The Music Teacher's Companion*' dedicates a chapter to the teaching of sight-reading (Harris and Crozier, 2001). This chapter starts with the following statement:

'Fluent sight-reading is arguably the most valuable skill for young musicians to acquire.'

(p. 45)

The reasons given for this are that the pupil will learn new music more quickly, that good marks will be obtained in sight-reading tests in examinations and that pupils will become more musically independent. Harris and Crozier go on to suggest that good sight-reading skills will also '*prevent valuable time being wasted on tedious note learning*'. This seems to be in line with the reasons why Student K writes things down when learning gamelan. However, this is only true if you are learning within a community of practice that places the interaction with written notation as a priority for realising and interpreting music. Groups 1, 2 and 4 are learning within this community of practice and there was much discussion on the issue of sight-reading, i.e. the ability to interact with and interpret written notation very quickly, as a tool for fulfilling their object.

Student L told of his experience of singing with a choir in Europe and the different emphasis placed on sight-reading to that of his experience within this country.

'The European way of doing orchestra, way of doing choir is a lot less sight-reading. And I noticed that the English way of doing music, certainly performing music in orchestras and choirs, there's an assumption... that, certainly true in church choirs, that here's the music, you're off. And so you are reliant on reading very very quickly and responding to it very quickly...

The European orchestra that we were playing with, or the European players, it was oh, can we go back to this one and can we go back, and it was eternal rehearsals, it felt like it, and all the English players were like, come on [lots of laughter] and because the focus wasn't on sight-reading... and we would sing it from memory and so we never had a piece of paper in front of us when performing.

And so the whole emphasis, and it was very interesting to see those people who were much more professional, like the people around here, who are much more professional English performers, who were saying but we don't need this, we are quite happy to see the notes once, it's already here, I can now play it and off we go.

If you'd taken those notes away of course it would have been a different matter.'

This supports both Student K's reasons for using notation and those given in the '*Music Teacher's Companion*', that of 'getting it right'.

The concept of wanting to get it right is discussed by Cross as a characteristic of an adult learner. As adults may not have the same speed of learning and processing information as children and young people she suggests that they compensate speed for attention to accuracy. This then lowers the risk-taking involved in their learning and produces a desire to get it right (Cross, 1981). Student H talked of how sight-reading skills are developed in his group and goes some way to explain why he feels it is important to have strategies for sight-reading when learning within a group.

'And also of course that there's the sight-reading as every time we get a new piece essentially we are sight reading for the first time. So it's very good sight reading practice.'

'it's most important if you don't know your notes to [know] exactly where you are so that when you come to something that you can play, you can play it at the right time, so [the tutor] teaches us a technique called leapfrog sight reading where we play, we go through the piece and we just play the first note of each bar, basically so that we can all go through together and we know exactly where we are.'

Here the tutor is giving the students strategies to develop their sight-reading. However, this is not so as to get it right, but so that the students know where they are in the music and can contribute to the ensemble without having to play every single note, i.e. by not getting it completely right. The emphasis here is that whilst the students do need to interact with notation so as to play the correct pitches, it is more vital that they can interact with the pulse of the music to keep themselves in line with the other ensemble members. In other words, the tutor is giving the students strategies for using their tools within the context of the specific community of practice in order to be able to contribute as a member of that community. Not by getting the correct pitch, but by being able to join in at the right time. The following conversation highlights the difficulties that this presents to students within a learning ensemble.

H 'Also the simple problem of playing in time... you fondly imagine that you can count to four.'

J Yes.

H But it turns out

J Yes.

H It's not as easy as that. [laughter] Yes, everyone can count to four but they can't necessarily count to four at the same speed. [lots of laughter]

I That's exactly right!'

Linked to this is the counting of rests, as Student H points out.

H *There's also the consideration of not playing as well as playing because if you're playing something for your teacher, and the chances are you've got a piece which you are playing continuously throughout, there might be a couple of bars' rest while your teacher plays something on the piano. But here you might have to not play for 10, 20 bars and you have to...*

I *You have to concentrate...*

H *You have to know...*

I *You have to know how to count...*

H *Count...*

I *Count the bars.*

H *Yes. Either explicitly count it or recognise the cues that will bring you in.*

J *Mmmm.*

H *So that you don't have to count for 20 bars...*

I *Yes.*

H *But you know when you're going to come in. That the, I, I don't trust cues I always count.' [Laughter]*

An interesting point is made here. Not only do the students have to count at the same speed as everyone else, they also have to listen to check whether they are in the correct place, and there are aural cues to help them do this. However, to Student H, these may not always be trustworthy. In other words, he is far happier to interact with his tools, i.e. the notation, by using counting skills used in prior experience, rather than interacting using listening skills, which also would mean trusting that the other members of the group are also in the correct place. Student J shows how difficult it was to separate the sounds that she heard around her from her own sounds, and then getting her own sounds in the correct place, when she first joined her group.

J *When I first came if I heard a loud instrument behind me and they are playing... at a different time to me, I wanted to, because I heard them I want to play with them instead of waiting for my bar to play and it took me quite a long time to get used to that particularly a loud instrument. I wanted to play with them.*

I *Yes.*

J *Instead of waiting, or play my bit before them or after them, not with them. [laughter] And at their time as well. [more laughter]'*

I also had a similar experience in my learning ensemble.

'1 November 2005

We had to delay the gong very slightly in this. When it was [another student's] turn, he really delayed it, about a half beat, and I could not keep in time with the tune, I was naturally going with him and then my pulse was delayed a half beat too.'

The following conversation shows the complexities involved in interacting with both aural tools and notation tools simultaneously in order to get something right.

'F Listening to everybody else around you is quite difficult to do when you're sort of watching your piece of music. It's quite hard to focus on what's going on around you.

I It's sometimes hard to hear what you're playing...

F Yes

I Yourself actually...

F Yes. And I can't hear whether I've, with brass playing you've got different mouth shapes.

Of course

F So you can do the... the right fingers...

J Yes

F And get the wrong note, many times [laughter]

However, the students have to come to terms with the fact that they are not going to get everything right and then need to make judgements as to how best to cope with mistakes when playing in an ensemble. Students I and H discuss how in an individual lesson there is the space to stop and rectify a mistake, but in the learning ensemble there is not.

'I One of my problems when I'm playing with my teacher is if I make a mistake I stop and put it right.

J Mmmmm.

F Yes...

I And that is something, you can't do that here.

[laughter]

H *That's a problem that I have in lessons ...*

I *Yes... I just stop and play the wrong note ...*

H *I will stop and go back ...*

I *You do the right one, you keep going.*

F *Yes.'*

The orchestral flautist Richard Davies sees how important it is for a musician to keep going if they make a mistake.

'Often, in practice, you make a mistake and you go back, you've ruined an opportunity, because in a concert, if you make that mistake, it might completely flummox you!'

(Lewis, 2005; 27)

So by learning within a learning ensemble the interaction with the tools is different from that when learning by oneself. The ensemble forces a student to interact with notation, pulse and the soundscape around them in a more integrated way, putting less emphasis on interpreting the notation correctly and more emphasis on listening to whether what you are playing fits in with that of everyone else around you. So what we see emerging is both an aural dependency and a notation dependency that would not occur in a different situation; the student has to interact with prior experience tools as well as develop the usage of new tools.

IV.4.c New experience as a tool

Student H points to other areas where aural dependency is needed in order to realise the notation.

'The difference between a solo piano, pianissimo and an orchestral one is quite dramatic and you don't appreciate the problems of balance until you've played with a group.'

Student J adds to this

'Hearing others... hearing another sound... keeps you up to speed because when you, or I found I play by myself I go slower and slower and after I've done about five minutes I go oh it's time for a cup of tea [laughter] but you've got to keep going, you've got to keep at it.'

She continues

'And like I said you've got, you haven't got to play with, you play with them but not exactly the same so you've got to play your own part but in coordination with them, you coordinate better. You learn to share, sharing really. You're not eating the same dinner but you're giving some to them as well for them to have their turn to play.' [laughter]

Green (2002; 61) describes this kind of listening with intent to learn as '*purposive listening*'. This is where the learner listens to other musicians with the intended purpose of learning how to play. The examples given by Green are of people listening to CDs in order to copy and play along with them. In the context of a learning ensemble, students are listening to the others around them, both those who are playing the same part as them and those that are playing different parts, with the intention of either copying them or fitting their part in with them. Therefore although the students may place themselves at the notation end of the notation/no notation spectrum, they are in fact interacting with both sets of tools in order to reach their object.

The process of interaction with these tools is evolutionary and it is clear from my own learning diary that the longer I have been learning gamelan, the easier it has been to pick out the individual sounds within the gamelan and fit my part against it.

'3 May 2005

I found that today I could clearly hear the drum signals. I think that it was because I was on an easier piece. I could really listen to the Bonang and they were playing something that I have played before. So I could hear what it sounds like from the other side.

7 June 2005

We did Willujeng, which is pelog. I couldn't remember what the notes were and had to ask others. I missed the signal to go to the Ngluk at first, but then I got it. I was working on a bit with [the tutor], where we go double the speed of the tune, mirroring the peking, but we shared the notes out. I found it really hard at first to keep where I was. I kept getting lost. There were lots of 2723 2756 2723 things and I couldn't find where I was, whilst listening out for [the tutor] - which I found really hard. I latched on to the Peking, it was easier to hear and spoke the numbers 22 77 22 33 22 77 55 66, where I played the second of the group of two. That worked. I need to stop trying to listen to the other parts and concentrate on what I'm doing.

6 December 2005

He explained what to do and that he would shout out the numbers to me, which he did. I did alright, although it was difficult when it slowed down, as I speeded up and I just couldn't quite get the right timing. I played four notes to the tunes pair and the tune was on my 2 and 4 but I kept getting it on 1 and 3.

The thing is though, I could hear that I wasn't right, and I just stopped and listened hard and got back in (with a bit of help from [the tutor]). He said that I did really well for a first time on an instrument – I'm just brilliant me!

26 January 2006

Was on the Peking again, doing the same one, I really cracked all the speeding up and slowing down this time and could start to hear other things that were going on.

23 May 2006

I went on the bonang paneris and this time I could really hear where I was supposed to be and I didn't sniff [in the rests to keep time] but it happened quite naturally.

10 October 2006

Played the Bonang Paneris today with [Student M] playing the Bonang. I was really pleased with myself because I totally managed to lock into what [he] was playing and it was a really good feeling to hear the gong in the right place. I really feel that I'm making progress.'

Hallam (2001; 64) says, *'the process of music enculturation continues throughout the individual's life.'* As I have travelled deeper into my community of practice, I have become more involved into that particular style of music; I am travelling along an enculturation trajectory. Green (1988; 33) says *'style is the medium by virtue of which we experience music, and without which we could have no music at all.'* Therefore the more I travel along the enculturation trajectory, the more able I am to interact with the sounds that I hear as they become more familiar and easier to anticipate.

This use of my new experience as a tool allows me to travel along trajectories taking me deeper into my community of practice. The further I travel, the more my prior experience fuses with my current experience in order to allow me to gain the understanding that I need to continue learning. Over time, current experience becomes prior experience and a cycle of experience is generated. New experience is essential in generating this cycle, and the more a student can interact with new experience, the better they will be at developing tool usage.

IV.4.d Confidence barriers

Practice is synonymous with playing, as discussed earlier (page 91), and the act of playing, and interacting with the tools, develops confidence. As students move along the notation/aural spectrum and travel along trajectories, they become more confident with

their ability to use their tools to produce the results that they want. Student J explains how playing within her learning ensemble has given her more confidence as an individual musician to be able to play outside of the group.

'J I feel much more confident, at church I play every Sunday in the folk group. At one time I didn't know where they were, but now I feel quite confident playing in church.

I I do as well.

J Do you? I don't mind that people can hear me [laughs] at one time I was frightened of playing but I, I just play out now whether in tune or not, I just get on with it.'

However, not everyone in this group had developed this amount of confidence.

H Ever since I have started coming to this orchestra every end of term concert we have, [Student J] stands up and plays a solo piece... And that, and that is something that I still don't have the courage to do.

J Well they haven't run away from me yet [laughter].

H So I, admire that tremendously, and also a few years ago she went to [a] summer school... and that is brave. [laughter]. Because that [particular summer school] can be very hairy indeed.'

Student J has been a member of her group for twelve years, Student H for six. Student G also did not have the confidence to play as an individual.

'I played to a group of old ladies in the hospital and they had all been stuck in their beds [laughter]. I go to the Irish Society, well my wife and I go to the Irish Society and one night quite soon I'm going to play down there because there is amateur musicians on a Friday night, and people keep on telling me to. But I'm really, I'm scared stiff of it, I'm going to have to do it soon.'

Every student has a confidence barrier and the deeper they are in their community of practice, the more barriers they cross and more able they become to play outside their community. For example, a beginner within a group may have a confidence barrier where she herself is the limit, i.e. she will only play to herself. As the student plays more and becomes more confident, the barrier moves and she may play to one very familiar person, perhaps a parent or child. Again, as she becomes more confident by playing to the familiar person, her confidence barrier may move again to include playing to a group of familiar people. This perpetuates to include unfamiliar people and larger groups. Depending upon the individual's personality a student may stay within one confidence barrier for a long period of time, or may move swiftly through their barriers, but in my

experience as a teacher and performer, all musicians have a confidence barrier that may be overcome by experience. Student F says

'You have to get through that confidence thing when you're soloing. I went through a really bad time with that and I can remember I was in a church and I was in a little music group that I run over in Kings Clear and we were doing this solo thing, I was absolutely petrified and I was ready to walk out that church [laughter] and I thought I can't, I've got to do this, I was out of the back room, I was shaking, warming up the oboe and I was thinking I can't do this, I really can't do this, I was terrified, they announced and they said er er [Student F] is around here somewhere and I thought [laughs] come on I've got to do it and so off I went and I did it and then from then on, although I was terrified, I was able...'

This concept of confidence barriers can be demonstrated by my own experience of learning a particular type of vocalisation in my group. My gamelan were learning alok. These are vocal interjections during songs, traditionally males jeering a female vocalist. My learning diary explains how the more I did this, the more confident I became with it.

'29 September 2005

We did silly noises today. The men jeer at the women as they sing the songs in a suggestive manner and we did these. I really wanted to do them and did them really quietly and felt a little, well a lot, silly. It reminded me of learning to improvise and how silly I felt just going for it.

4 October 2005

More silly noises today. I'm getting more confident at them, but still find them a little silly and embarrassing.

11 October 2005

Did the songs again today. Felt a bit silly with the noises (alok), especially as there were two blokes there who I had not seen before, and they seemed to be drafted in to sing. However, they didn't stay long. As soon as they went, I was more comfortable with it. One of the other guys joined in with the noises too, and he said the same thing, that he didn't feel as silly after the two blokes had gone.'

This experience took me on a strange trajectory. It transported me back to memories of being a child and teenager learning to play the flute but not feeling comfortable playing in front of people. This was not the only time when I was travelling along this trajectory.

'3 May 2005

Today we played a landrang and the Bonang decides when to move to the new section. I remember when I did this once and I was too shy to move to the next section. I didn't feel that I could without being told to. This really took me back to my youth and learning to play the flute.'

My confidence barrier with the alok moved when I had done it in front of the group a few times, however, when there were strangers in the room I was no longer confident. When the strangers left the room, I was again confident enough to do the alok. Now that I have done it in front of strangers once, this has given me the experience I need to start to move my confidence barrier and do it again in front of strangers.

Many adult learning theories refer to experiential learning (see *II.4 Adult Learning*, page 23), but how far is the learning achieved by the experience or by the way in which a person interacts with that experience? As I have stated above, different people move through their confidence barriers at different paces. The pace at which I move through my confidence barriers appears to be the same when learning as a child as when learning as an adult:

'3 May 2005

Today we played a landrang and the Bonang decides when to move to the new section. I remember when I did this once and I was too shy to move to the next section. I didn't feel that I could without being told to [in case I did it wrong]. This really took me back to my youth and learning to play the flute.'

The following conversation between students A, B and D shows how they can relate their current experience of learning with that of when they were children.

'A But other people though have learnt at school because like you did it when you were a child and all the rest of it, so I suppose there's all different personal things, and the people who have done violin at school you can usually tell, even though they might be in the same grade they are better, it's as if that has somehow stayed in their brain and their fingers.

D Most of that's true, what was put in me when I was eight or nine is still there. It's deep...

A B Yeah, yeah.

D ... it's deep down somewhere in the bottom [laughter] no but it is there, it makes a difference.

B No, you're right, you're right, it does. Yeah, what I notice particularly oddly enough is the bad things that I've kept from that time, the bad technical habits that I developed as a child that I now have to correct. But the good stuff does stay as well it's an odd thing.'

Within the gamelan group there is a wide range of different experience of musical learning and for Student K the relationship with learning can be directly attributed to experience of learning as a child where her teacher instilled a wide confidence barrier in her by putting her in different situations.

'I really like this opportunity to do it a different way. Because my first cello teacher was very much into improvisation and he would play me things and I would play it back and so he started me off doing that, and also performing right from the beginning as well and so never to be worried about that.'

However, when discussing a learning experience from 25 years ago, Student N shows the same characteristics now as then.

'I'd want to write it down first before I played it, I'm the same here.'

This is the way that he feels most comfortable interacting with his tools. Similarly we all have our own preferences of interaction and we know what works for us, and what we are more likely to use to get a required result. So, there are many ways of interaction with the tools in order to reach the object, but as we interact with them we are taken along various trajectories that deepen our understanding of what we are learning. It is our communities that allow us to interact in such a way that we build links between the different tools we use and how we operate them, so as to achieve the results that we desire from our chosen practice.

IV.5 Chapter 5 - Ensemble Etiquette

In Chapter 3 it was established that a learning ensemble is a community within which its members develop a practice. The key to the functioning of that community is its evolutionary nature caused by changes in attitudes of current members and the introduction of new members into the community. Lave and Wenger (1987; 110) say

'Newcomers participate in a community of practitioners as well as in productive activity. Legitimate Peripheral Practice is an initial form of membership characteristic of such a community. Acceptance by and interaction with acknowledged adept practitioners make learning legitimated and of value from the point of view of the apprentice. Learning in practice, apprentice learners know that there is a field for the mature practice of what they are learning to do.'

In other words, when a student joins a learning ensemble they are joining a community where other members are further along their trajectories and can offer support in the form of peer learning to the newcomer. Student P1 sums this up.

'Yes, I would definitely do whatever I could to help one of the newer members. In fact one of the newer members came along for one of [our] practices... last week and she's only been playing for a few weeks but I encouraged her along but I thought it would be good for her to come and have a session with us really to see how it felt for her... I encouraged her to do, I think it worked. Because I remember being like that myself. Even though I wanted to do the practice it was me who said come on let's get together and practice because I knew if I didn't it would be even more of a struggle and I want to enjoy it from day one and I don't want to dread it I want to enjoy it, which I might have done if I just didn't practice enough. And I think the main thing is just to feel that you are not on your own. That's probably one of the main attractions of [a learning ensemble] is that you are never on your own. As I say you can talk to other people, you can be with them and get some help apart from what [the tutor] can help you with.'

Would you say that you are teaching them?

Yes, I would yes.

And you are learning yourself from that situation?

Exactly, yes, it's like a double teaching situation. It might only be very basic things but it's still some teaching and some helping.'

IV.5.a Learning with and from each other

Cope (2002) places an emphasis on the role of the 'session' as a forum for self-taught musicians to gather information for their learning. In this context the session is where a group of musicians come together and play. It may take on the form of a band practice

where musicians know each other or it may be an open session where any musician can join in. Membership of the session is gained by playing a particular type of music on an appropriate instrument. For example rock musicians would go to a session where rock music is played on electric guitars, drums and vocals whereas a jazz session may involve playing jazz music on instruments such as saxophones, trumpets, trombones etc.

Talking to two self-taught musicians, Cope (2002; 97) found that

'Sources of information [for learning] included watching and taking advice from other players and ... reading some materials. Both acknowledged the importance of the session in motivating them and influencing their development.'

Green's (2002) research on how popular musicians learn also has a strong emphasis on the role of the session or band rehearsal as a catalyst for the enculturation of students.

'Friendship and the sharing of musical tastes are highly significant to young popular musicians and affect their learning practices in many ways'

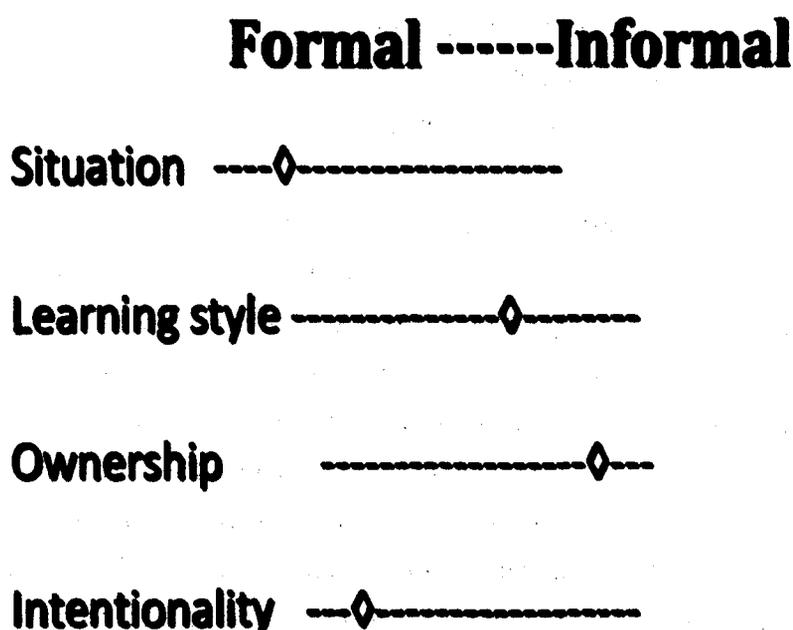
(p.83)

Green's (2002; 76) definition of group learning is that it *'occurs as a result of peer interaction but in the absence of any teaching.'* She does acknowledge that informal learning can take place within a formal situation (p.60) but this suggests that there is a difference between a formal learning situation and an informal learning situation, the difference being the presence of a teacher. Folkestaad (2006) discusses the problems of defining musical learning as either formal or informal. He too defines formal learning situations by the presence of a teacher who *'can be another musician – but someone who is leading the activity'*. He defines informal learning situations as where *'the activity steers the way of working/playing/composing and the process proceeds by the interaction of the participants in the activity also described as self chosen and voluntary'* (p.141). If a formal learning situation is one where there is some kind of teacher presence, and an informal situation one where the activity steers the voluntary learners, where does a learning ensemble that is functioning as a self-selected, voluntary community in which the activity is steering the learners, but has a tutor who is an integral part of the community of practice, fall within the definitions of informal/formal learning situations?

Folkestaad continues his discussion by suggesting four aspects of learning that can be either formal or informal. These are the physical situation (school or outside of school), the learning style (by notation or by ear), the ownership of the learning (self or teacher)

and the intentionality of the learning (how to play or so as to play). Marshall (2008) took these definitions and suggested formal and informal learning are not static concepts and that at any one time, a student can be placed at different points along four continuums of formal and informal learning, shown in figure 19.

Figure 19 – Four continuums of formal and informal learning



(from Marshall, 2008)

This suggestion by Marshall is in the context of school music and he found that pupils who managed to balance informal and formal activities in these four areas were more able to cope with school music at examination level (i.e. opt into GCSE music). Based on a longitudinal study of pupil attitudes to secondary school music he found that people who inhabit the 'poles' tend to opt out of school music examination and that people who achieve some form of 'equilibrium' remain in it/cope with it.

If we take each of these four continuums and apply them to learning in a learning ensemble we see that the nature of the learning ensemble allows the students to maintain an equilibrium of points along each of the four continuums. Firstly I would suggest that the 'situation' continuum occupies a fixed point. A learning ensemble may happen within a school, outside of a school, in a village hall or in an arts centre, but the place usually remains the same. The formal (in terms of school/out of school) structure of the learning ensemble is therefore stable and this stability gives members a fixed

reference point for membership of that group. Secondly, as discussed in *IV.4.a Using notation* page 111, the students may move along the 'learning style' continuum in terms of learning by notation and learning by ear, combining the two in the ensemble situation and constantly changing depending on what the student is tackling. We have also already discussed how playing the music is synonymous with practising it, and therefore that by playing the music the students are learning how to play it at the same time (see *IV.2.a The practice of practising*, page 91). So depending on the specific activity at the time, i.e. whether the students are performing or rehearsing, they move along the 'intentionality' continuum. Finally, movement along the 'ownership' continuum can be seen through the analysis of the rules of each specific learning ensemble.

Each ensemble will have its own system of etiquette. Members of the ensemble will know when it is appropriate to talk to each other, talk to the tutor or talk to themselves. In a learning ensemble the etiquette is very different to that of a purely performing ensemble where members may not wish anyone around them to talk and be focussed on rehearsing music. One thing that immediately struck me on observing the learning ensembles was how noisy they were. This was echoed by Tutor T5. Tutor T5 is in fact not a designated tutor as such. He plays semi-professionally, but he gives percussion support to his learning ensemble as his wife is a member. He has not been employed to fulfil the role of tutor but, taking Folkestaad's (2006) definition of a tutor stated above, he fulfils a teaching role. He describes the learning ensemble.

'There's a lot of chat going on... which, I'm sitting there thinking 'I wish people would be quiet so that I can get on' [laughs] but it is part of the learning process, the trumpets next to me will be talking amongst themselves sort of saying 'this bit's really difficult' and 'how do you play this' and... yeah, there's a lot of mutual support going on and the conductor will, certainly on most of the woodwind he'll come over and help if people are getting problems.'

Here the students are interacting with the rules of the community in order to engage in peer learning. For different ensembles this will happen at different times, for example Tutor TP said.

'When I stop for a break they are all comparing notes and they get their music out that they have brought, other than the stuff that we do in the group.'

In my gamelan it is different again. For example, when we are playing a piece sometimes you will see that the person sitting next to you is lost. Within our community it is acceptable to point to where they are, sing the notes to them or tell them which line or section we are on. Also, when the music stops there is usually a lot of chatter to both the tutor and to each other, discussing which bits went right

and wrong and why. Sometimes two members may start playing their bits together whilst the others are talking about something else, and this too is acceptable. In a different group, the etiquette of the group would not allow this and other members may interpret it as rudeness. Within our gamelan community it is accepted that others will play whilst others are talking.

Student Y explains how this type of interaction with others in the community has helped her.

'And we do teach each other the new notes, you know, there's one next to you 'oh how do you do that?' and you'll just teach the person next to you or she doesn't know or he doesn't know then it passes along the line, or we'll ask [the tutor] if we're all stuck. But, I mean I've learnt loads from the lady who sits on one side of me, because she has lessons. So, she... taught me a lot of alternative fingering and stuff, so yes, we do teach each other. But we also, I think as a band, we're probably listening to each other better now than we did in the beginning. Which is obviously, we've got to, like with tuning and that you've got to listen to... you just know don't you, when you've got a chord, if it feels right or not.'

Student R deliberately joined a second group at a lower level than her own group so as to reinforce her understanding and help the others in the group.

'I'm usually doing something backgroundy, giving structure to what they're doing. So usually I'm on tune or I'm on gongs, just giving structure to what they're doing. So there's somebody there who's got some little experience who can just hold it together a bit. I think it's useful for me and it's useful for them as well, it seems to work.'

What is interesting is that the students appear to want to ask their fellow students about a difficulty before the tutor. This evidence would support Knowles' key assumption of adult learning that *'adults have a deep need to be self directing'* and that the role of the teacher is to engage the student in the process of mutual enquiry (Knowles, 1990; 31). However, the following conversation from Group 1 demonstrates that not everyone is receptive to this type of peer learning.

D *What I do find annoying is that most people don't listen because they're so busy chit chatting to each other or tuning their violins or doing whatever they do because we are adults and we can do whatever we do, we don't have to listen to whoever is in charge and so just chit chat and start bar 5, which bar?*

B *Right.*

D *Which bar?*

E But that's...

D What did you say, what did you say. And because people, it's part of their social life it's from half past nine till quarter to, what is it?...

A One.

D One. It's part of social life you see you meet people that have the same interest playing music and so you need to chit chat. Instead of going out with each other on Friday night and chit chat then.

O I don't know I think that what a lot of the talk around me is, is of basically of people who have not done the practice...

B Mmmm.

O Who are asking other people who they think might know more...

A Mmm.

O Something that is not being told as we are going along. I mean if there is an assumption by the tutors...

A Yeah, yes.

O That you are practising scales. And that you are better accomplished in reading music than you are...

A yes. Yes.

O Particularly those who are real, real beginners.

A Yeah.

O Who are trying to work out as we are given a new piece and we are starting straight away and there are three sharps on it. And I mean I for one...

D But it's not you or me or anyone in the orchestra's job to do that, that's why there are five teachers walking around...

O Yes. But nobody's going to say in the orchestra...

D But then...

O Excuse me... I can't remember, is the second finger close to the first...

A Yeah, yeah, yeah, no, I know what you mean...

O Or close to the third.'

Here, although the others are happy with an amount of constructive discussion amongst students, Student O has a strong view on where and from whom her learning should

take place. She is less tolerant of those who feel the need to discuss issues with their peers as to her it is getting in the way of her own learning.

IV.5.b Finding the boundaries

Rodgers (1986; 107) says that a disadvantage of learning within a group is that

'some learners find it difficult to cope with such a variety of experience and views.'

It seems to me that an important part of the group learning process is also learning the etiquette of learning within the community. In order to keep the shared norms and values of the group for it to function (see IV.2 Chapter 2 – Social Music Making, page 90) there have to be boundaries. These boundaries can be anything from where people sit to what people do when the tutor is addressing a small section of the group only. For example, in a performance focussed ensemble if the tenor saxophones needed to go over a small section of the music the conductor would expect the other members of the ensemble not to play. In a learning ensemble the tutor may ask the other members to follow their own part so that they can see how that particular part fits in with others, other tutors may expect this to happen as a norm and therefore it is part of the group etiquette. During this time members may talk to one another about the music, as the above conversation with Group 1 shows, but it would not be appropriate to play whilst the conductor was giving other members of the ensemble direction. In different groups, such as Groups 3 and 4, the etiquette is different and students can and do play whilst the tutor is discussing something with other members of the group.

This etiquette is all part of the accepted norms of the group and will be unique to the specific group. In many cases the etiquette may develop as the group develops. For example my gamelan's etiquette developed as the community evolved. I remember clearly that in the early days of the group when instruction was being given to one or two people on one or two instruments the rest of the group would be quiet. This developed into the rest of the group being quiet or chatting quietly about the music. The next stage of development was that other members may play something quietly to themselves and now we have reached a stage where we know that it is ok to have a chat or play something whilst someone else is receiving some individual instruction. In some cases the gamelan instructor may call us all round to hear something specific, other times he will leave us. Interestingly we all know when the etiquette has been broken, usually when someone has been talking a bit too loudly about a matter unrelated to

gamelan. Once it is accepted that the etiquette has been broken, it will very quickly resume. This is also closely linked to the occurrence of 'make or break' moments as described in *IV.2 Chapter 2 – Social Music Making* (page 90). During one of these moments the etiquette is broken and then reforms. Sometimes the reformation of this etiquette may be developmental and the etiquette moves on accordingly. This etiquette is often very codified yet intrinsic to the group, and it may not be entirely obvious to the newcomer. Therefore peer learning is vital in order to 'train' newcomers into the etiquette of the group, allowing them to travel further into the community of practice.

IV.5.c Facilitating different paces

Having ensemble etiquette also allows for people to learn at their own pace, as Student C explains.

'I think it's a bit unrealistic to think that 'cos it's such a big session, if everyone put their hand up. So for me there's no pressure, if I don't get it, I sit back, if I don't get it here I'll go back and do it in my own time. But that's what I like about it here because when I was a child and there was that pressure to get it right, here it's like, if I haven't got it I'll sit back and no-one's going to tap me on the shoulder [agreement] and in my own time I'll go back and have a look at it and that's what I love about it [agreement].'

An important factor of the learning ensemble is that different group members do learn at different paces, which in turn allows peer learning to happen. Students can take their time to work things out for themselves, placing them on the 'self' end of the learning style continuum. Or they can use all the teaching resources, be it tutor-led or peer-led, to accelerate quickly, as students in Group 1 acknowledge.

'O No, I think there are lots of people... as [Student D] said they want the first violin part...

E Yes.

O And they want to push themselves to their limit. [agreement]

A Yes, cause I started at the City Lit with someone who's, well we've been in the City Lit for three years together, and he's gone up to level four, but I'm doing level three again...

The significance of allowing members to learn at their own pace is that even if you have a learning ensemble where there are no newcomers and everyone starts at the same time, you will still get a rich peer learning environment. As a student moves into the

community at their own pace, they are able to look towards others who are further in than themselves and also help others that are moving more slowly. These changes in participation contribute to group evolution and give students different *'viewpoints from which to understand the practice, evolve through changing participation in the division of labor, changing relations to ongoing community practices, and changing social relations in the community'* (Lave and Wenger, 1987; 96).

Therefore the rules that allow the student to engage with the community are crucial in producing a positive learning experience within the evolutionary and multi-level nature of the group.

IV.6 Chapter 6 – Master or Apprentice?

So far, I have described the learning ensemble as a community of practice (*IV.3 Chapter 3 – Creating a Community*, page 98), an environment where the rules of the community allow peer learning to flourish whilst enabling a newcomer to become established within the group (*IV.5 Chapter 5 – Ensemble Etiquette*, page 129). However, if we accept that a person may join a community of practice in order to learn something, and that learning is facilitated by both tutors and more experienced members who are able to pass on their knowledge and understanding to the newcomer, we must consider the concept of apprenticeship. Lave and Wenger (1991) explore apprenticeship in reference to Legitimate Peripheral Participation through analysing the cases of five groups of people; Midwives, Tailors, Quartermasters, Butchers and Alcoholics. They consider the view that apprenticeship is a *'form of control over the most valuable, least powerful workers'* based on the Western European experience as well as the *'relatively benign, relatively egalitarian, and non-explosive character to apprenticeship'* seen in contemporary West Africa. However, through the discussion of the five case studies, they ascertain that within apprenticeships there are *'rich relations among community members of all sorts, their activities and artefacts. All are implicated in processes of increasing participation and knowledgeability'* (p.84).

If a community of practice then allows the apprentice to develop their expertise, then somewhere within that community, is there a master? Is there a person or persons whom the apprentice looks to in order to familiarise themselves with the social world in which they have placed themselves so that they can deepen their knowledge and understanding of the community? Lave and Wenger (1991; 110) say that *'acceptance by and interaction with acknowledged adept practitioners make learning legitimate and of value from the point of view of the apprentice.'* Therefore, within the learning ensemble, who are the acknowledged adept practitioners? Who are the masters?

By analysing the division of labour we can see how the newcomer's learning is facilitated by primary and secondary constituents within the ensemble. Primary constituents take on a direct role in sharing labour, such as a tutor playing alongside a student. Secondary constituents take on an indirect role in sharing labour, sometimes without realising that they are sharing the labour with others, such as the group continuing to play whilst a tutor plays alongside a student. We can also see how more experienced learners are able to develop their learning through interacting with the ensemble at greater or lesser levels, depending on what the goal of the person is at that particular time. Alongside this, division of labour can also be explicit, where a tutor will purposefully divide the

labour amongst ensemble members, and spontaneous, where a tutor or a student will change their contribution to the group spontaneously to help someone who either asks for help or looks like they need help. The tutor plays a key role in both forms of division of labour and we must therefore establish what the role of the tutor within the ensemble is.

IV.6.a Explicit division of labour

Rodgers (1986; 108) states that within adult education, it is the role of the teacher to

'Watch the balance between the personal self-development of each learner and supportive/challenge role of the group.'

The tutor is responsible for ensuring that each learner has the opportunity to achieve their personal goals and that the learning ensemble provides an appropriate context to allow this to happen. This is done using both musicianship and teaching skill through guided division of labour.

To Student B, the tutor is a strategist- someone who can give a quick fix within the time constraints to improve the students' playing.

'I think they're very aware that everyone has really busy lives and I notice that they... have kind of strategies that they have built into the pieces we're working on to talk you really quickly into technical tweaks that will make things sound better almost immediately.'

This role of 'technical strategist' is probably the most common perception of a tutor: the ability to show a student how to overcome a technical difficulty in a concise way, and give a strategy for overcoming future similar difficulties. This then places the tutor as master, as the person with the most knowledge who is able to share their knowledge with others.

The view of the tutor as the master of the group is shared by other students. The following conversation shows how Group 2 regard their tutor and how the tutor controls the division of labour within the ensemble so that the needs of the individual are attended to and all students can be engaged.

'H Yeah, I think it's fair to say that she defines the ethos of the group. That it's very much a reflection of her approach to music really.'

J And her generosity of time and...

I/H Yes.

J I mean she's not just being paid for two hours tutoring, all the work she does at home.

H Writing out parts, arranging parts.

F Yes.

I Yes, because all the music she produces herself. Well no, not all that's...

J But she rearranges music especially for our standard.

I Yes, mmmm.

I And that's the important thing. That's what makes it easier, do-able.

F Yes.

I Is that she writes it. She asks you what your range is before you start and then she tries and fit the other pieces in and then once you actually....

F Yes.

F The difficulty is we are all at very different levels.

I Mmmm.

F Right from very, we've got two at the moment who are really very beginners, up unto grade 5 grade 6. So it's very difficult to get the balance but [the tutor] manages that perfectly.

I When we...

F She gives a part that you can all play...

I Yes...

F So if you are grade 5 you don't get a part with about 3 notes on it you get a decent part.'

This conversation highlights two things. Firstly, the students are very appreciative of the time and dedication that the tutor gives to the group. It shows a respect between student and tutor that allows the tutor to be in control of the group and therefore in control of the music. Secondly, it shows that in this position of control, the tutor is able to consciously divide the labour in the group so as to meet the needs of the individual whilst maintaining a coherent musical sound. In other words, by differentiating the parts with an emphasis on the ability of the individual, the group becomes able to function as an ensemble.

Tutor T2 is very aware of this role and describes how computer software has made it easier for her to arrange music for her group.

'I couldn't have run this orchestra if I'd still had to do everything by hand, the way I want to run it. With the children, this was 1980, and I was doing all the copying and all the transcribing and everything all by hand and then the photocopying from manuscripts. But with the bigger numbers and much wider range of instruments I really need to be able to do things like feeding a violin part into the computer and turning it out as a clarinet part and stuff like that.'

It's brilliant to be able to do that isn't it?

Yes. We'd actually had the music software about a year by the time I started the orchestra, so I was reasonably competent with it.

That's quite a key thing isn't it, to be able to arrange the stuff.

Things just do not come off the shelf for the sort of weird mixtures you've seen. And it's different each term because I only ask people to enrol for one term... So it can change quite a lot from one term to the next.'

Student H refers to how Tutor T2 also gives strategies in order to cope with the music at different playing abilities.

'And she's very accommodating, she teaches us techniques to help us deal with the fact that we might not quite be able to play the tune, she teaches things like leapfrog sight reading which is basically, it's most important if you don't know your notes to know exactly where you are so that when you come to something that you can play, you can play it at the right time, so she teaches us a technique called leapfrog sight reading where we play, we go through the piece and we just play the first note of each bar, basically so that we can all go through together and we know exactly where we are.'

This explicit division of labour also occurred in other groups. The following conversation happened between members of Group 1.

O *Have you looked at the sort of music we are playing at all to see how the groups progress? Because I mean I showed, when I sort of started, my, one of my children plays the violin... grade 8 standard... and plays in an orchestra, was kind of surprised at the level of the music that we've been doing.*

That it was more difficult?

O *That it was more difficult than he was expecting.*

B *I think so, I think that's one of the interesting things. There's not a lot of concession made to the fact that people are beginners...*

E *Absolutely not.*

B *Which is brilliant because.*

D *They make an open string for you so that's fine.*

B *Exactly, exactly.'*

By explicitly dividing the labour in this way the tutor is able to fulfil the role outlined by Rodgers (1986) above, that of providing a balance allowing the individual to achieve their goals and ensuring that the group is sufficiently challenging/supportive to all members. Tutor T3 highlights this as one of the essential parts of teaching gamelan.

'One of the things that I personally find quite interesting as a gamelan teacher, sometimes difficult, sometimes wonderful, ends up being both, is that with gamelan you've got to teach, I'm not sure if it's a tension or a balance, between teaching individual people how to do individual, specific things with a particular instrument and also making sure the whole group knows what's going on as well. Because they're not having individual instrumental tuition and then playing in an ensemble, it's not like just directing an orchestra. It's like directing an orchestra but also having to make sure that I'm telling the violins how to finger that particular phrase as well, so it's one of the weird things you get. It's like having to focus on individuals at times but also make sure the whole group gets attention as well.'

Therefore one key role of the tutor is to explicitly divide the labour of the group so as to provide the right balance between individual and group attention, allowing the student to interact with the constituents of the activity system in order to achieve their goals. Here the tutor is the primary constituent; they are directly responsible for the labour division. They are the master of the group.

Interestingly, a number of comments above show how the students feel that the tutor's character shapes the group. Indeed Tutor T4 sees this as a vital part of the functioning of the group.

'I think because a lot of the way a band works is down to the band master and I think people coming in absorb the culture of it. I think the culture is very much driven initially by the band master and then it goes from there.'

He sees the role of the tutor as someone who drives the culture of the group; someone who creates the community, the rules and divides the labour so as to allow the students to enter into the community of practice. The tutor is a character who somehow defines the group. However, how does this work if the personal relationship between the student and tutor is not positive?

In Chapter 3 we saw how, although a tutor was disliked by some students and liked by others, they felt that they all learnt whilst in his sessions (page 102). The implication that the tutor is a master who defines the culture of the group then becomes distorted when a group is divided about their tutor's style of teaching. So how does this group continue to function when there is a negative reaction to the tutor? Barrett (2005; 268) explains

'It is important to note that whilst 'Communities of Practice' involve shared social practices and goals for the individuals within that community, this does not necessarily imply that these communities are characterized by a sense of 'harmony' or concord between all participants.'

This must mean that the tutor's character is not the only defining factor of the group, and if a master is someone who defines the group there must be more than one master.

IV.6.b Spontaneous division of labour

The following diary extract shows how a spontaneous interaction between myself and my tutor allowed me to regain my contribution to the ensemble and provide me with a burst of motivation

'6 December 2005

I played four notes to the tune's pair and the tune was on my 2 and 4 but I kept getting it on 1 and 3. The thing is though, I could hear that I wasn't right, and I just stopped and listened hard and got back in (with a bit of help from [the tutor]).'

In this instance, I had lost my place and my object was to find where I was and join back in. In doing so the labour was divided between primary constituent, the tutor, with help from the secondary constituents, the ensemble. I was able to use listening tools along with cognitive tools using my knowledge of the piece to help me find my place. In seeing that I was trying to work out where I was, the tutor gave me some spontaneous help by singing the notes that I needed to play, this helped me lock into my part of the ensemble. All of this was facilitated by the secondary constituents, the ensemble; if the ensemble had not have been playing, I would not have been able to interact with the tools needed to find where my part fitted in.

Spontaneous division of labour can also be instigated by another student. Smith and Spurling (2001; 71) state that

'groups are evolution's answer to individuals' need to survive and prosper in a hostile environment. Helping and particularly reciprocal helping, is a key aspect of group behaviour.'

I have been a member of my gamelan for over four years; I am an old timer. When I play with the gamelan I am often alongside students who are either newcomers or not quite so much an old timer as I. I am now in a position to offer spontaneous division of labour. I can recall numerous occasions where I could see or hear that someone beside me has got lost and if the tutor is otherwise occupied, I am able to either play a little louder so they can hear where they are in the tune, sing the note numbers or lean over and point to where we are in the tune. I do this without hesitation and as a natural part of the gamelan playing. I am not the only one who does this; other old timers fulfil this function too. Similarly, as a conductor of a learning ensemble, I see other students lean towards someone who is lost and play louder so that they can use their listening tools to regain their place.

What this creates is an environment where the rules help to facilitate peer learning (as discussed in *IV.5.a Learning with and from each other*, page 129), but division of labour allows students to alter their contribution in order to support the learning of fellow students. Green (2002; 76) says that

'group learning occurs as a result of peer interaction but in the absence of any teaching.'

Her view is that when people learn to play popular music, they do so through interaction with their peers using different types of listening and sharing tools. The implication is that there are no masters, just peers. However, much of this learning occurs when students listen to recordings or interact with others with greater skill; in other words, they enter into a community of practice. Here the recordings and the other students are the masters. Therefore, in the context of a community of practice within a learning ensemble, the students also act as masters at different points. Moreover, my experience of having the ensemble as a secondary constituent in the division of labour shows how the other members of the ensemble can act simultaneously as masters.

For me, the outcome of the spontaneous division of labour described above was that it created the opposite of a 'make or break' situation (discussed in *IV.3 Chapter 3 – Creating a Community*, page 98). This is a point where the student is highly motivated by a positive interaction with the music through support from either the tutor or other students. This is a moment of 'elation'; a moment when the student feels that they have

accomplished something and can go on to tackle anything. The feeling I had after this incident was *'I'm just brilliant me!'*

How this supports learning can be explained by Vygotsky's concept of 'Zones of Proximal Development'. The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is

'the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers.'

(Vygotsky, 1978; 86)

The developmental level of the others who share the same social environment as the individual determines the space between the two levels of the individual's development, the actual level and the potential level. If the others have a higher actual level than the individual, then the individual's potential development level will also be higher. In other words, the potential for musical development is determined by the level of others within the community of practice. As an old timer in my group, the level of my development is greater than the newer members, therefore I provide a gap between my musical development and their musical development in which they can progress- meaning their development potential is great. However, as one of the longest standing members of the group, I have one of the highest levels of development; therefore within my group my own development potential is relatively small. This being the case, I occasionally take the opportunity to play with another, more developed group than my own so as to increase my ZPD. For me, knowing that I fulfil this role in my group helps my motivation when I do not feel that I am learning as much as previously. For others, it takes them on a trajectory outside of the group to another community and eventually they may leave the group.

IV.6.c Looking for other masters

It is easy to see that through division of labour an appropriate ZPD is created and a moment of 'elation' could occur. The student has the opportunity to engage fully with community to overcome a difficulty, leaving a feeling of great achievement. These are the points that the student remembers and carries forward with them in their learning (see *IV.9.b Recognising achievement*, page 172). However, these moments cannot occur without a high level of co-operation between students and tutors and students and their peers.

Turner (1987; 32) says that within a group, levels of co-operation can be increased by

'Explicit instructions to adopt a co-operative rather than competitive or individualistic orientation.'

But as the above examples show, within a learning ensemble individualistic orientation through division of labour is fundamental to the production of music and the development of the learners. Moreover, students seem to be able to tolerate interpersonal differences for the sake of the music and so the learning ensemble becomes more than just a tolerant group of people, but a community of practice with the emphasis firmly on the musical learning rather than the cohesiveness of the community in which it occurs. The students show an immense mutual respect for each other, regardless of personality, that allows a high level of co-operation within the community, providing a safe environment for the students to develop their musical learning tools.

Student H said:

'we all like to try as hard as we can and play as well as we can... if you play a wrong note or if you miss an entry no-one is going to turn around and stare at you accusingly [agreement].'

Similarly, this conversation between students F and I shows that within the safe environment of the learning ensemble, students can take risks in order to develop their skills.

'I But playing to these people is ok...

F Yes.

I It's great isn't it...

F Yes.

I Do you remember the first one I did?

F Yes

I I went to play and my valve stuck.

Oh really.

I Yes, I just, that was just... [laughter] and so I walked away.'

However, my own learning experience shows that this safety is important to learning, but it took a while for me to feel safe within the group.

'8 November 2005

More people were here tonight. We started with the nice easy song and we had people actually sitting at the front singing instead of singing whilst playing. I volunteered. This shows that I'm now comfortable with the group enough to volunteer to do it. I remember before I wouldn't ask to do things I wanted to do, but I can now. It was great actually sitting in the middle and hearing it all as a whole. I really like the spaces in the tune in this piece because you can hear so much of what is going on.'

Therefore, as with formation of the group, there needs to be a period of time before the individual can feel safe. This may be after a 'make or break' moment or moment of 'elation' has occurred when the individual feels that musical learning can occur without a full consensus within the group, in other words, when the learning ensemble has formed into a tolerant group.

The view of the role of the tutor as sole master now changes. Moreover, students often seek other masters outside of the group in order to become more proficient within the group.

'C In the past I've had individual lessons and come here and for me definitely I think I need to go back to having the individual lessons... Perhaps because I don't practise as much but just with regards to my technique and the little nitty gritty parts of it the individual lessons really help.'

B 'I don't know, I mean I feel that we have the tuition classes here, the technique classes and they are quite small groups and I think [my tutor] particularly, I don't know about the other classes but I think that he does spend quite a lot of time correcting technique in so far as he can.'

D 'I had a few lessons after the four hours at [the group], from [a tutor] you know, and that helps too when you have a private, a private hour on holding your bow and doing simple things because you don't want to hold up the whole group do you?'

O Well that's exactly what I feel the pressure is that everybody doesn't want to feel like the one holding...

A No, you don't want to be the worst...

O Holding up the group. And that's what I'm saying is exceptional among adult classes, evening classes there are people who are feeling very conscious of being the back [laughter] and having some kind of remedial catch up. [laughter] For me, for me I went on the summer school as a make up for lack of practice.

E Yes, that's right.

O And I feel you've sort of gone up three steps sort of thing because I've been playing for a whole week at a summer school...

E Yeah.

O So it's kind of a catch up as much as anything else.

The feeling of not letting the group down seems to be important to members of this group and is why they seek other masters.

Group 2 students were all taking individual lessons at the time of interview; they clearly saw that it was their own responsibility to develop their individual technique outside of the group, which needed individual time with a tutor. However, learning the skills of playing with others was also helping to develop their individual skills. When asked if the individual lessons and the learning within the group cross over Student H said:

'Well to the extent that sometimes... when [the tutor] tries to help us with instrumental problems, she's a flautist herself she also plays the viola so she knows, she knows a lot about problems that wind players might have. She knows also quite a bit about problems that string players might have in terms of fingering and bowing.... But quite often I'll take a piece that I'm working on here to my teacher and she'll help me figure out the best way to finger it.'

The perceived need for individual tutor contact within the group situation was diminished.

My experience of learning shows that I need different levels of teacher interaction depending on what I am doing. The following extracts from my diary illustrate this.

'24 May 2005

We then went to a new piece and I moved the bonang, which I was pleased about. It took a little bit to remember where the notes were but I was able to work it out via listening to the notes and relating it to the previous tune. He then explained what I had to do and I don't think I really watched because I had to ask him again which ones I was using, high or low. I then couldn't pick up the upbeat. I find it really hard to play on the anticipating off beat. Anyway, I messed it up and he helped me and I tried it again.'

However, I was aware that while I am getting individual attention, 10 other students are getting no attention. A few weeks later rather than ask for individual tutor attention, I started to latch onto other parts and develop my own strategy for not getting lost.

'21 June 2005

We did Willujeng, which is pelog. I couldn't remember what the notes were and had to ask others. I missed the signal to go to the Nglik at first, but then I got it. I was working on a bit with [another student], where we go double the speed of the tune, mirroring the peking, but we shared the notes out. I found it really hard at first to keep where I was. I kept getting lost. There were lots of 2723 2756 2723 things and I couldn't find where I was, whilst listening out for [the other student] – which I found really hard. I latched on to the Peking, it was easier to hear and spoke the numbers 22 77 22 33 22 77 55 66, where I played the second of the group of two. That worked.'

I do not remember being conscious of not wanting to take the tutor's time away from other students as before, but as my learning progressed I naturally started to develop ways of not needing the tutor's help. In other words, I was becoming more self sufficient as a learner and I was looking towards other masters. Student L also found himself doing this.

'When I'm playing certain things and I can't tell which speed I'm supposed to be playing, and I'll look at [the tutor] and he'll know that I'm looking and why I'm looking at that very moment because he knows there is something wrong ... if you're struggling on the bonang he'll come over and help you do it. But often if you're playing with your neighbour, then you're probably doing it right.'

Student AA also found that as his learning progressed, he found himself listening to the others around him to help with his own playing.

'One of the things I find I do now is I'm listening to other people, what they're playing, for cues for me to play. That has changed things. Before I was just trying to do it by counting and if you make a mistake you're finished because you can't ever catch back up again. Whereas if you actually know what other people are playing you can think 'Oh yeah, just after they play that I do...' and then you can jump back in again if you get lost.'

Not only this, he has also started to think about how his playing supports that of the others.

'It actually makes me wonder if other people are listening to what I'm playing as well! Bit frightening really!'

Interestingly, as the students' positions shift between master and apprentice, and students seek other masters, so too does the position of the tutor. This can be highlighted by an incident where the intervention of the tutor does not produce the desired effect.

'4 October 2005

One of the guys was trying to get his head round [a particular concept] and trying to explain it by saying that we are trained to think of the first beat as the strongest, whereas in this music, the last beat of every four is the strongest. He was trying to explain it as moving the note further towards the more important note. I got what he was saying but [the tutor] didn't, he [the student] was saying that all that happened was the note just moved a quaver beat, which I got too. He was trying to explain the concept using his own understanding of music, but [the tutor] wasn't getting that. It all got a little confusing.'

Tutor T3 is very aware of this.

'I don't normally find it difficult to explain [musical concepts]. But I do sometimes find that I think I've explained it and actually my explanation hasn't functioned and then I've got to try and find another one. Which I find quite enjoyable, trying to find another way of thinking about it. Things like 'hang on, that's not working, I'm actually confusing people more than helping them here, let's think about this from another direction'.

So it's challenging for you as well then isn't it really?

Yes. I find I understand how it's working better because I then have to explain it to other people. It makes you think through things a lot more.'

We must remember that the tutor is also a member of the community and that the tutor is also learning alongside the students and from the students within the community. What we see is the tutor's position being shifted from that of master to apprentice. Although not a musical apprentice, the tutor has to find ways in which to develop his teaching skills in order to function in his role in the group. He is not the only tutor who is aware of how the role of tutor in a learning ensemble is also a learning experience for themselves, as Tutor TP shows when asked what attracted her to the role.

'It was a challenge, I've never done, I've taught a few adults singly, which works but not terribly successfully, certainly with beginners. I mean if they've already got a standard or a level of achievement that's ok. Yes I fancied it as a challenge

Well, it's made me much more enthusiastic. I've been in the job 32 years and you do get into a rut of you know exactly what you are going to teach in the next lesson. I've had to think differently and you do have to not so much think on your feet much more but you do have to be prepared to explain things much more, you have to be prepared to be questioned much more. It's made me a better teacher without a doubt because I've had to think and because I've had to evaluate what I'm doing.

So the whole thing has been a learning process in itself?

Yes, very much so.'

The way the labour is divided within the learning ensemble is fundamental to the notion of transient masters and apprentices. The concept of 'master' is not a fixed state; students and tutors can become masters and apprentices of different things at different points. The role of the tutor is to explicitly divide the labour so as to create a balance between support and challenge for the individuals within the group. However it is the different roles played by the students and tutors that form the ZPD needed in order to learn in the group situation. The model used by Tutor T3 in teaching gamelan is taken from Javanese practice.

'I quite like the model in Java, so I tend to verge towards that myself. I think most people actually teach fairly much like that. But in Java people would get together of an evening, they're not professionals, there's just amateur groups. If there's a gamelan around they'll find someone who knows a bit more than they do or someone who can drum to lead the group and then they'll get together and they'll just play pieces.'

Therefore the tutor within the learning ensemble is a member of the community who has more knowledge or skill than other members of the community of practice, who can lead the group in social music making. The skill of the tutor in allowing themselves to become an apprentice and encouraging students to look towards other masters is paramount to the successful division of labour.

IV.7 Chapter 7 - The Performance

So far the process of interaction between the different elements of the activity system has been discussed in order to see how the student engages in a community of practice. The outcome of this practice is the performance. It seems that a key ingredient of the learning ensemble is the dual purpose of learning and performing. Within this, the performance is the driving force behind the learning and fuses the group together. It places the student in a community of practice where they can flourish as performers. Some, like Student J, remain in the same place for a long period of time:

'You wouldn't think so but this is my 11th year here. And I'm still in the second violins!'

Others move onwards and upwards through a series of progressively more advanced groups, striving to reach their limits in order to progress as students as Students E and O comment:

'E There are certain people who are very very competitive... they want to get ahead... they skip up stages.'

'O I think there are lots of people... they want the first violin part...and they want to push themselves to their limit.'

However, whatever the reasons for joining or motives for achieving, when a student joins a learning ensemble they are from the outset a member of a performing group. As discussed in previous chapters, the students' musical skills are developed through the processes that they as individuals engage in within the ensemble environment. As the members become more proficient on their individual instruments these processes will change, for example an elementary student might spend more time interpreting written notes and finding the appropriate fingering for each note, as Student P5 explains:

'When I'm trying to concentrate on doing the notes right I can't get the timing as well, but I get one right and then try and concentrate on the next aspect. And then one day you suddenly realise that you can play some notes and you think oh I did it, so it is little steps forward and you suddenly realise that when I tried to do that a couple of months ago I just couldn't do it.'

In this case the student is very insular, looking only towards what they can and cannot do on as an individual player on an individual basis. They are on the very periphery of their community of practice, a newcomer whose learning has not developed enough to be able to place their playing in the context of the group. However, over time, as a student's instrumental skill develops and their identity within the ensemble strengthens,

they are able to move along an *'insider trajectory'* (Wenger, 1998; 154) and become more outward looking, relating their participation in the ensemble to that of the others around them.

IV.7.a Moving from Isolation to Integration

In *IV.3 Chapter 3 – Creating a Community* (page 98) we saw how students found it difficult to cope with the new sounds of the ensemble when they first joined. Student J recalled how when she first joined her learning ensemble she found it very difficult to focus on what she, as an individual, was doing in relation to what was going on around her.

'When I first came if I heard a loud instrument behind me and they are playing at a different time to me, I wanted to, because I heard them, I wanted to play with them instead of waiting for my bar to play and it took me quite a long time to get used to that, particularly a loud instrument.'

In order to be able to play her part she had to cut herself off from the group and concentrate solely on her own part, playing it in isolation to the rest of the group. Nevertheless, over a period of time she was able to integrate her playing with that of those around her and now she is able to listen to the other parts and use them to ensure that she is playing in the right place.

Through a process of being immersed in a musical environment where different sounds occur at different times, she has moved along a trajectory from being very inward looking in terms of her own playing, to being more outward looking and able to place herself within the ensemble, moving closer to full membership of the ensemble:



Wenger (1998; 149) says that

'Developing a practice requires the formation of a community whose members can engage with one another and thus acknowledge each other as participants.'

To an ensemble director, ensuring that the members of the group are engaging with one another, including themselves, is vital to a good performance and it is this aim that

catalyses the move along the inward/outward trajectory. At any time within a learning ensemble different students will be in a different place along this trajectory, but a performance can force a member to move further down their own trajectory more so than if they were in a rehearsal. Student AA joined a second learning ensemble in order to 'play more [different] music'. After each rehearsal he would tell the conductor of the new learning ensemble that he is battling to play the right notes and that he has no idea where he is half the time, however after this first performance with the group he said:

'Although I couldn't play any of my notes, I knew that everything around me was working.'

For the first time this student was able to sense what was happening around him and realised that the ensemble was producing a good performance. Without participating in the performance he would not have known that the performance was going well and would not have been so sensitive to what was happening around him. Therefore the performance has forced him along the inward/outward trajectory.

This performance gave him the experience of engaging with his group in a performance situation. Now he has that experience he can draw on it in future learning situations (Hallam, 2001), using it as a tool. He is now half way to full participation in the community; all he needs to do is put in his notes so that others can then engage with him!

Lave and Wenger (1991; 53) say that *'learning is not merely a condition of membership, but is itself an evolving form of membership.'* As the individual evolves by engaging with the group, the group will also evolve as a result of the individual's development. With each performance every student will move along a different trajectory, becoming closer or further away to being a full member of the group, adding to the ever-changing group dynamic. Within this, each individual student will have one or more different goals that drive their learning and their participation in the group. These goals may be very small and personal, like getting a particularly difficult bar of music correct (many a time have I been ecstatic about hitting one particular note right in a complete work) or they may be large, such as playing together in an important concert and feeling a sense of ownership of the music. Indeed,

'the process of performing is itself an achievement for those who consider themselves to be amateurs.'

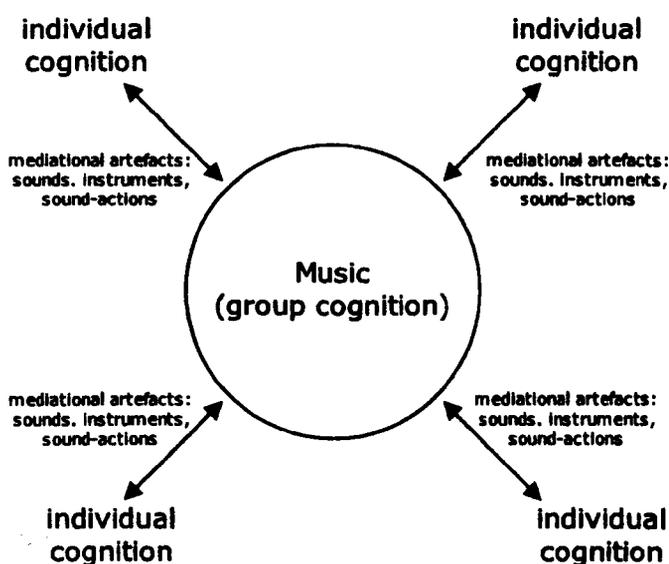
(Pitts, 2005; 25)

However, the aim of the ensemble remains to produce as good a performance as possible, and this is achieved by the success or failure of each individual student to reach their specific goals. So if there is an object or goal of the ensemble that is different to that of the students within the ensemble, there must be an activity system for both the individual students and the ensemble as a whole.

IV.7.b Working towards group cognition

In discussing the activity system of a group of musicians engaged in an improvised performance, Burrows transforms the triangular representation of the system as shown in figure 20.

Figure 20 – Burrows’ Activity System



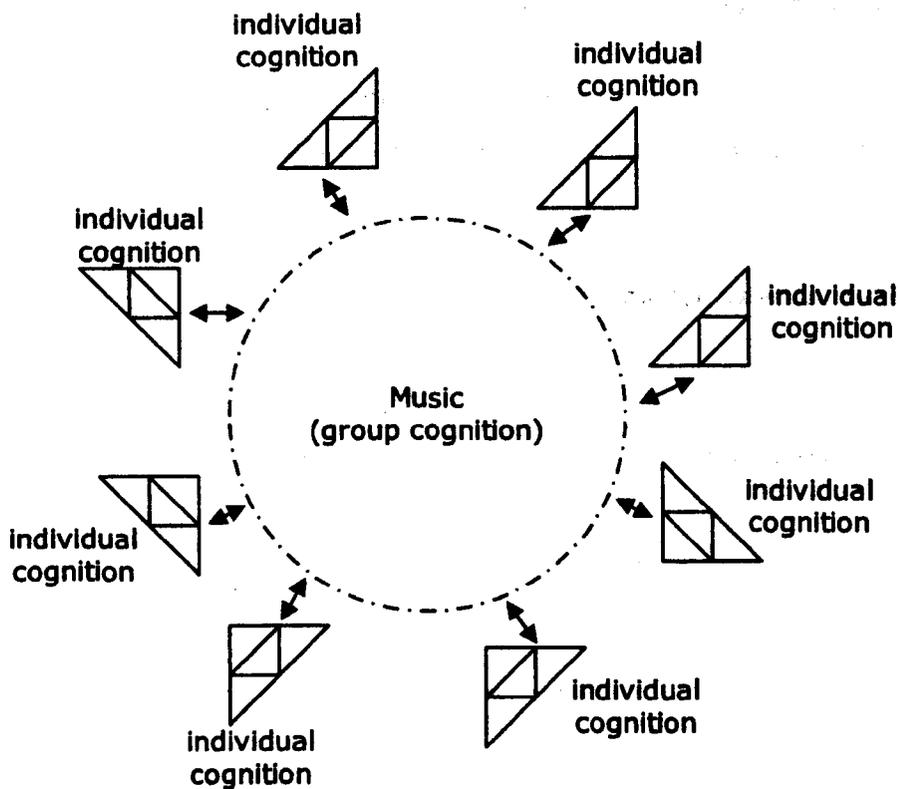
(Burrows, 2004; 8)

The musicians are using their individual instruments, sounds and sound-actions as tools to create a group sound, the result is individual cognition contributing to group cognition and group cognition feeding individual cognition. The music is placed as both artefact, the performers use the music to reach the object of interacting with each other, and object.

However, this model does not allow for the interactions between the individual and the social context in terms of community, rules and division of labour. If we insert the

activity systems of the individuals as shown in figure 21 below, we can show that the individual goals, objects and outcomes of the students, along with their relationship to the social context, form music as a result of group cognition.

Figure 21 – Activity systems in relation to group cognition



(Henley, 2007b)

This also recognises that group cognition is permeable; some of the individuals' activity will feed directly into the creation of the music, others will pass through. Therefore, this allows for the outcome of any individual's activity system to not only go towards group cognition, but also to come out of it. For example, the outcome of my new player in that first performance was to become engaged in the community of practice, but as he did not play any of the notes he did not directly contribute to the music, however his outcome was a direct result of the group cognition.

The performance therefore is a catalyst for learning. Tutor T3 explains

'That's one of my main things about gamelan, for me personally it doesn't mean much to learn it unless you're actually going to do it for people and play something with it. I fully appreciate that there's lots of, it's really lovely to learn an instrument even if you're just doing it for yourself at home, but

particularly with gamelan it's very much about performing in some way, not necessarily concerts but having other people around it, even if it's just as background music. For me it's a very important part of what gamelan music is. So I think it is important that we perform. And it allows people to do that, it makes it quite a different musical experience for people learning if they've got the focus of a concert and doing it in concert makes it very different, you'll know this anyway, playing when you're just in a group on an evening is very different from when you're playing if you've got an audience.'

The whole notion of performance within a learning ensemble is that it puts you into a different situation; you are participating in a different activity with a different set of rules, community, division of labour, have different goals and are perhaps using a different set of tools, or at least using your tools in a different way. It is the performance that creates the perpetual motion of the activity, making the activity '*recurrent and cyclic*' as opposed to it being a linear action (Engeström, 1999; 33). The rehearsal does not stop at the performance, instead the performance informs the rehearsal, leading to the next performance and so forth. Student AA explains how he feels about performing and what he has taken from the experience.

'And how about performing in concerts?'

Absolutely terrifying. To start off with it was terrifying, although those last ones that we did... weren't so terrifying at all. I was a lot more relaxed about those than I've ever been before.

'That's interesting. Why do you think that was?'

I think it was because I joined the second group, and I was sort of improving in confidence in playing with other people. And I think also, that has helped me in being part of the second group, it's helped me to read the music better.'

For Student P1 the concerts form a focal point to work towards.

'I think that the format is good because you get two concerts a year so there's two points of focus to work towards. And I treat it quite seriously because I don't like to miss any [rehearsals] either.'

Similarly with Student R.

I think when I'm learning as just a student, without the performance in mind, because you tend to rev up to the performance, I tend to just be more relaxed and laid back about it. When we're coming up to a performance I'm trying to think 'how can I get this right to perform it?' I think it makes me more focused. Also, we tend to work out what tunes we're doing and make sure I know what I'm doing on that, know the instrument that I'm on so it's not going to be something weird when I get there. Also, I think I just try to get the discipline that if I go wrong not to show it too much because if you just sort of panic and go 'aagghh!' it messes it up for everybody. It's much better just to pretend

you're still doing it. I think really it just makes me focus better, and also it makes me listen for cues more because by the time we get in there you know what other people are doing and I listen to their cues more.

Student F explains that although her first performance was a terrifying experience, it took her through a confidence barrier.

'Oh gosh, that was terrifying. That really was the start of my playing together and performing, that really was. And after that I just sort of went from strength to strength and I love it now.

And it was that experience of remembering being in the vestry or wherever, quivering...

I remember I went out to play... I went out to tune the oboe and to have a blow and I was shaking, and I thought 'I don't want to do this, I want to go home'. And I was tempted just to run and then I heard them say 'oh, where is [she]?' and I thought 'no I can't, I've got to do it' and I did it. It wasn't very good but at least it broke the ice. And once you've done it once then the next time is never as bad. I just got more used to it. And now I'm very relaxed at playing, I'm quite happy playing.'

This being the case, it is important to understand that the performance is not the sole product of the learning ensemble. The success of the students should not be measured externally through one performance taken out of context. Instead, the performance is an integrated part of the process and events leading up to the performance and what the students take away from it should be the factors that determine whether a student is successful in their learning, as Student B explains:

'The first [performance I did] I think, it was just really exciting to be able to do it again, you know I had a couple of people coming along and it was a really nice feeling. I didn't really have any sense of how it was going to turn out. I was a bit nervous. To this day I'm quite careful about who I ask along. I only ask people that I know who will take the imaginative leap required to understand what the whole thing is about. Because really by any stretch of the imagination they're not performance orchestras, in the sense that they're not things that, that sounds really unkind and I don't mean it unkindly, I just mean that the performance isn't exactly the point. It's there and we do it and we need it as a kind of, we need it as a focal point to take us to a certain level of achievement in terms of each particular piece and I think it's really important to have that. But I think the performance is more for us than for anybody else, if you see what I mean. It's very important to do things in front of people, I think, because otherwise it feels as if you're, well you're never really risking anything are you. I think probably the last, the very upper orchestra sometimes sounds sort of more like something you might be able to invite objective people to. I suppose that's the harsh reality of it really. But the point is that there's something about it. I think my brother when he first came along said something about how he really enjoyed seeing something like that, partly because you know how hard people are striving and there's a real sense of danger to it because it could go desperately wrong at any point. And it normally does at some point.

We do what we can, that's the important thing and everyone does absolutely as well as they can. And it's lovely to see it and it's lovely to see people who really didn't ever expect to be in that situation. Just a sheer sense of wonder at being in front of people doing something they weren't doing a year or so before.'

This is echoed by Student H.

'The thing is, the audiences are almost entirely made up of family and friends of the players, so if the players are still quite early on in their experience then I suppose really the families in the audience are expressing the nervousness that the players themselves don't have time for. And frankly don't have to feel because they're not going to be that exposed, unless they're actually doing a solo spot.

Sometimes it's worse though isn't it, playing in front of people you know?

Well yes, in a sense I suppose it is. Then that sort of audience doesn't have the same expectations as an audience who are just turning up and paying for the privilege. We don't ask our audiences to pay to get in, they get in for free, but once we start playing they have to pay to get out!'

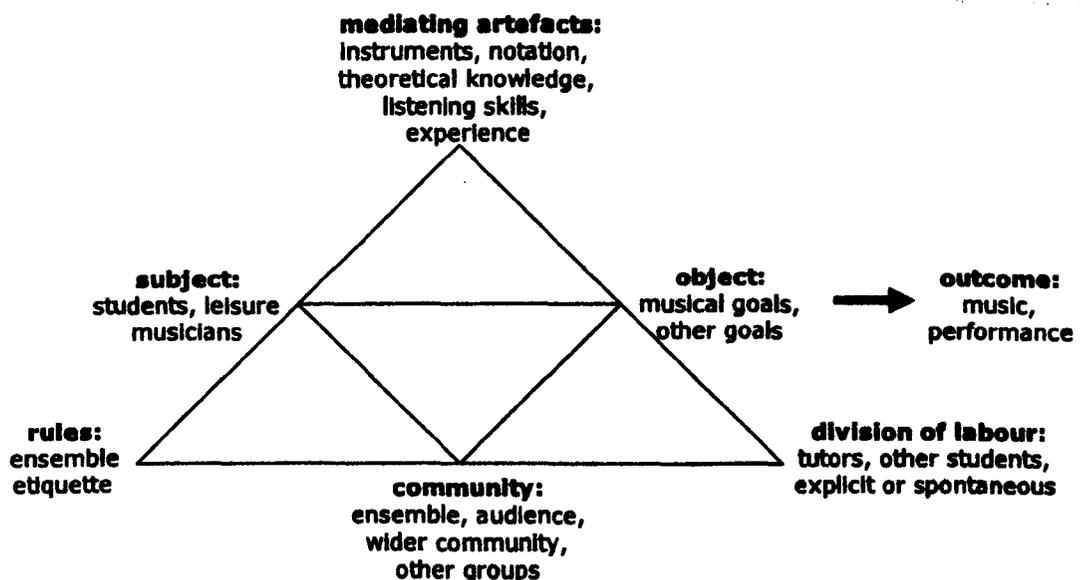
Therefore, although not necessarily the primary outcome, the performance is crucial in catalysing learning. It allows the student to work towards an intended outcome, it places the student in a different context so as to push their boundaries further and it gives a focal point for reflection upon the student's achievements.

IV.8 Chapter 8 – A Social Activity

What the first part of this discussion has shown is that by using Activity Theory to analyse the interactions between a student and their social context, we can see how the cultural context supports learning. Looking at the ensemble as a community of practice has shown that the students form a working, tolerant group where they are able to show respect for each other and support each other's development either directly or indirectly. We have seen how the students use the tools that are at their disposal, and develop new tools so as to find ways in which to continue down a trajectory into their community of practice. This is supported by the rules of the group and I have demonstrated how the enculturation process is a vital component of learning. This in turn leads to a situation where students are able to help each other out and can switch roles spontaneously from apprentice to master, and how students seek other masters within the group so as to form an optimum ZPD. The internal catalyst is the social environment; the external catalyst is the performance.

Therefore, the activity system of learning an instrument within a learning ensemble is presented in figure 22.

Figure 22 – The learning ensemble activity system



The curious thing about this is that most of this is done through the medium of music. The music encourages a student to set a goal– 'I must learn how to do this so that I can play that.' The music will dictate the etiquette of the group– formal orchestra or informal

learning ensemble. The music will determine what tools are used to carry out the activity– notation or no notation. The music will necessitate how the labour is divided and it is through the music that masters can communicate to apprentices, even in just a short space of time. It is this that gives rise to an interesting dichotomy; being social on one hand and socialising on the other.

IV.8.a Being social and socialising

Tutor T3 explains:

'Gamelan is very much a social thing as well as a musical thing and it's quite important that we work as a group rather than just people who turn up, play it and then go.'

However, it wasn't until nearly two years after I started playing with my gamelan group that I actually knew everybody's name and felt comfortable chatting to them, as these diary extracts show.

'18 October 2005

[Two students] have invited everyone to their house next Tuesday (half term) for curry and gamelan videos. I doubt I'll go. It would be nice but I'm still a little shy of just going in and joining in, maybe next time.

6 December 2005

I was chatting to a few people over crisps ... starting to feel a little less awkward socially, although I did slip off at the end as everyone was talking to people and I didn't want to disturb them to say goodbye.'

When we played together, we were supportive, respectful and communicative; we were social. When we stopped playing, we did not really speak to each other; we did not socialise. So the difference between being social and socialising seems to come from whether or not music is being played.

Most learning ensembles seem to have smaller sub groups within them, such as a brass group or clarinet group, as Tutor T4 explains.

'There are a lot of smaller groups happening as well. The clarinets met together, the flutes met together, the saxophones met together and so on and that helps [the learning process].'

These smaller groups are sometimes practice groups, as in group P:

P1 *Well we practise anyway and when there are two of you, you can hear each other very easily and when you're both right or wrong or one's right and one's wrong... it's more difficult isn't it.*

P2 *[talking over] So you practise two of you together do you.*

P1 *Yeah.*

P2 *That's good.'*

Sometimes they are groups that have been instigated by the students so as to try different music:

P7 *[Two other students and I] have been doing a trio recently... and I had to really count to get my cello in the right, playing the right notes with the violin. It's very enlightening. [general laughter]'*

Other ensemble members are actively encouraged to form smaller groups, as the following conversation from Group 2 shows.

H *[The tutor] encourages us to play solo pieces and chamber groups and so a lot of people are involved with smaller ensembles as well...*

J *Yes, yes.*

I *Oh yes.*

H *And then we come together and perform those...*

I *Yes... we have a brass group.*

H *That's...*

Do you?

H *That's an important part of it as well.'*

This conversation also shows that the students do feel it important to make music in smaller groups between themselves. The students however do not perceive these musical sub-groups as socialising with each other, as the following conversation illustrates.

H *It's, well, we don't actually, for instance I've been playing in the orchestra for four years, it's not the sort of group that goes to the pub afterwards. Mainly because we tend to rehearse in places that are a little far out, like here and people come from quite far...*

I Yes, we're very very diverse aren't we.

H Away.

J Well one woman comes from [about 30 miles away]...

Oh right

J And she's been coming for a long long time.

F That's far isn't it.

H So by the time you start and the time finish...

J Some do come a long way.

H It's not really easy to socialise.'

Although on reflection, Student I followed this conversation with

'But having said that, having formed our little brass group, we do go to each other's houses.'

The point being, that without the music they would not socialise, but with the music they are social. Student Y on the other hand joined her group specifically to extend her social circle.

'I felt that personally... all of my social interaction was with other teachers, as a teacher I didn't have much social life outside of school anyway because of evenings being tied up and everything. I thought 'I want to meet other human beings who are not teachers', in fact there's an awful lot of teachers in that band, so I haven't quite achieved it! But it was definitely, you know, I want to widen my social circle, again, and that's a good thing for people because if you're not going to always be at work, if you are forced to stop work for some reason or you retire then you don't want to suddenly go from having a life where you're with people all day to having a life of sitting at home having no friends and no-one to mix with and no hobbies.'

So to this student, there is clearly an element of socialising in her motives for belong to her group and she connects making music with socialising. Some students realise how they are being social without socialising. Student I said:

'I don't really communicate with [the other students] except through the music.'

This communication through music shows how learning ensemble students can be social without socialising, and also how it can draw people together. As part of my involvement

in a learning ensemble I was fortunate enough to be involved in a prison gamelan project. The project involved a tutor working with a group of women prisoners for a week and then our community gamelan joined them for the final morning to participate in a concert. The experience of watching the women being fully engaged in what they were doing and creating music socially was very moving. What was really apparent was the way that they also engaged with each other, as a group. I was granted permission to interview these women about their experiences of participating in the gamelan project and found that they had a similar experience to a lot of the other students that I had spoken to. Moreover, these were women who may find concentrating for extended periods of time difficult, who may have been disengaged with the learning process for some time and who may also find being in a social situation difficult; yet they worked together and they all acknowledged how well they worked. One woman told me that

'We are all from different walks of life. I knew a couple of people before the gamelan, but I'd never even seen the others. We all got on really well. It was great. It was great to have such different people coming together like that. [The tutor] was brilliant at that.'

The prison education officer also told me that the women were still in touch with each other after participating in the project, something that very rarely happens with other prison education projects. Through interviewing them, I could see that the bond between them was still evident, even a fortnight after the project. The women talked about their gamelan playing with pride and there was a strong feeling of achievement at having made music together. Similarly to other students they were nervous about performing, but were glad that they did it; and they also put a large part of their success down to the skill of the tutor. The women agreed that the best thing about the tutor was that he treated them all with respect. Not once did he, or any of the others from the outside gamelan group, ever make them feel that they were different, and that was one of the most important parts of the week. They also agreed that being told that there was no right or wrong way to play the gamelan, that they could hold the mallet how they liked and that it did not matter if they hit a wrong note, helped their confidence. Once they knew the rules, they could interact with them and enjoy the experience. All women agreed that it was relaxing. For them that was the biggest part of playing in the gamelan. The music just took them away and made them feel really calm and relaxed. One woman said that *'it was amazing to create such beautiful music.'* A couple of women talked about how they had to listen to others and how the actual playing of the music was really easy and so they could listen out to what the others were doing so it all made sense. A number of the women also told me that they would like to take up gamelan playing when they return home.

The activity system as presented above does not operate in a vacuum; it is functional within the context of social music making. Whether students want to socialise or not, they all want to be social music makers and that is fundamental to the learning process. The fact that such a diverse group of people can come together, create music and gain a sense of pride in what they have done is largely due to them being within a supportive community, being able to interact with the rules and having the labour divided so that they all work together. The experience of being within a learning ensemble made them social and once the group had formed, made them able to socialise.

Vernon (1969; 96) says:

'Many social groups arise initially with the purpose of performing an activity in which members have a mutual interest. Motivation is enhanced, action is more enduring and effortful, satisfaction is increased, when people combine together to promote such activities. Indeed, it might be said that for the majority of human beings such social participation is the most valued and enjoyable part of their lives.'

This can be demonstrated using Activity Theory. By viewing the learning process in terms of a fluid activity system, we can see how a person uses the socio-cultural environment. Constituents of the system are shifted to different positions in order to generate motivational factors so that the desired objective can be reached. In order to demonstrate this, I shall discuss how the student interacts with competition, feedback, aspiration, identity, affinity, affection, progression and transformation.

The second half of this discussion will concentrate on motivation, identity and transformation. I will use the activity system shown in figure 22 (page 160) to show how the interaction of different constituents of the system provide motivation for learning and I will also show how identities are defined and developed by shifting constituents to different points in the activity system, therefore changing the activity. Finally, I will consider the transient nature of the constituents of the activity system and then I will present a three-dimensional model that takes into account the different activities taking place during the learning process within a learning ensemble.

IV.9 Chapter 9 - 'The music' or 'about the music'

We saw in *IV.8 Chapter 8 – A Social Activity* (page160) that one student joined her group specifically to widen her social circle. When talking to students about their reasons for joining a learning ensemble, many point to factors other than playing music or learning an instrument as their primary reasons for joining their group. For example, Student C said

'One of the reasons why I wanted to take up an instrument was that I honestly thought that it would be good for my brain... and I was told like if you do different things, creatively, you can work different parts [of your brain].'

The goal of this particular student at the time of joining was to exercise her brain, so what role did the music play in her activity system? It is certainly an outcome of this objective; by exercising her brain through playing the violin she is producing music, but her declared primary desired objective was to use a new mental process. Therefore, if we put the music as a tool rather than the outcome, we can construct an activity system that uses music as a tool to achieve the objective. Therefore this student is learning 'about the music' in order to work her brain. Although the music is not the primary focus, it still acts as a prime motivational factor in her learning as it is the tool by which she aims to fulfil her goal.

As this student has developed her musical ability and moved closer towards full membership of her ensemble, her activity system has changed and her goal is now to be able to create music with others. As Nardi (1997; 75) says, '*activity theory recognises that changing conditions can realign the constituents of an activity*', therefore the changing condition of the student's membership of the group has caused the emphasis to shift from learning 'about the music' in order to work her brain, to learning 'the music' in order to perform it. In other words, the music has shifted from tool to object.

This shift from tool to object is quite common amongst the students. Student Y described how she wanted to learn an instrument in order to learn something new.

'You get to the stage where you've trained for a job and you've had your education... 'cos when you've just finished your education you think 'I don't want to learn, I've had enough of exams and learning and all the rest of it and I'm just gonna be a normal human being' and then you get to the point where you get almost bored with that and you want to learn something new.'

Student B found that she joined her group in order to fill in her spare time.

'People tend to, especially as they move into middle age I think, and I'm talking here personally, you tend to find yourself with a little bit more spare time on your hands than you've had for a long time, and a desire to spend it in a way that doesn't just involve sitting back and looking at the television or doing something quite passive.'

And as Student I said:

'It's giving me an interest.'

However, what may have started as an activity in order to fill in some spare time has, through immersion in a community of practice, changed into a definite musical pursuit. When asked how she would feel if her 'interest' was taken away, she said

'Devastated. Absolutely, yes. Yes, you don't really think about things like that do you? If it was taken away I'd have to try and find something else to join. I mean, now I'm retired, if I hadn't found the horn, life would not be nearly so interesting. If you like, it's made my retirement. I wish I'd started it earlier, but then as things were, I mean when you're working, full time teacher and all the rest of it, you don't have an awful lot of time.'

I have also seen this shift from tool to object myself. When I started learning in my learning ensemble, the object was to experience learning an instrument within a group as an adult, the music was the tool. However, as I have become more deeply involved in my community of practice, my object has become to play music. In a recent correspondence with an acquaintance who was gathering anecdotes for a book on adult learning, I wrote

'To be involved in creating the most beautiful music I have ever heard is a privilege. I'm sure the music would be even more beautiful if I wasn't whacking my instrument at the wrong point, but nevertheless it is mesmerising. On a Tuesday night I leave the kids, the husband, the house, the work, the routine behind and I envelop myself in pure music. I relax. I enjoy it, something just for me.'

This was written in 2007, nearly two years after I started to learn gamelan. In those two years the music has slowly shifted from tool to object.

IV.9.a Competition

By allowing the music to change position in the individuals' activity systems we can also see how competition motivates different students in different ways.

Vernon (1969; 119) says

'Adults tend to regulate their level of aspiration in accordance with what they think may be expected of them; and if they are highly involved in successful performance – that is to say, they feel that success is important – they may compete with themselves and try continuously to improve.'

In some groups the notion of competition amongst students is very explicit, as this conversation from Group 1 shows.

E *It's like a competitive sport. Like a competition, a violin competition.*

B *The thing is you do want... to be not letting [anyone down] because it's so physical and so audible when you make a horrible mistake [agreement]*

D *No but there's still a competition, people want to play the first violin...*

A *Yes.*

D *They are on the same stage as I am ...*

A/O *yes, yes.*

D *In the same class and they play the first violin because that sounds better than playing the second violin...*

O *Yes.*

D *Therefore there are no second violins.*

O *Yes, yes.*

D *Because people don't want to play the second violin. The part although might be more interesting than the first violin, still there are only a handful who play second violin.*

C *I think there are other reasons as well, for example today I took a first violin and a second violin...*

O *Yes, yes.*

C *I normally play second violin, but I couldn't get it...*

O *Yes.*

C *And there were more first violins so it made it easier for me to pick it up and I thought I'll go with the majority and I won't, if I miss a note it won't be so obvious.*

D *We all miss notes.*

B *I think it's only some people. There are certain people who are very very...*

E *Competitive.*

B Competitive, they want to get ahead.

E They skip up stages. And other people would rather be ...

D When they are not necessarily...

E A bit better than the lower stage [agreement] the next stage up.

O I think there are a lot of issues about people's personal achievement as like soloists at home and their wish to take part in an orchestra and I think that really if you are part of an orchestra you should play something that is within your capabilities for the orchestra but I think there's a lot of people who are kind of stuck, there's a lot of people who just want to be the best that they can be but within the orchestra and it's actually not necessarily within the orchestra's interest. Do you?

E I don't know, I think that might be the better, I mean the higher up maybe, I don't know. I wouldn't have thought...

O No, I think there are lots of people ...

E Lower.

O As [Student D] said they want the first violin part...

E yes.

O And they want to push themselves to their limit. [agreement]

A Yes, 'cos I started at [an adult education college] with someone who's, well we've been [there] for three years together, and he's gone up to level four, but I'm doing level three again... and I'm sort of like, what is he doing there [laughter]... and like to today [laughter]... in the full orchestra all of us are playing together, and he's in the firsts and I'm sort of thinking, well hang on a minute you know... and I'm sitting at the back doing the second bit and I'm sort of thinking, well I should be in the firsts, but then I'm thinking well no I shouldn't and actually I'm not as good and maybe he's, you know and there's all this stuff going.

D You all know the same thing and it's not that one part is more difficult than, in the big orchestra it is [agreement] but in the ensembles we play in it doesn't make a difference whether you play first or second. Sometimes the first is more interesting, sometimes the second is. But it, people like to say they play the first violin. [laughter]

A I do.

D But I don't give a toss. I don't play then turn and everyone else...

A It does have a nicer tune though, this is the thing.

D Ha?

A Usually have a nicer tune, this is the thing and when you are stuck in the thirds and seconds you've got one note repeated and stuff.

D *And then you have to fight somebody to say oi, you played violin one last term and now you play violin two because I want to play violin one.*

O *Yeah, yeah.*

C *Wow.*

D *I don't think so. [laughter]*

B *Next term you swap with me. [laughter]*

D *I'm a grown up, I can handle that. [laughter]*

The image that this conversation conjures up is quite hostile, however it should be noted that this conversation was light hearted. It clearly shows that in some groups there are people who see competition differently, and this can be demonstrated by considering where the music lies in the activity system of the individual. For example, competitiveness can occur by individuals competing with themselves in order to succeed; indeed the essence of Self-Determination Theory (Reeve, Deci and Ryan, 2004) is that a person strives to be autonomous and competent through interaction with the environment. However, the motivation is intrinsic rather than coming from external sources. To this person, the music may be firmly placed as the outcome. The person's objective is to play at as high a standard as they possibly can, which means pushing themselves onwards at a pace that is far quicker than another person. However the pace of other people is not the concern and rather than competing with others, they are competing with themselves. Here the person is learning 'the music'. The music is the primary focus and the motivational drive is to constantly achieve a greater standard of music making than previously. On the other hand, if a person's objective is purely to be the best at something, then the music will move to the position of tool. Here the person is learning 'about the music' in order to be an achiever; the motivational factor is the achievement (McClelland, 1987), the music merely the tool.

So how do we distinguish between the two types of competitor described above? Without talking in depth to each person involved, it really would be very difficult to discern whether they are competing so as to push themselves on, or whether they are competing for competition's sake. So, do we really need to distinguish between these two different types of learner? If the contribution of the individual to the group is constructive, and the group is fulfilling the subjects' desire to obtain their objectives, whether it is learning about the music or learning the music itself, then there is no need to make a distinction. However, if the contribution of the individual becomes destructive to the group, then a distinction needs to be made and the individual needs to either realign their activity system to avoid a 'make or break' moment (see *IV.3.b Engaging*

with one another socially, page 102) or the 'make or break' moment must happen in order for the group to stabilise so that the community of practice can continue to flourish.

Student D's explanation for the competitive element of her group is as follows:

'... most people are probably between you know, thirty and seventy really, there's a whole range, but by that time you've kind of got your adult life organised and most people who come here are a fairly self selected group who manage they own lives or feel reasonably intent and, and, of kind of competence in their work life and to actually come here and find you are not very good at something, it's quite hard...'

Therefore the motivation not to fail is strong and the perceived competitive nature of some individuals comes directly out of this.

Group 1 provided by far the most extreme example of competitiveness in the learning ensemble, but competition with oneself and with other group members, although more subtle, does exist in other groups. This 'make or break' moment referred to earlier (*IV.3.b Engaging with one another socially*, page 102) demonstrates this.

'23 May 2006

As [the tutor] was showing us the tunes by repeating them over and over, everyone had their own way of remembering it. I was singing the numbers, others were remembering the pattern of left and right, and [one student] was being really annoying and singing out loud and playing an imaginary bonang. As he was getting it he was singing louder and louder as if to say 'I've got it' and when other people were having a go he was singing the numbers for them and it was not helping. I must admit I was tempted to help out once but then I remembered that you've got to let everyone do it in their own way. He really annoyed [another student], she ended up saying 'yes I know it's a 3 I just need to find out where the 3 is'.'

This was the first time that I had sensed open competition between any of the members of the group and I remember being amused by it. The particular reason for my amusement was that the two students concerned are actually both professional musicians, 'masters' in their own profession, and I think that this was more to do with proving their musical skills and justifying their status as musicians rather than one wanting to be better than the other. For a fleeting moment perhaps the music moved to the position of tool for both students and the objective became to vie for their place within the group. But in terms of motivation to learn gamelan, this competition facilitated the development of both students; the first student needing to continue to 'get

it' in order to maintain his position and the second student needed to be able to 'get it' in order to prove that she can.

Whether the student is learning the music or about the music, the motivation provided by the subject interacting with the tools is a great driver towards fulfilling the objective. It seems that this particular type of interaction manifests itself through competition, and how others perceive this competition will have an impact on the tools of their own activity system; are they going to compete and allow the music to move to the position of tool, or are they going to refrain and allow the music to continue in its position of object? Whichever they choose, it will motivate their own learning and aid the fulfilment of their own objective, and as long as it occurs within the conditions of the group, the community of practice will continue to function and students can continue to work towards their object.

IV.9.b Recognising Achievement

High achievement is widely recognised as a motivational factor in the attainment of goals (Locke and Latham, 2007). How the students recognise their achievements, wherever the music is in their activity system, is vital to their motivation to continue in their group. Student O views her achievement in terms of '*money well spent*'.

'It is money absolutely well spent isn't it, I mean it's one of those times in your life. You know there's plenty of times when you spend an evening doing absolutely bugger all and you get to the end of the evening and you think that's five hours of my life [agreement] gone, watching crap on TV and with this you go home and you feel as if, you are just filled with this rush of sort of virtue.

Student A added to this.

And all of my friends are very impressed [agreement and laughter] I mean everyone is so impressed [laughter].'

This shows that her sense of achievement is catalysed by her friends' reaction to her achievements.

Student K's measurement of success transpired in a different way:

'I dream gamelan now and so it all falls on to the gong at the end of the gâtrâ and that's how you can sort of tell that you've got there. I think because you

start, it's like when you learn a foreign language and you start dreaming in it and then you can tell that it's kind of got down the levels in your head.'

Student K goes on to describe learning the damping technique applied to playing the 'saron' and states how it *'did it all by itself'*. Therefore showing that some achievements have happened subconsciously; in other words, whilst she was concentrating on a different part of the music, the technique of playing became ingrained in her motor memory as part of the learning process.

In my own learning I discovered there were often little clues that I was achieving something as I was learning, and then big surges of a feeling of success, often triggered by the smallest thing.

3rd May 2005

I found that today I could clearly hear the drum signals. I think that it was because I was on an easier [instrument]. I could really listen to the Bonang and they were playing something that I have played before. So I could hear what it sounds like from the other side.'

Here, being able to hear a drum signal and responding to it was a little clue to the fact that I was achieving something.

Another clue came on 8th November 2005:

'I finally got the anticipating off beat today. I've always had problems with it as when we play something in Western music, we expect the first note to be on the beat, I suddenly got today that actually, the first note is before the beat and the second note is on the beat. I think I kind of knew this but it has taken this long to actually get out of my Western way of thinking and get this beat.'

And again on 26th January 2006:

'[I] was on the peking again, doing the same one, I really cracked all the speeding up and slowing down this time and could start to hear other things that were going on. Then I had a go at the piece on the Bonang. I think I did really well. The bonang did something different than I have done before but it fitted in with the Peking so I was able to play in the right time and, now that I get how the bonang relates to the tune, I could get the bit where is slowed down. The main difficulty was knowing where each note was, so I drew a diagram. I was really pleased with my Bonang efforts.'

All of these are achievements of small goals; goals that I set myself either consciously in that I specifically set out to be able to do something, for example hear the drum signal, or unconsciously as the result of trying to do something else, as in understanding how

the bonang relates to the tune through becoming proficient on the peking. Added together, these smaller goals contribute to the achievement of one larger goal: to play gamelan proficiently enough to produce recognisable music and perform it.

IV.9.c Motivation through performing

I have already considered the importance of the performance in *IV.7 Chapter 7 – The Performance* (page 152). The performance is a catalyst to the students' learning; it changes the activity of the student and places them in a different social context. We saw how some students were terrified of performing, yet recognised that it is an important part of the learning process; performing is an achievement. Not only is performance a catalyst for learning, it is also a motivational factor, as Student D shows.

'and there's concerts ... ok, got to practise now.'

Student J also felt that concerts motivated her to practise as she wanted to perform well for the tutor:

'It inspires you perhaps because if you are just playing a piece by yourself oh, that's not too bad but because you don't want to let other people down and the conductor leader you don't want to let her down particularly when we have an end of term concert...'

The performance not only changes the activity, it also requires the individual to step through their own confidence barriers (as described in *IV.4 Chapter 4 – Using the Tools*, page 110) in order to perform. However, by passing through a barrier and being able to perform in front of people can provide a great amount of motivation. We saw earlier Student F describe her first performance and how it took her through a confidence barrier (page 158).

'I remember I went out to play, I went out [of the room] to tune the oboe and to have a blow and I was shaking, and I thought 'I don't want to do this, I want to go home'. And I was tempted just to run and then I heard them say 'oh, where is [she]?' and I thought 'no I can't, I've got to do it' and I did it. It wasn't very good but at least it broke the ice. And once you've done it once then the next time is never as bad. I just got more used to it. And now I'm very relaxed at playing, I'm quite happy playing.'

To the gamelan group performance was viewed differently. Student L said:

'I hate performance and I love performing gamelan'

I too shared the view of performing gamelan being a different experience to performing on other instruments, as this extract from my learning diary recorded after our first gamelan performance shows.

'5th July 2005

We did the concert today. Everyone was really nervous but I wasn't at all. That's really interesting because I always get very nervous when I perform, but I wasn't.'

Why should performing gamelan be any different for me than performing on another instrument?

I remember my first performance. It was at school, I was probably about six and I played my recorder in front of the school. I was so nervous I was nearly sick. I was physically shaking and I could hear the trembling in my playing. The reason I remember this was that because I was shaking so much, I thought I was going to lose my skirt and as I was playing I was getting more and more upset about this thought. This may be an amusing thought now, but for me to remember that feeling shows that it must have been very distressing. Did this performance motivate me to continue playing the recorder? In hindsight it is hard to tell; perhaps it did motivate me as I did not want to feel like that again. Perhaps it gave me a fear of performance that is so deeply ingrained it still affects me today. What I do know is that a great deal was expected of me and my self-efficacy did not match that expectation. Today, as a flautist, the feeling of being able to perform without nerves is a prime factor in what and when I choose to perform. My self-efficacy must match the expectation of those to whom I am performing; otherwise I have no motivation to perform.

A vital part of learning within an ensemble is being able to cope with performing; however the activity itself makes the performance a different experience than that of playing solo. In my experience as a young girl above, I was taught in a group but expected to perform as a soloist; the performing situation did not match the learning situation. In a learning ensemble there is no great expectation or pressure placed on the individual student to perform well and with the emphasis on the group experience, the pressure of performance is shared between the players. The students learn as a group and perform as a group. Students may have an individual awareness of how well they played, but the fact that they are playing together and part of producing music as a

whole, with a group goal of performing to an audience, is the primary focus. Brewer (2000; 58) tells us that

'What is painful at the individual level becomes a source of pride at the group level – a badge of distinction rather than a mark of shame.'

So had my first performance been as part of a group, would I have been proud of it rather than ashamed of it?

It is this that reiterates the fact that the performance itself is not the measure of individual's success, but how the students prepare for the performance, allow the performance to motivate them and what they take from it that are the factors that should be used to assess achievement. The performance is about being proud of participating in a group achievement and should be a positive experience. This positive experience can then be used to develop self-efficacy in order to continue along the learning trajectory, setting higher goals along the way.

Student O recognises that one of the attractions of playing in a learning ensemble to her is to be part of one overall group goal:

'Because [playing on your own] you can't be part of a tune, I mean even if you are actually playing the notes of a tune you are hearing [the music in full] and you are part of it and I just think that's a really productive way of learning.'

Her perception that a single melody cannot be part of a tune is very interesting and shows that after only playing for a relatively short time, she is able to think about complex musical concepts such as harmony, texture and structure. Certainly in terms of gamelan all parts need to be present in order to produce the tune; there is always a tune that cannot be heard unless all parts are there, known as the *lagu batin*, or inner melody. Student N says that this experience in gamelan is what makes it different to orchestral playing:

'But yeah of course, even when you are playing in an orchestra you are still part of something big but you know, you come to that bit and there's the flute solo and that's you and you get to do your bit. But there's just nothing like that here'.

However, Student N is a professional baroque flautist and his orchestral experience will be very different to that of those in a learning ensemble. In a learning ensemble most of the instruments are doubled and there are very few instruments that play their part on their own, therefore there are no very exposed parts for individuals to play without the

support of other players. This, coupled with the support received by the individual when they interact with their community as described in *IV.7 Chapter 7 - The Performance* (page 152), enables the student to experience performance in a safe environment in order to achieve their personal goals whilst contributing to a larger group outcome.

By allowing the objective and the tools of the activity system to be transient, and by also accepting that students participate in different activities at different times to motivate their learning, we can begin to build an understanding of the integral motivational factors that exist within a learning ensemble. Whether the students are aware of this shift raises questions of the controllability of this motivation. Questions as to whether the tutors are aware of this shift also arise. From my point of view as a learner, when I started to learn gamelan my objective was different from what it is now, and this shift will be discussed in Chapter 13.

Lave and Wenger (1991; 53) say that '*learning involves the construction of identities.*' If this is the case, the object of the activity system will have a big impact on the identity that is formed by the learner.

IV.10 Chapter 10 – Aspiration and Identity

IV.10.a Being part of a whole

Vernon (1969) discusses motivational drive in terms of goal directed behaviour. He says that when people

'consciously direct their behaviour and strive to perform certain types of activity, and to attain certain ends ... it would appear that they frequently attempt to reach some criterion of excellence ... and set themselves a 'level of aspiration', the standard they hope to attain.'

(p.117)

In the learning ensemble community the students are being engaged in the creation of music. Sometimes they are engaged in this musical activity alongside others of a higher level, creating a Zone of Proximal Development (see *IV.6 Chapter 6 – Master or Apprentice?*, page 138). This community allows the students to see what can be achieved, through the achievements of others, and therefore helps them to set their level of aspiration. This in turn develops the self-concept of the student; by realising that there are *'other people who are as bad as me'* as well as that better players are prepared to *'tolerate cheerfully'* less advanced students, the individual is able to engage in the music at their own level, knowing that they are in a secure environment to do so but also that they can aspire to play like the better players. Members of Group 1 highlight this.

B *I think that's one of the interesting things. There's not a lot of concession made to the fact that people are beginners...*

E *Absolutely not.*

B *Which is brilliant because.*

D *They make an open string for you so that's fine.*

B *Exactly, exactly.*

O *In fact the open strings often, when they are doing something that is in 12/8 or something and you've got an open string and you're trying to find out where the hell you are [laughter] it's a big incentive to get some notes to get out of that section [lots of laughter] to get some notes to help you find where you are.*

D *That makes you practise.'*

Here an open string part is given to the beginners, in other words the string players bow their strings without using their left hand to create different pitches on each string. This means that the player can concentrate on bowing technique as well as giving them space to concentrate on the notation and rhythms, allowing the subject to reach their objective of playing with others without compromising the community. In the situation above it allows the students to play as part of the main group in a very difficult time signature for a beginner, and the students recognise that by having their own part, they are being prepared for playing at a more advanced level. Moreover, whilst in their group, they can see and hear the more advanced level and this helps to develop their aspirations, as Student G explains after attending a summer school.

'The nice thing about the Summer School there were, I was probably one of the weakest there, but I could see where I might be next year. That's the key thing. It's actually seeing what I need to do and being there next year. To an extent [my learning ensemble] gives me that.'

Student B explains that through the way her community is organised, she is able to consolidate her own work whilst developing her aspirations and therefore giving her motivation to progress.

'But I think as it goes along you find yourself automatically doing a little bit more because the more complex the music becomes, the more interested you become in being able to play it really well. I think in that sense the group thing really acts as a pull and I think that the group thing where they have a fair mixture of all different levels, if you look at the way the orchestras are put together you have the [level] 1s and 2s [orchestra], you know, people who've only been doing it possibly a year will now be in the sort of lead positions effectively. So from a very early stage you're given an opportunity to play an important role in an orchestra. And then you have [level] 1,2,3 [orchestra] which again gives the 3s the opportunity to be the leaders. Then you have [level] 3,4 [orchestra] which does the same thing for the 4s but takes the 3s up to a more complex musical level. And then you have the [level] 3,4,5 [orchestra] which obviously pulls the 3s and 4s a bit further along and you've got the really good players at the top there. And so you've got a layering thing going on, where there's always something to aspire to, and there's always something that's challenging you a bit but something that's also consolidating your position as an efficient and good player at a certain level. And so I think that that, maybe that's what it is, a sort of combination of consolidation and aspiration.'

This layering of levels is an important aspect of how Group 1's community works. However, this is a large community and therefore layering of levels is easy to do. The tutors of the learning ensemble are aware of the need to develop aspiration in order to motivate students to learn and do this by organising their communities in different ways. Tutor T2 recognises that the mixed ability community of her learning ensemble is important in motivating students who have less developed skills.

'Having the mixture encourages the less technically able to perhaps give it a bit more time than they might otherwise.'

She maintains the level of interest in her more experienced players by keeping *'the music more interesting and I just simplify the parts as necessary.'* In other words, she is using explicit division of labour (page 139) to preserve the motivation of her community.

Tutor T3 explains how he allows the students to hear the next step within his community. He feels that an important aspect of learning gamelan is for the students to see where they can progress to and he does this by changing the tools that the students are using in order to achieve their object.

'Whenever I teach I like to do some things from memory but I find that if you have a group which tries to do everything exclusively from memory it can be very off-putting for people who can't remember the [tune] and stuff like that. It also slows you down in learning new repertoires and to my thinking, particularly with adults, particularly if they're adults with musical experience, it's very important to get them onto realising that gamelan is music as well as a process and that also there's more to it than just going 3,5,3,5,3,5. You have to let people have a taste of the complicated stuff in order to make them think it's worthwhile continuing and progressing, that they're not just going to be doing the same thing forever. And so I like to use notation just so that we get a good repertoire there, so that people have a taste of lots of different pieces.'

Tutor T4 explains how aspiration is developed through contact with the wider community of his learning ensemble.

'I think the concert in January is one of the most valuable concerts because the guys at the bottom have a very good idea of what the hell they have got before them. Having [all bands] so they can see what's in front of them. I think the experience was just you know, and then having everyone playing at the end. "I can't play that", "well play what you can."

His learning ensemble joins up with three other groups once a year for a performance. The groups perform in progression of levels, from beginner through to advanced. When the newer players have performed they are able to relax and watch the other groups perform, each group gradually becoming more advanced. The concert ends with a mass joint item. Therefore the wider community in which the learning ensemble is placed also plays an important role in the development of aspiration.

These methods of maintaining aspiration are caused by the tutor purposefully changing the constituents of the activity system, therefore changing the activity of the student. Sometimes these are done within rehearsal, as the gamelan group will change from

memorised pieces to notated pieces. Other times they will be done on one specific occasion through placement of the group within the wider community for one performance. By doing this, the student is able to interact in a different way to develop their level of aspiration. However, *'levels of aspiration are more realistic in the generally secure'* (Vernon, 69; 120). Often, students will take themselves out of their communities into other communities in order to motivate themselves, but this does not necessarily cause a positive reaction. Student N talked of how going to see concerts of other groups affected his aspirations.

'Seeing them, most of whom of course have been at it a lot longer than us, and seeing [a very advanced group], seeing some of the best Western, well some of the best English gamelan musicians anyway, certainly left me feeling that I've still got a lot to learn.'

By taking himself out of the secure environment of his community, Student N found that he was left with perhaps an unreachable aspiration. However, this experience could still be turned into a positive reaction by considering Student N's self-concept.

IV.10.b The possible self

Hallam (1998; 91) highlights *'Self Concept'* as a motivational factor in learning an instrument; within this she includes *'ideal self, desired possible self and feared possible self.'* The idea of the possible self as tool to reach a goal was put forward by Markus and Ruvolo (1989). They said that

'The crucial element of a goal is the representation of the individual himself or herself approaching and realizing the goal.'

(p. 211)

In order to reach what they desire, a person will construct a self-image of the person that they want to be, and it is the fulfilment of this self-image that drives the person to achieve. They say that the more elaborate the picture, the more chance there is of success and go on to suggest that a person may be able to actually feel what it is like to be their future possible self at different points during the execution of the action that takes them towards it. In other words, a person may be able to dip in and out of a future personality, and it is this experience that keeps them motivated throughout the task (Markus and Ruvolo, 1989). Possible selves can be positive or negative and work best when a positive possible self is balanced with a negative one in order to achieve the greatest result. For example, a student may construct an imaginary picture of what it is

like to pass their grade 5 violin and be a grade 5 violinist; how they would feel, what it would mean to them, how others may view them once they have achieved this level and where it may take them in the future. This is a positive possible self. On the other hand the student may fail that grade 5 exam. Another picture is constructed of the self as a failure. The person may be able to feel how they would react on failing the exam, how others may react to them, what their self would be like as someone who has not achieved the level that they want. The key to whether they succeed in their pursuit of the qualification depends on whether they can balance the two possible selves and use the negative possibility to drive them on towards the positive outcome. If the negative possibility is too strong, then it may overtake the positive one and become a reality; 'I can't do it therefore I won't do it.' If the positive possibility is too strong then it may lead to over confidence and perhaps lack of preparation. When the two are suitably balanced then the greatest success can be expected (Henley, 2008a).

This can be seen by Student AA's reaction to his first performance with his learning ensemble.

'Although I couldn't play any of my notes, I knew that everything around me was working.'

He was dissatisfied with his own performance, but he was fully engaged in the performance of the group, and to him the experience was '*electrifying*'. This was a performance that he could be proud of; it consisted of both his feared possible self- that of not being able to play a note, and his desired possible self- that of being a trombonist in a performing band. The fusion of his two possible selves in that one performance inspired him to practise and gave him confidence as a band member.

I have also experienced the fusion of my feared and desired possible selves in relation to a performance. This extract was written a couple of weeks before a big performance.

'5th June 2007

I am so annoyed I can't play 'Sumyar'. I was just totally lost, couldn't remember the sakharan and couldn't get the imbal. I couldn't even get the basic bit right. I was rubbish. I just gave up in the middle and felt like crying. [The tutor] came over and explained some things to me and then we tried it again and it was a bit better but I was still rubbish. I just think the whole piece would be better if I didn't play it. I was really looking forward to London but I'm not now, not at all.'

Here my feared possible self was acutely realised; that of being terrible at playing and letting the group down. Despite this, I did go on and do the performance and this was my diary extract after the performance.

'24th June 2007

That was brilliant. Everyone was on a real high after the gig. That bit that I couldn't do, oh my God. I just smiled and kept hitting the thing! I turned round to [another student] at one point and said 'Are we at that 2 yet', and she just turned round, smiling, and said 'I don't know'. Hee hee. We were both totally lost. I felt good about it, it was a good performance, I totally enjoyed it.'

Through participation in the concert I was able to engage with the group without having to be fully proficient at what I was doing. The object of the group was more important than my individual object and by being able to change my activity system from an individual activity to a group activity, I was able to generate motivation.

IV.10.c Being a musician

What is vital in the creation of a possible self is being able to place your achievements in context of the others around you as Pitts explains, there is a

'close connection between demonstrable achievement and musical identity... Suggesting that to be a 'musician' involves not just ability and experience, but must also incorporate a degree of recognition from others and a strong sense of self-identification with the values and skills attributed to this label.'

(Pitts, 2005a; 6)

This is highlighted by Student I's self-concept as a musician. When asked about her musical background she said

'I've no musical background really except a daughter who plays.'

However she later revealed that

'I've sung since I was 10. Not on my own, in a choir, sung in a choir since I was 10.'

Not only this, her husband plays guitar and her daughter 'who plays' is a professional viola player, so her family life is surrounded in music making. When she started to learn her instrument she kept it to herself for some time until joining her learning ensemble, as she explains.

'I tried to play the horn and achieved it so [my family] made me take lessons [laughter] and that was five years ago.

And then I worked with a former member of the orchestra.

Oh right.

And she found out about my big secret which I never used to tell anybody and she said why don't you join, it's just what you need. And it is, just what I need, it's great.'

When she is within her family she feels unable to identify herself as a musician as she cannot live up to the abilities of other members of her family, as this anecdote about taking grade exams shows.

'When my daughter was little we decided that [taking graded music exams] just wasn't necessary. She was enthusiastic, she wanted to keep going because her father played the guitar, she played with her father and my brother, she was quite enthusiastic and I think the only reason really for taking the grades is to make them want to achieve a bit more. But she was quite happy playing with them so I didn't think it was necessary. When she went to secondary school they said 'Ooh well...' and she said "yes", she wanted to so she did from then on. In fact she never got grade one, so when I got grade one distinction I got something my daughter hadn't got! It was great. That was a great family joke that was, that I'd got something she hadn't.'

However, when she is within her learning ensemble, she is at the right level for her to be associated with being a social music maker. Therefore, her possible self is different when she is within her learning ensemble to when she is at home as there is a far greater gap between her own level of skill and that of the other members of her community.

Other students share the similar change in self-concept when in and outside of their community, as this conversation with students from Group 1 shows.

A *And all of my friends are very impressed [agreement and laughter] I mean everyone is so impressed [laughter].*

D *Going home in the tube is actually very good when you've got your violin [lots of laughter] everybody looks at you and says, oh, she's...*

A *She's a musician [lots of laughter]*

E *Especially...*

D *And then you start thinking to yourself, I can play [lots of laughter].*

A *Yes, yes.'*

When they were amongst people with less musical skill than themselves, or who did not know what their musical skill is, the students above felt confident enough to think about themselves as musicians. However when asked directly if they perceive themselves as musicians, their self-concept changed.

'Do you perceive yourselves as musicians then?

D No.

A No.

E No. No.

D I know I can't play [laughter]

E Sometimes I think people think you are.'

When they are brought back into the context of their own community, they feel that their skills don't match their perceptions of the values and skills attributed to the label of being a musician. They continued to discuss what a musician is.

'So what would be a musician then to you?

E A professional.

D Well no, not necessary a professional. If you can play straight away...

A Sight read. Yes, if you can sight read.

D Level 4 or 5 here they can get a piece of music and they play it. That's a musician.

O Someone can play to you, I mean even at a very low level, if I could pick the violin up see even a very simple piece of music, even like a nursery rhyme or, you know, I'd actually be able to play the tune either by hearing it or by simple notation, first go through I would regard myself... [agreement]

A Yes, somebody who can be in a pub in a group and just hang out playing and someone's on the ...

D Or somebody says can you play [something] and you say oh yes.

A Yes, yes. That's what a musician is.

B Well, I think to be honest I sort of, I don't perceive myself as a musician, I can see that perhaps in a few years time I could see myself as it. I've regained a sense of there is musical ability somewhere deep inside there that can be drawn out and that music is much more important to me than I've been aware of, you know I've managed to kind of sit on it for years.

A *I think it's a difference between being musical and being a musician [agreement] because I would say I think I'm musical but I'm no way I'm a musician. And to me a musician has got to be somebody who like as you say can just pick up something, improvise and entertain a whole pub. You know. Or be in like an orchestra or something.*

B *But maybe we do all have that possibility to get there eventually and it is perhaps just shifting the perception is enough to do it almost.*

D A *Yes.*

B *Once you've. It's an artificial construct almost.*

A *Yes, exactly.*

B *It's like who is and who isn't a writer? Is a writer someone who writes because that's what they have to do?*

A *Yes. Published.*

B *Or is it because, yes exactly something is published.*

C *Well I always had, well if you're grade 4 and above then you're a musician. [laughter]*

B *Yes, that is artificial.'*

So it is clear that the students have a definite idea of what a musician is, but also that it is something that they can achieve; it is their possible self. In this community, being able to see that possible self in other members of the community generates motivation and they are aware that they themselves can shift their own self-concept to be that possible self.

The idea of being a musician was also discussed in Group 3. They too agree with Pitts' view that in order to label yourself as a musician, you need to be recognised as possessing the right values and skills attached to the label.

L *My brain is working on that are you a musician question. [laughter] I'm thinking, I'm just dissecting that question as do you make music, would you culturally accept, are you culturally acceptably able to be called a musician. Do you consider a musician to be of the right status to what you consider yourself to be?*

Absolutely.

All *Yes. [laughter]*

L *You know there's a whole range, a loaded question. Because for some people, to be considered, oh I could never deign to consider myself a musician and there's, it's where... It's a very ...is it above you or is it really beneath you.*

It's a really loaded question isn't it. It's a very interesting question, I like that one.

K And I think it's really interesting culturally as well because I did a bit of ethnomusicology...

Oh did you?

K ... and thinking about music in its place in African society and it's completely different from here, because here you have the audience and the performers and never the twain shall meet and some wear funny clothes and the others clap and it's just utterly separate. But in a lot of other cultures it all gets mixed up and people get up and dance and sing in the middle of it and go and play the instruments and other people go out and watch and it, and everybody's in it together.'

When asked if he considered himself to be a musician, Student L said

'If I'm performing in gamelans and someone said were you the musician in that one then yes, but in any other context then I wouldn't.'

So for this student, his possible self is based on the community that he is in at one particular time.

For Student G his motivation is generated by a possible self that excels in what he does. He says:

'I don't think it's really self-improvement, it's perhaps self-fulfilment. It's all about pushing yourself.'

If I've ever had two fantasies in my life that were serious, one was winning the Olympic 800 metres and one was playing a concerto in front of a great orchestra. That's part of it. Part of it is knowing that it's worth doing.'

He is very self-driven and knows that in order to push himself he needs to be within a community where he can get a full experience of what he is trying to achieve.

'I'm sure that if I hadn't come here or something like it, I'd have just been ... [pauses] ... it's a bit like learning to touch type, you know, just going through the motions, whereas music is a much more rounded thing and there's a lot more to it than just putting fingers in the right place.'

For Student G, his possible self must be very far out of his reach or else he will not be able to generate the motivation needed for his learning. Interestingly though, although the students are all engaging in social music making, their possible selves are not always connected with being a musician. Student Y explains her motivation for joining her learning ensemble.

'I'm not far off retirement. I suppose you've had a long working life and I studied a lot to become a teacher and I'm academically qualified in sciences and so on, I got to the stage, well I for one had breast cancer anyway, so I had, you really do start to evaluate your life and I think other people in middle age evaluate their lives anyway, they think well, you know, you don't know how long you're going to be fit and active for do you, or how long you're going to live. I mean, it's a depressing thought but it's true and you think 'I don't want to go into old age having done nothing but work all my life and having not learnt another skill'.

My job, you know what secondary school teaching's like, it is so stressful and your confidence is constantly undermined and much as I love kids, in many ways it's now so hard to teach them because of all the other things that go on in schools, that I think I've become in some ways quite disillusioned with education. I do my best still or I'd get out. I consider I do as good a job as I can and I try hard to fulfil my obligation to the children, but it is quite depressing really working in a school. And learning, actually going out on Saturdays and doing something else it's given me something else to think about, talk about, something else to relax with. I love gardening for instance, but you can't do that all the year because this time of year it's miserable isn't it? And dark and cold and you can't relax out in the garden but you can get your clarinet out at midnight if you feel like it.'

Here she creates a complex feared possible self; someone who goes into old age without ever learning something new, someone who is depressed in her job and can't relax, and someone who is suffering from illness. Therefore she is motivated in her learning by the thought of being a healthy, active person who is able to relax with an activity unrelated to work.

Whatever the students' possible selves are, they can be generated by changing the constituents of their activity systems. They are able to move in and out of activities, depending on what level of motivation they require. This fluidity in the activity system is vital in enabling the students to reach their objective on their own terms within their desired community so as to maintain a level of motivation to continue in their learning.

IV.11 Chapter 11 – Affinity and Affection

'It could be argued that the ... tendency of human beings to form and belong to social groups is aimed fundamentally at the attainment of security... The individual becomes securely embedded in the group which supports him in need and protects him from danger.'

(Vernon, 1969; 95)

I have established that when a person joins a learning ensemble they are from the outset a member of a social group. They learn together as a group and they perform together as a group, and this unique aspect of a learning ensemble directly contributes to the motivation of the students within the group. One main concept of the learning ensemble is that everyone is in the same boat as each other, therefore providing learning support in a different way to a student who has an individual lesson. The following comment by a student highlights this.

'when you find when you're finding something difficult, quite commonly other people are also finding it difficult, and you can hear that as well'

To this student, knowing that other people around her finds something difficult provides a certain amount of comfort.

IV.11.a Being in the same boat

When I asked Manager M1 what he thought the attraction to learning in a group is he said that *'there is a vulnerability in individual tuition'* but in the group situation this vulnerability disappears. He continues

'And you don't mind being wrong because it can be a bit of a laugh.'

Other students echo this, such as Student R.

'I think that anyone that's been there a while, they all have their moments when they can't do something.'

Student AA is also aware of being in the same boat as everyone else when it comes to making mistakes.

'Well I know that other people are making a mess of it as well. I'm not on my own. Other people make mistakes and do things wrong. It's just that the instrument I play makes so much noise it's damn obvious when I do it!'

Most students talk with good humour about making mistakes in their group. We saw this conversation earlier when discussing how students engage with one another (page 102).

G *Not feeling as if you are not really up to it [is important too] else otherwise it's an impossible mountain to climb. I started two years ago and I thought I would never be able to get to play with people for years and years and years and I tried, as I say, I tried some other group and my view was confirmed. Then I spoke to someone who plays and she said try [the learning orchestra] and I, expect it's the wrong word, but I've been tolerated cheerfully [laughter] and that's important for somebody in my position.*

I *I think I've realised that there are other people who are as bad as me. [laughter] Which is not a very nice thing to say is it.*

J *There are some people if they are very good players, they would be irritated ...*

I *Yes.*

J *Like a tennis player, not everyone but some people would play with you even if you can't play tennis very much, they are quite happy to play with you though they like to play with good players as well. And so it's very good here that there are people that are better than us that are willing to play with us.'*

Here the students show that they feel secure enough in their group not to feel bad if they have made a mistake. So how does this security and sense of belonging facilitate motivation? Through interacting with the rules and the community, the student is able to move deeper into their community of practice; they are able to become more closely associated with the other students and they feel more affinity with the group.

According to Wenger (1998), a new member to a group will move along an 'inbound' trajectory, this will take them into the group through a process of integration and acceptance by the 'older' members of the group. Student G above describes how he joined his particular learning ensemble because when he joined other groups, he felt that he was not up to the standard of the groups and therefore did not fit in. In this case he did not move far along the 'inbound' trajectory before he felt that the group was not for him. Perhaps the music was very difficult and he felt he was letting the other members down, or perhaps the other members could see he was at a different level to them and therefore did not accept him into the group. He knew he was not secure in the group and therefore his motivation to continue was low and his learning or his membership did not evolve. This 'inbound' trajectory turned into an 'outbound' trajectory and he left the group. However, when he joined his current group he found that he was 'tolerated cheerfully' and this was enough to make him continue along the 'inbound' trajectory

towards full membership of the group. The emphasis of this group on learning rather than just performing made all the difference to him feeling accepted by the group and therefore generated motivation.

In order to motivate the student to continue along their 'inbound' trajectory and move towards full membership of the group, they must feel secure within that group; the feeling of being in the same boat as everyone else makes a strong motivational force to continue into the community of practice. When a student is sure of their place within a group, they can then set themselves a level of aspiration in order to motivate their learning to reach a higher level (discussed in *IV.10 Chapter 10 - Aspiration and Identity*, page 178).

Having this affinity with the group is not only vital in helping a student to become more deeply involved in the group and therefore the learning process, but also helps to create an affection for the group, thus giving another motivational factor. Student K highlights this.

'I'm not a sporting person, I don't come from a sporty family, but I think playing team sports is like that. People practise together as a team, they become one thing. But then what they do with that usually is to play against another team, and that is why I prefer music. I just want it, when you're playing music you're all the same team and you're all winning together, so you don't ever get a losing situation. I just think it's better. And nowadays you get sports days in which nobody wins and nobody loses because it's horrible to lose. In a way that's not what sport day's about, it's excelling at things but you can't really win if nobody's really lost. Whereas with music you can really, really win and nobody has to lose at all.'

To Student K, this feeling of being in a positive 'win/win' situation is vital to her motivation. Vernon (1969) says that '*sentiments differ from interests as the emotional element is more prominent*' and

'The most salient characteristics are love of a particular object, person, social group or abstract idea; and strong motivation to support and promote this object, and to attack or overcome anything which threatens it.'

(p. 113).

When talking to students about their groups they show a great fondness for the group, as these comments illustrate.

'B *I feel so enthusiastic about it, all I want to do when I'm there is play, that's all I want to do, and I'm just so grateful that there's room to do that. I don't really understand why people go if they don't feel that sort of enthusiasm really... I say 99% of the people I think share my sense of wonder that this thing is even there. Especially people who've never had a chance to touch an instrument before in their lives. It's just such a revelation to them, and they come on so quickly.'*

'R *It's like a family really, there's the elders and then there's the younger ones and it's nearly impossible to learn gamelan on your own, you have to learn in a group and the group seems to evolve together.'*

'I *One headmistress once said to the group of children 'How can you go back to class and argue with each other and be nasty to each other when you've just shared a beautiful chord with each other?' I thought that was lovely, 'you've shared a chord'. So how can you possibly go back and bully each other and bitch each other or whatever.'*

It is clear to see by the language that the students use that their groups are very dear to them. These affectionate comments and references to groups as families imply that the group are sharing something special, and the individuals feel protected by that. As we have seen above, an affinity to the group allows the students to participate in a community of practice, which in turn allows their learning to evolve alongside their group membership. But as discussed in *IV.8 Chapter 8 – A Social Activity* (page 160), the students do not necessarily go to their groups to become friends with other group members. Therefore, is it the people within the group that the students feel affectionate towards, or is the activity that the group allows them to participate in that gives them an emotional attachment? I refer back to a conversation between members of Group 2 highlighted in Chapter 8 (page 162).

H *It's, well, we don't actually, for instance I've been playing in the orchestra for four years, it's not the sort of group that goes to the pub afterwards. Mainly because we tend to rehearse in places that are a little far out, like here and people come from quite far...*

I *Yes, we're very very diverse aren't we.*

H *...away.*

J *Well one woman comes from [a town approximately 40 miles away]... and she's been coming for a long long time.*

F *That's far isn't it.*

H *So by the time you start and the time you finish...*

J *... some do come a long way.*

H *... It's not really easy to socialise.*

So it must be the group itself that provides the sentimental motivation; in order for members to develop such affection for it, the group must be giving a person something that cannot be got elsewhere.

IV.11.b The perception of others

Sentiments vary greatly amongst different people (Vernon, 1969) but one particular type of sentiment, 'self-regarded' sentiment, acts to maintain pride and self-esteem, protecting the person from contempt, disapproval and frustrations.

'Self-esteem depends to a considerable extent on the esteem given by members of the groups to which they belong, they seek to harmonize their behaviour and their ideas about themselves to accord with the opinions of others.'

(p. 116)

This is reiterated by Hallam (1998; 94).

'One of the most powerful influences on our behaviour is what other people think of us.'

In the previous chapter I discussed how in order to accept the label of musician, students must feel recognised as one by their peers (page 183). However, in terms of sentimental motivation, this runs deeper than questioning whether or not they are a musician. Many students that I have spoken to have talked about how frustrated they have been with themselves when learning their particular instrument and how they feel when they have done something 'wrong' in front of the group. Although the group provides a safety net in which to do this, it is still not always a nice experience when things go badly wrong. This is something that I have experienced myself. The following diary extract shows one of the frustrations that I have had when learning gamelan.

'5 June 2007

I just can't get my bit on the off beat and [another student] is trying to be oh so helpful and saying come on, you clap to my off beat, which I refused to do. She should just leave it alone, it makes me feel worse and that she's rubbing it in that I can't do it. I'm sure she's not but that's how I feel. I just think the whole piece would be better if I didn't play it. It seems that every time I have a difficult bit to do, we never practise it. The same happened last summer with my bonang bit, I totally cocked it up and it was awful, because I'd only played it about twice.'

I remember at this point I hated the group and everyone in it! However, on reflection this was because I was frustrated at not being able to do something and I felt that

everyone else thought that I could not do it; this was very different to making a mistake in a safe environment. I remember feeling very exposed and my self-esteem was very low. I was not in the least bit safe in the group, and at this point I probably felt the least affectionate towards the group that I ever have. So when I was not protected, when my pride was hurt and my self-esteem was low, I was very unaffectionate towards the group. When I feared that everyone in the group thought I was not very good, I disliked them. The other side to this is that on the occasions when things have gone very well, and I have felt that everyone in the group thought I was brilliant, I loved them! Both occasions motivated me to come back. The first so that I could prove that I could do it and regain the level of self-esteem that I had previously had, showing that *'the feeling of rejection is itself a motivating state'* (Maslow, 1987; 7) and the second so that I could bask in the glory of my brilliance!

Interestingly then, this shows that the sentimental feelings towards the group that act as motivators are actually generated by ourselves and not the other group members. Moreover, I have seen other members of the group in exactly the same situation as me and not once have I ever thought that the music would be better without them, or that they should not belong to the group. When I was in this situation, this was purely conjecture on my part. Maslow (1987; 22) says that

'All people in our society have a need or desire for a stable, firmly based, usually high evaluation of themselves, for self respect or self esteem, and for the esteem of others'

So is the sentimental motivation that membership of a group provides more to do with how we gain the esteem of others through the goals that we set ourselves, and how well we achieve them in the group context?

One of the key aspects of Self-Efficacy Theory (Bandura, 2006) is that vicarious experiences are necessary to the formation of self-belief. Although it has been argued that self-belief (self-efficacy) is different from self-worth (self-esteem), they are connected, as my gamelan experience above shows. When I lacked self-belief my self-esteem was lowered. Similarly in situations where my self-belief has risen, so has my self-esteem. This is central to how I perceive the value that my group places on my input, therefore in gaining their esteem.

Bandura (1995; 3) states that

'Seeing people similar to themselves succeed by perseverant effort raises observers' beliefs that they, too, possess the capabilities to master comparable objectives. By the same token, observing others fall despite high effort lowers observers' judgement of their own efficacy and undermines their level of motivation.'

By observing other members of the group, self-efficacy can be raised or lowered. However, self-efficacy can also be raised and lowered by emotional states and so if an emotional attachment to a group is formed, the security of the situation can lead to raised self-efficacy. Moreover, through this affection the student can feel both safe and that they belong, so, according to Maslow, self-esteem needs can be fulfilled. When self-esteem needs are fulfilled, self-actualization can occur. Therefore a sentimental attachment to a group provides a catalyst for self-efficacy, self-esteem and self-actualization - a catalyst for motivation.

IV.12 Chapter 12 – Progression and Transformation

Feedback is vital to progression as it *'provides information as to the degree to which the standard is being met'* (Locke and Latham, 1994; 18-19). When a student realises how far they have progressed it can allow a transformation of identity to take place.

Students from Group 1 found that the realisation of what they have achieved so far, and how this has affected their lives in general, was a strong motivational factor, as the following conversation shows.

O *It's really improved my listening, which I hadn't really realised, I was in a shop with somebody and heard a tune that was playing and a couple of weeks later, she said well, because we wanted to buy it, and I could remember it...*

B *Right...*

O *And I think I would never have been able to do that before. And when I hear things on the radio I can work out complicated rhythms a lot better...*

B *You can isolate different strands.*

O *Yes, isolating strands better. And that's something which has just happened.'*

Student O continues to say that being in a group was one of the enjoyable things about learning in this way and that the feedback about her own playing given from being part of this community has motivated her.

'I mean really it was when I started last year and I'd not read music before and being able just to play the open strings and follow, and learn to follow the music by just playing the open strings, there was a fantastic attraction, whereas I don't think I would have persevered with lessons or playing on my own because the feedback from playing on your own in the early stages is very poor.'

The feedback that the student above is talking about is not necessarily spoken feedback from a tutor; it is the feedback that is received by being able to place her own playing in relation to where she should be at the particular stage in her learning. If a student is learning as an individual in a one-to-one lesson, a tutor can give the student as much positive feedback as they can but still the student may not really accept it. I have heard a comment along the lines of 'you're just saying that to make me feel better' in many adult individual lessons. However, within a learning ensemble this type of feedback is readily available to a student and is apparent when they reach a point where they realise what they have learnt.

For example, a student may start in a learning wind band playing the clarinet. At first the notes that the student can play are restricted to the lower register and they cannot play many complex rhythms. Therefore, if they are in a mixed ability group, they may be given a part that consists primarily of longer notes playing a range of perhaps no more than a fifth (five notes) and doubling some of the integral harmony parts played by other instruments. Here the labour has been explicitly divided by the tutor in order to allow the student to engage in the music at their own level. Although playing at their level, the new clarinettist has much less of a role in the ensemble as a whole, with the other members of the ensemble taking a greater role in order to produce a coherent musical sound. However, as the clarinettist improves their technical skills and note reading skills they can progress to 'clarinet 3' parts, which often provide lower harmony over a relatively small range of notes, but sometimes plays independently of other instruments. This progression may lead to 'clarinet 2' parts, providing a mixture of harmony and counter melody (a second melody complementing the main melody of the piece), and then to 'clarinet 1' and 'solo clarinet' parts that are more technically demanding and often play the main melody. When the student realises how they have progressed through different levels of independence and contribution to the music, they can see their progression. This feedback is gained from having a greater contribution to the labour of the ensemble.

However, not all students want to progress to more difficult parts, it may well be that a clarinettist will stay on 'clarinet 3' or 'clarinet 2' parts and not progress to clarinet 1. Some people prefer to play a harmony part, making their contribution to the overall music but without the pressure of 'playing the tune', but they can still see their progress in terms of division of labour. Are they leading the other clarinets? Do they have greater satisfaction in knowing that they can play their part well? Do they feel more confident playing in exposed places? These are questions that allow the student to recognise their progression within the group. Unlike explicit and spontaneous division of labour seen previously (page 143), here the student is in control of the division of labour. They themselves are making decisions as to how much they contribute to their section and if they are contributing more than they have previously done, although not playing a more difficult part, this can be measured as progress.

IV.12.a Realisation of learning

The gamelan group found it easy to be motivated by realising what they have learnt, as Student K shows.

'But the damping thing I thought was really interesting the first, that time I came, he told us how to do the damping thing and how you sort of move your other hand along behind your first hand ... and I had to do it consciously. And the next week, without me doing any practice, my mind had got itself around that and when I began to do it my other hand just followed and I never had to think about it again. And I think that's really clever because it did it all by itself.'

Here Student K is looking back at something she found very difficult that has now been committed to motor memory. Playing gamelan is relatively easy in terms of actual technique, the majority of instruments being struck with a mallet and dampened with the hand. The ease of gaining a sound out of the instruments therefore allows the student to concentrate on the complexities of the music. However, there can also be a downside to this as Student M points out.

'The actual hitting of the instruments is really very easy isn't it.

M Yes, that's the core of it. Having, once having mastered that I'm not sure whether I'm really making any progress after that. [laughter] With all the problems of memorisation and rhythm.

L You don't squeak ... they don't squeak. [laughter]

K Like clarinets. It takes years to get over the squeaking.'

Student M is a clarinettist, playing to a relatively high standard within local amateur orchestras. It may well be that his expectations of progression are far higher than what can be achieved in reality when learning a totally new concept of creating music.

These moments of realisation come to all members of learning ensembles. Some, like Student M above, led to an 'outbound' trajectory; Student M left the learning ensemble shortly after this interview. When interviewed a year after leaving the group he said:

'I think my reason for giving up was not so much because of external pressures, though there were those, as dissatisfaction with the style of music making.'

However many give the motivation for students to continue along their 'inbound' trajectory, as I discovered in my own learning experience.

'6 December 2005

Then we did good old Richet Richet. You know, it's quite amazing that after a relatively short period of time – just under a year – we can do requests.'

Then again on 10 January 2006 I noted this

'I got there early [tonight]. There is a good group of beginners, probably about 15 or so, a full gamelan anyway. It was their first session and they sound really good. It was interesting watching them as they were finding it so hard to dampen the notes and I remember being completely bamboozled by that! I knew exactly what they were going through. It's funny because I was really pleased that there was a good group of beginners because it makes our group more secure as we will have more people moving up. When I first started I remember how insecure I was in the group, watching my place and worrying when I wasn't selected for an instrument because I'd missed a week or two. I think that maybe as the group is more established and my skills as a gamelan player are too that it means that I can just enjoy being in the group.'

This extract from my learning diary shows that I needed to feel secure in my group and this moment of realisation of what I had learnt at this point satisfied this need to feel secure. I remember this session well; this was the point that I felt that I was a gamelan player rather than it being something that I was trying out. This is where my commitment was forged.

Knowles (1990; 31) states that a key assumption of adult learners is that

'Adults are motivated to learn as they experience needs and interests that learning will satisfy.'

However, these needs and interests need to be experienced on a social level before they can satisfy and as Maslow (1987; 30) says, *'a satisfied need is not a motivator.'* Indeed it was not my need for security in my group being satisfied that motivated me, nor was it my need to be considered a gamelan player that shifted my level of commitment, it was the realisation that I had progressed; I was no longer just having a go at something, but I was participating meaningfully in a community of practice. This point charts the start of my transformation from a person who plays gamelan, to a gamelan player. My identity shifted as my object changed from wanting to find out how I learn into wanting to engage in gamelan music. Not only this, the music changed from tool to object; I transformed into someone who was learning 'the music' rather than 'about the music'. My possible self changed into someone who could be a real gamelan player and the strong emotional attachment that I have for my group started to develop. All of this was realised through being exposed to my wider gamelan community- in this case, the beginners' group.

These shifts occur throughout the learning process. The following extracts show how three years later there occurred another shift in my activity system. This was again realised through exposure to my wider community.

January 17th 2009

I'm really feeling that I'm pretty good at gamelan. I've started to try and do everything from memory when I'm playing tune instruments. I'm playing the bonang in a piece and doing it all from memory, it is so much easier. I've really got to grips with how the instrument works along with the tune and in relation to the other instruments around. I think I've reached gamelan Grade 1!

February 21st 2009

I went to the Klenengan² at the Royal Festival Hall today. It was brilliant. It was really good to be playing with fantastic people. I was pleased that I played a number of different things, and I was the most rubbish person there. It has sort of taken my gamelan playing to the next level.'

Here, by entering into a different community the division of labour of my activity system shifted considerably. In my group I have been gradually taking on more important roles on the structural instruments and also I have been singing; many gamelan pieces are songs and so the singer plays a vital role. I have also been playing easier instruments in order to keep together the other players. What this has done is transform my activity system into that of someone who is playing in order to support others' learning. My object is still to make music, but it is being done in a supportive role rather than a learning role. My Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), as described on page 145, has been diminishing and therefore my progression has also diminished. However, by entering into the wider community with support from my tutor, my ZPD increased drastically. I relished the fact that I was nowhere near as good as the other players. Moreover, I felt that my self-concept shifted somewhat and I realised that I was capable of playing at this level, which in turn shifted my possible self.

The above highlights major shifts in self-concept and activity systems. The following two extracts from my learning diary show how after a realisation of how the music works, a smaller shift occurred in my self confidence.

'23rd May 2006

I had a bit of an epiphany today. I suddenly got it. I kind of feel that I've been bumbling along quite nicely but I'm now starting to get the bigger picture.

² A klenengan is a gathering of gamelan players. Anyone is invited to join in and you can play as little or as much as you like.

Basically he described gamelan as a cross between serialism and jazz. Each instrument has a number of different things it can do and the player can choose to do whatever he likes, however each instrument is governed by a hierarchy of instruments which affects what everyone else does. So for example, on the slenthem I can do a number of different elaborations but what I do is dependent on where the bonang decides to go in the tune. There you go. So you can learn to play and enjoy it without knowing what the hell's going on, but having an understanding of it just enhances the experience.

30 May 2006

I am on fire! We did the sakarahen again today. It was really weird. When he was going through it I couldn't even remember where each number was but then as I sat down at the Bonang Paneris it just happened, it was easy, the pattern just came. Very bizarre. I was quite clearly the best, and I'm not just bragging.'

These extracts show that as my self-concept was raised through gaining an understanding how the music works, my confidence was also raised and I clearly felt very good about what I was doing. Also my self-efficacy was raised, which drove my motivation. Other students have experienced similar moments where they realised how much they had learnt:

'Earlier this year I suddenly realised that I rarely if ever get lost when we are all playing these days. What's more, if there are parts that I just can't handle, too fast perhaps, then I am still able to follow the music, play most of the notes and climb back on again as soon as I can. In the past, I would have been absolutely lost and, all too often, unable to find my place again.

I go to [other music courses] as often as I can- six times a year. I love going there but until a few months ago, I always knew it was going to be difficult rather than enjoyable. Now I enjoy playing virtually all of the music and, although there are many there better than me, I don't feel so wretched. Thank heavens they are pleasant and gentle because I have come across elitist people [at other music courses] where they seemed to set up barriers on purpose but that is another story that still annoys me.

The tutor gave me a part last term which took my violin playing well up beyond third position, which I am still struggling with. It was a struggle to play the notes but often I was able to get to the right notes by listening to a better player who sits next to me. The tutor is very good at giving us parts that take us out of our comfort zones- but in a very constructive way.

All in all, I find myself being able to compartmentalise my mind so I can deal with several things going on simultaneously, a bit like a time-sharing computer.'

Here Student G shows how exposure to his wider community and by explicit division of labour he has realised how much he has progressed. Student AA talks of stages in his progression.

'Well, it has all happened in stages. For the first year I was afraid to make much noise in case I played a wrong note... which happened quite often when I was playing the band. This happened because I was pretty nervous, and you can't easily hide with a trombone! But, I got better with practice and started to gain confidence and played louder, and [the tutors] were always saying it is harder to play quietly... and it is. So being afraid to play wrong meant I played quieter which is actually harder, and so on.

Then, I realised that other people were playing wrong notes too so maybe I was not any worse than them. So playing more loudly without being afraid of making a mistake was stage one.

Next was hitting those high notes. One of the pieces we played was Vaughan Williams "Flourish for Wind Band", and that piece had a top F which I missed quite often. So I practised, but I never really managed it regularly. But still I went for it... Stage 1 confidence made me try even though I knew it would go wrong sometimes. Suddenly, last year sometime I found I could get it every time, what a confidence boost... top F is just another note. Now I can get top G most of the time and I just know I will be able to get A if I keep working on it. So this is Stage 2. I know I am going to be able to play those high notes eventually, and I am not afraid to try and go wrong sometimes.

Lastly, the biggest mountain to climb. Reading the music. Remember I couldn't read music when I started. Up until 6 months ago I could only play by taking the music home and going through it note by note over and over again until I just about knew big chunks off by heart. I play or practise every day. The problem with this is that I am now playing in 5 different bands and trying to learn all that stuff in a diminishing amount of time was getting difficult, especially since the standard is getting higher. Suddenly, just a couple of months ago while looking at some new music, I realised I was sight reading sections of it. That is the first time, and a big break-through!

So Stage 3... I can sight read some pieces of music, not the complicated things, of course ... but this is new and recent and for me, very exciting!

Student AA talks of his self-efficacy rising with his confidence and also how exposure to the wider community, by joining a number of different bands, has helped him to pinpoint his moments of progression. His identity has shifted from someone who has to learn everything from memory in order to play, to a sight reader. In an earlier interview Student AA said

'I think those two elements are necessary [in being a musician], both the ability to operate the instrument and a sort of a feeling for what you're playing. I think I have a feeling for what I'm playing, but it's the operation of the instrument that's the problem!'

So as he has now recognised that he can operate his instrument, perhaps he can see his transformation towards musician.

However, these shifts can also happen in the opposite direction, as the following extracts from my diary following on from the above show.

'6 June 2006

I don't understand why I was so good at the sakarahan that [the tutor has] put someone else on it. I played Demung most of the evening. Then he put me on Bonang for Puspadata and I really messed it up. I'd copied it down wrong, which didn't help.

20 June 2006

I'm worried about Puspadata, I got it today, but I've only played it a couple of times and we seem to do it right at the end when there is no time to go through it again. He explained the quick funky bit today, but I didn't have time to do it. I can't make it next week so hopefully we can go through it the week after, before the concert.

11 July 2006

We did the concert last Saturday, [the tutor] said that it went really well but I'm not so convinced! I came last week but I had [my children] with me and I couldn't do anything, so I hadn't played Puspadata for a long time. We rehearsed a little bit in the morning but we spent most of the time moving the gamelan in and out of the rain. We went through Puspadata first outside and I couldn't hear the tune at all. Then we started with that one and [my daughter] came running up to me and started hassling me and my music was blowing away and I got really lost! It was bad! Anyway, we didn't do it again! Then we were playing the dance piece for the final time and I was on the slenthem, and I got absorbed by the music and lost my place and stopped, and realised that I was one of the only ones playing the tune! I got it back again though. I also had a hairy moment on the peking. You know, take away the comfort blanket of [the tutor] telling us where we are and what we are doing and it all goes to pot.'

What these extracts show is a reversal of the shift that occurred in the previous weeks. The great burst of confidence received from working something out was reversed by not being placed on that instrument again by the tutor. What is important to note here is that the tutor probably did not realise that I had had my epiphany, and that I wanted to go on the instrument again as I had not vocalised this thought. The realisation that I had progressed but still needed support from the tutor helped my activity system to settle, giving me a focus for the next stage of my learning- to attempt to be more independent.

What can be seen here is how turbulent the activity system can be. However, this turbulence is needed in order to help the learner place themselves within their group and develop the necessary possible selves needed to generate motivation. The fact that the constituents of the activity system can change dramatically at precise points in learning, as the two major shifts in my activity system above demonstrate, as well as within the

space of a rehearsal or even during one piece, is vital in our understanding of how a student generates motivation in order to learn. What strikes me as interesting is that these shifts happen quite naturally within the learning ensemble, and in some ways the ensembles seem purposefully designed for these shifts to occur.

IV.13 Chapter 13 – Activity Constellations

I have so far demonstrated how the constituents of the activity system are fluid and that they can be shifted in order to construct identities and generate motivation. Sometimes these shifts are controllable, other times they can be an unconscious part of the learning process. In this chapter I will show how the multi-faceted nature of the activity system can be represented to acknowledge these shifts. The discussion of how different activity systems are related to each other, the shifts in constituents and the emotional attachment that catalyses these shifts also addresses Daniels' and Warmington's (2007) three issues of contradiction and labour-power, subject position and identity and emotional experiencing in processes of personal transformation.

IV.13.a Contradiction and labour-power

Contradiction and labour-power refer to how an activity system develops. Contradictions exist in activity systems as '*the driving force of change and development*' of the system (Engeström, 2001; 135) and '*manifest themselves in disturbances and innovative solutions*' (Engeström, 2008; 205). For example, we have discussed the contradiction between where music lies in the system; as the subject or as the tool. This contradiction is key to the learning process as it allows the person to generate motivation based on where they feel the music lies at any particular time. If they are feeling low in self-efficacy due to a perceived poor performance, then they can switch the music to tool; I am only learning about music in order to give me a new social circle. However, if self-efficacy is raised, a person may set higher musical goals by switching music to the position of object in order to drive them forward; I can be a musician so I am going to push myself to see how far I can get (Bandura, 1995). Whichever way they look at their purpose for learning, they can generate motivation. Therefore the contradiction of where the music lies helps to develop learning. Not only are there contradictions locally, such as one thing occupying two places in the activity system, the activity itself generates contradiction in that it is an individual's activity system yet the activity is a group phenomenon, so the person is '*simultaneously marginal and central within the activity system*' (Daniels and Warmington, 2007; 381). There is a double activity, that of the group, where the person is marginal, and that of the person, where they are central.

This raises a number of questions. When an individual is acting as a member of a group to reach a meta-object (the objective of the group), do other constituents also change? Is the division of labour the same? Is the community the same? Are there different rules? And, as already discussed, do objects become tools? Could there actually be more

than one activity system running simultaneously where the subject interacts with different constituents of the activity at different times? Can the subject change from an individual central to the system to a group subject, allowing the person to adopt a marginal position as activity changes? Certainly from the discussion of the role of performance in learning ensembles earlier (see *IV.7 Chapter 7 – The Performance*, page 152), it would seem as if a person does adopt a marginal role when their learning ensemble performs, changing to a group subject in the pursuit of a meta-object, so as to cope with a difficult individual activity. If these contradictions are viewed as separate activity systems rather than as part of an unstable changing system, these systems can then be layered in order to show all the different systems that a person can utilise during their learning.

IV.13.b Subject position and identity

'The way in which subjects are positioned with respect to one another within an activity carries with it implications for engagement with tools and objects. It may also carry implications for the ways in rules, community and the division of labour regulate the actions of individuals and groups.'

(Daniels and Warmington, 2007; 382)

As previously discussed, identity changes as constituents within the activity system change (see *IV.10.b The possible self*, page 181). When the constituents change, the subject interacts differently with other constituents and their possible selves change accordingly. This can also be seen when they consider their position against that of other members of their group. When I asked members of Group 1 whether they perceived themselves to be musicians, they said

D No.

A No.

E/B No. No.

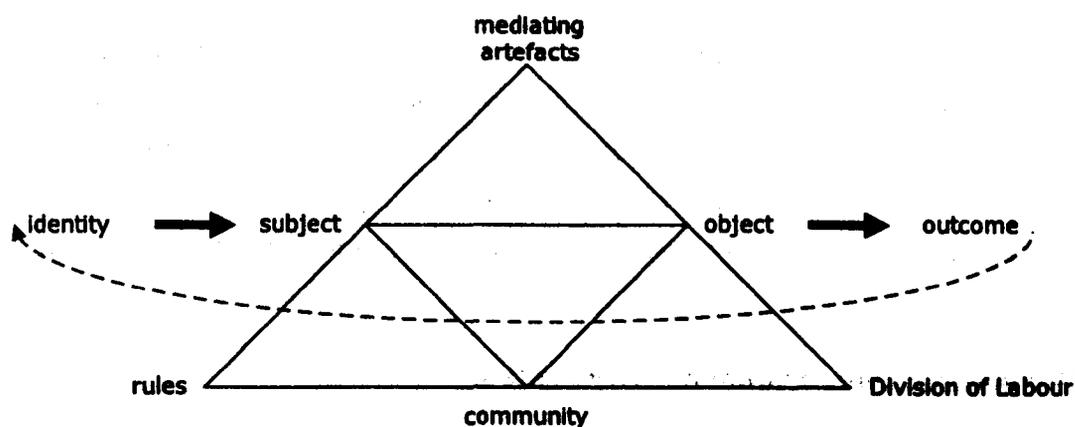
D I know I can't play [laughter]'

Yet in an individual interview, Student B said

'I mean it's certainly a huge part of my life, in a way that it wasn't before. I think people are wary of using that because it sort of suggests, it sounds quite pretentious in a way. ... I think you shouldn't be scared of labels and if it's a vital part of your life then why not? I wouldn't say yet but you know I think it's not something I could write off entirely. If a musician means being somebody who sees music as a vital part of their life and who really does have an urge to play as well as possible then I suppose I already am.'

Within the group situation, there was a definite no, but on an individual basis Student B does want to call herself a musician, but is worried that it may make her sound pretentious. Perhaps if she admitted this in front of her peers she may have felt as if she had broken a rule that the purpose of the group is to make social music together with a common agreement that they are all 'non-musicians' together. Or it may make her community interact with her in a different way. Therefore, depending on whether she is acting towards a meta-object or an object, her identity changes. This change is therefore dependent on whether she is acting as a member of a group or an individual; in other words, where she positions herself as subject in relation to the rest of her group. So, the identity constructed at any particular time must feed into the person's positioning of subject. Here we can draw a loop between the outcome of the object and the identity of the subject; the outcome helps to construct an identity, the identity helps to define the position of subject. This is shown in figure 23.

Figure 23 – Identity in the activity system



IV.13.c Emotional experiencing in processes of personal transformation

Daniels and Warmington (2007; 388) say that

'We have noticed the considerable resistance to change that arises when participants ... understand that they should make changes but cannot engage with the processes of making those changes.'

In the case of musical learning, this can be seen as the expectation of the tutor for the student to practise and the amount of practice that the student is willing to do.

We saw earlier that the act of playing within a learning ensemble was practice (IV.2

Chapter 2 – Social Music Making, page 90). However, many students still feel that they should practise more, as Students A and C show.

'C And I think there is an onus on all of us to, to do personal work...

A Well we all know that don't we. What we do and what we should do...'

So even though the emphasis is on learning whilst playing within a group, the students feel this tension between what the tutor expects them to do and what they actually do.

Daniels and Warmington considered Vygotsky's (1994) concept of emotional experience acting as a prism through which the factors of the environment can influence development. In other words, the emotional experience of this tension between knowing that personal practice would make the person better at what they do, and the reality of how much time can be spent on personal practice shapes the identity of the person. Their possible self is someone who has the potential to be a musician, and this drives their learning.

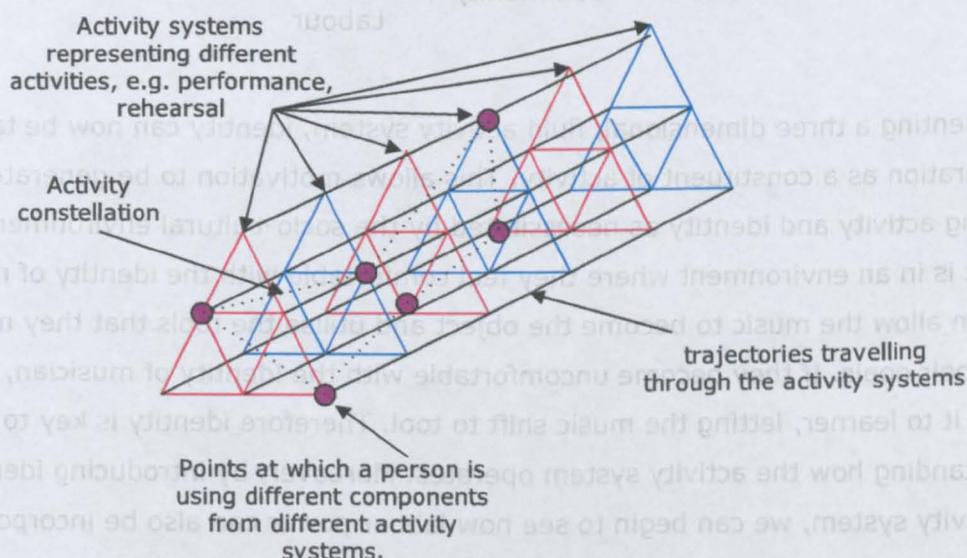
So, within the learning ensemble we have an environment where the subject is both central and marginal, acting towards objects and meta-objects, where the subject can change depending on how they position themselves against other members of the group and where tensions help to shape the identity of the subject in order to drive their learning forward. This being the case, how do we represent this in the activity system?

IV.13.d A three dimensional activity system

I have already demonstrated how the constituents of the activity system can shift. I have also shown that a subject is capable of acting simultaneously towards objects and meta-objects. I would also suggest that this simultaneous activity occurs frequently throughout the learning process. For example, as the labour spontaneously divides through a student helping another student, the student who has become a master (page 143) is acting in at least two different capacities where they are central to the activity- that of helping the other student whilst also acting towards their own individual goals. Not only this, they are acting towards a meta-object as a member of the group. Therefore, there are three different subject positions occurring at the same time. This being the case, a two-dimensional activity system is no longer adequate to represent the interactions of the learning process.

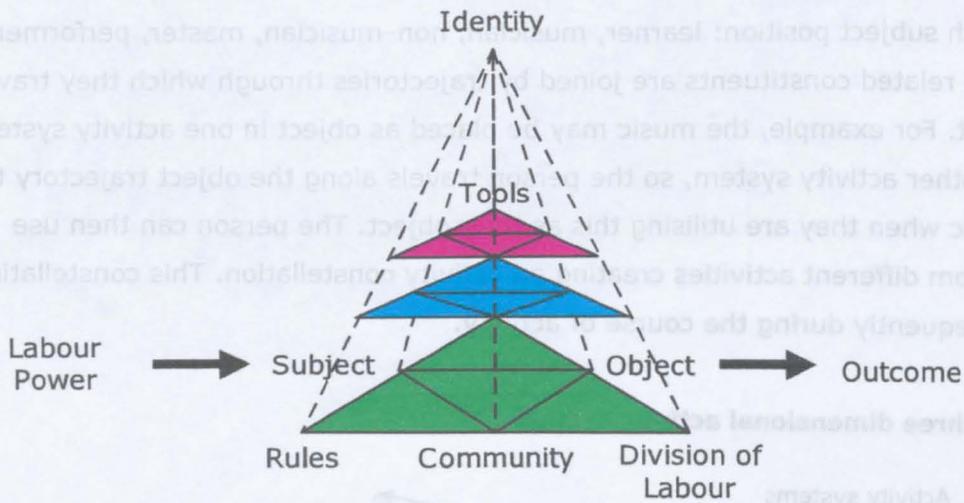
Figure 24 shows an activity system where traditional two dimensional activity systems are layered next to each other. This three-dimensional system represents the different systems of each subject position: learner, musician, non-musician, master, performer and so on. The related constituents are joined by trajectories through which they travel when they shift. For example, the music may be placed as object in one activity system and tool in another activity system, so the person travels along the object trajectory to reach the music when they are utilising this as their object. The person can then use constituents from different activities creating an activity constellation. This constellation may change frequently during the course of activity.

Figure 24 – A three dimensional activity system



The difficulty with this representation is that it does not demonstrate how the shift between systems occurs. When a student instigates a moment of spontaneous division of labour by helping another student, they are using the same tools as they are when they are a peer to that student, but the division of labour has shifted. This shift is facilitated by a change of identity. Therefore, identity is the key to moving along the trajectories between the individual activity systems and the group activity systems. So, by introducing identity as a constituent of the activity system, we can draw a three-dimensional system that allows the changing identity of the subject to interact with other constituents, shown in figure 25 on page 210. The systems of each activity can be layered and as the subject changes identity, they can use the appropriate constituents to fulfil their object. By changing identity from peer to master during a brief moment of spontaneous division of labour, the student can travel to a different activity system and utilise constituents from this. This then allows for activity constellations to be drawn within the pyramid.

Figure 25 – An activity system incorporating identity



By presenting a three dimensional, fluid activity system, identity can now be taken into consideration as a constituent of activity. This allows motivation to be generated by changing activity and identity as necessitated by the socio-cultural environment. If a student is in an environment where they feel comfortable with the identity of musician, they can allow the music to become the object and utilise the tools that they need to reach their goals. If they become uncomfortable with the identity of musician, they can change it to learner, letting the music shift to tool. Therefore identity is key to understanding how the activity system operates. Moreover, by introducing identity into the activity system, we can begin to see how labour power can also be incorporated. Labour power affects how far the subject contributes to group activity. So, by placing it as an inward factor at the point of subject, we can allow the subject to change identity as the labour power changes and potentially shift from individual subject to group subject in order to fulfil meta-objects alongside their individual objects.

V - Conclusions

At the start of this research project, I set out to answer three research questions:

- How does the individual learn within the group environment?
- How does the dual function of learning tool and performing ensemble catalyse the students' learning?
- How do the students identify themselves as musicians – at what point do they class themselves as musicians?

By analysing learning using activity theory I have demonstrated how a person develops the skills needed to use the tools available to them, and how they use them within the community to make meaningful music. Furthermore, I have found that the set up of that community in terms of the rules and division of labour is crucial to the learning. I have also shown how performance is an important part of the learning ensemble in order to catalyse learning; it provides feedback and forces the learner into a different community, set of rules and division of labour so as to allow them to engage with the tools in a different environment. Finally, I have demonstrated how the activity system is fluid and the constituents shift as students progress, transforming their identity and generating motivation.

Through this study I have learnt that the activity system can be volatile. There are numerous contradictions that exist in the way that constituents move around and that during the process of activity, a person will engage in more than one activity. There will be more than one goal; group goals as well as individual goals, and therefore by viewing it as one activity system, tension is created between the various activities and goals. This study has shown that in fact there are layers of different activity systems going on at any one time and people move between these layers as necessary to carry out their activity. Wenger (1998; 146) states that *'identity serves as a pivot between the social and the individual'* and this is crucial to my understanding of activity theory. By looking at the different activities that people carry out within a learning ensemble, I have been able to draw out that identity *is* the key element that allows people to move between the layers of activity systems, giving them access to different goals. It is the pivot between individual activity systems and group activity systems. Therefore, by adding identity as a point on the activity system, I have been able to stabilise the activity system and show how activity constellations using different elements of different layers can be constructed.

To aid this, rather than view the activity system as a complex, unstable and volatile system, I have seen this in a positive light by seeing it as a flexible way of viewing activity. As discussed in the methodology (see *III.2 Flexible Design*, page 43), this study has been organic in that I adopted an emerging research design. The flexibility of the activity system has suited this well as I have been able to build up the layers of the activity system as the study has progressed, understanding the ways in which they worked together as my own understanding of activity theory deepened. This has suited my way of working as a researcher. Again, the methodology of this thesis sets out the approach that I have taken in terms of setting out to research something, asking questions as the research progresses, reviewing the research process and taking the research forward as a result (see *III.2.c Grounded Theory*, page 50). Activity theory has given me a flexible, theoretical tool that has enabled me to work in this organic way, drawing on other areas of information as necessary to inform my research.

By looking at the social environment of musical learning, I have discovered that there is a whole host of other things going on in a learning ensemble as well as musical learning. I have demonstrated that whether students are learning about the music or learning the music itself, often they use music in order to reach other goals. As well as being able to provide an in depth analysis of what is going on musically, I have also shown how people use music in order to deal with other areas or aspects of their lives. For example, Chapter 8 describes the experience of a group of prisoners participating in a gamelan project (page 164) and this has shown the therapeutic effect that participation in a learning ensemble can have. Other participants in this study have recovered from illness, have suffered changes of circumstance due to accidents, have coped with bereavement through immersing themselves in musical activity and so on. Therefore this is not a study purely about musical learning, it is also a study about how people use the social learning environment in order to facilitate and cope with change.

I have also learnt about the social motivations of participation in a learning ensemble and the notion of either being a musician or not being a musician. From this, I have found that it is not as contentious an issue as I thought it might be. Sometimes not being a musician is the best motivator for learning as it allows the student to access another layer of the activity system that could not be accessed if identity as a musician was a fixed concept. This study has shown me that people need to be able to move between being a musician and not being a musician, and that it only becomes contentious when people make it so. In terms of the actual music, it does not make a difference. Where it does make a difference is in how people engage with the music in

order to learn and the construction and maintenance of their own self-esteem within this.

As a practitioner, this study has been extremely useful. As a teacher, I have used some of the outcomes in my own teaching and reflected upon them in order to improve my own practice. As a researcher, I've used this bank of work for engaging with other researchers, giving papers at conferences and disseminating the outcomes so that I can exchange ideas and develop them.

The implications of this study are threefold. Firstly, it has shown how the activity system can be stabilised by transforming it into a three-dimensional system. Secondly, it has made a contribution to understanding of what the significance of performance is. By considering what students' perceptions of performance and being a performer are, along with how they overcome their fears of performance, the importance of performance as an assessment tool for musical learning other than learning to perform, is challenged. Thirdly, this study has implications for the way in which musical learning for adults is provided. By providing an in depth analysis of the learning processes within the social context, this study has shown that a learning ensemble is an effective way of not only engaging with the musical learning process, but also with music itself through participative learning.

This being the case, a model of participative learning that takes into consideration the constituents of the activity system can be constructed. Participative learning takes into account:

- *The purpose of learning:* Why is the student learning? If the student is learning in order to play in an ensemble, then learning should occur within that community of practice.
- *Holistic learning:* Are there a number of different tools available to students, and are they given the opportunity to use and develop them simultaneously?
- *The social learning environment:* Who is the student learning with? Is there an opportunity within the learning environment for a student to move between different roles, enabling peer learning to take place?
- *The boundaries:* How is the learning environment set up? Do the rules of the learning environment reflect the intention of the learning?

- ***Beyond the learning environment:*** Is there an opportunity for students to engage in the wider community?
- ***Performance:*** Are students given the opportunity to perform in a different community as an integral part of the learning process rather than as an assessment of learning?

The emphasis of the learning model as presented in this thesis is that students are learning this way in order to create music in a social environment. They are learning how to play with other people and they can only do this by participating in meaningful social music making. However, it is easy to see how this model can be used in other learning situations. Critics of the method of learning presented here may question how an instrumental student develops their technique without rigorous technical exercises and expert tuition. Participative learning can be applied to the development of technique if that is what the student wishes to achieve. The community of practice will be a technique class. The community will be formed of tutor and student(s). The division of labour will be distributed between tutor, student and resources such as technical exercises. The rules of the practice may include rules such as deliberate, repetitive practice of technical exercises. The student will develop the skills to interact with the tools through the course of the activity. Performance will play a similar role in that it is a catalyst for development of technique; a good technique will support the performance of music in a different environment and the performance will highlight areas of technique that need further development.

Through this study, three questions have arisen:

- How does the analysis using activity theory affect how teaching occurs in the future?
- How should musical learning be assessed?
- What are the benefits of developing a multi-faceted activity system?

V.1 Activity Theory and Teaching

Looking at learning through the lens of the activity system raises interesting questions about how teaching occurs. For example, I demonstrated that shifts occur in the students' identity as they move deeper into their community of practice (*IV.10.b The*

possible self, page 181), but how aware is the tutor of these shifts and can they control or harness them? Also, I demonstrated that division of labour can be viewed as both explicit and spontaneous, and that other students are able to divide the labour spontaneously so as to support their peers (*IV.6.b Spontaneous division of labour*, page 143). How much should the tutor be in control of this division of labour? We saw that learning can still occur when the students did not find their tutor easy to get along with (*IV.3.b Engaging with one another socially*, page 102). Does this tell us anything about how a tutor can engage students when there is a personality clash or how learning can occur without the presence of a tutor?

These questions cannot be answered here as the focus of this research has been on the learners rather than the teachers, but by viewing the learning process through the activity system, the tutor is able to design teaching so as to accommodate these things. If a tutor can see how a student interacts with their tools, and has an understanding of the tools that are available, they can provide opportunities where tool usage can be maximised. For example, we saw how students moved along a notation continuum. Although students were willing to move from one side to the other, they were most comfortable within a safe space between two points on the continuum (*IV.4.a Using notation*, page 111). The tutor can design learning so as to allow the students on one hand to use their tools within their safe space and on the other develop their tools so that this space can be increased. Similarly, if a tutor is aware of how other students can provide spontaneous division of labour, they can design learning so that there are opportunities for this to happen. Not only this, but knowledge of the activity system and how a student engages with it in order to generate motivation, can inform a tutor as to how to keep their students motivated.

All of these things are not necessarily new to teaching, but what activity theory can do is map them out so that the tutor is aware of how the student uses the social environment in their learning processes and can aid the development of this environment to support learning.

V.2 Assessing Musical Learning

It became apparent throughout the research that although a major part of the ensemble's activity, the performance was not the primary purpose of the learning. However, more often than not, it is the performance that is used to assess learning. We saw that students often do not enjoy performing but see it as a necessary part of the learning process (*IV.7 Chapter 7 – The Performance*, page 152). Quite often when

learning ensembles perform, they do so in front of a sympathetic audience which has an understanding of what the students have done in order to get to where they are. This is a crucial point; if we assess a performance purely on face value, how can we see the extent to which a student has engaged with the learning process?

By using activity theory to view the learning process, we can also see how it can be used for assessment. How far a student has interacted with the community, rules and division of labour may tell us how much they have developed. Similarly, how they have utilised their tools and developed skills in order to use new tools may also provide an insight into how much a student has learnt. This also allows for different levels of prior experience to be taken into consideration. Also, noting how far a student has moved within a three-dimensional system may allow us to assess learning. At the beginning of learning a student may only use one activity system, but as learning progresses, they may be able to interact with different activities simultaneously, therefore engaging in a wider activity constellation. This also raises questions as to how far shifting identities can be used to assess learning. In short, I believe that further research into using activity theory for assessment would be very fruitful.

V.3 A Multi-faceted Activity Constellation

The multi-faceted activity constellation that I presented (see *IV.13.d A three dimensional activity system*, page 208) is a natural evolution of the activity system. By accepting that systems operate simultaneously, and that a student can move in and out of activities as their learning progresses and identity transforms, we can view learning in terms of fluid activity. It allows for contradictions to exist between activities and students to change their identity without changing the practice of the activity. In other words, a student can set out to learn in order to become a musician, but then change this identity as necessary so as to function within their community but without changing their actual physical contribution to the group. It also allows for students to use constituents from familiar activities, such as rehearsing, to help them with unfamiliar activity systems, such as performing.

Using a multi-faceted activity system accepts that activity is not rigid. Therefore the benefits of using this type of system are that the system reflects this and activity can be seen in terms of constellations where simultaneous activity can exist. The fluid activity system that I have presented is a first attempt at stabilising the system and creating a system that allows for constellations to be constructed. Further research could test this system and develop it in terms of where the labour-power lies in the system and

whether constellations can be drawn from group activity as well as individual activity, with the subject shifting from person to group.

V.4 Participative learning – a way forward?

The driving force of the learning processes seen in this research is that the students are making music; participation is the learning. This research has been carried out on adults, although through the research I have seen how adult learning is not unlike learning as a child. I have travelled along trajectories that have taken me back to feelings and thoughts that I had as a child learner (see *IV.9.c Motivation through performing*, page 174), and these thoughts and feelings have steered my behaviour. I have seen my own behaviour patterns that existed as a child (how I interact with the community, with performance and with using the tools) transpire in my learning as an adult; even though I have a different understanding of things, my behaviour is still similar. I also discovered how one student learns in exactly the same way now as he did when he was an undergraduate student (see *IV.4.a Using notation*, page 111). This would suggest that learning patterns stay with us throughout life. We do not switch from one way of learning as a child to another when we become adults, rather learning patterns evolve through interaction with learning. Therefore, the question this raises is, if the learning processes of an adult are similar to that of a child, can this model of learning through participation also be successful for children?

This study has shown how learning can be assessed, how motivation can be generated, how progression occurs and how students are engaged, and there is no reason to suggest that it cannot work equally for children as for adults. Whether we can create the socio-cultural environment needed to facilitate this learning is a question that needs careful consideration. Participative learning is a way forward for musical learning and I suspect that many elements of it already exist in music education. However, it embraces current thinking in terms of a model of learning that allows all who wish to do so, to engage in the musical learning process through active music making. Moreover, not only does it support differential learning, this is one of the key ingredients that make the learning model work.

The next step for participative learning is to engage in its practical application so as to test its generality and to conduct further research so as to investigate the impact of learning in this way. Once it has been accepted as a generic model for musical learning that can be applied to different situations both within and outside of the school, it can be

Appendix I – Coded Pilot Study Observation Notes



Actions

Thoughts

2:30

tuning, some practice
are tutor giving advice

was chatting.

121 advice for VC.

TR

teacher input

F	F	F	F
VC ¹	VC ²	VC ³	VC ⁴
F 0	0	0	0
F 0 ⁵	O ^M 1	O ^M 2	F 3
VC	VIn	VIn	VIn
F 4	F 5	O ^M 6	(O ^M 7)
VIn	VIn	VIn	VIn

2:45

main tutor arrive.

was now practicing

I

indirect practice

1/8

VC's I. VC 1, 2+3
scales.

2:50

Register taken.

Ⓣ posture advice to VC1. other
VCs watch, as to VC2.

→ (FA)
Teach
input.

Vln 6 practice, then
Vln 2, Vln 4 reading
futer book.

→ (I)
Instructed
practice

tutor's discuss what doing
then No. 6 BK I.

tutor (I) to Vln 4 - seems
new, explaining string
writing in pencil. VC

→ (TR)
Teached
input.

(F) individ to VC1 on
bow hold.

given time
to look BY
Start?

waiting for (VCT) to
finish. more people play.

everyone practicing

→ (I)

Vln 6 steps,
~~given~~

2.55 first.

VnT gives individual attention to new (Vln 6)

VCT play piano

as it played Vln B4.

everyone waits

VCT back to VC I bow hotel.

- into about a concert given.

VCT ask if do noise while

Vln 1 gets stickers for

Vln 4.

add to do whole bows.

more arm movement.

"more sound isn't it?"

Vln 6 "yes" others fairly silent.

3

TR

warm up numbers?

G

technical input

S?

do again while writing

think about ↓ ↑ ↓

12

no. 11.

no. 10.

still Vln 1 with Vln 4.

VCT gives instruction

to VC's.

VC 2 not knew what number.

no. 16. Vln 7 sit with

Vln 6 as get no back.

Vln 6+7 time

Separation between VC/Vln

no. 28

(Very silent)

3:05

Vln 4 P133.

VCT instruction to VC's.

no. 23.

Actions

Thoughts

(VnT) ask pn to play D1 D2
to demonstrate notes to Vln 4

(3:10) group splitting

chat / drink / silent

Vln 7 play. Vln 6 practice
P133.

Vc's move rooms

Vln 7 + 6 play
others silent.

(VnT) back in room.

check bow holds

tell Vlns to play
what like - advice. then
onto Vln 4 to explain
bow holds.

Vln 1 2 + 3 play.

Vln 5 silent in rest pos.

Vln 6 + 7 chat about
tunes.

(G)

individual

→ competition?

(PA)

(PL)

3.15 info about ~~grip~~ given to Vln 4.

C+ scale.

Vln T look for piano part. all play scale together

Vln T play too, gives finger position instruction as play. Vln 4 - note know where they are watch & listen.

Arpeggio - explain via numbers

theory instruction given

Vln 5 asks Vln 4 to share back - using 2 beats.

Using music

Vln 6 Book, rest fingers

onto SLURS

Vln 4 → looking a bit lost. ?

all scales & arpeggs done via numbers not note names, the strings are mentioned followed by fingers - new language! (N)

how many are looking at books (N)

onto G+ app. told learn by note names rather than numbers.

same do I've saved do 2 others catch up.

told G3 start in 3's.

VlnT uses numbers.

Grade 2 music - given out / got out of bags.

Vln 6 captured as to? what playing.

Explain codes: - 1 # = F#

G+ vln 6 + 7 not listening

VlnT demos (novis) vln 1 2 3 4 + 5

follow. Vln 6 + 7 still look for music.

Vln 4 follows music others play.

Vln 6 + 7 too fast

G

do they all know how to start?

PM

T

TR

Vln 6+7 still too fast.

→ on 200 holds.

demo on Vln 3.

others practice with posture while ~~with~~ (T) to Vln 5.

next piece (G2) all practice. (Vln T) at piano

Vln 4 - knows about music, tapping rhythm on foot.

(PM)

Dynamics

~~g~~ crush note explained but not demo.

(G3 piece)

is this sight reading?

(P) puts fingers into Vln 2 copy, others practice

3:35 lots of ornaments

(N)

(T) explains.
vocal demos.

Vln demo - all fellow
- then all play.
only Vln 2 try full.

practice as (T) looks for
3rd ~~plum~~ . Last 2 bars.
Practice ornaments.

Vln 4 still watch intently.
all practice with (Vln 1)
goes to talk to (Vln 1).

Vln 6 + 7 ~~etc~~ (P) -

(PL)

then 2+3 (P). 1 (I)
+ 5 (I).

onto turn.

Demo

Vln 5 join in with (T).

(T) explain ans.
Vln 2 asks about ans
6+7 practice 9

go through slowly.

Vln 1 lost - not meaning
how v. much at all.

All engaged still.

3.45

→ (G)

terminology
used all the time.
(PM)

Vln 6 comment "quite nice"
explain technical bit.

(5?)

Vln 2 nods 6+7 nods
no reaction from chest

(3.50) → 5 mins break

Vln 3 pract.

6+7 go to 4 to chest

1 on arm. 2+3 same chest.

5 advice from (T).

(I)

(1) practice

3:55

6 practices, catches 4's attention, then plays things from memory. Starts 14 pieces current G3. banter est

was this his aim?

establishing social relationships

G

1 + 2 discuss music.

6 play 7 5/11 - good strings. 5 talk about technical instrument things.

→ competitive again!

G

2 then move to 4 to chat.

4:05 start again.

D+ scale.

4 play scale p133 then numbers.

N

1 to 3. 4 share with 5.
"

Explain pencil markings.

6+7 rish again.

All Engaged.

4 fellow music
7 ahead, 6 lost
because of it.

into Largo in D.

① plays + counts +
numbers.

into scale 2 gves.

from memory.

hand position changes

slurred.

① Demo's app. all but
2 watch, 2 look at
fingers.

→ competition
they want
to go ahead.



←
grp dynamics

is confusion
bet. numbers or
net.

underlying

level of
understanding

→ or is there

would / understanding
if not musical



12

4.23

G3 piece -

6 practice - Kmann

tune. misses out #'s.

Grace notes explained
all practice

5 V confused

6 - comment

V. Challenging.

A+

1 - over to 4.

4 join in P133.

clay Dance.

P133 with bow in hand.

A+ 2 gives

→ 4 not join in.

→ ? (PL?)

7 not do 2 & e ¹³ and.

4.37

① → explain why do scales. asks to buy scale bench.

a piece in 6 & 8 Do they

do they understand the time sig.?

VC's came back in → Clap the Vlns time Played with piano

⑤

Never played 4.

Partners
Parent
Son/daughter

6
1 3.
1 3
8.

Appendix II – Coded Pilot Study Group Interview

Pilot study - Group Interview

Sunday 7 November 2004

Tell me about the [redacted] group, anything?

What do you mean sort of what it does or the experience people of got. (D)

The experience of the group, what you enjoy about it.

I think without it, probably, certainly for myself, I would have never have taken up an instrument. (A)

Right.

Because I think one to one it's too intense and I feel at my stage in life, I haven't got the time to really concentrate like the children do and I don't absorb things as well. Were as when we are playing altogether, it's really inspirational because you want to play with everyone else and you don't want to be the one who keeps playing wrong. [general agreement] And it's a real spur and it's such a good group, people are nice, and you get encouragement. (A)

But also when you find when you're finding something difficult, quite commonly other people are also finding it difficult and you can hear that as well and also it helps you spot when you're making mistakes. (D)

Yes. Do you all agree with that?

It's a very supportive group and when we are trying to learn there are no great criticisms 'shall we try that again' it's a very subtle sort of learning process. And I think that is marvellous. [general agreement] (A)

Yeah, and I think [redacted] brilliant isn't she because she doesn't ever sort of flinch. (F)

She doesn't point a finger and say you were wrong again. [laughter] She just marches on. (A)

[something I didn't get]

That's right.

No you are given a few chances to sort of get it right, you know you sometimes play a sharp when you should have played a natural and you think oh yeah, I was a bit different to the others and you've got a chance to get it right again. (D)

Yeah, so do you see the role of [redacted] as a teacher as a really important role to you?

Oh definitely [general agreement] (E)

I'm sure it's different reacting with adults you know, interacting with adults, as it is with children. Children expect to be told exactly what to get on with. (A)

Yes we need to be told what to do but it's the delivery of it. It's very good yeah, I think it's very important. (A)

Teacher input

camp

teacher input

I started last summer, and I started because my son started, he's nine, and I started with his teacher so I was only getting solo lessons, and I heard about this group and I caught the last lesson I think last term and I started in September doing it. And it is such a different experience from having one to one and I couldn't say any one was better or worse particularly but it is such a different experience

(F)

not

[something about confidence I think]

It does. I find when I'm trying to learn, it is harder trying to learn when you are older anyway, but I'm trying to learn with the spotlight on me, just me practising on my own or practising in front of the teacher. You really do sort of tense up, but whilst I'm in this group and we had a special cello session last time and he was saying just do it, just use the bow, just, and you can make all these really horrible noises with gusto and it is such a different experience and I hadn't experienced that at all in my one to one lessons I always feel really sort of 'oh that doesn't sound very good' and worried about it whilst when I come here you can just let go and it doesn't matter if you make a horrid noise, well it does, but

safety

(A)

Success

But when you make a good noise it is wonderful, when you actually co-ordinate

(B)

I'll let you know [laughter]

(F)

Yeah we do, [redacted] and I do quite often don't we mate. [laughter]

(B)

And you can hear that, can you hear that can you, you know when you've got it right.

Peer learning

Well we practice anyway and when there are two of you, you can hear each other very easily and when you're both right or wrong or one's right and one's wrong... it's more difficult isn't it.

(B)

[talking over] So you practice two of you together do you.

(F)

Yeah.

(B)

That's good.

(B)

But we still create some good sounds.

(F)

Well you can tell when the group does. When the group plays a new one it doesn't often sound very good but when the group plays, because I'm new to it I haven't heard a lot of the tunes, but I can tell when everyone has played one before and it does sound much better and you're right it is very uplifting [general agreement]

Peer learning
see what learnt

And how important do you think you are to each other?

Yeah

(A)

Oh absolutely [general agreement]

(F)

We couldn't do without each other.

(A)

The support is amazing.

(A)

It is.

Peer support

Really amazing.

difficulties

Having lost a few people you know you have to build up again and it definitely helps for everyone to play together. It all the little aspects, you need to take yourself off and properly practice and then come together and we've all got to be counting the same note at the same time you know or you are playing something different, you know violas or ... [too noisy, can't hear]

(G)

*Comparing
Comparing*

And I wonder whether that's different with children, I can only judge by my son, and I think it would be academic for him at his age of nine whether he is playing on his own or whether there are other people there really. It makes absolutely no difference. But I think as an adult it makes a terrific difference.

(F)

It makes a terrific difference? [general agreement]

See next step

I came last year and I was in my first year and I think everyone was then in their second year.

(C)

Yeah that's right.

(A)

See next step

And we, there was at least two of us here on violin, we used to sit there, and there were new cellists over here. But erm, we sort of, the notion of what the second year could do is what moved us. We could hear these wondrous things and when we went to this Christmas concert for instance they produced these things that we would not have dreamed of. But the very introduction as I remember in September of last year with, I went to the open day at the [redacted] and er, [redacted] sort of had the group play what it had done at the weeks through the year and I remember she said six weeks in we could do this and they played something and twelve weeks in. That was very good. All the time. And as well as that it's in, very much in proportion, and very much a lot of good return. I think if I was one to one I think golly there's someone here listening to me for a full time, for a full hour and doing nothing else. Whereas you come here and you think well it's not all for me so it doesn't matter you know if I make the odd error and so that there's that side to it so that you are that more relaxed. Erm and as well as that you get the sort of, what is it, oh yes you get the chance to relearn as well. You're not at a test, and I realised today for instance we've done book one and I've picked up things in book one that I certainly didn't pick up last time and so all this becomes acceptable doesn't it.

(C)

realising what learn

Meaning

I think that's important isn't it, just going back to the start. Because you might think that I'm only playing open strings but then you are using your bow and so you might think I'll practice using my bow getting it really smooth.

(E)

Yes, that's true.

(G)

So I think that's important.

(E)

realising

Yes the basics are very important and if you can revisit I think it's great.

(G)

Yeah

realising

What encourages you is how you've improved as well.

(F)

Yes

(go worst)

(A)

It's quite useful/last summer??

(F)

realise

Hard and now I look back and play and I can do it with more gusto because it makes you realise that you've learnt.

So that's the important way for you of measuring how successful you've been to revisit. How else would you measure your success? How else would you know that you are improving?

I think some of the pieces we played for the first time we really struggled trying to play them, I mean that Can-Can even.

A

It was frightening.

D

It was frightening, really

A

Still is [laughter]

I would never be able to play that.

A

Two years ago.

B

And yet the last concert, was it the last one we played the Can-Can.

A

Yes, Christmas again.

B

And it was twice as long and much faster but we did it didn't we, and enjoyed it.

A

We were smiling. And then you know that you have moved on.

A

We are definitely playing more natural, more complicated pieces and the June concert was quite impressive wasn't it really.

B

It was.

A

It should have been daunting but it wasn't really because of the informal...

B

Oh that's interesting.

Arrangement of the audience.

B

We enjoyed it. Yeah.

A

So, it was quite nice to be up on the stage wasn't it really?

B

So it's becoming an enjoyable experience?

Certainly it's the targets for the year, the two concerts. So it hones your concentration.

B

I was pleased that you got the opportunity if you want to do practical or theory tests that that opportunity has been given. I mean, it's not for everybody and not everybody wants to do that but I find it as a discipline it makes me actually sit down and think about it. It makes me really nervous [laughter] you know but it's, I find it very useful to have those in as well as the concerts.

B C

How have you find learning the notation? Have you all started from scratch learning the notes?

realising

Success Criteria

Success

Teacher input

What completely,

Reading music?

(A)
?

Reading the music.

It's harder than playing the instrument. It's so hard. I mean that's why I get stuck here. Not with the mechanics of the instrument I just can't assimilate the information on the page and my nine year old has not got a problem at all. We started at roughly the same time and he can pick it up like that but again as I explained earlier on, I just can't take in new stuff like that easily.

(F)

And repetition actually helps doesn't it

(A)

Yes

(P)

When we go back over something.

(A)

Yes, yes it does.

(P)

Also that you say to yourself why couldn't I get that before [laughs].

(A)

Because I had learnt some notes before, I used to play at junior rather than, oh sorry, first year senior and I had to you know the relearning was quite interesting and I was quite surprised about what I needed to relearn and it's been very supportive but yes, as the age gets to you, you don't absorb it so quickly.

(G)

What's, sorry, what's marvellous here is the first time I came, I couldn't believe it because I was so used to being one to one I'm used to having to do something all the way through and then do it again. You can just stop and other people just carry on playing [laughter]

(F)

I try!

(G)

Yes you find you're on your own, all the other cellists are just sitting there finding where they are in the music, but you can stop, and nobody minds you know, you can just pick it up again if you can find out where you are in the music and nobody minds and that's marvellous.

(F)

How about you four with the notation?

I did piano for a year when I was 11, erm but haven't touched anything since then but I could pick up again reading the treble clef fairly quickly but find it a bit slow when you get onto the ledger lines working things out.

(D)

Yeah, I couldn't read music at all until I started three years ago and my sight-reading I think is quite good now.

(E)

Oh good.

I'm really pleased, you know, the way it's gone on you know. But I think older people they do it for them selves, not to impress others, whereas children do it for the adoration whereas adults try to bring something out of themselves that they need to do. They need to feel that they are achieving something as they are getting older, they are not just sort of you know, waiting for God sort of thing. [laughter]

(E)

Notation

Teacher input

Time out

Notation

Reasons

You do, you like showing off [more laughter] (A)?

Oh I'm a show off. (E)

Mind you the problem with that... (F)

It's all coming out now.

Is that I think you are much harder on yourself and you have higher expectations for your self than say a kid would. (F)

Yeah, but you might but somebody else might not, we're all different aren't we. (E)
You know, we've all got our colourings.

I think I'm worried about failing more than son does. (F)

How have you managed to get over the barrier of finding the music reading hard?

I haven't yet. (F)

You haven't

No, it's still really really hard. (F)

Is that the same with everyone?

You've just got to keep going. (A)

Do you see it as a barrier? Reading the music.

[shakes of head]

Not at all?

Have you always, have you learnt before then [to another participant] (F)

I know the basic notation, what I couldn't get is those beat references, 4 over 8. (C)
And I'm learning that still. I'm still not there completely.

The time signatures.

Yes, counting's very hard isn't it? You think it's pretty basic boring stuff but it's quite intricate to keeping. (A) (G)?

Do you feel you can only think it? Sort of (E)

Sometimes but ... (A)

... made something of it that isn't actually here. In fact it is quite simple to [claps] (E)

Yes I know but I think what we as adults, we've heard the music before and so we know what we're trying to achieve and sometimes we have heard different (A)

Compare

*notation
difficult*

versions of it as well and we're not listening to, you know we're not playing the notes as printing so... whereas kids don't know what they are trying to play.

comparison

That's the magic of kids isn't it.. (B)

It is it can be... (A)

...when they play a piece of music that they've never seen before and it's spot on. (B)

They know the beat exactly. (F)

I can always remember when [redacted] did things like that and you think [clicks fingers] you've got a musician in the family you know. It's magic. (B)

It's the counting that I find the hardest. (D)

Yes it is the hardest. (G)

[redacted] I and [redacted] have been doing a trio recently and what. And I had to really count to get my cello in the right, playing the right notes with the violin. It's very enlightening. [general laughter] (G)

But it is the counting ...

difficulties

It's sometimes easier with the violin ... (D)

... rests...

... because it's playing the small notes isn't it. (D)

Most of the time. It's playing the melody isn't it? Yes. (A)

So it's various skills that you want then really isn't it... (B)

Sorry (G)

... it's various skills that you want... (B)

skills

..yes... (G)

It's a whole sphere of skills. Coming together... (B)

...all at the same time... (G)

...even counting. [laughter] (B)

I'll look forward to that. (F)

Yes. (G)

Do you think that it's vital to understand everything that's on the page in order to make the music?

Not initially, no. (A)

That's something...

teacher

As time goes on it is, because I think [redacted] does expect a sound at the end of the term. When we've been practising a certain song I think she actually expects us to improve not to... (A)

Yes, subtlety is the dynamics isn't it? (G)

That's right. (A)

Often it comes sort of second. Getting the notes is first. (G)

Do you do much playing away from the books?

Some you get together don't you and play. (E)

Yes, but we always use the books, we use the music. (G)

Oh sorry. (E)

Playing scales for example with out the music.

Yes, we do scales but nothing else. I'm really looking forward to the time when I can hear something and then play it but I couldn't even begin to find a note and play it at the moment. (F)

I tend to download a lot from the Internet. (D)

Do you?

Midi files and then I've got some software where I can print that out and often it's not quite in the range that we've got but you can transpose it easily enough and make an easier key, so we've got some reasonable pieces. (D)

Oh yeah, definitely yeah. It's quite useful yeah; it gives you some good ideas of things to perform. (B)

What, play without music. (E)

But I find the music itself, by learning to read music you then depend on it. If I was going to play carols to a neighbour you've got to find the music. You're too lazy to learn it off by heart. (E)

You've got a wonderful ear though [redacted] I mean, I often hear you before we start and you're well away, you've got a wonderful ear for it. (A)

Showing off you mean. (E)

No, it's really good. That's what I'm aiming for. (A)

I love you too darling. (E)

You are very good [laughter]. (A)

Thank you. (E)

So, how about the physical aspect of playing then. The technical mastery?

notation

notation

examples of support

Skills

Physical

Compare

Skills

Mental

What do you mean? (E)

Posture, those kind of things.

Again it's another skill that we are learning. (B)

Do you find it a challenge?

Erm, yeah, it is really. It's the bow hold and things like this that you suddenly realise that you've got to get right otherwise you are going nowhere. And the fingering. (B)

My bow hold will never be right. [laughter] She hates me doing that. [demonstration of double jointed fingers] (A)

(That's going to sound really weird on the tape.)

Four fingered violinist, what a talent hey. (A) (B)

I know that my fingers should be in a certain position when I do it but my little finger doesn't always want to do it. Erm, whether it's sort of stuck like that because of the age or what ever, but I can't physically do what the position should be doing. (G)

No

Perhaps the shape of the wrist and everything. So that's an inhibitor on getting the technique absolutely correct. But I think technique is very important, especially when you go into 3rd position or whatever and you do back stretches and things like that, you have to have learnt you technique in order to have achieve the, you know away from the first position. Keep practising. (G)

Do children have problems, I mean I find it difficult I have to force my hands into the place where they are meant to be, it's certainly not easy... (P)

You see we learn a lot quicker than children in some ways; we've achieved a lot more. (B)

Yeah. (F)

In, I mean my daughter can vouch for that; she's amazed at just how far we've gone in two years. That's still learning the basics; it takes them so much longer to do these things. (B)

How about the mental aspect of it? Having to think about all these different skills at once?

Well you can't consciously think about them, they just come and every now and then something just clicks into place. Don't forget that... (B)

That's what it felt like though, when I started trying to do some music. I started first of all trying on a keyboard, I thought I'd try to learn to play keyboard and sitting down trying to read music, which I can't anyway and do two things different with my two hands, I could almost feel my brain...[laughter] (F)

Absolutely (A)

I could almost feel my brain (can't make it out) and I thought, I can't do that. I'll try the cello, learn how to read music and come back to it later on. But even then it must be one of the really satisfying things about the exercise is that I've found something at my age which is still really really really challenging, really hard. Really intellectually, because you kind of get, you know, you stay with the things you know. Your job, you carry on doing that, you're mum or what ever and you tend to settle in to the things you know, but to take on something completely new that makes your brain creak. I can almost feel it going no, no.

mental

(P)

And I think in order to get over that you have to perhaps concentrate on one aspect of what you are trying to do at the time. I read the music or find the notes...

notation

(G)

Yes, yes,

(F)

On the instrument, or what ever or doing the bowing.

skills

Yes, I find that. When I'm trying to concentrate on doing the notes right I can't get the timing as well [agreement] but I get one right and then try and concentrate on the next aspect.

(D)

And then one day you suddenly realise that you can play some and notes and you think oh I did it [agreement] so it is little steps forward and you suddenly realise that when I tried to do that a couple of months ago I just couldn't do it.

(P)

Lovely. And just finally then. What sort of impact has learning together as a group has had on your life in general? I know that's a big question, but just briefly.

Well I love coming and I look forward to it. And for me that's my relaxation, that's my time, no one else is having it, I'm coming on Sunday erm. I didn't think I would feel like that. It was an accident that I came because [redacted] was going to [redacted] and instead of standing around [redacted] said why don't you go and join [redacted] with the violins and I said ME, play an ... and I came in and everyone was so nice and that was it and now I love it. [redacted] s not in it any more but I'm still here.

(A)

Yes.

(B)

Yes it has increased the social circles hasn't it, especially when we get together as well.

social

(G)

You get together outside of the

Yeah, mainly for practising music

(G)

Yes, but it's like everything else, you've got to practice [laughter]

(B)

If somebody had of said two years ago you're going to be on [redacted] stage at the town hall and you're going to be playing a violin, I'd have laughed at them and thought they'd lost it completely you know, and yet we did it. And it wasn't horrendous, it was really fun.

success

(A)

Appendix III – Coded Pilot Study Individual Interview

P2

Interview

Asking you about your musical experiences before the group, before you joined. It could be anything that you've done previously or not previously or..

Well I haven't even touched a musical instrument or read music. I assume I must have done it at school but I was obviously not very good at it and didn't enjoy it so I'm I don't remember music lessons as being anything pleasurable at all at school. Erm but I started because my son started to learn the cello and to keep him motivated I said that he could try and teach me to read music and to play after his lesson his week. So he had a quarter sized cello with the school so she started trying to teach me on this little cello. I'd always wanted to do it, always wanted to learn, well I say always, the last decade or so to learn a musical instrument and so I was quite taken with it so he actually thought he might give up at around Easter time this year so I decided to hire a cello of my own to keep on learning and in the end he did keep up with it and actually he's still doing it but I started getting lessons then one to one with my sons teacher on a full sized cello and [interruption] so I started getting one to one lessons with [redacted] and I think I heard about this group from her or it may have been, no it wasn't it, it was a girl that I work with who plays viola in an orchestra and she said there's a group that plays because I think we had been having a discussion about it as an adult and as a beginner there aren't very many forums where you can practice and have a go at stuff and she'd heard about this learn as you play erm so I came along then probably, well I got my own instrument in May, probably it was the last two lessons that I attended before we split up for the summer in July or something like that. I guess the big change in doing that in having the one to one lessons is that it gave you a whole load more freedom and the ability to see how other people were doing and how quickly they were learning and how you can aspire to and some experience. Doing one to one when I just don't know, I've never played an instrument, I can't read music and I don't know how people sound when they do well apart from you know Yo Yo Mar, people like that, I don't know how people sound when they are doing well, I don't know whether I'm doing well, whether I'm getting on reasonably or if I should give up now, it just gives you an opportunity to sort of erm doing it amongst other people that are learning to try and gauge the right sort of speed. I find well certainly [redacted] I don't know if she is representative, I have read some things on websites that about teaching adult beginners, and she's used to teaching children well more than

Motivation to start

Peer support
motivation

measure of self

camp

Camp
pace

adults anyway and I think children are probably a little less demanding, they will take in whatever is fed to them so what ever is fed to them they take it in and they do it at that pace but I find that was going to slow and in fact I find that my one to one lessons are still going to slow.

Really

Pace
Teacher
input
Skills

I mean I've got my grade 1 cello next week and we got to a point in the books that my son has, because we are using the same books, where I was going on to grade 2 stuff so we had to stop then. So we weren't allowed to go to the next page as it were, but I've carried on here in the learn as you play, I've carried on trying to do first finger extensions and trying to do second finger, things that I haven't actually done with my teacher because that's not where you go, not the allotted sort of pace that you go at.

That's interesting. How do you feel about that, how do you feel about being told by your teacher that you can't go on to the next page?

Pace
Camp
notation
musical

Well, well it's frustrating and I have actually gone on to the next page and when we come to do it now I'll be able to do it now and I'll probably not do it very well and she'll be able to show me how to do it properly then but erm I think as an adult learner the teacher needs to be much more receptive to the pace that the adult wants to go rather than as children they will do what they are told really, and it's when, you have listened to music for 50 years, I'm 50, I enjoy music my hobby is dancing so I'm used to rhythm and counting and I don't want to sit down and play jingle bells I don't want to play you know I want to try and stretch and do some hard things and I don't mind if I don't do them well, but I want to keep the interest up by trying to do hard things and I don't feel. I don't know whether that's traditional and that most people learn when they are little or when they are at school but I don't feel that the way that I am being taught one to one is keeping my interest as an adult whereas this group does do that.

Hmmm, that's interesting. So, thinking back to your one to one lessons then where do you feel that they fit together the two groups, your one to one lessons and the learn as you play.

I don't feel that they do, it's entirely separate and different experience. I enjoy this more, I enjoy the orchestra more erm the only think I would be a bit worried

4+ Arrows + Timid Cat
musical training
skills

about I guess if I wasn't doing one to one, you can play badly in the orchestra without, I mean you can't actually even here it, I know that I play wrong notes and miss notes out and if I look down I can see that I've got my fingers in the wrong place if I was playing on my own at home, or in front of my teacher, I couldn't get away with that. I would have to correct that note and get it right. One of the things that have been quite hard actually is being able to tell. To get my ear tuned in to what is wrong with the note. I know it sounds wrong but I don't know whether it is sharp or flat. I'm still not sure I know really without looking at my fingers to make sure I have got it on the red spot [laughter]

It takes a lot of practice

negatives

negatives
comp

Does it, not just me then. I don't think, I wouldn't be able to gage that from here because you sort of you know, you play in mela of everybody else you can make mistakes without it really being noticed. I guess they are complimentary, and I wouldn't want to be without the one to one because I think adults are much more perfectionist than kids and they do want to get it right and they are much harder on themselves, so I would be worried if I was only doing this. But as experiences go it is completely different, completely separate, completely different and they are running along in sort of in parallel and not crossing at all.

So do you think you are learning different things in, with the different, because you are having two different styles of teaching?

external
comp
a lot
teaching
style
not judge

Yes, with my one to one lessons I feel I'm learning the technical stuff. How to do it right, how to get the notes right, but I feel it's very sort of tight and, it wasn't till I came here I started using the whole bow. So I can get the notes right and they sound right and I can get the beats right and everything but it's very sort of tight and restricted. But whilst coming here I get the notes wrong but the benefit that I get from coming here is that because I'm not worrying about getting the notes wrong I can concentrate on using my whole bow and make loads of noise and be really free. And I can draw a parallel with dancing because if you are doing dancing for exams you know, you have to have the right bit of your foot on the floor and you are not allowed to do certain, and there are only certain steps you are allowed to do at certain grades and if you go over them or do something a bit too expressive you can be penalised. But if you do completely free style dancing not outside the medal just some freestyle, you can do anything you want, it doesn't really matter. If you are being judged you probably wouldn't have

not not
happen
could be
strict with
a group

Can't
teach
style

your right bit of your foot on the floor at the right time but you can do much more, with your arms, you can be much more expressive, you can put a lot more into the music and they are like two completely different parallel and you almost need both really because you need that foundation of technical, of getting it technically right, but you need that freedom to just go and see how far you can go and how big you can be and how loud you can do it and how much bow you can do and all that and I don't get that from my one to one.

But you do get it from the group.

Yes

Why do you think you get it from the group?

Learn
style

Because you are not nervous about getting it wrong, you're not nervous and I mean it is wonderful because she never, I mean I never even see her flinch. I mean I'm sure she ought to be, She sits at the piano going like this, and she never even flinches, she's marvellous.

That's really interesting. So, joining the learn as you play group what impact do you think that has had on you as a person, you're talking about this freedom and expressiveness, comparing it with the dancing.

next step

I think I possibly might not have kept going if I had carried on one to one, I may have but I don't think I would be feeling enthusiastic about it. Because I have had a glimpse of what you can move forward to doing it here amongst other people and listening to the orchestra in the other room as well, you get a glimpse of what you could move on to whilst where you are only working one to one, you can't see that next step, you can't see that. And it's the same with dancing as well because you can have private lessons and learn your prescriptive steps for your exams and everything, but if you go out to dances and see other people who are dancing well and you're trying to dance with other people who have much more experience than you and it drags you forward with them, it pulls you up with them, which is.

So its all this learning with other people isn't it. Would you say that was one of the main factors of the group?

Peer Support

Yes, for me, yes, for me. Its also it's nice socially but for me that isn't that important to be honest. I like the musical support I get from other people but I'm not fussed about the social side of it.

I'm quite interested about your relationship with music in general because interestingly you said when we started you said you had never done anything but then you said I've been listening to music for 50 so it's the relationship between the different styles of music, the dancing. And I'm kind of wondering how learning the cello in this group, whether you are connecting with that, with the other aspects of your life listening to the radio. Do you listen to a lot of music?

MUSIC

Yes I do, but it tends to be, I don't listen to classical a lot. I do like classical music and I have classical music in my collection but not really listening to it, I am listening to it more now but I do have a big gap between what I am doing here and the music that I dance to. Most of the dancing that I do in is Swing so it's Swing music that, so I've already felt a little bit frustrated that again I have such a big divide here between what I enjoy which is Latin music and ballroom and Lind hop and what I'm actually playing and I'm actually thinking that maybe I haven't picked the right instrument although I love the cello, because I can't play that type of music. But again coming here and meeting other people and I've been reading on the website that if you get to grade 4 apparently you can go to the swing band so maybe I can swap to learn to play double bass. And that would have never have occurred to me if I hadn't have come here I would never have thought about changing to another musical instrument or trying another group or anything. But this whole ethos anyway of give it a go, you can do it, just give it a go. It just opens up those new vistas to you. You think 'oh, maybe I could'. Keep going with the cello keep going with a classical stream but maybe I can try and play something that I can play with that string group as well and I would never have known that at all.

it seems to me that the key thing here really is the relaxed atmosphere and not being afraid to have a go at things. It really does seem that this is the point. So would you say that is the most important part of the

?

Support

Yes, that you can come here and do things with not worrying about doing things that are not absolutely technically perfect, which is very different to my one to

Ask
about
it!

Expression
Skills

one. This building up to grade 1 exam. I mean I will do the exams but getting everything absolutely technically on the nose, I don't feel that I am really expressing. I don't feel like, I feel like I want to do a wrong note, but do a big bow and I can do that here I can't do it with my teacher I have to have the note right. There is a lot more freedom.

I think that reflects the different teaching style.

Camp
Camp
Support

Yes, possibly. But I say, you need to have that foundation I guess. One thing that I sort of, with my son and seeing his friends with his cello group at school that he plays in, is that they don't care if they making a horrible noise at that age, but of course grown ups do and they can hear it. And I worry when I am making a horrible noise with my teacher and I worry and I think I've got to get this right and do this you know it's sort of worrying stress and everything. Whereas when we come here, we still know we are getting the notes wrong but everybody just turns round to each other and says 'never mind'. It's that sort of camaraderie, we'll get it right next time sort of thing. It's very supportive.

I'm wondering whether, you said that you are listening to things and you are starting to listen to more classical music. But has your approach to music changed?

Approach
Mentor
Mentor
Mentor

Not from coming to . It's changed from starting to learn to play a musical instrument and starting to read music. It's like speaking a foreign language, it's like a whole new language, and when I am listening to music now I am much more aware of what is going on in the music. I must have been aware sort of because of dancing. But I didn't know about beats in bars, you know 4 4 time and all that stuff really. I just hear it and my feet move in time with it. So learning an instrument has opened all that for me, there's so much to learn.

Has that helped your dancing?

Other

Yes, absolutely definitely. Definitely. Especially with sort of freestyle and Lind hop because you don't have a set partner you move around amongst people. Whereas ballroom I have a set partner. And it is a real struggle for most people to find the 1, to find the 1 beat to start playing, to start dancing. And I can hear it now, now that I've started doing this, I can hear it and I can explain it to other people now

Links

as well and that's something new. Obviously I must have heard it subconsciously because I don't dance off time. But now I understand how it works.

How does that make you feel?

Oh yes, it's great. I just wish I'd started it earlier because there is so much to learn isn't there.

So you intend to keep on playing.

Definitely.

How do you, do you intend to carry on, you mentioned to possibility of moving on to another group. Do you think you plan to stay within a group and play within that group.

Face

Well I'll stay, I'll be anxious to move on as soon as I'm good enough. Yes, I like to be stretched, I like to stay slightly outside my comfort zone, I'd like to stay, I mean the social side of it is nice but it wouldn't keep me here so as soon as I felt that I was in my comfort zone here then I would like to move and I would. I would do another instrument or what ever it needs me to do. I don't know, maybe I'll be more into classical then so maybe I'll move into the orchestra if I get good enough.

Appendix IV – List of Research Questions after Pilot Study

Does learning music through reading notation create a dependency? If so, how willing are the students to break this dependency?

Does the teaching of notation as the sole tool for playing music create a barrier to the creative processes of music making?

Do students have to be technically perfect in order to enjoy learning to play an instrument?

How far can physical limitations be overcome by practice?

Does the group learning situation aid the development of simultaneous skills?

Do adults unnecessarily complicate basic skills and how can the group teacher help to simplify these issues for the students?

Do the adults learn quicker than children through their very nature of being questioning, cautious learners or is it the learning community that is supporting the pace of their learning?

Is flexibility of teaching style vital to the successful functioning of the learning community?

Do the learning and teaching methods have to be rigorously planned out in the form of schemes of work with strict monitoring in order for the learning to occur?

Is the fact that the learning is facilitated in a non-school like way a factor in the success of the learning community as a teaching method for adults?

Does the learning community exist because of a mixed ability approach or can it exist in a same level environment?

Are the students more musically sophisticated than they credit themselves for and are they able to unconsciously apply different skills simultaneously?

Is it the teaching style or the group environment, or a combination of both, that provides support to the students?

How do different teachers use their personal teaching skills in the group situation to provide the right environment for the learning community to emerge?

Is peer learning a natural phenomenon of the learning community or is it reliant on the personnel within the group?

Does the learning community aid the students' development of skills through being able to take 'time out'?

Do all the students want to be engaged all the time?

Is a mixed ability group essential for the learning community to thrive as a mechanism for supporting learning?

Is the social support a factor of the learning community or does it exist separately?

Is the feeling of being in the same boat as everyone else enough to motivate students to continue to learn?

Is being able to 'hear the next step' a vital part of the motivational support of the learning community?

Is it a vital part of the learning process to provide opportunities for the students to realise what they have learnt?

Are these five motivational factors related to success (performances, exams, progression to other groups, access to opportunities and evolving as musicians) exclusive to the learning community or can they exist without the group?

Can the students still receive the same level of motivation and the ability to link their learning to other areas of their lives without the learning community?

Appendix V – Coded Main Study Group Interview

1

2

The purpose of this is to sort of just have a chat to you about erm sort of initially your experiences learning with specifically and I just wanted to start by erm just finding out what your musical learning background was before joining

Right. Er. Well, shall I ... Well I've been playing erm I've been learning cello for about three years erm prior to that, with a gap of about 20 years since taking lessons playing flute and saxophone. I hadn't played anything for quite some time then I took up cello and after about three years er phoned my teacher, she does occasionally phone local teachers to see if there is anyone who might benefit from some orchestral experience and I joined the orchestra at that point.

(H)

Oh right. Interesting, lovely.

Not music

Erm I've got a very musical background and I've been playing instruments all my life.

(F)

(interruption: Sorry, can I go that way. Yes of course. I'll just take it that way. He's got a very important piece of research to do, making tea. Absolutely [laughter] get the water boiling. Are you alright with that wire over there? Yes I'm fine.)

Sorry

Not music

Erm, I've got a musical background, I've been playing instruments most of my life erm. Started the oboe a long long time ago and then came to

(F)

Right.

just for a different experience with an orchestra.

(F)

Right.

And I've been here ever since.

(F)

Okey-doke.

Not

Well I started to learn the violin when I was retired and then I saw about orchestra in the newspaper erm, and you wouldn't think so but this is my 11th year here.

(J)

Gosh, wow.

Self

And I'm still in the second violins. [lots of laughter]

(J)

Lovely. And

Not

Right well I've no musical background really except a daughter who plays.

(I)

Mmm.

Not

As you know. By coincidence I tried to play the horn and achieved it so they made me take lessons [laughter] and that was five years ago.

(I)

Right.

And then I worked with a former member of the orchestra.

(I)

We have a tea break. (J)

Yes that's right. (I)

Apart from that. (J)

So what you're learning with learning in your individual lessons. is working alongside what you're

Yes, (J)

Yes, (I)

Yes, (F)

Yes, (H)

Do they cross over?

Well to the extent that sometimes erm er when tries to help us with instrumental problems, she's a flautist herself she also plays the viola so she knows, she knows a lot about problems that wind players might have. She knows (H) also quite a bit about problems that string players might have in terms of fingering and bowing. Erm but quite often I'll take a piece that I'm working on here to my teacher and she'll help me figure out the best way to finger it.

Right, right.

Yes, (I)

Erm. (J)

And also of course that there's the sight reading as every time we get a new piece essentially we are sight reading for the first time. (H)
as every time we get a new piece essentially we are sight reading for the first time.

Yeah.

So it's very good sight reading practice. (H)

Yeah.

I could repeat what says with my teacher exactly the same. (J)

So erm where have you seen your musical progression with then, you mentioned sight reading. Do you all feel that your sight reading has ...

Sight reading yes and also the ability to play at different dynamic levels which is something that you don't get. The difference between a solo piano, pianissimo (H) and an orchestral one is quite dramatic and you don't appreciate the problems of balance until you've played with a group. Also the simple problem of playing in time erm you fondly imagine that you can count to four

Yes. (J)

Skills -
syn read

Skills -
Prt.

but it turns out **(H)**

yes. **(J)**

it's not as easy as that. [laughter] Yes, everyone can count to four but they can't necessarily count to four at the same speed. [lots of laughter] **(H)**

group. enthusiasm

That's exactly right! **(I)**

Do you find that's the main challenge of playing with others, is keeping in time?

Listening to everybody else around you is quite difficult to do when you're sort of watching your piece of music. It's quite hard to focus on what's going on around you. **(F)**

It's sometimes hard to hear what you're playing... **(I)**

Yes **(F)**

Yourself actually... **(I)**

Yes **(F)**

And I can't hear whether I've, with brass playing you've got different mouth shapes **(F)**

Of course

So you can do the sort of do the right fingers... **(F)**

Yes **(J)**

And get the wrong note, many times [laughter] **(F)**

And there's ... **(H)**

You can't hear **(F)**

There's also the consideration of not playing as well as playing because if you're playing something your teacher, and the chances are you've got a piece which you are playing continuously throughout, there might be a couple of bars rest while your teacher plays something on the piano. But here you might have to not play for 10, 20 bars and you have to ... **(H)**

You have to concentrate... **(I)**

You have to know... **(H)**

You have to know how to count... **(I)**

Count... **(H)**

Count the bars. **(I)**

Yes. **(H)**

Challenges can

Challenges can/ins

Challenges can/ins

Either explicitly count it or recognise the cues that will bring you in. (H)

Mmmm. (J)

So that you don't have to count for 20 bars... (H)

Yes. (I)

But you know when you're going to come in. That the, I I don't trust cues I always count. [Laughter] (H)

Do you.

The brass count a lot. I mean brass always counts a lot. (I)

Yes. (H)

When I first came if I heard a loud instrument behind me and they are playing, as says, at a different time to me, I wanted to, cause I heard them I want to play with them instead of waiting for my bar to play and it took me quite a long time to get used to that particularly a loud instrument. I wanted to play with them. (J)

Yes. (I)

Instead of waiting, or play my bit before them or after them, not with them. [laughter] And at their time as well. [more laughter] (J)

That's it yeah, absolutely. Erm what do you think the main aspects are of, because essentially you're learning orchestral skills within the group

Yes, yes. (I)

What do you think the key aspects are of learning with each other?

[silence]

I'm not quite sure what you... (I)

Erm. In the fact that you're individually ...

Yes. (J)

Learning your individual instruments but when you come here you're learning to play as a group.

Mmmm. (F)

So what are the main aspects of learning to play as a group? Are you helping each other out.

I see what you mean. (F)

Oh yes. (J)

Challenges - counting

each

Peer Learning

Skills
group
motivation

The main things we have to do. (I)

And like I said you've got, you haven't got to play with, you play with them but not exactly the same so you've got to play your own part but in coordination with them, you coordinate better. You learn to share, sharing really. (J)

Mmmm.

You're not eating the same dinner but you're giving some to them as well for them to have their turn to play. [laughter]. (J)

That's a good way of putting it. (I)

Lovely. How about the support that you get from each other?

Safety
Support

That's great. [agreement] Well certainly in the brass section. [laughs] (I)

It's important that it's the sort of group which isn't, which isn't at all competitive and we don't audition to get into the orchestra and although we all like to try as hard as we can and play as well as we can erm if you play a wrong note or if you miss an entry no-one is going to turn around and stare at you [agreement] accusingly as what, I don't have any experience of playing in a more professional group but I imagine in a better ... (H)

Yes it does happen. (I)

That that kind of ethos can apply and it would be fatal to I think people of our level of accomplishment... (H)

I certainly would have packed it in if I mean I hardly played the first couple of times. I was just sitting there going errrrrrr. [laughs] (I)

inspires you
coach

It ^{inspires you} perhaps because if you are just playing a piece by yourself oh, that's not too bad but because you don't want to let other people down and the conductor leader you don't want to let her down particularly when we have an end of term concert... (J)

Mmmm. (I)

Skills
coach

We try to erm give her and the rest, the other people, because if you played wrong you put them off. So I'm thinking it gives you that sort of a social skill. (J)

Mmmm. (I)

The difficulty is we are all at very different levels. (F)

Mmmm. (I)

Challenges
diff levels
teaching
style

Right from very, we've got two at the moment who are really very beginners, up unto grade 5 grade 6. So it's very difficult to get the balance but manages that perfectly. (F)

When we ... (I)

She gives a part that you can all play ... (F)

Yes... (I)

So if you are grade 5 you don't get a part with about 3 notes on it you get a decent part. (F)

And she's very accommodating, she teaches us techniques to help us deal with the fact that we might not quite be able to play the tune, she teaches things like leapfrog sight reading which is basically, it's most important if you don't know your notes to exactly where you are so that when you come to something that you can play, you can play it at the right time, so she teaches us a technique called leapfrog sight reading where we play, we go through the piece and we just play the first note of each bar, basically so that we can all go through together and we know exactly where we are. (H)

Mmmm. (I)

Urm, and she's quite happy that if when we are actually playing the piece properly that if we're not quite confident about certain ... we don't have to play, urm, she's not going to turn round and glare at someone who suddenly stops playing as the chances are they've come across something that they just can't tackle at the moment and 's attitude towards that is well, play as much as you can and practice it and in time you will be able to play a bit more of it and in time you'll be able to play all of it. So in that sense it is a very supportive environment. (H)

Mmmm. One of my problems when I'm playing with my teacher is if I make a mistake I stop and put it right. (I)

Mmmm. (J)

Yes... (F)

And that is something, you can't do that hear. (I)

[laughter]

That's a problem that I have in lessons ... (H)

Yes... I just stop and play the wrong note ... (I)

...I will stop and go back ... (H)

...You do the right one, you keep going. (I)

Yes. (F)

Another thing said is that she is quite happy if we move on to higher and better things... (J)

Mmmm...

That's the idea of it. (I)

After 11 years I'm waiting to move on to higher things. (J)

[Laughter]

The problem round here is there is nothing another step up, it's either this or the Symphony Orchestra which is grade 8 plus. (F)

Teaching Style

Challenges - trying to play

Progress

Right.

Mmmm.

There's nothing in between. (F)

Yes but how far I come, there's nothing like this... (I)

No... (F)

Not at all. There are several... (I)

Right, in school's they have medium quality [agreement] ... (J) (I)

Yes... (I)

...like the juniors... (J)

...yes... (I)

and the medium and the really top players... (J)

Mmmm. (I)

We've got nothing in the middle have we... (J)

No... the good thing is that we're all adults ... (I)

Yes. (J)

... You would feel foolish playing with children. [laughs] (I)

Yes. (H)

And they never buy a round afterwards. [laughter] (H)

Erm. When you perform with your concerts do you, do your children come and watch you or is it an adult audience that you are playing to?

Some people do... (F)

Some people bring young people with them but it's mostly partners... (H)

Partners, yes. (F)

Yes. (I)

And family members. (H)

You can't get that many ... (J)

I think a lot of us have got grown up children haven't we (F)

We don't get that many visitors do we. (J)

No.

Well, my daughter doesn't come anyway. [laughs]

(I)

We don't have very many visitors.

(J)

Do you not?

My teacher came last time.

(I)

Oh right.

Which was very good actually...

(I)

Mmmm.

(J)

... I just happened to say to him well we're doing a concert and he said, well perhaps I'll come to that

(I)

Mmmm.

(F)

And that was good, you know, that he was interested.

(I)

Yeah, that's really good.

And it certainly gives you a sense of purpose, it's somewhere to come really. Oh well, Thursday night, must be ready to play.

(J)

Yes.

(H)

Yes.

(I)

You're not watching television.

(J)

But also we're not just playing the orchestral repertoire, encourages us to play solo pieces and chamber groups and so a lot of people are involved with smaller ensembles as well ...

(H)

Yes, yes.

(J)

Oh yes.

(I)

... and then we come together and perform those ...

(H)

Yes ... we have a brass group.

(I)

.... That's...

(H)

Do you?

... that's an important part of it as well.

(H)

My teacher, one comment that he did make, is that the pieces that we are playing are really quite difficult.

(I)

Mmmm.

(J) (F)

outside

etc.

sense of purpose

Sub group

9

9

Material
then! said
teaching
style

He thinks that I'm probably playing, in fact he doesn't know how I do it, that I'm playing above what I can do really. (J)

Right

has quite an eclectic taste when it comes to selecting music. A term rarely goes by when we are not playing at least one Bach Chorale, and she loves Bach Chorales. They are pretty good for practicing your intonation. (H)

Mmmmm. (J)

But we've played, um, we've played some quite prickly contemporary pieces as well. (H)

We do. (F)

There's a piece by Howard Skempton called Pole which she drags up into the light of day. (H)

Mmmmm. (F)

[Door opens]

I'm sorry I'm late. (G)

Hello. That's alright, I'm glad you made it.

We're playing some music at the moment that has written... (J)

...yes... (H)

You know which he has just written. And then another member of the orchestra that played the bassoon ... (J)

... bassoon yes... (H)

... what's his name, I've forgotten. (J)

(I)

, yes. (H)

... , we've played a piece that he's written specially for us. (J)

Oh right.

And her daughter in law has written a piece especially for us. (J)

Lovely.

So we do as says ... (J)

We do get a very, I think I play a wider range of music here than at (H)

Right. Mmmm.

Yes, we have played every age range from Mozart or below till now, to date. (J)

oh...
teaching
style

Material

Yes. I

So it's really broadening your musical ...

Absolutely. J

Yes. I

Yes. F

We've just been talking about people's backgrounds before , ...

Right. G

In terms of musical learning and things and what drew you to join and we've just gone on to sort of discuss about the things that you are learning while you are here. So feel free to pipe in [laughs].

Erm. So it seems that is quite integral then isn't she to, to the whole running and developing of the musical ...

Yes. H

Yes. I

Yeah, I think it's fair to say that she defines the ethos of the group. That it's very much a reflection of her approach to music really. H

And her generosity of time and ... J

Yes. I H

... I mean she's not just being paid for two hours tutoring, all the work she does at home. J

Writing out parts, arranging parts. H

Yes. F

Yes, because all the music she produces herself. Well no, not all that's ... I

...but she rearranges music especially for our standard. J

Yes, mmmm. I

And that's the important thing. That's what makes it easier, do-able. I

Yes. F

Is that she writes it. She asks you what your range is before you start and then she trys and fit the other pieces in and then once you actually I

Yes. F

Yes, that's important. I've been playing just about two years now. G

teaching style

feel support

Right.

Absolute novice. And I tried somewhere else before I came here. (G)

Oh right.

And I just couldn't, just couldn't even play a note and I felt that I was an absolute nuisance. It's not like that here. (G)

No. (F)

You could be miming [laughter] (G)

We haven't mentioned that have we? [laughter] (I)

My daughter said to me, the most important thing to learn before you go is how to mime. [laughter] (I)

That's very important as well and not feeling as if you are not really up to it else otherwise it's an impossible mountain to climb. I started two years ago and I thought I would never be able to get to play with people for years and years and years and I tried, as I say, I tried some other group and my view was confirmed then I spoke to someone who plays and she said try and I, expect it's the wrong word, but I've been tolerated cheerfully [laughter] and that's important for somebody in my position. (G)

Yes.

I think I've realised that there are other people who are as bad as me. [laughter] (E)
Which is not a very nice thing to say is it.

There are some people if they are very good players, they would be irritated ... (J)

Yes. (I)

Like a tennis player, not everyone but some people would play with you even if you can't play tennis very much, they are quite happy to play with you though they like to play with good players as well. And so it's very good here that there are people that are better than us that are willing to play with us. (J)

Yes. And there must be, when you get new comers into the group, there must be people that are, you say I'm really bad, but there must be people who come in who haven't played as long as you...

Yes (F)

And you must be in a position to be able to help them as well.

Yes, (J)

Yes. (D)

Yes and some are actually are good, there's a mixture come in. (J)

We've got a lady now who started playing violin. She's played the viola for very many years but she always wanted to play the violin. I think she's been playing for a matter of weeks. She came along and she said I'm not really sure I'm up to (G)

time
cult
Support

Support

it but all of a sudden she started to, to, because of her music experience I guess, she's catching up very quickly. But I think your word used ethos is absolutely key.

Yes, it is yes. (J)

How about the social aspect of the group?

It's, well, we don't actually, for instance I've been playing in the orchestra for four years, it's not the sort of group that goes to the pub afterwards. Mainly because we tend to rehearse in places that are a little far out, like here and people come from quite far... (H)

Yes, we're very very diverse aren't we. (I)

... away. (H)

Well one woman comes from Marlborough... (J)

Oh right.

And she's been coming for a long long time. (J)

That's far isn't it. (F)

So by the time you start and the time finish... (H)

... some do come a long way. (J)

... It's not really easy to socialise. (H)

But having said that, having formed our little brass group, we do go to each other's houses. (I)

Do you?

Yes. (I)

And another good thing at Christmas we always give a charity concert. We go to, is it Saver Centre... (J)

Yes. (I)

... and we went to another place last year. We've been to two places. Saver Centre and the one in town. (J)

Asda. (H)

Asda, yes. (J)

And we play Christmas Carols... (H)

And it's been for... (J)

... we collect for charity... (H)

Social

big

13

either Cancer research or some other form, some other charity. So we give some back as well don't we. Not much but we do some. (J)

That's good.

Erm, just check my list of things [laughs]... yes, we'll finish in a minute so you can get and do some playing [laughs] but erm. The point of this is get some background and then I'd like to come back towards the end of next term and talk to you again.

Right. (J)

Erm, but I'm quite interested in how you view yourselves as a musician. Would you say that you were a musician if somebody asked? You said that you hid your secret of playing [laughter]

I did, I wouldn't tell ... (I)

It's interesting because ... (H)

...I wouldn't tell anyone at work for ages. (I)

...before I started playing, it didn't so much happen with this group, but I started at because I found out about it through this. I went to their summer school and then joined. And it wasn't until I started playing at if you'd asked me before are you a musician, I'd say, no I'm someone who tries to play the cello. (H)

Right.

But after a while at and backed up by the experience I have here, I do regard myself as an amateur, as an amateur musician, but as a musician. (H)

And that's come through playing here?

That's come through, not through the work that I do in my individual lessons but the work that I do playing with other people, basically here and (H)

Mmmm.

That's how I get that, nurture that conviction that I am some ^{sort} kind of musician. (H)

Mmm. you've probably been playing the least...

Yes. (G)

...amount of time than everyone here ...

I've actually started to feel more rounded as a practitioner of the violin. I've got years and years of ahead of me yet I hope unless the arthritis gets to me, but erm ... (G)

Have you, had you, had you played music before? (I)

No, only a tiny bit about 30 years ago when I, I was a runner for, I run for years and years and I ripped an Achilles tendon so I couldn't run so I played the violin for a little bit then and I hardly, hardly learned anything at all... (G)

So you're learning music as well as ... (I)

I'd even, what I did, two years ago when I started, I'd even forgotten where my hands go and everything and I'm sure that if I hadn't come here or something like it, I don't think there are two many places like it, but I'm sure if I hadn't come here I'd have just been, it's a bit like learning to touch type, you know just going through the motions, whereas music is a much more rounded thing and there's a lot more to it than just putting fingers in the right place.

Mmm. (I)

It's a feeling thing, and I'm starting to feel it, and I don't think I would have done if I had of been by myself even with a good teacher. (G)

Brilliant.

Mmmm. (I)

I feel much more confident, sorry, at church I play every Sunday in the folk group. At one time I didn't know where they were, or ?, but now I feel quite confident playing in church. (J)

I do as well. (I)

Do you, I don't mind that people can hear me [laughs] at one time I was frightened of playing but I, I just play out now whether in tune or not, I just get on with it. (J)

Yeah.

I just get on with it. [laughs] (J)

I have an extra bonus that I mean I said I sing, I actually find it quite hard to pitch a note correctly unless there's a background of piano or something but I find I do that better. (I)

Oh really.

Since I've been learning and instrument and I'm quite sure that I'm better at singing, it's improved my singing. (I)

Yes, yes.

Just to say, ever since I have started coming to this orchestra every end of term concert we have, stands up and plays a solo piece. (H)

Really, [laughter]

And that, and that is something that I still don't have the courage to do. (H)

Really.

Well they haven't run away from me yet [laughter]. (J)

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So I, admire that tremendously, and also a few years ago she went to the summer school that, the [laughter]. Because that can be very hairy indeed. (H)

You have to get through that confidence thing when you're soloing. I went through a really bad time with that and I can remember I was in a church and I was in a little music group that I run over in and we were doing this solo thing, I was absolutely petrified and I was ready to walk out that church [laughter] and I thought I can't, I've got to do this, I was out of the back room, I was shaking, warming up the oboe and I was thinking I can't do this, I really can't do this, I was terrified, they announced and they said er er 's around here somewhere and I thought [laughter] come on I've got to do it and so off I went and I did it and then from then on, although I was terrified, I was able ... (F)

But playing to these people is ok ... (I)

Yes. (F)

It's great isn't it... (I)

Yes. (F)

Do you remember the first one I did? (I)

Yes (F)

I went to play and my valve stuck. (I)

Oh really.

Yes, I just, that was just [laughter] and so I walked away. (I)

Just pretend to be playing John Cage [laughter]. (H)

I played to a group of old ladies in the hospital and they had all been stuck in their beds and they [laughter] didn't, I go to the Irish Society, well my wife and I go to the Irish Society and one night quite soon I'm going to play down there because there is amateur musicians on a Friday night ... (G)

Right.

... and people keep on telling me to. But I'm really, I'm scared stiff of it, I'm going to have to do it soon. (G)

Talk to me later, I know an Irish group you can go and play with [laughter] I'm serious. (I)

Another thing Jennie you do appreciate what a real musician, a professional musician, a soloist, you do appreciate the work that's gone into to get it so good [agreement]. (J)

It is ... (H)

Apart from the natural talent they've had to work jolly hard and you appreciate that all the more now, now that you've tried it yourself. [agreement] (J)

Skills - Confidence

Safety

Skills - Confidence

16

I have to sit there with the counting and I must stop it [laughter]

9

You wait till you start conducting. [laughter]

Lovely, that's been really really interesting, it's given me a good idea of the sort of things that you are getting and then and what I will do is I will contact you. Thank you very much for your time.

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Appendix VI- Coded Main Study Individual Interview

1. The first part of the text discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions and activities related to the business.

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interview

What I wanted to do was just ask you, if you can think back and remember what it was like when you first joined and how you felt.

Oh. Um.

Because you've not been there that long have you? A few years haven't you?

To be honest, my first thought was relief.

Was it?

Yeah. Because I'd already tried another small orchestra thing and it didn't work at all, in fact I rather resented the fact that I was told that people that didn't stick it didn't have any gumption. I felt that at my age and my time of life and after all I'd done, I didn't need some formidable woman who'd never done music in her life telling me about gumption. So I was very relieved to find somewhere that I could at least get started. Because playing with others, especially for an adult, is not that easy a thing to achieve.

Is it two years you've been with or is it three now?

I think it's coming up about a year and a half.

About a year and a half is it? And how has that changed? Because you came in and you were very relieved that you found a group and everything.

It's been a struggle. It's been a struggle because I'm not very good at keeping time. It's one thing playing by yourself and my mind tends to wander round anyway. I'm now getting to the stage, and it's been a struggle, where I can actually keep time and generally keep with the music the whole way through. And I know from talking with others it's not an uncommon thing, but I'm pretty poor at it because of my flippitygibbet brain.

And you've not done any music before have you, not like this?

Not really. 25 years ago I had a dabble but it's not really significant.

I think it's really hard. I think the timing, keeping in timing is really, really difficult. A lot of children find it, it's just a difficult concept to grasp and then actually trying to do it is hard.

It's alright when the notes are all the same length.

So are you having lessons outside the group?

Yes.

You are as well. I think everybody, most people are aren't they.

I think it'd be impossible to start to play the violin without regular lessons.

So what's the difference between what you get from your regular lessons and what you get from _____ ?

Playing
with others

_____ is played with others, full stop. The music that I play at _____ is probably not at the level that I play with my teacher, not necessarily anyway. But when I play with my teacher I can stop and I can start and she can tell me what to do. So there's a greater degree of individual one on one with teaching. The other thing I get from my teacher, more and more so now is I play along with her, she plays the piano or the violin. That is, I find that incredibly useful. And I'm hoping I should do that with _____

_____ certainly the lady I went to Summer School with last week, and a friend of hers. _____ plays, it's just playing the violin less time than me, but she also has been playing the piano for 50 years and she's got a friend who plays the cello, so we might get something going there.

That's a nice combination isn't it? How about performing then, doing the concerts? It was certainly a good concert. And you got up and did your Irish jigs didn't you?

Yeah, well yeah. That was the first time I'd ever played in public. Apart from two or three Christmas carols to old ladies in the wards that I work at the hospital last year, but that didn't count because they didn't have anywhere they could escape to. And they said "Oh lovely _____!" So that's the first time I actually played in public and I was really grateful that _____ was there because she kept the thing together.

And how did you feel about playing, were you nervous?

Peef

Not particularly. The environment in the room was totally different. There's things going on in the room, you're conscious of people being there. I'd only really played with _____ the Monday night prior to the concert. So we'd had three quarters of an hour or so on the Monday night and then we ran it through once before the concert started. So really we were, I was, _____'s a good player but really I was sort of pushing the envelope a little bit. Nervousness, yes, of course I was nervous but I don't mind that. I was a competitive runner for 30 years and did any number of things standing up and talking. So I don't mind nervousness at all. It's competence that bothers me. We were sailing close to the wind I think, or indeed I was, but I just wanted to get it out of the way one way or the other.

Has that given you confidence then to go and do more?

Well I know how it feels now, so I suppose yes.

I remember when I came down and we were talking and I remember that you were saying that there was an Irish group or Irish club or something that you go to and you didn't have the nerve to play the violin and then there you were at the concert playing some Irish music! Have you played at the Irish club?

No I haven't, not yet. I thought about it and one night I had the violin down there but it didn't happen because there were other things going on and there'd been a bit of a tragedy. But sooner or later I will but it will happen rather than me forcing it. One of the reasons I'm so careful is the guys down there have been playing together for years and years and years. And they're not, they do welcome people, but I know that they're not really keen on too many extraneous excursions into what they do. And they do a good job to be honest. So that needs to be handled with care, but it will happen.

I know what you mean. I lived in _____ for a long time and there was a pan-Celtic group that used to meet in a pub and it was the same thing, and even though I'd been playing the flute for years, these people have been playing together for such a long time and they know exactly what they're doing.

You don't barge in.

No, absolutely not.

And sometimes people do try and barge in and it's not appreciated by anybody. Although I know everybody down there, so I'd get more of a welcome but I'm still going to be very careful.

Yes, not to upset the balance isn't it?

Exactly.

Going back to doing the concert then, how do you feel about performing when you're within the orchestra? Because it's so different isn't it, doing your solos?

Yeah, totally. Well yes. That's nice. You can actually rely on other members of the orchestra to keep going when I get it wrong. It makes quite a difference. I think one of the problems we have here is not enough violinists. We're all a bit weak, and we'll be the first ones to admit it. There aren't very many of us, we need another six violinists, we need to be as strong as the flutes are really.

The flutes are very strong aren't they?

Exactly. We need to get the violinists like that. We need more people on the violin. Where they come from is anybody's guess. And then we would feed off each other.

That happens already does it?

To an extent. I was away last week with _____, who is the lady that sits next to me in the violins, and we were up at the Summer School and we played together the whole week. And I think that's brought us closer together musically, and that should have a beneficial effect on Thursday nights because if nothing else I feel that _____ now, who's a very experienced musician, knows what my weaknesses are, or really understands what my weaknesses are. I feel that perhaps I can encourage her when she feels that because she's not been playing for very long, she doesn't, little things like bowing. If you're playing the piano you don't have to worry about bow direction. So now we have debates about that and she's come into that side of things as well. She and I will feed off each other and we really need two or three more at least violinists there. I expect _____'s aware of that. And to be honest, to be very blunt, I suspect the rest of the orchestra don't think that the violins are very strong. And you'll probably find the flutes are very superior.

Oh really? I haven't got any of the flutes that I'm talking to.

But I can imagine them, I think there might be six of them all playing together or something. It makes a heck of a difference.

Perf.

Peer Support

It does. This is the difficulty isn't it? Because in a traditional orchestra you would have only two flutes, maybe three and the same with clarinets. And you would have far more string, a bigger string section. So of course, all the orchestral music is written for that balance. It's very difficult isn't it when the balance is tipped?

It is. And even when the flutes are given violin parts it doesn't really help the violinists.

No it doesn't. It's the same in children's orchestras as well, there's not so many people learning violin any more, more people are learning woodwind instruments.

Perhaps they're easier to learn, I don't know.

I don't know, I think it's hard to say. It depends on the person really.

I was thinking about this today. The Summer School has caused me a lot of reflection because there were 130 people there of all different levels. I ran for 30 competitively at club level, modest times, nothing hugely fast. But if you take a typical road race or cross country race and a lot of people talk about people just going along and turning up, we're talking about regular runners that do it every day if they can and race at the weekends. When they start, unless they've got tremendous talent, they're at the back and they're struggling to keep up. And it's so much easier, it's easier for people at that level when there are big fields in races because there's a continuity from the very fastest to the very last. But when you get a few people just hanging on the back and they're miles behind everybody else, they get discouraged and they won't go. And it's the same with music. The nice thing about the Summer School there were, I was probably one of the weakest there, but I could see where I might be next year. That's the key thing. It's actually seeing what I need to do and being there next year. To an extent _____ gives me that. Going to _____, that's the _____ on Saturday mornings would certainly give me that but it's a two hour drive and I might find it difficult. Perhaps playing with _____ and her friend will certainly help me progress along that way. But I suspect that applies to lots of adults because very few people have got this inborn, innate talent. Most of us have got to struggle, put it that way. And sometimes put up with all sorts of setbacks as well. When you turn up and you don't understand a word what the music is.

Level in gray



Is that what it was like at the Summer School?

It was, yes. The first afternoon we all had to go into this big theatre or this big performance area. And _____ and I, we just turned round at one stage and said 'What's the conductor beating?'. It was compound time. I didn't know what the hell compound time was. But the good thing was there were instructors, teachers, who were walking around and standing with people who needed a little bit of help. And we had that. We had a full orchestra session every day and so by the second time around we were getting with it and by the last concert we were able to do our bits. Which wasn't that significant, but at least we kept with it all the way through and that was thanks to the helpers, well large numbers, but certainly that instruction being available.

Peer support

That sort of individual walking the floor as it were.

Exactly. Walking the floor, coming up behind you with a violin and perhaps counting time or just doing whatever needed doing. And by the last concert, the woman who

had helped us a lot, I was conscious of the fact that she was there, six feet away, but she didn't need to do anything at all. So it was a struggle, it was a struggle of a week I tell you, but there you go. It ought to be really, otherwise anybody could do it!

As I talk to people and everybody says the same things, that it's hard, that there's a lot of setbacks, that it's a real struggle, but you carry on doing it. What is it that makes you carry on doing it? There's something.

Is that a question?

I don't know, perhaps it is! What is it for you that makes you carry on doing it?

It's worth doing. I was talking to a patient at the hospital yesterday and we did talk about things. Part of it's fantasy. If I've ever had two fantasies in my life that were serious, one was winning the Olympic 800 metres and one was playing a concerto in front of a great orchestra. That's part of it. Part of it is knowing that it's worth doing. A lot of the music that we hear in concerts at the , the concert hall in just down the road, we get to sit there and listen even to Schostacovitch for three quarters of an hour. It's not something to be taken lightly, it takes work. And you've got to know it and you've got to understand the context in which it was written. Whether you're playing or listening, it doesn't really apply to music, it can be anything, any form of study or, and I hate the term self-improvement, but I don't think it's really self-improvement, it's perhaps self-fulfilment. It's all about pushing yourself. And it certainly was for me when I was a runner for 30 years. I've learnt not to compare running or the mechanics of running with the art of music, but there's certainly endeavour that needs to be brought out and it's the only way, just to struggle.

When you're listening to Schostacovitch, I mean has it, learning the violin and being a performer yourself.

Absolutely. Even more so after being at with where she takes different sections of the orchestra and goes through a bit. And certainly after last week where we were divided into first and second violins and cellos and whatever. And even in our small start, we were Orchestra A, which is the lower level, but when you spend an hour on six bars and not only how the bars are played, but how the different sections relate to each other. I can't say I've learnt an awful lot in terms of how it's done or whatever, but I do understand what's going on. That's the main thing. And I had this sense of sitting and watching orchestras for many years about how the sections relate to each other, but I'm understanding more and more as time goes on. And that's the main thing, that's the significant thing really.

How everything relates to each other is interesting isn't it? I'm very interested in how you get a bunch of random people in one room, who you perhaps don't even know the other half of the orchestra but yet when you're playing together of course, you said it when you were talking about the violins feeding off each other and you know how you communicate musically, well the whole orchestra is doing that. Do you feel that you're doing that with the rest of the orchestra or do you just feel that it's within the violins?

No, I feel that it's interesting. it's difficult because there are so few violins, just to be within the violins. But I'm beginning to. It's a long, slow job. I'm beginning to feel at that, at least I'm understanding and feeling. It's definitely a feeling thing rather than a thinking thing. I think I can feel how the different sections bounce off each other without getting distracted and trying to play along with them which was

a problem I had. I'm beginning to understand that now. You've got to watch your own music, you've got to watch the conductor, or at least be conscious of the conductor, you've got to be conscious of what's going on within the other violins in terms of tuning and playing, you've got to be conscious of what's going on for example in the violas or cellos especially, and then in the wider orchestra. And to be involved in one of the major symphonies must be until you get used to it, perhaps you never do, must be quite an experience really.

It's exhausting.

Yeah, I can imagine. And keeping concentration up for 40 minutes.

Did you find that after you've done concerts with _____ or with the Summer School that you're absolutely exhausted afterwards or not?

Yeah. Perhaps not so much at _____ because we are fairly relaxed with it.

Yes, it is very relaxed isn't it? It's nice, it's a nice atmosphere there isn't it?

That's right, it's a very gentle atmosphere and I think a lot of that comes from it's almost a sort of Quaker type approach to it. At the Summer School I was exhausted, continually exhausted. Because as I say, if you spend an hour on six bars, it's not because you're just playing them round, it's because you're actually trying to get them right. And the tune, tuning and timing, it's all coming back to us.

When I came down and spoke to everybody I was asking how people perceived themselves as musicians and what's your view on that, on yourself as a musician?

I'm a potential musician.

That was back in November wasn't it? So now, six months on do you feel that you're any closer?

Yeah, I'm beginning to see what I need to do. It started with perhaps the last term at _____, it certainly has been reinforced at Summer School, but I'm beginning to see what I need to do to be competent. I'm at the sort of level of conscious incompetence. There's sort of different levels. You get bores at concerts that have never touched an instrument in their lives, they know everything and they're unconscious incompetents. Then you get people like me that are struggling and we're conscious incompetents. And then the next wonderful step up must be conscious competence and then you get unconscious competence, that must be wonderful. So whether I've got long enough left in life to achieve that I don't know.

But will you know when you've achieved it?

No because I'll be unconscious! I watch orchestral players and they are obviously, they're just doing the job. In fact that's the stage where boredom starts to set in. And that's when perhaps they get bored of their work and they find another challenge or something.

Appendix VII – Participant Codes

Code	Role	Group
P1 (B)	Student	Pilot
P2 (F)	Student	Pilot
P3 (A)	Student	Pilot
P4 (C)	Student	Pilot
P5 (D)	Student	Pilot
P6 (E)	Student	Pilot
P7 (G)	Student	Pilot
TP	Tutor	Pilot
M1	Former Manager	Pilot
M2	Current Manager	Pilot
A	Student	1
B	Student	1
C	Student	1
D	Student	1
E	Student	1
O	Student	1
F	Student	2
G	Student	2
H	Student	2
I	Student	2
J	Student	2
T3	Tutor and Manager	2
K	Student	3
L	Student	3
M	Student	3
N	Student	3
Q	Student	3
R	Student	3
T3	Tutor	3
S	Student	4
U	Student	4
V	Student	4
X	Student	4
Y	Student	4
Z	Student	4
AA	Student	4
T4	Tutor and Manager	4
T5	Tutor	4

Students from Group 5 were not coded as the interview was not recorded and transcribed.

Codes given in brackets for pilot study participants are the original codes assigned when transcribing the interview (as found on the transcription in Appendix II). Codes were changed in order to distinguish between pilot study participants and main study participants.

Appendix VIII – Interview Scripts

Interview Script – Group Interview

Ensure lap top is recording!

Thank participants for taking part in research and hand out letters.

Explain purpose of interview

Discussion Points

Before joining this group, what was your experience of learning music?	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Musical background • Others in household • School
What particularly attracted you to playing in a group such as this?	
So far, what have been the key aspects of learning with others?	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer learning • Teacher
Has anything been difficult, if so, how have you overcome this?	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning notation • Physical aspects of playing
Do you think you have been successful in your learning? How can you tell?	
Why do you come back each week?	
Would you describe yourself as a musician?	

Thank participants once again.

Set up next interview.

Interview Script – Student

Ensure lap top is recording!

Thank participant for taking part in research.

Explain purpose of interview

Discussion Points

Can you think back and remember how you felt when you first started in the group?	
Has that changed? How?	
Can you remember how you felt giving your first concert?	
How do you feel about giving concerts now?	
How do you regard your fellow players?	
What support do you get from the people around you?	
Would you describe yourself as a musician?	

Thank participant once again.

Interview Script - Teacher

Ensure lap top is recording!

Thank participant for taking part in research.

Explain purpose of interview

Interview questions for teacher interview

What attracted you to teaching the Learn As You Play Group?	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prior experience with adults• New experience• Develop skills
How do you view your role in the Learn As You Play Group?	
What do you think the key aspects are of learning within the group?	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Motivation• Peer learning• Anonymity
How do you cater for different learning styles within the group?	
How do you know that the students are learning?	
In what ways do you see the students develop?	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Musically• As an ensemble• Socially• As a group
How do you measure the success of the group?	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• As a teaching tool• As an ensemble• Yourself within the group
What have you gained from this teaching experience?	

Thank participant once again.

Interview Script - Manager

Ensure lap top is recording!

Thank participant for taking part in research.

Explain purpose of interview

Interview questions for teacher interview

Why provide a learning opportunity for adults?	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prior experience with adults
Why a group learning method?	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Band method• Material chosen
What do you think the key aspects are of learning within the group?	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Motivation• Peer learning• Anonymity
How do you cater for different learning styles within the group?	
How do you measure the success of the group?	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• As a teaching tool• As an ensemble
What have you gained from providing this opportunity?	

Thank participant once again.

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'Learn As You Play'

An investigation into adult instrumental group learning: researching from the outside and the inside

Jennie Henley

Abstract

This research project is a qualitative study of adult instrumental students who have chosen to learn music through participation in an ensemble. The aims of the study are threefold: firstly to discover how learning in the group situation creates a learning community, and how individual learning takes place within this; secondly to investigate how far the dual function of a performing ensemble and learning group aid the students' learning; thirdly to discover how the students view themselves as amateur musicians and how the development from non-musician to musician occurs.

The research design is two-dimensional, using strategies as both an outside and inside researcher. This paper will discuss how the research design has evolved during the course of the project and why I decided to become a learner myself as part of the process.

Introduction

Working as an instrumental teacher I often come across parents who tell me that either they wish they had the chance to learn an instrument when they were young or that they did learn, but gave up and now wish that they had carried on. My reply is of course that anyone can learn an instrument, regardless of age, and that it is not too late to start. Most often than not this brings the response that either they are too busy or that they wouldn't know where to start. Some parents do decide to learn, quite often as a way of keeping a child motivated. This however brings the problem that adults seem to want a different learning experience to children and are not always happy following the same material as a child, as the following comment from an adult learner, interviewed in December 2004, shows.

'I don't want to sit down and play jingle bells ... I want to try and stretch and do some hard things and I don't mind if I don't do them well, but I want to keep the interest up by trying to do hard things ... I don't know whether that's traditional and that most people learn when they are little or when they are at school but I don't feel that the way that I am being taught one to one is keeping my interest as an adult.'

Another student pointed out that as an adult learner you are

'much harder on yourself and you have higher expectations for yourself than say a kid would. Adults are much more perfectionist than kids and they do want to get it right and they are much harder on themselves'

Also, children

'don't care if they are making a horrible noise at that age, but of course grown ups do and they can hear it.'

The above comments make it clear that these adults have different requirements for their learning situation, therefore a different method of teaching from the traditional tutor/pupil model, employed by many instrumental tutors, is needed to satisfy their learning needs.

Historically many learning opportunities for adults have been housed within FE colleges and HE continuing education departments, offering adults opportunities to learn basic skills such as computing, accounting or languages as well as more leisure orientated subjects like arts and music. However, recent government initiatives surrounding workplace learning and the development of sector skills councils have moved the emphasis towards learning to increase employment opportunities, such as adult literacy and numeracy. Whilst some institutions are able to continue to support a musical learning programme, others are not. This being the case, organisations are developing their own self-funded learning opportunities for adult instrumentalists.

In 2002 Gloucestershire Music set up a new initiative called the 'Learn As You Play' scheme. The scheme was aimed at adult beginners who wished to take up an instrument, the innovative part being that all the students learnt together, in one large ensemble. They set up two groups, one string and one wind band so as to offer a wide choice of instruments. The scheme was a major success and continued to create four more wind bands, a jazz group and an orchestra. The scheme was so successful in training new adult instrumentalists that in 2005 it evolved into a complete adult ensemble structure, that runs alongside the youth groups, feeding into the upper level adult concert band and jazz band that already existed.

Many adults are now opting to learn to play instruments within a group environment, joining orchestras and ensembles that are specifically designed as learning tools but have a dual function as performing ensembles, as in Gloucestershire. Whilst some organisations have been established since the 1980s in this type of provision, other new groups are being set up. It is therefore timely to conduct research on the learning processes involved in group instrumental learning, with an emphasis on performance, and the impact of this experience on the adult student so as to provide a model of this particular type of learning.

The Research Design

The research is being carried out using three longitudinal case studies and the design has been tested via a pilot study. When the project was initially designed I specifically chose a case study approach so as to gain an in depth understanding of the relationships and processes involved in learning music in this way. As Denscombe says, researchers use case studies

'in order to allow greater depth to their research, more attention to the dynamics of the situation, better insights that come from a detailed knowledge and understanding of a specific example.'

(Denscombe, 2002; 146)

Also

'A strength of the case study is ... that it allows for the use of a variety of methods depending on the circumstances and the specific needs of the situation.'

(Denscombe, 1998; 32)

By using case studies I have the flexibility needed to adopt an emerging research design, this will then allow me to develop some grounded theory by way of collecting data, generating theory and then returning to the field to test and develop the theory (Denscombe, 1998; 214-8).

Schofield tells us that although case studies are useful for providing *'a picture of the current educational scene that can be used for understanding or reflecting on it'*, it is essential for the researcher to ensure that cases reflecting the *'typical situation'* are chosen (Schofield, 1990; 98). In order to do this, three groups have been chosen for the project and data will be cross-referenced between the groups to ensure that theoretical generalisations are *'typical of other instances'* (Denscombe, 2002; 146), and therefore valid.

The negotiation of access to the groups has been relatively easy and so far all groups and students have been willing participants in the research.

The research design is two-dimensional. The first dimension comprises three stages; initial observation, group interview and individual interview. There are three layers to the individual interviews; students, teachers and managers. The initial observations took place in June 2005 with the group interviews taking place between October 2005 and January 2006. The final stage of interviews is currently taking place and it is envisaged that they will finish by December 2006. Interview data is being recorded, transcribed for analysis and coded using topics and sub-groups (Blaxter, Hughes and Tight, 1996; 210-2), and I am writing up after each interview stage so as to allow for *'theoretical reflection'* before collecting more data from which to test my *'emerging theory'* (Bryman and Burgess, 1994; 4).

The second dimension takes on an ethnographic approach and involves researching my own learning experience. The purpose of this second dimension is to

'find out how the members of the group ... understand things, the meanings they attach to happenings, the way they perceive their reality'.

(Denscombe, 1998; 69)

In order to do this I have joined a musical learning group that is different to my own musical training so that I can fully appreciate the complexities of the musical learning processes involved. My experience is being recorded in a reflective learning diary, which is also being analysed at each stage of write up and cross-referenced against the interview data.

This two-dimensional approach evolved from a pilot study conducted in the initial stages of the research. The pilot study was carried out between October 2004 and January 2005 on one group of adult learners. The study was written up and an evaluation of the effectiveness of both the research design and the researcher was carried out. From this, the main study was designed.

Researching from the outside

The evaluation of the research design led to the development of the first dimension: Researching from the outside. The concept of this dimension is that I can enter the social context of the group and 'peer' into the world of the adult learner from the outside, taking away a snapshot view of the learning processes and group dynamics within that world on which to reflect and develop theory. Being on the outside would ensure that a distance is kept between the informants and myself, avoiding a situation where the context is *'too familiar'* leaving me open to bias, missing the obvious and taking things for granted (Hockey, 1993; 202).

In order to explore my research questions, I needed to collect information regarding the experience, emotions and feelings of the students. Denscombe suggests that using interviews is a good way to do this (Denscombe, 1998; 111) and therefore the pilot study was designed using interviews as the main method of data collection.

After an initial observation, volunteers were recruited to take part in a group interview. I chose to conduct a semi-structured group interview, focussing on a list of key themes drawn out from the initial observation. My main aim was to engage the students in conversation about their experience so as to allow the key topics to be explored and also enable the students to bring in other related issues. I then conducted a round of individual interviews. These allowed me to explore the issues raised in the group interview more deeply whilst giving the students the opportunity to express themselves freely outside of the group situation. I was also able to steer the interview more easily and ensure that my agenda was fully covered (Denscombe, 1998; 114). Finally, after devising categories, data was collected and analysed until all the '*categories were saturated*' (Bryman and Burgess, 1994; 4).

When designing the main phase of the project I decided to keep the same approach but to conduct a series of five group interviews over a period of eighteen months, using individual interviews only if necessary. This was because I felt that group interviews would provide me with more opportunity to explore the relationships within the group, a key element of my research. However, after the first set of group interviews I had a strong feeling that each individual student brought a different aspect to the research, and I wanted to explore this on an individual basis.

After an initial thematic analysis of the group interviews, I decided that the best way to continue was to conduct a further group interview and then follow on with individual interviews. After writing up the first interviews though, it became clear that these had produced a large amount of rich data already that needed to be followed up individually to get the depth that I wanted. I also felt that the relationships within the group were not as explicit as I expected and that the group interview may have prohibited some informants. By digging for these relationships in a second group interview, I could create a false dynamic and also alienate the participants. Therefore I decided to move straight to individual interviews for the second stage of interviewing.

Ironically, the research design for the first dimension has now turned a full circle and evolved out of, and back into the same design as the pilot study. The main difference between the

pilot and the first dimension study is that the case studies of the main phase are being conducted over a longer period of time, with more individual interviews.

Researching from the inside

Denscombe says

'One line of reasoning argues that a cold and calculating style of interviewing reinforces a gulf between the researcher and informant.'

(Denscombe, 1998; 117)

As an interviewer I wanted the students to trust me enough to talk freely about their experiences, particularly any difficulties or challenges in their own learning. I needed an emotional reaction from them, so I would need to show empathy. From the analysis of the effectiveness of the researcher in the pilot study I found that my open 'chatty' style had worked in producing some rich data, but it became increasingly clear that I had no experience of learning an instrument as an adult in the same way and therefore could not provide that empathy. LeGallais urges us to assess our position as researcher using an insider/outsider continuum (LeGallais, 2003). This I did and found that as well as being able to define myself as *stranger* or *native* at any one point in the research, I could also assess myself along a scale that existed in juxtaposition to that continuum, that of *master* and *pupil*.

All the students who participated in the pilot study knew that I was a musician, and as this was a local group, many knew me as a teacher, one student was in fact a parent of one of my pupils. Although I would be a stranger to the students participating in the main study, it led me to consider quite seriously how I could fully understand the processes of an adult learner in this situation being so far removed from it.

Moreover, I felt that this position could in fact produce a barrier between the students and myself. The following conversation occurred during an individual interview for the pilot study in response to the question 'Do you class yourself as a musician?'

Student B *'No.'*

Researcher *'Why not?'*

Student B *'I just don't think I'm good enough to be called one yet.'*

Researcher *'And what to you is a musician?'*

Student B *'What to me is a musician? That's a good question. I don't know. I suppose one of my ambitions is to compose music. Now that to me if I can definitely say I can compose music then I am a musician. Now, ok, you also need to play the music so a musician needs to do both really.'*

Researcher *'But you do play music.'*

Student B *'Oh yes, I do and I'm proud of it and I tell people and it usually gets a reaction. And I think you just need to, I think at some point I will leap into a stage where you have felt that you have reached a level of accomplishment I suppose, and I don't think I have quite got there yet.'*

To this student a musician was someone with a high level of accomplishment, far greater than his own. This student's musician was on the top of an ivory tower, a place that it is his ambition to reach. It occurred to me that as this student knew me as a musician, and had seen me perform, perhaps he viewed me in that way, placing me firmly as a *master* in his eyes. This took me to the decision that in order for me to gain a true understanding of the processes in learning an instrument in a group as an adult, and to *'appreciate the full complexity of the social world at hand'* (Hockey, 1993; 206), I would have to put myself in the position of *pupil*.

I have been reading music for as long as I can remember, I started to play the flute when I was nine years old but was singing in a church choir and learnt the obligatory recorder prior to that. I have learnt new instruments as an adult but being a note reader and already having an in depth musical understanding, this has involved a different learning process to that of the

adult beginner. Therefore in order to become a *pupil* I needed to learn an instrument from a different tradition to that of my own musical roots.

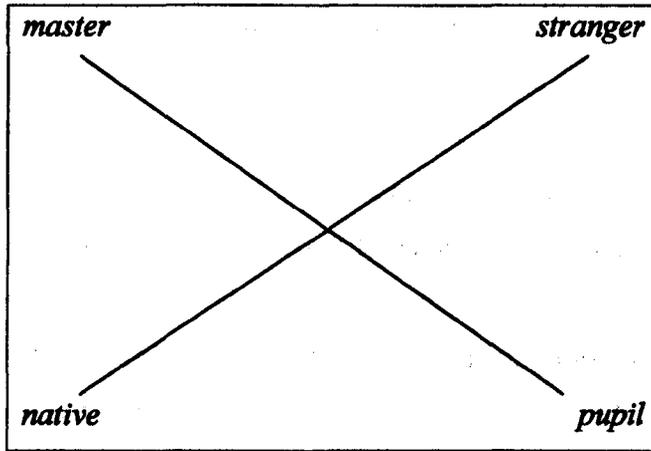
In 2005 a new community gamelan was set up locally and I was fortunate enough to be in a position to join. Javanese Gamelan is completely different in musical terms to traditional Western Classical music. The tuning is very different to the diatonic system used in Western music and it uses numerical notation rather than the symbols that I am familiar with. Furthermore, the emphasis of the music is on the end of each *gatra* rather than the beginning of each bar, something alien to my musical understanding. The Gamelan is governed by strict rules but within this the player is expected to make decisions based on the scope of the instrument that they are playing, and much of it is done from memory. This is very different to orchestral playing where the music is notated and a conductor gives direction. Also, a Gamelan is a group of instruments that are all kept together. Gamelan players do not own their specific instrument and therefore are not expected, as in the Western tradition, to practice alone and become proficient on their instrument in its own right. Therefore all the learning has to take place within the rehearsal. Not only is this tradition of music different to my own, but it also challenges my concept of how music is constructed and played, putting me in a very close position to the students that I am researching.

LeGallais says that we should be able to move between the stance of *stranger* and *native* so as to

'utilise the best aspects of both roles to inform and enhance the research experience'

(LeGallais, 2003)

By putting myself in the position of the learner I am able to add this second dimension to LeGallais' continuum, giving me the ability to place myself at any point within the box below and utilise the strengths of that position.



This will lead to a lively and interesting discussion of the role of the researcher in the final thesis, particularly when the two dimensions merge. Maybe I will find a third dimension.

Conclusion

I am amazed at the impact that adding a second dimension is having on both my research and my own learning. When interviewing I now have a good understanding of what the students are going through and why they react in the way that they do to their learning. It is providing me with an insight that I could not have had prior to learning Gamelan. On a personal level, it is giving me an enormous amount satisfaction. Being able to analyse my own learning processes, and connect them to events from my youth, is a very refreshing experience. Professionally, I can be more sensitive to my students when teaching and personally it is providing answers to questions as to who I am. I am totally hooked on Gamelan and it has added a fresh perspective to my musical being!

In retrospect, the key element to the smooth progression of my project has been the adoption of an emerging research design. I have let the design unfold as the research has developed and it has taken me places that had my design been inflexible, I would never have reached.

For me, research is a personal journey. Incorporating inside research in this way into my project has taken me further than I initially expected when embarking on this project, and this

alone has given me the necessary confidence and motivation to continue, and complete, my research.

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Biography

Jennie Henley works for Gloucestershire Music as a flute tutor and music centre director. She has been involved with adult instrumental learning both as a tutor and a manager, working with the 'Learn As You Play' scheme since its inception. She is researching for her PhD at the University of Central England.

Learn As You Play: A Model for Adult Learning

For many people Sunday afternoons are a time for relaxing, spending with family, gentle walking or simply watching a film. But for a group of students in Gloucestershire, this time is for dedicated rehearsals: learning technique in order to play difficult passages, forming a sense of pulse and rhythm so that they may play successfully with others and developing ensemble skill in preparation for their next Concert. I'm not talking about the Youth Orchestra who are busily tackling some piece of great magnitude with the enthusiasm that youth orchestras do in the room next door, I'm taking about the adult beginners who are listening intently to their tutor, many of whom are learning an instrument for the first time. This is Gloucestershire's Learn As You Play Scheme, where adults of any age are welcomed to learn to play an instrument of their choice within an ensemble.

It is slightly surreal to stroll around the school where they meet and hear Tchaikovsky interspersed with 'pat-a-pan', more so when you realise that the children are playing the 'mature' music and the adults are playing nursery rhymes. I have never seen a group of adults look so proud to be playing 'Old MacDonald Had a Band'! But the whole concept of learning together and playing, as a performing ensemble, from the outset has had considerable success in developing new musicians of a variety of ages.

This is not a new concept. The band method is widely used in America and is becoming more popular in schools in this country. What is new is that it is being offered specifically for adults, by a Music Service, as a way into music for people who may never have had the opportunity to learn an instrument, let alone perform in front of a live audience. And the results have been astonishing. One member of Gloucestershire's Learn As You Play String Group commented *'If somebody would've said two years ago you're going to be on stage at the town hall and you're going to be playing a violin, I'd have laughed at them and thought they'd lost it completely you know, and yet we did it. And it wasn't horrendous, it was really fun.'*

Somebody once told me that music is going to benefit from the 'saga holidays syndrome', in that we are reaching a point in society where there is more disposable income, people are in a position to take early retirement, mortgages are paid off and the emphasis of life is shifting towards leisure. They were right. We are seeing a new breed of musicians forming, the *leisure musician*.

These musicians are learning in the safe environment of an ensemble and meeting other like-minded musicians. They are achieving what they never thought possible, which gives them an immense confidence yet humble approach, this in turn is revolutionising their relationship to music. People who would not have thought about going to a classical concert before are starting to become concert goers. They are being hurled into a new world of metronomes, tuning meters, cleverly folded instrument stands and the like, and believe me, adult learners love their gadgets! But more incredibly, music is becoming such a large part of their lives, where it previously had played no part, that these people cannot imagine a life without music. Yet, if I ask them if they consider themselves to be a musician, they say no.

The key ingredient into learning in this way, for adults, seems to be the dual function of a learning group and performing ensemble. It is widely accepted that if children perform from an early age they can develop a positive attitude to performance. But as adults, we already have experience of presenting ourselves in public and are aware of the difficulties that it poses us, and have given ourselves enough time to develop a fear of it; performance on a classical stage is no easy thing. That coupled with the emotional scarring left upon more adults than you might think from being told to mime in the school choir due to their complete tone deafness or that they were not intelligent

enough to read music, makes you realise just what an achievement it is to learn an instrument and perform on it for these adults.

Gloucestershire (www.gloucestershiremusic.co.uk) is not alone in its provision for adult learners. The East London Late Starters Orchestra has been established for over 20 years and operates on an immense scale teaching adults string instruments through a progressive programme of technique classes, ensembles and orchestras (see www.ellso.org.uk). Other groups, such as Da Capo (www.mooremusic.org.uk) concentrate on teaching ensemble skills and developing rhythm, sight-reading and aural skills through orchestral teaching. The Associated Board has a lively adult learning forum and concerts have been organised by subscribers and like-minded musicians are making links with each other across the country. However, how many of you knew about these groups? I am sure there must be more that I have not come across too.

It is time to stand up and shout about what has been achieved for hundreds of adult learners by these groups and they need to show other organisations how adult learning can be successfully delivered. I hope that through my research into how adults learn to play within an ensemble in this way, a model of successful adult learning can be developed and other organisations will be encouraged to dip their toe into the ever increasing wave of adult music making.

Jennie Henley works for Gloucestershire Music as a flute tutor and music centre director. She has been involved in the Learn As You Play Scheme since 2002 and currently directs an adult concert band, born out of the scheme. She is researching adult instrumental group learning for a PhD at the University of Central England.

Learn As You Play; an investigation into adult instrumental group learning – where there's a group, there's a way.

Abstract

In a rising trend of offering adults the chance to learn a musical instrument through membership of an ensemble, this paper will concern itself with how the individual interacts with the group in order to learn successfully. Using the concept of Communities of Practice, the social nature of learning will be discussed in relation to how the individual learns within the group environment and where the learning is taking place; is it the individual learning within a group or the group learning as individuals? Drawing on Activity Theory I will then investigate how the music is acting as a catalyst for this learning and to consider whether it is 'the music' or 'about the music' that is being learnt. Finally, these two discussions will be used to explore the hypothesis that the group is a good learning environment for an adult instrumentalist.

Introduction

In 2002 Gloucestershire Music set up a new initiative called the 'Learn As You Play' scheme. Aimed at adult beginners who wished to take up an instrument, all the students learnt together in one large ensemble. The ensemble operated as a performing group as well as a teaching forum and the scheme proved to be a very successful way of teaching an instrument and training adult musicians in ensemble performance. Since its inception the 'Learn As You Play' scheme has continued to grow and now a range of groups are on offer to adults with opportunities to learn to play in wind bands, string groups and jazz groups in a progressive scheme of adult ensembles.

Gloucestershire is not alone in offering adults this opportunity and groups specifically designed with a dual function as learning tools and as performing ensembles are becoming more widespread. Whilst some organisations offering this type of provision have been established since the 1980s, other new groups are being set up to accommodate the growing number of adults wishing to participate in this type of learning.

These groups are aiding the evolution of a new type of musician, the *leisure musician* (Henley, 2007). As people find that they are in a position to retire early, have more financial security and there is a more focussed attitude to leisure time, some adults are turning to instrumental learning purely for the joy of making music. Many students may not have had the chance to learn as a child and always wanted to play or learnt an instrument briefly and then gave up; others, like the following student, simply want a new hobby:

'I was kind of looking for a new hobby, I heard [about the group on a] radio programme, Radio 4 last year, and I applied to join'

The rise of the learning ensemble is allowing these students not only to learn an instrument with other people, but also to give them the motivation that they need to continue learning. The following student tells of why she decided to learn to play her instrument.

'I started because my son started to learn the cello and to keep him motivated I said that he could try and teach me to read music and to play after his lesson. I was quite taken with it so ... I decided to hire a cello of my own to keep on learning and ... I started getting lessons then one to one with my son's teacher.'

However, she found that

'As an adult and as a beginner there aren't very many forums where you can practise and have a go at stuff.'

Her teacher told her about a 'learn as you play' group and she decided to join. When asked how she found playing in the group after having individual lessons she said:

'it gave you a whole load more freedom and the ability to see how other people were doing and how quickly they were learning.... Doing one to one when I just don't know, I've never played an instrument, I can't read music and I don't know how people sound when they do well apart from you know Yo Yo Ma, people like that ... I don't know whether I'm doing well, whether I'm getting on reasonably or if I should give up now. It just gives you an opportunity to sort of erm ... doing it amongst other people that are learning to try and gauge the right sort of speed...'

To this student, the experience of learning alongside other people gives her the chance to place her own learning in context with other learners and also to ensure that she is learning at a 'normal' pace. Unlike school children who often have others around them who are also learning an instrument, this student felt isolated as a beginner cellist. She continued:

'I find that [in my individual lessons I] was going too slow ... I don't want to sit down and play Jingle Bells ... I want to try and stretch and do some hard things, and I don't mind if I don't do them well, but I want to keep the interest up by trying to do hard things and I don't feel ... that the way that I am being taught one to one is keeping my interest as an adult whereas this group does do that.'

It is clear that this student feels that she does not get as rich a learning experience from her individual lessons as she does learning within her group. So, what is it that the group provides that keeps her learning alive, and why can't she get this from an individual lesson?

A Social Activity

Traditionally, instrumental learning has been carried out on a one to one basis, 'expert' teacher to 'novice' pupil. The more 'expert' the teacher, the better the learning experience. Recent years have seen a shift in instrumental teaching towards group teaching but, as an instrumental teacher, I often come across the view that if a child learns individually they are getting a better deal than learning in a group, group learning being considered as a cheap way out. This view comes not only from parents but also schools and other instrumental teachers alike. For an adult like the student above though, this is just not the case.

When asked "Why provide a learning opportunity for adults as a learning ensemble?", a manager of a 'learn as you play' scheme said:

'Most of the things we do in life are done as groups, you know, we survive as families in groups, we don't always get on, but we survive. We work in the work place generally in groups and when you look in the group context, the best groups are those that can interact together and move forward together and pupils in school are used to working in groups, in groups of 30, sometimes in smaller groups, so why is it that in instrumental teaching there

is a mentality amongst teachers that of course we can teach in groups but we are not going to get the same standard?'

This is a very interesting question. Moreover, as Lave and Wenger say,

'learning is an integral part of generative social practice in the lived-in world.'

(Lave and Wenger, 1991; 35)

The idea that a person learns through the situation that they are in, and that the learning is a fundamental ingredient of the social world that they are a part of, is the essence of the concept of *legitimate peripheral participation* developed by Lave and Wenger (Lave and Wenger, 1991). If a person is a member of a community of practice, for example the practice of a learning ensemble, then their learning will evolve alongside that of their membership of the group. Although the participation will always remain peripheral, the idea that learning is constantly changing and that to reach the centre would assume a 'closed domain' (Lave and Wenger, 1991; 36), the member moves along different trajectories across and within the group as their learning expands and develops. The more experience the learner has of the group, the closer they are to full membership of that group. The different trajectories that they move along may take them away from the group or they may take them more fully into the group, but each holds a valid learning experience that is unique to the particular community of practice that they are part of (Wenger, 1998; 154).

In relation to adult learning ensembles, the key factor to the learning is what the practice of the community is. If the learner wishes only to learn for the sake of learning an instrument and has no desire to participate in the social creation of music, then being part of a community of practice where the practice is that of learning an instrument on an individual basis may suffice. However, if the learner wishes to be part of a musical experience with others and join an ensemble, performing music in a social context, then they can only do so by being part of the practice of the social creation of music. To a *leisure musician* the idea of the act of learning an instrument may not be the motivation for learning, but more the desire to create music and play with others provides a far greater stimulus; they do not want to *learn* an instrument, but they want to be able to *play* the instrument (whatever words they use to express this desire!).

Davidson, Howe and Sloboda claim that in the development of musical performance skill *'the most directly effective activity for skill acquisition is deliberate practice'* (Davidson et al., 1997; 192) and the need for practice has been widely discussed in relation to how musicians learn (for an overview of the research literature of practice see Miklaszewski, 2004). However, to many students who are members of a learning ensemble personal practice is not necessarily something that they want to participate in, as these students show:

Talking about a summer school:

'but then at night you want to go to the bar and there are people still playing at night ... I don't think so!'

'There are some people going into rooms and practising away on their own!'

Talking about weekly rehearsals:

'If you know that you haven't really practised all week then it doesn't, then you sort of think that's the reason that I'm not very good.'

'I feel I put in that four hours here I don't think I've ever missed, there's one session where I was ill apart from that I haven't missed anything. But when I get home I tend not to do anything else.'

Talking about others within the group who do practise:

'I hardly say I do anything when I get home, very occasionally... one of the cellos, I think he played as a child, and when he came I think he said he wanted to become really good and he gets in from work at 5.30 and he has his cello sitting there and I think he practises every day from 5.30 to 6.30. And that's what he does when he gets in. Now I don't have either ... the time but I basically I don't have the inclination because I suppose I could move all of my lifestyle. I mean I don't get in that early I must admit. I suppose I could move my life schedule back where I could say I could do it from nine to ten, but I don't have the sort of life where I would be prepared to [do that].'

'if you are part of an orchestra you should play something that is within your capabilities for the orchestra but I think there's ... a lot of people who just want to be the best that they can be but within the orchestra and it's actually not necessarily within the orchestra's interest.'

What this demonstrates is that these people have chosen to learn within an ensemble specifically as it fits in with their lives. The crucial point is that although they don't perhaps realise it, they are practising; but unlike the students who Davidson et al. are talking about, their practice is not spending time on their own to acquire a sound technique, it is playing with others. The idea that practice is finite and it is simply a matter of frequency that allows a student to accelerate (see Davidson et al., 1997 for a discussion on the relationship between exam grades and practice hours) means that the students in learning ensembles will progress over time, and it is precisely this longevity that *'provides learners with opportunities to make the culture of practice theirs'* (Lave and Wenger, 1991; 95).

Fenwick and Tennant sum up the Vygotskian idea that learning is social before internal (for an overview of Vygotskian theory see Daniels, 2001; 30-68). Whilst discussing the processes of adult learning they state that

'Learning is rooted in the situation in which a person participates, not in the head of that person as intellectual concepts produced by reflection. Knowing and learning are defined as engaging in changing processes of human participation in a particular community of practice.'

(Fenwick and Tennant, 2004; 63)

Therefore to a *leisure musician* whose focus is on the creation of music rather than the technical mastery of an instrument, no matter how well a student could grasp the intellectual concepts of learning an instrument within an individual lesson, their learning must be grounded in the social context of playing with others.

Different goals but the same aim

The key ingredient then of the learning ensemble is the dual purpose of learning and performing creating an environment where the *leisure musician* can immerse themselves in the practice of playing with others. Within this, the performance is the driving force behind the learning and fuses the group together. It places the student in a community of practice where they can flourish as performers. Some remain in the same place for a long period of time:

'You wouldn't think so but this is my 11th year here. And I'm still in the second violins!'

Others move onwards and upwards through a series of progressively more advanced groups, striving to reach their limits in order to progress:

'There are certain people who are very very competitive ... they want to get ahead. ... they skip up stages.'

'I think there are lots of people ...they want the first violin part...and they want to push themselves to their limit.'

However, whatever the reasons for joining or motives for achieving, when a student joins a learning ensemble they are from the outset a member of a performing group and the aim of the group is performance. The students' musical skills are developed through the processes that they as individuals engage in within the ensemble environment. As the members become more proficient on their individual instruments these processes will change, for example an elementary student might spend more time interpreting written notes and finding the appropriate fingering for each note:

'when I'm trying to concentrate on doing the notes right I can't get the timing as well, but I get one right and then try and concentrate on the next aspect. And then one day you suddenly realise that you can play some notes and you think oh I did it, so it is little steps forward and you suddenly realise that when I tried to do that a couple of months ago I just couldn't do it.'

In this case the student is very insular, looking only towards what they can and cannot do on as an individual player on an individual basis. They are on the very periphery of their community of practice, a newcomer whose learning has not developed enough to be able to place their playing in the context of the group. However, over time, as the student's instrumental skill develops and their identity within the ensemble strengthens, they are able to move along an *'insider trajectory'* (Wenger, 1998; 154) and become more outward looking, relating their participation in the ensemble to that of the others around them.

One student recalled how when she first joined her learning ensemble she found it very difficult to focus on what she, as an individual, was doing in relation to what was going on around her.

'When I first came if I heard a loud instrument behind me and they are playing at a different time to me, I wanted to, because I heard them, I wanted to play with them instead of waiting for my bar to play and it took me quite a long time to get used to that, particularly a loud instrument.'

In order to be able to play her part she had to cut herself off from the group and concentrate solely on her own part, playing it in isolation to the rest of the group. Nevertheless, over a period of time she was able to integrate her playing with that of those around her and now she is able to listen to the other parts and use them to ensure that she is playing in the right place.

Through a process of being immersed in a musical environment where different sounds occur at different times, she has moved along a trajectory from being very inward looking in terms of her own playing, to being more outward looking and able to place herself within the ensemble, moving closer to full membership of the ensemble:

However, the aim of the ensemble remains to produce as good a performance as possible, and this is achieved by the success or failure of each individual student to reach their own specific goals.

Wenger suggests that *'identity serves as a pivot between the social and the individual'* and that an individual's identity must be the product of the *'mutual constitution'* of the community and the person (Wenger, 1998; 145). The evolving identity of the student within the group in turn creates the evolution of the group itself. As the student achieves their individual goals, they go through a process of changing identity. The following comments were made by different students at different stages in their learning in response to the question *'Do you consider yourself to be a musician?'* and they show how this change occurs over time.

'no way I'm a musician' Beginner learner.

'I don't perceive myself as a musician, I can see that perhaps in a few years time I could see myself as it.' After two years of learning.

'I've actually started to feel more rounded as a practitioner of the violin.' Also after two years of learning.

'I do regard myself as an amateur, as an amateur musician, but as a musician.' After five years of learning.

Although this is not the place for the discussion of a musician's identity (for a detailed discussion of identity in relation to musical participation see Pitts, 2005), what this shows is that the student undergoes a metamorphosis from *'no way I'm a musician'* to *'I do regard myself as ... an amateur musician'* through continued engagement with a community of practice and by a process of achieving personal goals in order to fulfil a group aim.

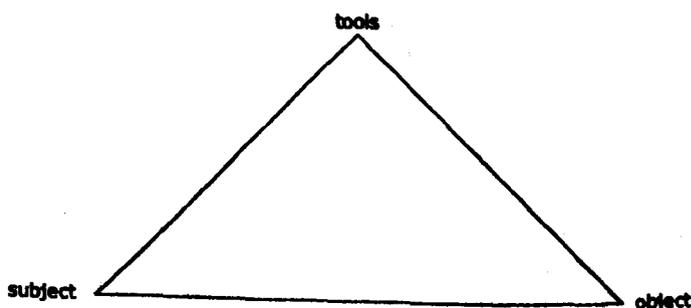
The group learning individually or the individuals learning as a group?

The notion of goal driven learning is embedded in Activity Theory, as Nardi explains:

'Actions are goal-directed processes that must be undertaken to fulfil the object.'

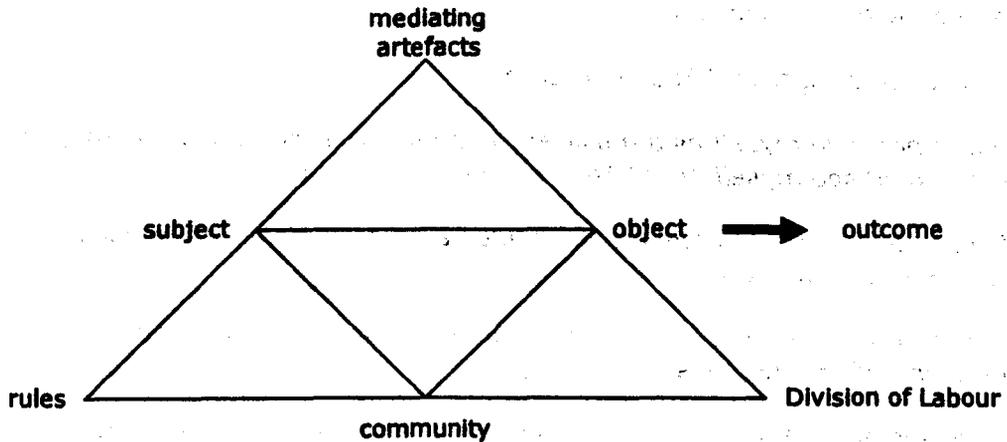
(Nardi, 1997; 73)

Activity theory describes the process of activity through the interaction between the people, the tools used to carry out the activity and the object of the activity (for an interesting and concise introduction to activity theory see Russell, 2004). The traditional model shows the interaction only between the subject, the object and the tools (also known as mediating artefacts) in the form of a triangle and is described as an activity system.



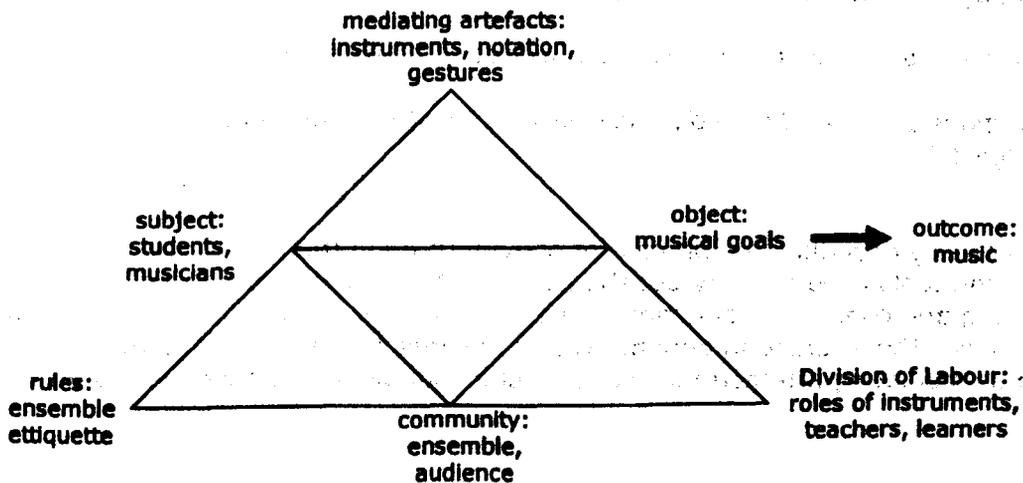
The subject is the student, the object is to play a piece of music and this is done through the use of mediating artefacts such as instruments, musical notation, physical gestures etc. The individual cannot play the music without the instrument, and the instrument cannot play without the student, therefore it is the mediation between the two that produces the music.

Engeström developed this model by adding another layer, placing it within the social context of the activity to show how the interactions between the subject and the world around them contribute to carrying out the activity.



(Engeström, 1999; 31)

If we apply this to a student learning to play their instrument within an ensemble, the activity system is as follows:



An individual student sets themselves a goal, for example to be able to play all the notes of a certain piece of music. The process they then go through to do this involves a complex set of interactions between their instrument and the notation, the physical gestures that the conductor will give to inform the players where they are in the piece and how to play that part, their own instrument and the other instruments in the ensemble as well as the rules that embody the nature of the ensemble which are guided by the context within

which they are playing. For example, in order to play the right notes a trombonist will have to physically move their arms and place their lips in the right position simultaneously to get the correct pitch, however if the correct pitch is not attained, and it does not fit in with what they can hear around them, they will firstly need to recognise whether the pitch needs to be higher or lower and then adjust physically to correct the note. The way that the particular note is played will be dependent on whether the note appears at the beginning of a bar or phrase or at the end, and the player will have to make a judgement as to where they are in the music as to how much stress they need to give the note, this can be directed by the conductor or can be gained by an awareness of what everyone else in the ensemble is doing at that particular time, or a combination of both. The note will belong to a series of notes that form a melody, a countermelody or be part of a harmonic sequence and therefore that note may need to be loud or quiet depending on where it lies in the texture of the music. The conductor may give a signal in the form of a physical gesture to indicate to the player how to play the series of notes, for example to play smoothly by a smooth, flowing gesture, or detached by a more jagged gesture, small indicating quietly and large indicating loudly. Simultaneously, the player will have to be sensitive to what particular role their instrument is playing at that point in the music, are they providing the tune, is it a solo or soli (a section solo, i.e. a solo played by a group of instruments e.g. flutes), a duet or is it an accompanying figure? On top of this the player has to be aware of where they are playing physically, are they in rehearsal or performance? Who is listening? And what the particular rules are for that specific context, for example in rehearsal it may be ok to speak or 'tut' at themselves or another person, laugh or even swear if a mistake is made (depending on the type of rehearsal, each group will have its own specific etiquette.). In performance this may change. All of this happens within a split second.

What this activity system describes is that it is not merely a case of whether the individual is acting alone but being surrounded by a group of people, such as a person would if visiting a busy library, or whether people are acting as a group but in an individual way, for example an audience showing their individual appreciation for a performance (see Turner, 1987 and 1991 for a discussion of the social group and social influence). Moreover a complex system of intricate interactions between the individual and the group occurs constantly throughout the period of activity. Therefore both the group and the individual are learning simultaneously, and both are contributing to the development of the individual's identity as a performer and the group's identity as a performing group.

The Music: object, outcome or artefact?

We have so far considered the function of the group as a performing ensemble and found this key to both the placement of the individual in a community of practice and to the evolution of group and individual identity, but what role does the music play in the complex interactions between the various components of the activity system?

As discussed above there are many reasons and motivations for deciding to join a learning ensemble, not all of which are musical.

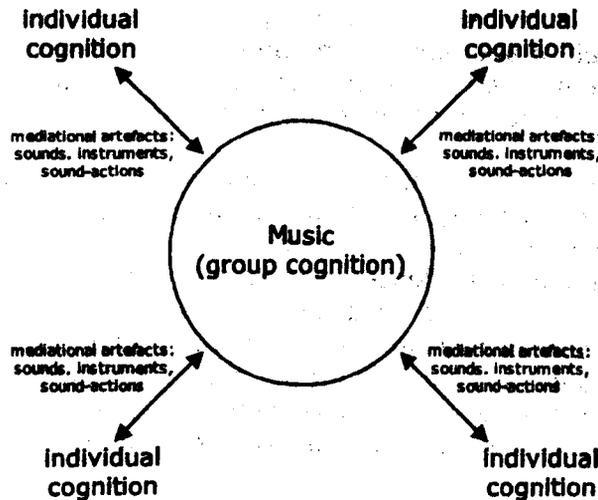
'One of the reasons why I wanted to take up an instrument was that I honestly thought that it would be good for my brain ... and I was told like if you do different things, creatively, you can work different parts [of your brain].'

The goal of this particular student at the time of joining was to exercise her brain, so what role did the music play in her activity system? It is certainly an outcome of her objective; by exercising her brain through playing the violin she is producing music, but it was not the primary outcome, that was to use a new mental process. However, if we

place the music as the artefact rather than the outcome, we can construct an activity system that uses music as a tool to achieve the real goal, rather than the music being a by-product of that goal. Therefore this student is learning 'about the music' in order to work her brain.

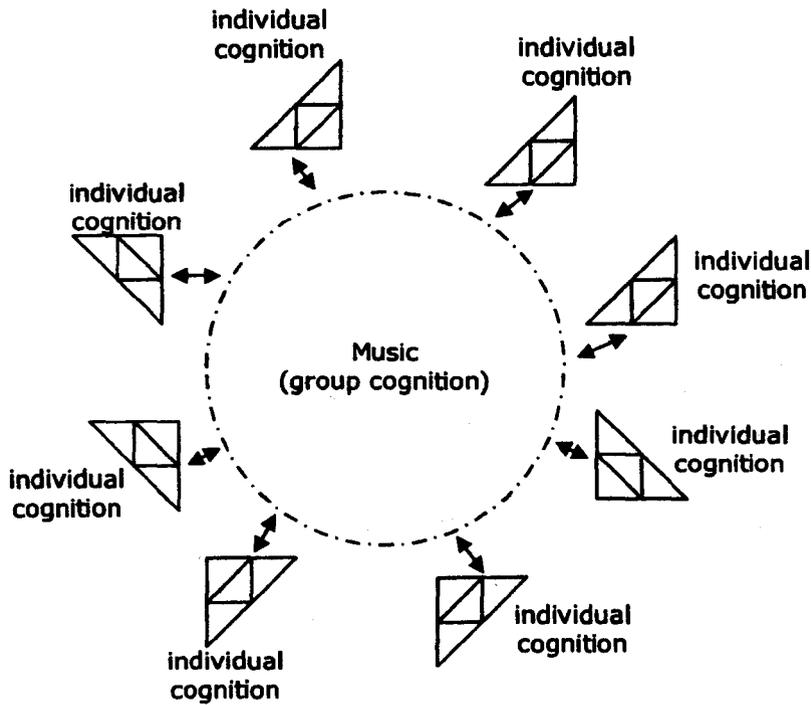
As this student has developed and moved towards full membership of her ensemble, her activity system has changed and her goal is now be able to create music with others. Nardi says that 'activity theory recognises that changing conditions can realign the constituents of an activity' (Nardi, 1997; 75). Therefore the changing condition of the student's membership of the group has caused the emphasis to shift from learning 'about the music' in order to work her brain, to learn 'the music' in order to perform it. In other words, the music has shifted from artefact to object. If 'learning involves the construction of identities' (Lave and Wenger, 1991; 53) then the object of the activity system will have a big impact on the identity that is formed by the learner,

So far we have concentrated on the activity system of the individual within the learning ensemble, but what of the activity system of the ensemble as a whole, and where does the music occur within this? Burrows addressed the issue of placing the music as both artefact and object in the activity system of an improvised performance by a group of musicians by transforming the triangle as follows:



(Burrows, 2004; 8)

The musicians are using their individual instruments, sounds and sound-actions as a tool to create a group sound, the result is individual cognition contributing to group cognition and group cognition feeding individual cognition. However, this model does not allow for the interactions between the individual and the social context in terms of rules and division of labour, both important constituents of the activity system of a learning ensemble. If we insert the activity systems of the individuals, we can show that whether they are learning 'about the music' or 'the music', the individual goals, objects and outcomes of the students, along with their relationship to the social context, form music as a result of group cognition.



This also recognises that group cognition is permeable; some of the individuals' activity will feed directly into the creation of the music, others will pass through. Therefore, this allows for the outcome of any individual's activity system to not only go towards group cognition, but also to come out of it. For example, the outcome of my new player in that first performance was to become engaged in the community of practice, but as he did not play any of the notes he did not directly contribute to the music, however, his outcome was a direct result of the group cognition.

A model for adult learning?

Why then should this method of learning be a successful model for adults who wish to learn to play a musical instrument?

As discussed above the *leisure musician* is an individual who wishes to be able to play an instrument with other people and the 'learn as you play' model provides just this; an opportunity to play and perform music in a group environment without having to take on a huge amount of extra work to become technically masterful. The dual function of the 'learn as you play' model allows the student to learn through a process of participation in both rehearsals and performances and to develop their identities through a network of goal driven activity, the more immersed in their group, the stronger their identity will be. Moreover, as the following student comments show, the instant gratification of being part of an ensemble as a beginner and contributing to the production of musical sound is exactly what the *leisure musician* desires, and it is this that attracts them to the learning ensemble.

'it was precisely the orchestral thing and I think it's because I've always enjoyed that and because it is that kind of set up of community and a sense of small contributions perhaps but contributions in the overall thing, which can sound lovely.'

'even if you aren't actually playing the notes of a tune you are hearing it and you are part of it and I just think that's a really productive way of learning.'

'I find it hugely enjoyable but you can be actually part of an attractive music sound at a relatively low level, you are pitched in straight away and that was

what attracted me because, I mean really it was when I started last year and I'd not read music before and being able just to play the open strings and follow, and learn to follow the music by just playing the open strings, there was a fantastic attraction, whereas I don't think I would have persevered with lessons or playing on my own because the feedback from playing on your own in the early stages is very poor.'

Overall, through this process of being immersed into a community of practice and the interactions between that community and the student, using artefacts to achieve their goals, the student can participate in an activity that provides them with a vital component of their motivation: the 'feel good factor', and it is precisely this experience that drives the *leisure musician's* learning.

'It is money absolutely well spent isn't it? I mean it's one of those times in your life. You know there's plenty of times when you spend an evening doing absolutely bummer all and you get to the end of the evening and you think that's five hours of my life gone, watching crap on TV and with this you go home and you feel as if, you are just filled with this rush of sort of virtue.'

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Learn As You Play; motivation for adult musical participation

What makes an adult join an ensemble and then continue to attend weekly rehearsals and perform regularly? The obvious answer would be to make music. So then, what would make an adult who can't play an instrument at the point of joining, join said ensemble and then continue to attend weekly rehearsals and perform regularly? This was a question that I asked myself a few years ago when I was involved in the initial pilot scheme of such an ensemble. Before my very eyes I could see adults pick up an instrument for the first time and work through a series of tedious one note tunes and quickly progress to the point where, after only a few months of playing the instrument, they could perform a half decent piece that certainly any parent would be proud of if they were watching their children. In fact, in the audience of the first concert of this particular group, there were many proud children encouraging their parents. How come when many adults start to learn an instrument they get to a point where the interest is lost and eventually give up, these adults have continued to flourish?

The difference is that these adults joined a 'learn as you play' scheme. An ensemble specifically designed as a learning group as well as a performing ensemble. When I asked a student why she joined her particular group, she said

'I find that [in my individual lessons I] was going too slow ... I don't want to sit down and play Jingle Bells ... I want to try and stretch and do some hard things, and I don't mind if I don't do them well, but I want to keep the interest up by trying to do hard things and I don't feel ... that the way that I am being taught one to one is keeping my interest as an adult whereas this group does do that.'

So what is it that is keeping her interest in this particular group, what is motivating her to learn?

"I can't do it, but neither can they"

Vernon says

'It could be argued that the ... tendency of human beings to form and belong to social groups is aimed fundamentally at the attainment of security... The individual becomes securely embedded in the group which supports him in need and protects him from danger.'

(Vernon, 1969; 95)

When a person joins a learning ensemble they are from the outset a member of a social group (for a definition of the social group see Turner, 1987). They learn together as a group and they perform together as a group, and this unique aspect of a learning ensemble directly contributes to the motivation of the students within the group. The concept of the learning ensemble is that everyone is in the same boat as each other, therefore providing learning support in a different way to a student who has an individual lesson. The following comment by a student highlights this.

'when you find when you're finding something difficult, quite commonly other people are also finding it difficult, and you can hear that as well'

To this student, knowing that other people around them finds something difficult provides a certain amount of comfort. When I asked a manager of a learning

ensemble what he thought the attraction to learning in a group is he said that 'there is a vulnerability in individual tuition' but in the group situation this vulnerability disappears. He says

'And you don't mind being wrong because it can be a bit of a laugh.'

The students echo this and many talk with good humour about making mistakes in their group, but the important thing is that the other members of the group do not mind them making mistakes:

Student G *Not feeling as if you are not really up to it [is important too] else otherwise it's an impossible mountain to climb. I started two years ago and I thought I would never be able to get to play with people for years and years and years and I tried, as I say, I tried some other group and my view was confirmed. Then I spoke to someone who plays and she said try [the learning orchestra] and I, expect it's the wrong word, but I've been tolerated cheerfully [laughter] and that's important for somebody in my position.*

Student I *I think I've realised that there are other people who are as bad as me. [laughter] Which is not a very nice thing to say is it.*

Student J *There are some people if they are very good players, they would be irritated ...*

Student I *Yes.*

Student J *Like a tennis player, not everyone but some people would play with you even if you can't play tennis very much, they are quite happy to play with you though they like to play with good players as well. And so it's very good here that there are people that are better than us that are willing to play with us.'*

Here the students show that they feel secure enough in their group not to feel bad if they have made a mistake, letting the other members of the group down. As student G above commented, he tried a traditional orchestra, with no emphasis on learning, and he found that he felt that he was not up to playing with other people, whereas the orchestra with the emphasis on learning gives him the security he needs to learn his ensemble skill. So how does this security and sense of belonging aid the learning of the student?

Lave and Wenger developed the notion of *Legitimate Peripheral Participation* as a way of explaining how a person learns through participation in a community of practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991). When a person becomes a member of a community of practice, for example the practice of a learning ensemble, their membership of that group and their learning within the group will evolve together. As the participation will always remain peripheral, the idea that learning is constantly changing and that to reach the centre would assume a 'closed domain' (Lave and Wenger, 1991; 36), the member will move along different trajectories across and within the group as their learning expands and develops, each providing a learning experience that is unique to their particular community of practice (Wenger, 1998; 154).

For example, a new member to a group may move along an 'inbound' trajectory, this will take them into the group through a process of integration and acceptance by the 'older' members of the group. Student A above describes how he joined his particular learning ensemble as he found that when he joined other groups he

felt that he was not up to the standard of the groups and therefore did not fit in. In this case he did not move far along the 'inbound' trajectory before he felt that the group was not for him. Perhaps the music was very difficult and he felt he was letting the other members down, or perhaps the other members could see he was at a different level to them and therefore did not accept him into the group. He knew he was not secure in the group and therefore his learning or his membership did not evolve. This 'inbound' trajectory turned into an 'outbound' trajectory and he left the group. However, when he joined his current group he found that he was *'tolerated cheerfully'* and this was enough to make him continue along the 'inbound' trajectory towards full membership of the group. The emphasis of this group on learning rather than just performing made all the difference.

Therefore in order to motivate the student to continue along their 'inbound' trajectory and move towards full membership of the group, they must feel secure within that group; the feeling of being in the same boat as everyone else makes a strong motivational force to continue with the community of practice.

"I just love my group"

Whilst membership of a learning ensemble can offer the security needed to flourish in terms of learning, it can also provide a sentimental motivation for members. Vernon says that *'sentiments differ from interests as the emotional element is more prominent'* and

'The most salient characteristics are love of a particular object, person, social group or abstract idea; and strong motivation to support and promote this object, and to attack or overcome anything which threatens it.'

(Vernon, 1969; 113).

When talking to students about their groups they show a great fondness of the group, as these comments illustrate.

'I feel so enthusiastic about it, all I want to do when I'm there is play, that's all I want to do, and I'm just so grateful that there's room to do that. I don't really understand why people go if they don't feel that sort of enthusiasm really... I say 99% of the people I think share my sense of wonder that this thing is even there. Especially people who've never had a chance to touch an instrument before in their lives. It's just such a revelation to them, and they come on so quickly.'

'It's like a family really, there's the elders and then there's the younger ones and it's nearly impossible to learn Gamelan on your own, you have to learn in a group and the group seems to evolve together.'

'One headmistress once said to the group of children 'How can you go back to class and argue with each other and be nasty to each other when you've just shared a beautiful chord with each other?' I thought that was lovely, 'you've shared a chord'. So how can you possibly go back and bully each other and bitch each other or whatever.'

It is clear to see by the language that the students use when talking about the group that it is very dear to them. These affectionate comments and references to groups as families imply that the group are sharing something special, and the individuals feel protected by that. As we have seen above, the security that the

group gives allow the students to participate in a community of practice, which in turn allows their learning to evolve alongside their group membership. But is it the people within the group that the students feel affectionate towards, or is the activity that the group allows them to participate in? When I asked a group whether they socialise, they said:

Student H *It's, well, we don't actually, for instance I've been playing in the orchestra for four years, it's not the sort of group that goes to the pub afterwards. Mainly because we tend to rehearse in places that are a little far out, like here and people come from quite far...*

Student I *Yes, we're very very diverse aren't we.*

Student H *... away.*

Student J *Well one woman comes from [a town approximately 40 miles away]... and she's been coming for a long long time.*

Student F *That's far isn't it.*

Student H *So by the time you start and the time you finish...*

Student J *... some do come a long way.*

Student H *... It's not really easy to socialise.*

So if it's not the actual people within the group that provide this strong sentiment, what is?

In order to develop such affection for a group it must be giving a person something in return, something that can only be got from that group. Vernon says that sentiments vary greatly amongst different people (Vernon, 1969; 115) but one particular type of sentiment, 'self-regarded' sentiment, acts to maintain pride and self-esteem, protecting the person from contempt, disapproval and frustrations. He says that

'Self-esteem depends to a considerable extent on the esteem given by members of the groups to which they belong, they seek to harmonize their behaviour and their ideas about themselves to accord with the opinions of others.'

(Vernon, 1969; 116)

Or, as Hallam says,

'one of the most powerful influences on our behaviour is what other people think of us.'

(Hallam, 1998; 94)

Many students that I have spoken to have talked about how frustrated they have been with themselves when learning their particular instrument, and how they are worried that they will do something 'wrong' in front of the group. Although the group provides a safety net in which to do this, it is still not always a nice experience when things go badly wrong. This is something that I have experienced myself as an adult learner. As part of my research I have been learning a new instrument so as to get as close as I can to the students I have interviewed. As I have been playing western music for most of my life, I decided to take up a non-western traditional instrument and so joined a gamelan. To

collect data from my own experiences I wrote a learning diary. The following diary extract shows one of the frustrations that I have had when learning gamelan.

'5 June 2007

I am so very pissed off with myself. I am so annoyed I can't play 'Sumyar'. I had this brilliantly back in March, it was so good. I haven't played it since then for one reason or another and then we did it two weeks ago as we're doing it in London and I was just totally lost, couldn't remember the sakharan and couldn't get the imbal. I couldn't even get the basic bit right. Then I practiced with paper plates and thought that it would be fine and then we did it right at the very end and I was rubbish. I just gave up in the middle and felt like crying. [the tutor] came over and explained some things to me and then we tried it again and it was a bit better but I was still rubbish. That was it, we were out of time. I just can't get my bit on the off beat and [another student] is trying to be oh so helpful and saying come on, you clap to my off beat, which I refused to do. She should just leave it alone, it makes me feel worse and that she's rubbing it in that I can't do it. I'm sure she's not but that's how I feel. I just think the whole piece would be better if I didn't play it. It seems that every time I have a difficult bit to do, we never practice it. The same happened last summer with my bonang bit, I totally cocked it up and it was awful, because I'd only played it about twice. Everyone is trying to be nice but it was just rubbish. I was really looking forward to London but I'm not now, not at all.'

I remember at this point I hated the group and everyone in it! However, on reflection this was because I was frustrated at not being able to do something and that everyone else knew. This was very different to making a mistake and it not mattering; it was something far greater. I remember feeling very exposed and my self-esteem was very low. I wasn't in the least bit safe in the group, and at this point I probably felt the least affectionate towards the group that I ever have. So when I wasn't protected, when my pride was hurt and my self-esteem was low, I was very unaffectionate towards the group and didn't want to play with them any more. When I feared that everyone in the group thought I was not very good, I disliked them. The other side to this of course is that on the occasions when things have gone very well, and I have felt that everyone in the group thought I was brilliant, I loved them! Both occasions motivated me to come back. The first so that I could prove that I could do it and regain the level of self-esteem that I had previously had, showing that *'the feeling of rejection is itself a motivating state'* (Maslow, 1987; 7) and the second so that I could bask in the glory of my brilliance!

Interestingly then, this shows that the sentimental feelings towards the group that act as motivators are actually generated by ourselves and not the other group members. Moreover, I have seen other members of the group in exactly the same situation as me, many times and not once have I ever thought that the music would be better without them, or that they should not belong to the group, nor has my opinion of them altered in any way. This was purely conjecture on part. Maslow says that

'All people in our society have a need or desire for a stable, firmly based, usually high evaluation of themselves, for self respect or self esteem, and for the esteem of others'

(Maslow, 1987; 22)

So is the sentimental motivation that membership of a group provides more to do with how we gain the esteem of others by the goals that we set ourselves, and how well we achieve them in the group context?

"I will get that bit right!"

Vernon says that

'Much human behaviour is characterized by its organised, highly motivated, goal-directed nature.'

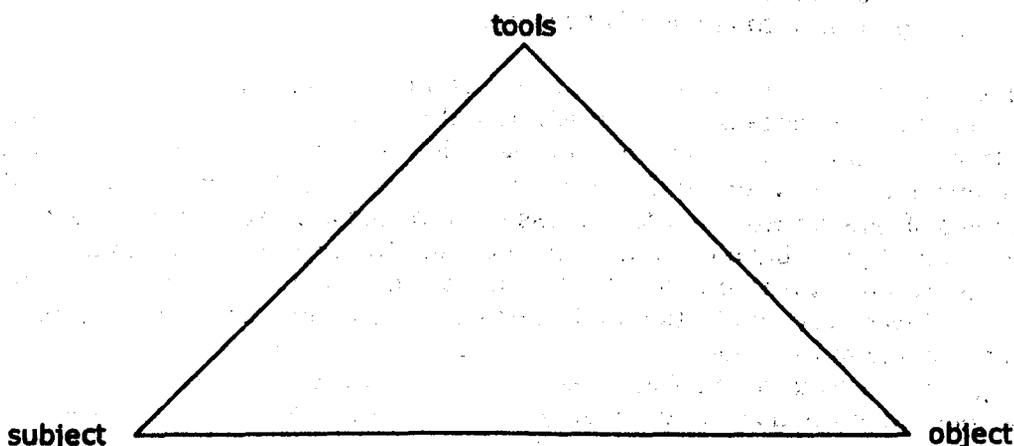
(Vernon, 1969; 108)

The notion of goal directed learning is firmly embedded in activity theory and, as Nardi comments

'Actions are goal-directed processes that must be undertaken to fulfil the object.'

(Nardi, 1997; 73)

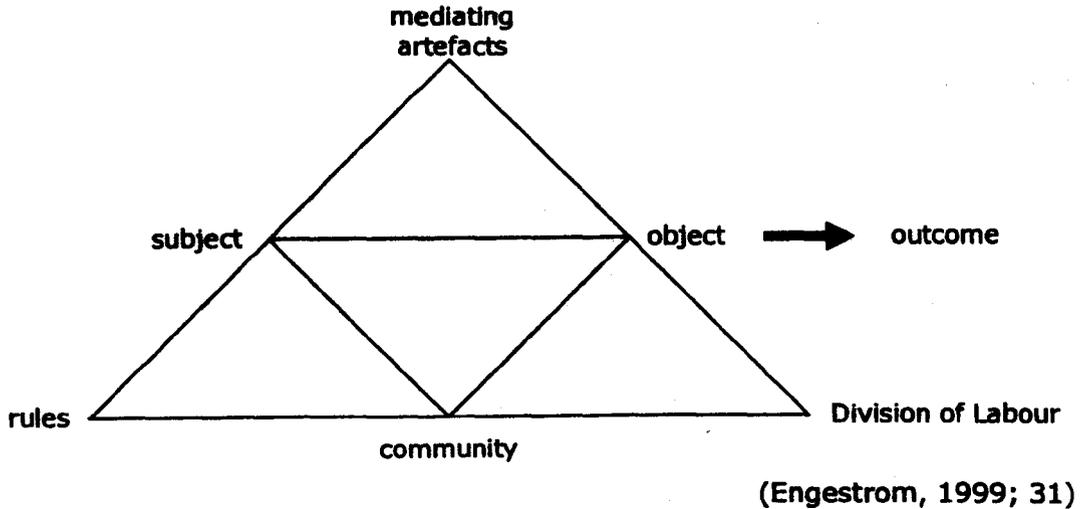
Originally conceived by Vygotsky (see Daniels, 2001), activity theory explains the learning process through the interaction of the individual (the subject) and the mediating artefacts (tools) in order to achieve a goal (the object). It is most commonly represented by a triangle known as an activity system:



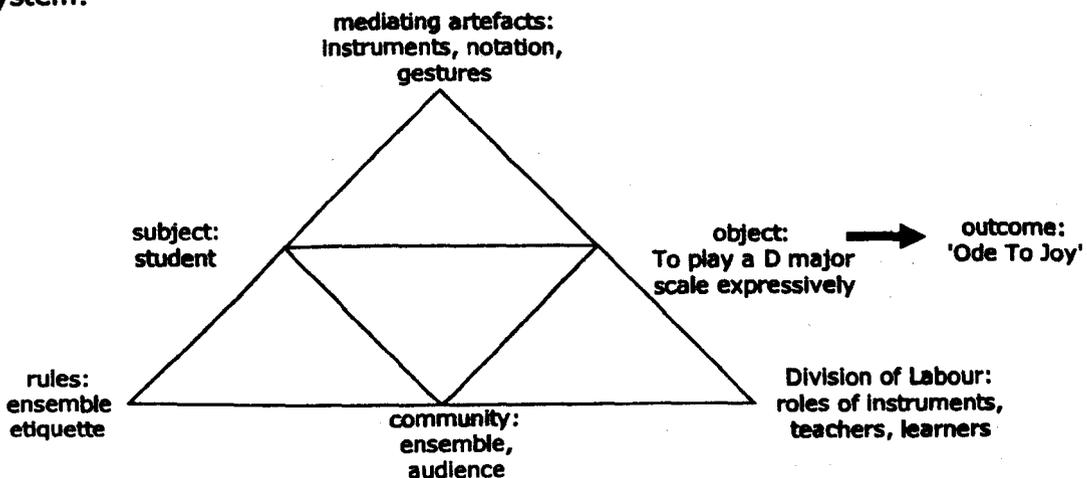
The idea is that in order to learn, a person will set themselves a goal and in order to achieve it they go through a process of mediation using the tools that are available to them within the specific context of the learning. So, for example, a person may decide to learn to play a violin. At the particular point of learning their object is to play a D major scale expressively, to do this their goal is to learn to play 'Ode To Joy' (Essential Elements 2000 for Strings, exercise 205, page 46). The object is to learn the scale and to think about how it appears in the tune, and how the tune is phrased. The outcome of this will be to play the piece of music sensitively, paying attention to the rise and fall of scale within the melody and expressing it accordingly. In order to do this they must physically interact with the instrument and mentally interact with the notation so as to produce the music as intended. The person cannot produce the music without the violin or the notation (this is not discounting playing from memory as the tool of notation is specific to this particular context of learning), and the notation cannot produce the music without the violin or person, nor can the violin play without the notation telling the person what to do; it is the interaction between all of these

things that allows the subject to achieve their object. When the object has been achieved, the outcome will noticeably different.

Engestrom took this process of learning through activity further and placed it within its social context, adding another layer to the triangle, and showing the place of the outcome:



This shows how the subject also interacts with the rules, community and the division of labour of the social context in order to achieve their goal. In the case of the violinist above, if they are learning within an ensemble this then adds a whole extra dimension to their learning. The rules will be the specific etiquette of the learning ensemble, in other words how their particular group likes to conduct its rehearsals or whether they are in a performance situation, which may require a different code of conduct all together (for a discussion of how the presence of an audience has an impact on the performer see Davidson, 1997). The community will be the ensemble and the audience, if present, and the division of labour will be how the violin interacts with the other instruments of the ensemble, whether this is all violins, a string orchestra or a full orchestra, as well as the conductor and the other learners around them. So the object then changes from able to play the scale expressively so as to produce the tune 'Ode To Joy', but to be able to play this securely enough to produce 'Ode To Joy' as part of ensemble, in time with the other players and how directed by the conductor (in terms of tempi, dynamics and articulation). This is demonstrated by the following activity system:



Once this goal has been achieved, the student will then set themselves another goal. As an instrumental teacher, I understand that using goals in this way is how a teacher can guide the learning process of the student through a series of small tasks that contribute to a greater goal (in terms of working on specific aspects of a piece of music such as dynamics, articulation, phrasing and so on in order to produce a piece as a whole), and as a learner I am also familiar with this learning process and the satisfaction that it gives when the goal is achieved. The following diary extract shows my feelings when I had been trying to memorize specific bonang patterns called 'sakharan':

'30 May 2006

I am on fire! We did the sakharan again today. It was really weird. When he was going through it I couldn't even remember where each number was but then as I sat down at the bonang paneris it just happened ... the pattern just came. The tunes stayed in my head and out they came.'

Galloway et al tell us that '*motivation is not independent of context*' (Galloway et al, 2004; 89). Therefore, by the nature of the activity of learning to play music in an ensemble itself, how smaller personal goals work together to create a larger group goal, there should be an inbuilt motivational factor. This is catalysed by the dual function of the learning ensemble as a teaching group and a performing ensemble. One student commented on how a performance motivates her to practise:

'and there's concerts ... ok, got to practise now.'

Whereas another student told of how they were motivated to perform well for the sake of the conductor.

'It inspires you perhaps because if you are just playing a piece by yourself oh, that's not too bad but because you don't want to let other people down and the conductor leader you don't want to let her down particularly when we have an end of term concert...'

As well as researching adult learners I also conduct an adult learning ensemble. The ensemble is an intermediate wind band; the players have either learnt from scratch through a learn as you play scheme, or have come in having learnt their instrument a number of years ago and wish to take it back up again. Through taking this ensemble it is easy to see how a performance can motivate students to raise their game. During the summer term a new member joined the band. He is a trombonist and, in a band with very little lower brass, is a crucial member of the section. During rehearsals I would look over to him to either bring in him or to check that he was in the right place and he would usually be looking at me with a lost expression. He would tell me after the rehearsal that he knew he could play the actual notes, but he couldn't do it at the right time and was always lost. He found it really hard to concentrate on what he was doing when everyone around him was doing something very different, and couldn't associate what they were doing with what he was doing. However, after his first performance with the band he said

'Although I couldn't play any of my notes, I knew that everything around me was working.'

Since this performance I have noticed a definite lift in the trombone section. He has raised his game and in a relatively short space of time is confident enough to play solos. Not only this, but he has lifted the other trombonist in the band; retired and in his seventies, he has never before participated in concerts and I usually don't hear him play during rehearsals, but now I hear him having a go at things and he has also participated in a concert.

"Anything you can do, I can do better"

In participating in the concert, the student above may well have achieved a goal that he set himself. Since the concert, it seems that the student has set a new goal; to try and contribute more to the ensemble. To do this he has had to build his confidence as well as develop musical skills such as rhythm and counting. In the two trombonists discussed above there are two different types of motivational forces; someone who has demonstrated that they thrive from achievement motivation and another who is happy to participate in interest centred activities. According to Vernon, these are two opposite motivational forces (Vernon, 1969; 128), however I would argue that the two students have shown qualities of both. The new trombonist being very achievement motivated, but participating in an interest centred activity, and the older trombonist who had previously been happy to coast along with the band suddenly found that he could raise his game and achieve something that he has never done before. Maybe this is because having a second person in the section has given him a little more confidence, or maybe it was fuelled by competition.

It is widely acknowledged that competition provides a strong motivational force in a wide range of activities. In western classical music competition is almost ingrained into our musical upbringing; auditions for orchestra places from a very early age, participation in festivals and competitions, grade examinations being used a basis to rate a persons 'musicality'. As a teenager, in a world of what seemed like a thousand flautists in the 1980s competing for the first desk in the county youth wind band, I recognised that to get where I wanted to be I had to fight off the competition and win my place. Being canny, I decided that the easiest way to do this was to get hold of a piccolo, giving me instant promotion. However, I very quickly learnt that to hold my place, I had to be good. Not only this but I found that my self-esteem needed to be *'based on deserved respect from others'* (Maslow, 1987; 22) and so I had to feel that I deserved to be on that front desk, not just because I played the piccolo. Therefore what started off as competition between my peers transformed into a need to set myself a high level of aspiration and striving to achieve that. Vernon agrees that aspiration and competition go hand in hand (Vernon, 1969; 121), and it is easy to see how this transpires within adult learning ensembles. The following conversation demonstrates how a competition can manifest itself within a learning ensemble.

Student E *It's like a competitive sport. Like a competition, a violin competition.*

Student B *The thing is you do want, you do want to be not letting, because it's so physical and so audible when you make a horrible mistake [agreement]*

Student D *No but there's still a competition, people want to play the first violin ...*

Student A *Yes.*

Student D ... they are on the same stage as I am ...

Student A/O yes, yes.

Student D ... in the same class and they play the first violin because that sounds better than playing the second violin...

Student O Yes.

Student D ... Therefore there are no second violins.

Student O Yes, yes.

Student D Because people don't want to play the second violin. The part although might be more interesting than the first violin, still there are only a handful who play second violin.

Student C I think there are other reasons as well, for example today I took a first violin and a second violin...

Student O Yes, yes.

Student C ... I normally play second violin, but I couldn't get it...

Student O Yes.

Student C ... and there were more first violins so it made it easier for me to pick it up and I thought I'll go with the majority and I won't, if I miss a note it won't be so obvious.

Student D We all miss notes.

Student B I think it's only some people. There are certain people who are very very...

Student E Competitive.

Student B ... competitive, they want to get ahead.

Student E ... they skip up stages. And other people would rather be ...

Student D When they are not necessarily...

Student E ... a bit better than the lower stage [agreement] the next stage up.

Student O I think there are a lot of issues about people's personal achievement as like soloists at home and their wish to take part in an orchestra and I think that really if you are part of an orchestra you should play something that is within your capabilities for the orchestra but I think there's a lot of people who are kind of stuck, there's a lot of people who just want to be the best that they can be but within the orchestra and it's actually not necessarily within the orchestra's interest. Do you?

Student E I don't know, I think that might be the better, I mean the higher up maybe, I don't know. I wouldn't have thought...

Student O *No, I think there are lots of people ...*

Student E *... lower.*

Student O *... as [student D] said they want the first violin part...*

Student E *yes.*

Student O *... and they want to push themselves to their limit.
[agreement]*

Student A *Yes, cause I started at [an adult education college] with someone who's, well we've been [there] for three years together, and he's gone up to level four, but I'm doing level three again ... and I'm sort of like, mmm why is he doing there [laughter] and you do, and like to today [laughter] he's doing the first, in the full orchestra all of us are playing together, and he's in the firsts and I'm sort of thinking, well hang on a minute you know, and he's, and I'm sitting at the back doing the second bit and I'm sort of thinking, well I should be in the firsts, but then I'm thinking well no I shouldn't and actually I'm not as good and maybe he's, you know and there's all this stuff going, and it is really yeah.*

Student D *You all know the same thing and it's not that one part is more difficult than, in the big orchestra it is [agreement] but in the ensembles we play in it doesn't make a difference whether you play first or second. Sometimes the first is more interesting, sometimes the second is. But it, people like to say they play the first violin. [laughter]*

Student A *I do.*

Student D *But I don't give a toss. I don't play then turn and everyone else...*

Student A *It does have a nicer tune though, this is the thing.*

Student D *... ha?*

Student A *Usually have a nicer tune, this is the thing and when you are stuck in the thirds and seconds you've got one note repeated and stuff.*

Student D *And then you have to fight somebody to say oi, you played violin one last term and now you play violin two because I want to play violin one.*

Student O *Yeah, yeah.*

Student C *Wow.*

Student D *I don't think so. [laughter]*

Student B *Next term you swap with me. [laughter]*

Student D *I'm a grown up, I can handle that. [laughter]*

The image that this conjures is a fairly hostile, volatile situation between the students but the conversation mustn't be taken out of context and it was actually very jovial. Interestingly although one student feels that competition that exists within the orchestra is futile that there is no difference between parts, people only wanting to play the first part as an image thing, the general feel of the conversation is that people are competitive purely to push themselves ahead. In my experience as an adult learner I have found competition rife within my learning ensemble, as the following diary extract shows:

'23 May 2006

As [the tutor] was showing us the tunes by repeating them over and over, everyone had their own way of remembering it. I was singing the numbers, others were remembering the pattern of left and right, and [one student] was being really annoying and singing out loud and playing an imaginary bonang. As he was getting it he was singing louder and louder as if to say 'I've got it' and when other people were having a go he was singing the numbers for them and it was not helping. I must admit I was tempted to help out once but then I remembered that you've got to let everyone do it in their own way. He really annoyed [another student], she ended up saying 'yes I know it's a 3 I just need to find out where the 3 is.'

This was the first time that I had sensed open competition between any of the members of the group and I remember being amused by it. The reason for my amusement was that the two students concerned are actually both professional musicians and I think that this was more to do with proving their musical skills and justifying their status as a musician rather than one wanting to be better than the other. But in terms of motivation to learn gamelan, this competition has facilitated the development of both of the students; the first student needing to continue to 'get it' in order to maintain his position and the second student needed to be able to 'get it' in order to prove that she can.

The common theme with all of these examples is that the competition that exists in these learning ensembles has more to do with a person reaching their own level of aspiration than that of beating others. Therefore, within a learning ensemble where there is *'a perceived need in some individuals to be successful and better than others'* (Hallam, 1998; 96), it is actually the individual setting themselves

'a high standard of performance or level of aspiration and [striving] to reach this through [their] own efforts.'

(Vernon, 1969; 121)

"The group is the key"

In each of these four areas of motivation, security, sentiment, goals and achievement/competition, the linking factor is the group. Without the group the learner could not feel secure enough to make mistakes, without the group the learner has nothing to channel their affection, without the group the goals that the learner can set themselves are limited and without the group there is no reason to set such a high level of aspiration.

Vernon says

'Many social groups arise initially with the purpose of performing an activity in which members have a mutual interest. Motivation is enhanced, action is more enduring and effortful, satisfaction is increased, when people combine together to promote such activities. Indeed, it might be said that for the majority of human beings such social participation is the most valued and enjoyable part of their lives'.

(Vernon, 1969; 96)

I cannot think of a more true statement to apply to a learning ensemble.

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THE MUSICAL LIVES OF THE NON-MUSICIAN

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ABSTRACT

This paper will explore the impact that learning an instrument through the participation in a learning ensemble can have on the lives of those who do it. Using the concept of 'possible selves' I will explore why students within a learning ensemble do not class themselves as 'musicians' yet they have a rich musical life, and how it has catalysed the personal and musical development of these students. This will be done through the analysis of the students' stories, including that of my own journey through a learning ensemble.

INTRODUCTION

Penny is a secondary school teacher. She teaches sciences and has done for nearly 30 years. John runs a software company. Pat is a retired teacher and David works in a hospital.¹ What do these people have in common? They all describe themselves as 'not musical' yet they learn an instrument through a process of immersing themselves in active music making and performance within a learning ensemble. They are self-confessed 'non-musicians', yet they have a rich musical life.

WHAT IS A 'NON-MUSICIAN'?

When asking adult learners whether they would consider themselves to be a musician I find that they often say 'no way I'm a musician' or 'I'm a potential musician.' Our 'non-musicians' above all have a view of what a musician is and why they are not one.

John: 'Well I think a musician is able to play their instrument with a reasonable degree of competence. I mean, I view my son as a musician because I think he can play with a reasonable degree of competence, he has a certain amount of musicality as well. I think those two elements are necessary, both the ability to operate the instrument and a sort of a feeling for what you're playing. I think I have a feeling for what I'm playing, but it's the operation of the instrument that's the problem!'

Pat: 'I think the actual word musician almost implies somebody for whom music is their profession, someone who plays in an orchestra for money. When you talk about somebody being a musician, that's what it conjures up in my head. And when people talk to me about music I say 'oh I dabble in music' or 'music's my hobby', so I don't describe myself as a musician although I suppose technically I am, because I sing as well. In the choral society where I sing, the standard's pretty high and we perform with professionals, both players and soloists, so in that sense I might say I'm an amateur musician technically.'

Penny: 'Well. If you stick the word amateur in front of it, then it does make a world of difference doesn't it? I'm all too aware of the limitations to my talent and ability in that direction. I've got some God-given musical ability, I think I have because I learnt to sing and taught myself and at best it's a reasonable voice and a good enough ear in order to learn. But I haven't got perfect pitch by even close. But compared with my son I mean, I'm pathetic. He has such a good ear and such a good feel for it, a natural feel and natural ability. You know, children that I've worked with, that I see in the school are really, really able musicians. They've got a level of talent beyond what I've got. So it does put it all into scale.'

David: 'You get bores at concerts that have never touched an instrument in their lives, they know everything and they're unconscious incompetents. Then you get people like me that are struggling and we're conscious incompetents. And then the next wonderful step up must be conscious competence and then you get unconscious competence, that must be wonderful.'

The students are making comparisons between themselves and people who they perceive as musicians. These role models are either children or well-known professionals who have reached an extremely high standard. In other words, it's like comparing your average 'Sunday League' football player² with a teenage Michael Owen or David Beckham in his prime. There is just no comparison, but does that stop the Sunday League player being a footballer?

¹ Names have been changed for purposes of anonymity.

² 'Sunday League' refers to football leagues in England for teams of friends and work colleagues to play in, often on a Sunday morning.

It is not uncommon for music students to think that they are not musicians. In *Valuing Musical Participation* Stephanie Pitts looked at the musical identity of music students during the transition from A-level to first year undergraduate level. She found that there was a lot of insecurity about the students' self perception as a musician and in the group of first year undergraduates she studied there emerged a *'close connection between demonstrable achievement and musical identity... Suggesting that to be a 'musician' involves not just ability and experience, but must also incorporate a degree of recognition from others and a strong sense of self-identification with the values and skills attributed to this label.'* [5] Therefore, unless our adult learners believe they have the same skills as their role models, and others recognise it, they will never be musicians.

Susan Hallam highlights *'Self Concept'* as a motivational factor in learning an instrument; within this she includes *'ideal self, desired possible self and feared possible self'*. [1] The idea of the possible self as tool to reach a goal was put forward by Markus and Ruvolo: *'the crucial element of a goal is the representation of the individual himself or herself approaching and realizing the goal.'* [3] In order to reach what they desire, a person will construct a self-image of who they want to be, and it is the fulfilment of this self-image that drives the person to achieve. They say that the more elaborate the picture, the more chance there is of success and go on to suggest that a person may be able to actually feel what it is like to be their future possible self at different points during the execution of the action that takes them towards it. In other words, a person may be able to dip in and out of a future personality, and it is this experience that keeps them motivated throughout the task [3].

Possible selves can be positive or negative and work best when a positive possible self is balanced with a negative one in order to achieve the greatest result. For example, a student may construct an imaginary picture of what it is like to pass their grade 5 violin and be a grade 5 violinist; how they would feel, what it would mean to them, how others may view them once they have achieved this level and where it may take them in the future. This is a positive possible self. On the other hand the student may fail that grade 5 exam. Another picture is constructed of the self as a failure. The person may be able to feel how they would react on failing the exam, how others may react to them, what their self would be like as someone who has not achieved the level that they want. The key to whether they succeed in their pursuit of the qualification depends on whether they can balance the two possible selves and use the negative possibility to drive them on towards the positive outcome. If the negative possibility is too strong, then it may overtake the positive one and become a reality; 'I can't do it therefore I won't do it.' If the positive possibility is too strong then it may lead to over confidence and perhaps

lack of preparation. When the two are suitably balanced then the greatest success can be expected.

In her recent book *Instrumental Teaching*, Janet Mills discusses *'aspects of being a musician'* in relation to how instrumental teachers can develop their students' musical lives. [4] These are

- Creating, interpreting and responding to music
- Joining in performances that everyone feels proud of
- Feeling 'musical'
- Being moved by music

If these four aspects are what make a musician, do the students in the learning ensemble have the opportunity to experience them, thus developing their music lives? If so, are they in a position to pursue a possible self as a musician, or are they using music to reach another possible self?

CREATING, INTERPRETING AND RESPONDING TO MUSIC

The learning ensemble is a group that has been specifically designed in order for students to learn how to play their instrument in a group environment. Students are in an ensemble from the outset and they learn to play their instruments simultaneously. As their note range extends, so does the complexity of both the music that they play and how it fits with the other ensemble instruments, and eventually they move on to play full band/orchestral arrangements. The emphasis is on the students learning to play together and creating an ensemble sound.

Pat is a retired teacher and she has been learning to play the horn for seven years. When we first met she told me *'I've no musical background really except a daughter who plays.'* At first she took some individual lessons, but kept her horn playing quiet until someone that she worked with *'... found out about my big secret, which I never used to tell anybody, and she said why don't you join [the learning ensemble], it's just what you need. And it is, just what I need, it's great. But why is it just what she needs? Why does she need to be part of the creation of music in this way to be a musician, and why can't she do it on her own?'*

As it turns out Pat has a whole lifetime of musical experience: *'I've sung since I was 10. Not on my own, in a choir, sung in a choir since I was 10.'* Not only this, her husband plays guitar and her daughter *'who plays'* is a professional viola player. Therefore for most of Pat's life she has been surrounded in music making. As a

³ Rather than the creation of music through original composition, I have taken the word 'creation' here to mean the creation of a musical sound. Some would term this the 'recreation' of music.

member of a choir Pat has sung with soloists and orchestras and her experience of what a musician is consists of seeing highly trained individuals perform to a very high standard. Could Pat make this musician her possible self? When I asked Pat how she would feel if her group was taken away from her. She said

'Devastated. If it was taken away I'd have to try and find something else to join. I mean, now I'm retired, if I hadn't found the horn, life would not be nearly so interesting. If you like, it's made my retirement. I wish I'd started it earlier, but then as things were, I mean when you're working, full time teacher and all the rest of it, you don't have an awful lot of time.'

So to Pat her musical life is about social music making, about giving a point to her retirement, it is about experiencing a little of what her daughter's life is like. Her possible self may be a person to whom music is their life, but she knows that reaching a very high standard of musical achievement takes a lifetime, whereas she has only just begun, and therefore the possible self of a 'musician' is not likely from where she stands.

Lave and Wenger say that *'learning is an integral part of generative social practice in the lived-in world.'* [2] The idea that a person learns through the situation that they are in, and that the learning is a fundamental ingredient of the social world that they are a part of, is the essence of the concept of *legitimate peripheral participation* developed by Lave and Wenger. [2] As the person participates in their group their learning expands and develops. The more experience the learner has of the group, the greater their development. They belong to a community of practice, travelling along different 'trajectories', each holding a valid learning experience that is unique to the particular community of practice that they are part of. [6]

In relation to adult learning ensembles, the key factor to the learning is what the practice of the community is. If the learner wishes only to learn for the sake of learning an instrument and has no desire to participate in social music making, then being part of a community of practice where the practice is that of learning an instrument on an individual basis may suffice. However, if the learner wishes to be part of a musical experience with others and join an ensemble, performing music in a social context, then they can only do so by being part of the practice of the social creation of music. Therefore, each time her learning ensemble meet, Pat is given the opportunity to create music as a group, interpret the music and respond to it. This is why Pat's group is just what she needs, and her possible self as social music maker perpetuates that need.

PERFORMING MUSIC

One of the unique factors of a learning ensemble is its dual function as learning group and performing ensemble. On one hand, the students join their group in order to learn their instrument. However, they are joining a performing group, and it is performance that catalyses the students' learning. A performance can be a positive experience, giving a sense of achievement and realising a positive possible self, or it can be a negative experience, having the effect of realising a negative possible self. However, when performing within a learning ensemble, the performance is shared between participants and therefore, if a performance does not go to plan for an individual, the collective achievement often outweighs personal dissatisfaction with one's own performance. Therefore the student gets a glimpse of a negative possible self, but because it is in the context of an ensemble performance, the student can still get a sense of achievement through the performance. It provides an opportunity for the student to balance their possible selves.

John is a trombonist and he joined my learning ensemble mid-way through the year. After each rehearsal he would tell me how he didn't know where he was, how he was completely lost and how he was sorry and would try better next week. After his first performance he said *'Although I couldn't play any of my notes, I knew that everything around me was working.'* He was dissatisfied with his own performance, but he was fully engaged in the performance of the group, and to him the experience was *'electrifying'*. This was a performance that he could be proud of; it consisted of both his feared possible self - that of not being able to play a note, and his desired possible self - that of being a trombonist in a performing band. The fusion of his two possible selves in that one performance inspired him to practice and gave him confidence as a band member. As a result, he has progressed from being an isolated trombonist in a group of people, to being able to integrate his part into the ensemble as well as playing solo sections with confidence.

Taking pride in a group performance, although one's own performance was not brilliant, is something that I have discovered myself as an adult learner. I play with a Javanese Gamelan and since joining as a beginner I have learnt as part of a learning ensemble, performed with the Gamelan and kept a diary of my experiences. This extract was written a couple of weeks before a big performance.

'I am so annoyed I can't play 'Sumyar'. I was just totally lost, couldn't remember the sakharam and couldn't get the imbal. I couldn't even get the basic bit right. I was rubbish. I just gave up in the middle and felt like crying. [The tutor] came over and explained

some things to me and then we tried it again and it was a bit better but I was still rubbish. I just think the whole piece would be better if I didn't play it. I was really looking forward to London but I'm not now, not at all.'

Here my feared possible self was acutely realised. Despite this, I did go on and do the performance and this was my diary extract afterwards.

'That was brilliant. Everyone was on a real high after the gig. That bit that I couldn't do, oh my God. I just smiled and kept hitting the thing! I turned round to [another student] at one point and said 'Are we at that 2 yet', and she just turned round, smiling, and said 'I don't know'. Hee hee. We were both totally lost. I felt good about it, it was a good performance, I totally enjoyed it.'

Regardless of wanting to give up a few weeks before the concert, I continued and it made me feel good. Without that performance I may well have given up after the bad rehearsal, but now I can't imagine not playing Gamelan; it is part of my musical being.

FEELING MUSICAL AND BEING MOVED BY MUSIC

David likes to achieve and excel in all he does. Outside work he used to run. He ran competitively for 30 years and, although modest about it, reached a fairly high level. However, after an injury he needed to find something else to occupy the space that running previously had, and so he started to play the violin. Talking about his learning, he told me *'I don't think it's really self-improvement, it's perhaps self-fulfillment. It's all about pushing yourself.'* He is very self-driven. So why is he learning through a learning ensemble where some might argue that he would not learn as effectively as he would through intense private tuition? He says

'I'm sure that if I hadn't come here or something like it, I'd have just been ... [pauses] ... it's a bit like learning to touch type, you know, just going through the motions, whereas music is a much more rounded thing and there's a lot more to it than just putting fingers in the right place.'

He knows that he needs to feel the music in order to interpret it and communicate it to others, and therefore be successful. He is a regular concertgoer and has seen many professional orchestras and soloists, and this is where his possible self is:

'If I've ever had two fantasies in my life that were serious, one was winning the Olympic 800 metres and one was playing a concerto in front of a great orchestra. That's part of it. Part of it is knowing that it's worth doing.'

He wants to play with an orchestra and therefore the only way to really feel orchestral music, is to learn within an orchestra. This makes him feel musical and takes him closer to his desired possible self.

When I am in the Gamelan, I am surrounded by the most beautiful musical sound. The different instruments lock together to produce something that no instrument on their own could. I smile when I have reached the end of a cycle and I hear the gong, or I am playing an *imbal* and it is working and I know that we are playing as one. There is a certain spirituality about connecting with each other in a non-verbal way, knowing that although you don't know anyone particularly, you are as one; and it is the music bringing you together. The more I experience this, the more I let myself go with it. The more I feel the music, the more I am moved by it.

Penny has had breast cancer. She fought the illness for five years and has now made a full recovery. When I asked her why she joined her learning ensemble she said

'I'm not far off retirement. I suppose you've had a long working life and I studied a lot to become a teacher and I'm academically qualified in sciences and so on, I got to the stage, well I for one had breast cancer anyway, so you really do start to evaluate your life, you don't know how long you're going to be fit and active for do you? Or how long you're going to live. I mean, it's a depressing thought but it's true.'

Penny had reached a point in her life when she decided that she needed to do more than work and so she took up the clarinet. But why music?

My job, you know what secondary school teaching's like, it is so stressful and your confidence is constantly undermined and much as I love kids, in many ways it's now so hard to teach them because of all the other things that go on in schools, that I think I've become in some ways quite disillusioned with education. I do my best still or I'd get out. I consider I do as good a job as I can and I try hard to fulfil my obligation to the children, but it is quite depressing really working in a school. And learning, actually going out on Saturdays and doing something else it's given me something else to think about, talk about, something else to relax with. I love gardening for instance, but you can't do that all the year because this time of year it's miserable isn't it? And dark and cold and you can't relax out in the garden but you can get your clarinet out at midnight if you feel like it.

Music has moved Penny to such an extent that it takes her out of a depressing working life and it has given her life new meaning after having such serious health problems. Not only does she get immense satisfaction from the social aspect of her group, the development of her musical skill through the group has enabled her to

surround herself in her own music making whenever she likes, wherever she likes. Extending the capacity of the music to move her both inside and outside of her group. In her words, it has '*brightened up [her] life*'.

ARE WE STILL 'NON-MUSICIANS'?

Penny, Pat, John, David and I have all been touched by playing music as an adult learner in a group. Pat wishes music to encompass her life and fill the void that retirement has left, perhaps getting a glimpse of what it is to be like her daughter. John simply wants to make and perform music with no desire for grandeur. David desires to be a professional musician, even just for one day. Penny has used music to take her away from a stressful job, knowing that she needs to keep her health. I wish to create music for its own sake rather than it being income driven. These are our desired possible selves.

By learning within a learning ensemble, the students are by Mills' definition musicians, but it is easy to see why they don't consider themselves to be a 'musician'. They have rich musical lives but they are using music for many different reasons and not necessarily seeking recognition from others. Music has the ability to touch lives. It needs no other reason than enjoyment, yet it can have a life changing effect on a person who participates in it. This is music at its best.

'I mean [music is] certainly a huge part of my life, in a way that it wasn't before. I think people are wary of using [the term musician] because it sounds quite pretentious in a way. And also there's the sort of notion that you can only be a musician if you earn your living by it. I couldn't do that. I think you shouldn't be scared of labels and if it's a vital part of your life then why not. If a musician means being somebody who sees music as a vital part of their life and who really does have an urge to play as well as possible then I suppose I already am. I mean a poet is a poet whether they're published or not, if they write poems, that's what they are.'

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Learn As You Play: Gloucestershire's Adult Ensembles From Scratch

The Learn As You Play scheme in Gloucestershire provides opportunities for adults to learn to play an instrument within an ensemble. Beginners can join a group and learn together developing both ensemble and instrumental skill whilst enjoying making music in a social environment. But how does it work? Jennie Henley explores the issues of the social context of learning through participation based on her own research into adult learning ensembles.

Background

In 2002 Gloucestershire Music launched a new initiative called the 'Learn As You Play' scheme. The scheme was aimed at adult beginners who wished to learn to play either a brass, woodwind or string instrument within an ensemble. The scheme very successfully trained students in instrument technique and ensemble skill and quickly developed into a whole programme of adult provision within wind bands, string groups, jazz ensembles and an orchestra.

The idea of the music service providing opportunities for adults came from the then Head of Service in answer to the question 'what happened to students once they left school?' If a student had reached a high level of playing, there were groups such as amateur orchestras for them to play in, but what of the students who reached grade 5, where could they play?

During the 90's the government's emphasis on education services promoting lifelong learning coincided with this thinking and during that time Gloucestershire set up an adult jazz group and wind band, catering for exactly these sorts of people. This then paved the way for discussions about providing opportunities for adult beginners. As the music service had an excellent instrument hire service that could hire instruments relatively cheaply, a package was put together that involved the hire of an instrument and tuition within an ensemble environment for adult beginners.

The Learn As You Play Scheme

After appointing an Adult Learning Co-ordinator, the scheme was launched with a 'Bow/Blow it and see day'. This was an afternoon where people were invited to come along and have a go on brass, woodwind and string instruments, helped by staff, in order to decide what they wanted to play. Potential students were given information about how the scheme would work, what the costs would be, what material would be used and how to sign up.

The material chosen was Hal Leonard's 'Essential Elements 2000' and the students purchased their own copy of the book. The book is written as a 'band method' and can be used with different combinations of instruments; there is a string version as well as a wind band version. The students can follow the book in the ensemble environment and as they develop their instrumental technique and knowledge and understanding of notation, the music becomes more complex, moving from unison playing, to two-part playing and eventually to full band/string orchestra arrangements. However, the book also comes with a CD backing and 'Smartmusic' software so that students can also use it for personal practice.

Two groups were formed initially: a wind band and a string group. The first rehearsal was quite amazing, and very loud in the wind band room! Students were shown how to put their instruments together and how to get a sound out of it. The students were allowed to experiment with their sound and most couldn't

wait to get their hands on their instrument. A main tutor who was a violin/viola specialist and a support tutor, who was a cellist, supported the string group and a brass player led the wind band, supported by two woodwind specialists.

The students gave their first concert after two terms as part of the annual showcase events for the music service groups. The results were phenomenal. What the students had achieved in such a short space of time was quite breathtaking and something that the music service could be proud of.

From then on the scheme moved from strength to strength, developing very quickly with the formation of an intermediate orchestra, to accommodate players who had learnt previously but were not of the level demanded by local amateur orchestras, and a second 'Learn As You Play' wind band. Three more wind bands and a jazz group followed soon after.

By 2005 it became apparent that students who had learnt in the initial 2002/3 'Learn As You Play' wind bands were reaching a level where they wanted to move on from the beginner groups and play more challenging 'real' music. For the strings, the progression into the intermediate orchestra was obvious, but for the wind and brass players the progression wasn't clear and restructuring was needed. Five wind bands were in existence as well as one jazz group. One wind band remained as a 'Learn As You Play' group and students could choose to join that group if they wished to continue at a beginner level. Then a new wind band was formed out of the other wind bands to accommodate players who wished to move on to the next level of learning in that environment. The jazz group evolved into an intermediate jazz ensemble so if students wished to play jazz, they could choose to join that group, if they wished to play orchestral music, they could choose to join the orchestra. To support this, instrument specific technical workshops were set up so that instrumental technique could be developed alongside the ensemble skills that the main groups offered.

During this period the existing jazz group and wind band also grew in both competence and numbers. Now they provide an outlet for both instrumental and class teachers as well as players who have reached a high standard of playing but have entered other careers. These two groups are the showcase adult groups in the structure and provide Gloucestershire with a progressive scheme of groups where adults can learn to play together from beginner level to advanced.

Being involved in this scheme from the beginning has been an incredible journey. The adults gain so much from playing within their groups and the level of playing that they reach through learning this way is impressive. How many of us have spent a year teaching beginner children in school on a one to one level or in small groups of two, three and four, who would not be able to play in an ensemble situation by the end of their first year? So why does it work?

The Research

That was the question I asked myself when I undertook a small research project as part of the Associated Board of Royal Schools of Music's Certificate of Teaching course (CTABRSM). Through this project I concluded that the method of learning within a social group, and the fact that the group was a performing ensemble, had a major impact on the pace at which the students learnt and the depth of their musical understanding. In short, more in-depth research was needed and so I undertook a PhD at Birmingham City University, which I am in the throws of writing up, to attempt to answer the questions left by the initial CTABRSM project.

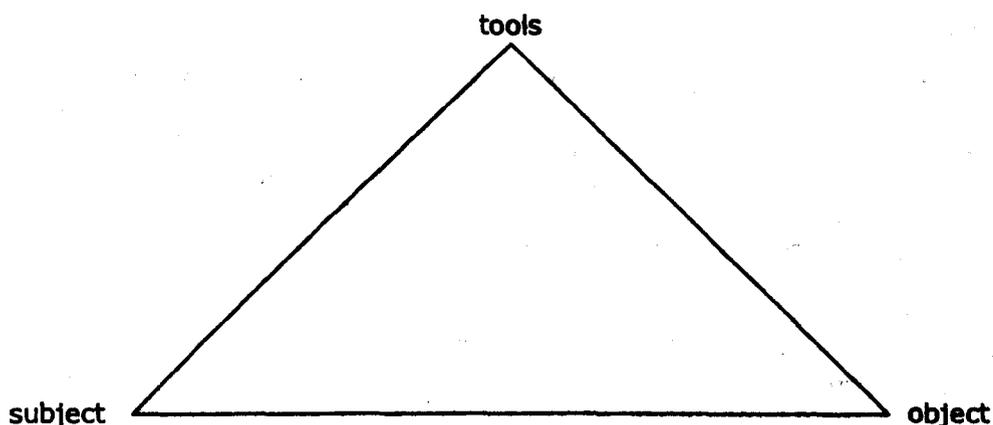
In order to understand the process of learning that occurs within these learning ensembles I took six groups, two of which formed a pilot study, from different parts of the country. All groups employ a large ensemble method of teaching adults. I observed each group, conducted a group interview with students and followed these up with individual interviews and interviews with the tutors. From the data I have been able to identify common themes across each case study and construct a picture of how the adults are learning within their groups, what the key motivational factors are and how participation in these groups shape their identities as musicians.

After the pilot study I realised that as an instrumental teacher myself, I have very little knowledge of what it is to be a beginner learning music through participation in an ensemble. So I decided to do it myself. Since 2005 I have been learning Javanese Gamelan and recording my experience in a research diary. This then has enabled me to analyse the data from the case studies alongside that of my own experience as a learner in an ensemble.

This aspect of the project has been the most exciting, illuminating and personally fulfilling part of the research. The experience has made me question how I learn, how I teach and why I teach the way that I do. Questions that we as teachers should continually ask ourselves in order to ensure our teaching is relevant and effective. I have also found so much common ground between my own learning and that of the students in the research that I believe I can present a convincing case for learning in this way, based both on student case studies and ethnographic research.

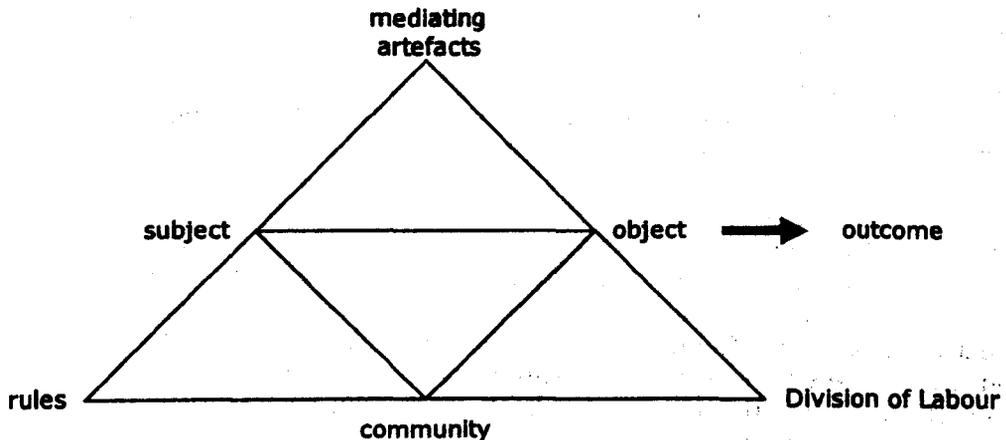
The Findings

In order to explain what is happening within the learning ensemble situation I employed a theory called Activity Theory. Activity Theory describes the process of activity through the interaction between the person undertaking the activity (the subject), the tools (also called mediating artefacts) used to carry out the activity and the object of the activity. Presented in the form of a triangle, it is known as an activity system.



In its most basic form, the subject is the student, the object is to play a piece of music and this is done through the use of tools such as instruments, musical notation, physical gestures etc. The individual cannot play the music without the instrument, and the instrument cannot play without the student, therefore it is the mediation between the two that fulfils the object of producing the music.

But this is not an isolated process and a second layer has been added to place the activity within its social context and show where the outcome lies within the process of activity.



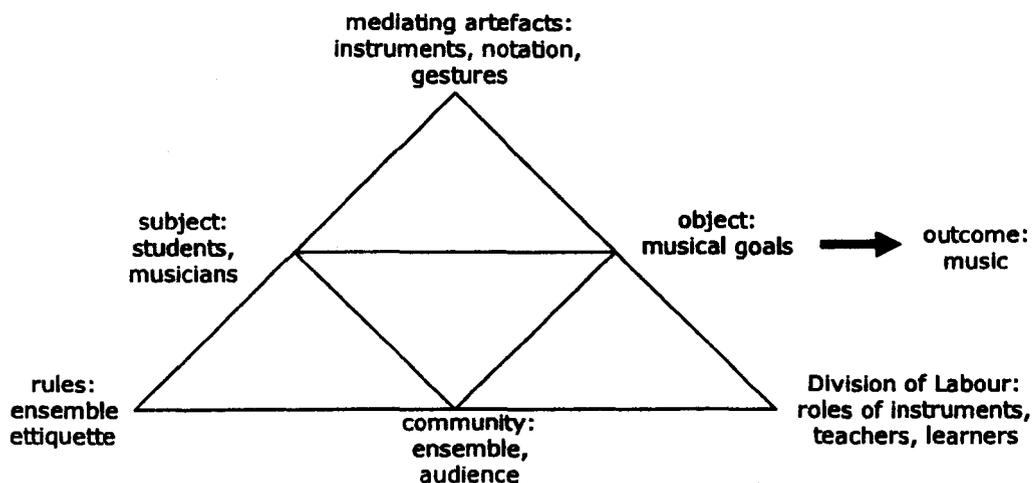
(Engeström, 1999; 31)

An individual student will set themselves a goal, for example to be able to play all the notes of a certain piece of music. The process they then go through to do this involves a complex set of interactions between their instrument and the notation, as well as the physical gestures that the conductor will give to inform the players where they are in the piece and how to play that part. This is within the context of where their own instrument fits with the other instruments in the ensemble, the rules that embody the nature of the ensemble, which in turn are guided by the context within which they are playing.

For example, in order to play the right notes a trombonist will have to physically move their arms and place their lips in the right position simultaneously to get the correct pitch, however if the correct pitch is not attained, and it does not fit in with what they can hear around them, they will firstly need to recognise whether the pitch needs to be higher or lower and then adjust physically to correct the note. The way that the particular note is played will be dependent on whether the note appears at the beginning of a bar or phrase or at the end, and the player will have to make a judgement as to where they are in the music as to how much stress they need to give the note, this can be directed by the conductor or can be gained by an awareness of what everyone else in the ensemble is doing at that particular time, or a combination of both. The note will belong to a series of notes that form a melody, a countermelody or be part of a harmonic sequence and therefore that note may need to be loud or quiet depending on where it lies in the texture of the music. The conductor may give a signal in the form of a physical gesture to indicate to the player how to play the series of notes, for example to play smoothly by a smooth, flowing gesture, or detached by a more jagged gesture, small indicating quietly and large indicating loudly. Simultaneously, the player will have to be sensitive to what particular role their instrument is playing at that point in the music, are they providing the tune, is it a solo or soli, a duet or is it an accompanying figure? On top of this, the player has to be aware of

where they are playing physically, are they in rehearsal or performance? Who is listening? And what the particular rules are for that specific context, for example in rehearsal it may be ok to speak or 'tut' at themselves or another person, laugh or even swear if a mistake is made (depending on the type of rehearsal, each group will have its own specific etiquette.). In performance this may change. All of this happens within a split second.

So the complex process of activity taking place within a learning ensemble presented as an activity system looks like this.



(Henley, 2007)

The ensemble situation allows this activity to take place in a different way than it would if the student was learning in a one to one lesson with a tutor. What is crucial to the success of the learning is what the purpose of the learning is. For every one of the adults that I have interviewed as part of my research, guided as a tutor within Gloucestershire's scheme and shared a song with in my gamelan, the purpose of learning is to make music with other people. If you cannot make music with other people, why learn?

One fundamental aspect of this type of learning is the dual function of the learning ensemble as learning tool and performing ensemble. The students in the ensembles perform regularly and it is the performance that catalyses the learning. A good example of this is the case of a student who joined my learning ensemble a month or so before a big end of year performance. After each rehearsal he would tell me that he couldn't play anything, didn't know where he was and that he would try harder next time. He didn't have to take part in the performance, performances are not obligatory, but he decided that he would. After the performance he was very much elated by the experience and he told me

'Although I couldn't play any of my notes, I knew that everything around me was working.'

For the first time this student was able to sense what was happening around him and to realise that the ensemble was producing a good performance. Without participating in the performance he would not have known that the performance was going well and therefore would not have been sensitive to what was happening around him. What this performance also did was show him that he didn't have to play all of his notes perfectly in order to produce a successful performance and feel good about it, and the performance is the result of a

combined effort that can far surpass the effort of the individual. Since this performance that particular student has come on in leaps and bounds. His confidence is greater and he has been able to integrate his playing with that of the others around him, showing an awareness of the ensemble that he didn't have prior to that first performance.

In this context the performance is the by-product of the learning; it is the outcome of the activity system. In music education we sometimes can put too much emphasis on the performance being the product by which we measure success or failure. Through my research I have come to the conclusion that the performance that the audience hears is not the sum of the achievements of the students and that we as music teachers should perhaps take a step back and look beyond the performance. There are many inspiring stories of adults using the learning ensemble to overcome illness, social isolation or to simply fill the gap that retiring has left in their lives. Many adults who participate in learning ensembles do not actually enjoy the experience of performance, but accept it as a necessary part of learning. They are learning in order to play, not to perform however they recognise that the performance helps them to play better. To others, it is the most thrilling part of the process. But it is the process that is important, not the outcome.

Needless to say, more or less all of the adults who participated in my research said that they would not have continued to play their instrument had they learnt purely with a teacher. All have different reasons for wanting to learn their instrument, for some it has changed their lives (see Henley 2008), but the common factor is that they wish to make music in a social environment and this environment, the performing ensemble, allows each individual's activity system to work in order to reach their own personal goals.

What Next?

For Gloucestershire, the question is where to go next. Decisions need to be made as to how to support the students who have reached a level beyond that of beginner (and indeed the initial expectations of the scheme), how to train staff to work specifically with adult groups and how to extend the scheme to encompass other genres and reach other target groups. One area that Gloucestershire wants to look into is working with adults with dementia, and a growing body of research is showing the effect that musical participation can have on the lives of people suffering with the condition. For myself, the question is where does all of this lead?

To me the answer is obvious; into schools. If adults can gain an understanding of music through participation in an ensemble, why can't children? Once my PhD is completed I intend to develop a project that will take my learning model (the intended outcome of my research) into a school to see how it can fulfil aspects of the National Curriculum, the Music Manifesto and provide a follow up for Wider Opportunities schemes. Maybe it can also begin to address some of the issues of transition from primary to secondary music whilst marrying the skills of the instrumental teacher with the class teacher through partnership working. If a project of this kind involving children is as fruitful as projects involving adults, I cannot begin to image the possibilities that this may create for music education.

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