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# Teaching the way we learnt: a study in popular music education

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Doctorate in Education



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## Summary

Popular music education in the UK, and worldwide, has seen significant expansion in the last two decades. As this new subject matures, scholars are beginning to fashion a new and more student-centred approach to learning and teaching: drawing on the informal learning practice found in popular music. Green (2006) defined the key characteristics of informal learning: allowing learners to choose the music; learning by listening and copying recordings; learning in friendship groups, with minimum adult guidance; learning in personal, often-haphazard ways; and integrating listening, playing, singing, improvising and composing. Informal musical learning is also facilitated through the use of recording as a technique for reflecting on, and improving one's own performance. These novel approaches to music education have begun to be applied by music educators, in a diverse range of contexts. Karlsen (2010) has correspondingly linked informal learning with ideas of authenticity, and communities of practice: social networks that provide individuals with access to learning through interaction with experienced 'old-timers' as described by Lave and Wenger (1991).

This thesis examines the way that seven musicians, teaching in one private UK Higher Education popular music institution, learnt their craft: firstly as musicians and subsequently as teachers. It asks how the way that these individuals acquired their skills and beliefs might impact on the way that they teach their students, and if this impact might be more effective if teachers were encouraged to reflect on their own learning, using that reflection to research, inform, and modify their own teaching practice. This work is particularly situated in small and medium size group teaching rather than the one to one teaching model found in classical music programmes, or in peripatetic music teaching.

Furthermore, my work takes a structural-constructivist approach using the ideas of Bourdieu (1977, 1990a, 1993) as a theoretical lens, and drawing on the constructivist learning theory developed from the principles established by Vygotsky in the 1920's and

1930's (1930/1978).<sup>1</sup> I argue that a hybrid approach to Bourdieu's notion of habitus (1990a, p.53) or the dispositions we adopt to the social world is crucial to understanding the way that we become musicians. Moreover, that the situatedness of musical and educational practice and the identity practices of learners and teachers are fundamental to the process of learning as a process of becoming (Lave and Wenger, 1991). Ergo, by recognising this process of learning as situated in social, cultural, historical, and technological contexts we may also facilitate metacognition (Flavell, 1979). By metacognition, I mean the ability to be reflexive<sup>2</sup> as a learner or teacher; understanding the way that learning works, our beliefs about learning, and how those beliefs affect one's own learning and thus agency. Additionally, that notions of authenticity and creativity are vital to the effectiveness of musical learning practices, and the accumulation of social and cultural capital for popular musicians.

My research methods include the use of open 'semi structured' interviews (Leech, 2002) alongside observation in the classroom<sup>3</sup> to generate empirical data. The primary research presented here is an *Action Research Study*: enabling the teachers in the study to retrieve their own experience of informal learning in order to facilitate informal learning practice in the music classroom.

I suggest that these individuals recognise the importance of their own experience and are able to utilise, and learn from those experiences in developing approaches that are relevant, creative, and also authentic to their students. What this work also aims to do is establish links between theory and practice, and to identify potential mechanisms for engaging with our students' entire learning experience, whilst allowing them to understand the social and cultural process of musical learning.

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<sup>1</sup> This text is a collection of Vygotsky's work originally published in the 1920's and 1930's.

<sup>2</sup> Reflexivity is a word used in sociology to describe how much agents are able to recognise the forces of social structure and therefore affect agency.

<sup>3</sup> By classroom teaching, I mean small group (10-20 students) and exceptionally, larger group (40-60) teaching, as is the model for delivery at my institution.

## Chapter one: Introduction and Context

In this introduction I will set out the context in which my thesis has evolved, beginning with my own narrative as an informal learner and a musician. I will also look at the development and growth of popular music education in the UK. My key research aim is to explore the role of informal learning in relation to popular music teaching in Higher Education. Specifically it seeks to address the following research questions:

1. How might music teachers utilise informal learning practices effectively in formal classroom settings?
2. How can music teachers be encouraged to retrieve and reflect on their own informal learning experience in order to see that learning through the eyes of their students?
3. In what ways can music students be encouraged to develop metacognition through reflection on action in action (Schon, 1983)?
4. By what means can both formal and informal learning become visible and legitimate for both teacher and learner?

My empirical research has been designed in two phases, the first phase primarily investigated the narratives of five popular musicians who had become teachers (working at my own institution, the British and Irish Modern Music Institutes or BIMM): asking them to reflect on their own learning as musicians and consequently as teachers and how their own learning history has informed the way they teach. The second phase consisted of an *Action Research Study*, which, asked five<sup>4</sup> BIMM teachers to reflect on their own informal learning and then use aspects of informal learning in their teaching, as a method for researching and improving their teaching practice.

This thesis is presented in six chapters. This first chapter outlines my research questions, introduces the context surrounding the work, and my own interest in this area

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<sup>4</sup> Two more teachers joined the project after the action research stage.

of research. Chapters two and three will examine the literature relevant to my research including: structure and agency;<sup>5</sup> social, cultural, historical, and technological contexts; learning and identity practices; authenticity, and creativity. In chapter three I will also look in detail at social constructivist educational theory, the history of music education, and notions of musical talent, metacognition, and informal learning. Chapter four will discuss methodology and the methods used to gather and analyse my data, including narrative, interviews, observations, and coding. I will also examine issues of ethics, validity and reliability. Chapter five summarises the findings from the 2012 *Action Research Study* and the analysis of my data. Chapter six lays out my conclusions and recommendations from that analysis and the thesis overall.

### My Narrative

As an aspiring popular musician growing up in England during the seventies and eighties, I believed that popular music was something to do in your spare time: it certainly wasn't something you did at school or college. There were no obvious routes to study popular music at degree level in the UK mainstream, and music education was dominated by the classical conservatoires alongside a few jazz programmes. Within formal schooling, classroom music tended to revolve around lessons in the sort of music in which I had little interest, partly because it required an aptitude for musical theory and playing an orchestral instrument. Outside the classroom, I had piano lessons for a while until my parents discovered that my piano teacher used a wooden ruler to physically punish poor technique.

So for me, music was an activity reserved for a small circle of friends, something that placed us apart from others. We swapped records and vied to discover the next great band. I bought a cheap electric guitar, a Kay<sup>6</sup> from Woolworths, and spent hours playing along, very badly, to recordings, trying my best to learn the chords. Eventually we formed a band

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<sup>5</sup> Here I am using the word in its sociological sense in that agents are individuals in society and agency is the ability of those individuals to act intentionally to affect change for themselves or others.

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.kayguitar.com/>

of sorts; unable to play the songs of the groups we idolised, we began to write our own songs (actually, one) and rehearsed in bedrooms.

After leaving sixth-form I immersed myself in the local amateur Oxfordshire music scene, going to see local bands and beginning to network with older more experienced musicians. I hung out at their rehearsal and writing sessions, in front rooms and garages, and I watched, listened and asked questions. As my own abilities developed, through hours of self directed practice, often playing along to recordings, I was able to join in, jamming<sup>7</sup> at rehearsals, gigs and private parties. Eventually I formed my own band, rehearsing in the garage of the bass player, until the neighbours complained and then in a barn at my parent's farmhouse. The next twenty years of my musical career followed this pattern: learning by listening, and playing along; and from friends, acquaintances (often older and more experienced musicians) and fellow band members.

I have now been a musician for almost thirty-six years and continue to write and record my music, although it really is relegated to my spare time these days. My professional career took a turn into music engineering and recording rather than playing, working with many exceptional musicians ranging from David Gray<sup>8</sup> to the Stereophonics<sup>9</sup> and Joe Strummer<sup>10</sup> to Howard Jones<sup>11</sup> and Hothouse Flowers.<sup>12</sup> I toured the world several times and eventually bought into a recording studio business in West London. During these years, and before I landed my first, part-time teaching jobs in colleges and then university some twenty years ago, my learning was always informal. I continued to learn, often by trial and error, and learning was always centred on writing, arranging and performing or recording and producing music. It didn't feel like a chore, most of the time, it was just what you did as a popular musician.

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<sup>7</sup> Group based improvisation.

<sup>8</sup> David Gray is a platinum selling folk influenced Welsh singer/songwriter: <http://www.davidgray.com/>

<sup>9</sup> Stereophonics are a highly successful Welsh rock band: <http://www.stereophonics.com/>

<sup>10</sup> Joe Strummer was a singer/songwriter and founder member of the critically acclaimed punk band the Clash who tragically died at the age of 50: <http://joestrummerfoundation.org/>

<sup>11</sup> Howard Jones is a English classically trained keyboard player who had several hit records in the 1980's with his distinctive brand of synthesiser based pop: <http://www.howardjones.com/>

<sup>12</sup> Hothouse Flowers are a Irish folk, and American soul and rock influenced band who had a series of hit records in the 1980's and 1990's: <http://www.hothouseflowers.com/>

Since the eighties, the situation has changed considerably and popular music can now be pursued as a subject at school, college or university. Musicians like myself are now teaching the next generation of popular musicians, many of whom may have learnt to play and produce music the way that we did. My own narrative forms a starting point for my exploration of informal learning practices. I intend to establish how reflecting on learning experiences through personal narratives can be used by teachers to facilitate connections between formal and informal learning, so that both are valued by teachers and learners.

One of the key catalysts for my growing interest in undertaking this research was an introduction to Lucy Green's work through her book *How Popular Musicians Learn* (2002), alongside Green's very successful venture in schools as part of the Paul Hamlyn *Musical Futures* project.<sup>13</sup> Green's model of informal learning has been the basis of *Musical Futures* work, which defines itself as 'a movement to reshape music education driven by teachers for teachers.'<sup>14</sup> Green's concerns with questioning the extent to which *traditional* music pedagogy serves popular musicians had a particular resonance with my own, as yet unarticulated, reflection on my experiences.

My background and motivations for this research topic are diverse. I am a self-taught musician who has had a career in music performance and production. I have worked as a musician, live sound engineer, recording engineer and music producer, and been a partner in, and director of, several music industry companies. I currently work as Dean of Higher Education for the BIMM group of colleges (in Brighton, Bristol, Manchester, London, Dublin and Berlin) where I am part of a team who oversee quality, standards and academic development across BIMM's Higher Education provision.

BIMM's approach to music education is both successful, and innovative. Research by Brighton Fuse,<sup>15</sup> a funded study bringing together Brighton and Sussex universities and creative digital network Wired Sussex, has been informed by the BIMM educational model. This work by the Fuse team has recently resulted in a successful European Union funding

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<sup>13</sup> <https://www.musicalfutures.org/resources/c/informallearning>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.musicalfutures.org/>

<sup>15</sup> [www.brightonfuse.com](http://www.brightonfuse.com)

bid to create a 'sector focussed learning space' (Sapsed *et al.*, 2013, p.63) at New England House in Brighton. This project took some of its inspiration from my *Phase One Study* in terms of interim research findings presented at a Fuse event at Brighton University (Irwin, 2012). This triggered the Fuse team to conduct their own research on BIMM's approach. The Fuse report cites the success of BIMM's educational community of practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991):

The Brighton Institute of Modern Music combines both formal teaching with informal learning experiences, as students are actively encouraged to form bands and gig locally as part of their overall education...Wenger's concept of Communities of Practice inspires and underpins the BIMM teaching and learning model. Using both individual and group assessment techniques, BIMM has produced many successful artists who have recognised the role of the institution in their development and as a consequence maintain their relationship beyond that of alumni, contributing their experience on practical levels. Tutors are drawn from the music industry and have successfully blended with the formal academic sector in order to accredit their BA courses and innovatively, developed their own PGCert for Teaching<sup>16</sup> (Sapsed *et al.*, 2013, p.34).

My thesis is also designed to inform the development of a learning and teaching strategy at BIMM that aims to promote the use of formal and informal learning approaches within a unified community of practice.

### **The Growth of Popular Music Education**

The extent to which the music education landscape in the UK in recent years has changed can be evidenced by figures available from Higher Education Statistics Agency<sup>17</sup> (HESA). The number of Higher Education institutions offering popular music rose from twenty-three in 2002 to forty-three in 2006, and the numbers of applications grew from 2,309 to 4,737 in the same period. Numbers overall for this period have shown a rise of around 2,000 full-time music students. Student demand for popular music courses and supply has increased hand-in-hand with an overall doubling of size within this subject in the early years of the current decade. More recent figures from HESA<sup>18</sup> show that recruitment to the Higher Education music sector remains buoyant, with some 8,395 students entering onto

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<sup>16</sup> Postgraduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching, validated by the University of Sussex:  
<http://www.bimm.co.uk/study/courses/brighton/teacher-training/?course-level=pgcert>

<sup>17</sup> The UK's statistical agency for Higher Education.

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.hesa.ac.uk/>



full time undergraduate programmes for the 2010-11 academic year, plus 485 part time students, giving a total of 8,880 new music students in the UK under the W130 Music JACS code.<sup>19</sup> It is not currently possible to separate popular music students from those studying classical and jazz, or performance, from composition (HESA are consulting on a new set of codes, which should make this possible in future). The 2010-11 figures show the total population of undergraduate music students (in all courses related to music) to be 22,070, of whom 1,150 are studying part time.

UCAS<sup>20</sup> statistics also show seventy-nine institutions offering music degrees in 2010-11, and only two out of nine national conservatoires (Leeds College of Music and the Royal Northern College of Music) currently offer popular music, between them offering some sixty places for popular musicians. Cloonan and Hulstedt's research (2013) finds popular music (not including Jazz or music technology) being offered at forty-seven Higher Education institutions. HESA also conducted a voluntary survey of privately owned provision in 2010-11 (HESA, 2012), which included returns from the Academy of Contemporary Music with 1,136 undergraduate students, and BIMM, Brighton and Bristol with 1,300 undergraduates. The two other large private pop music colleges in the UK at the time, the Institute of Contemporary Music Performance<sup>21</sup> and Tech Music Schools<sup>22</sup> did not return numbers to HESA for this survey. It is likely, however, that private provision accounted for between four and six thousand undergraduate popular music students (in the academic year 2011-12) studying programmes in the UK. These figures compare with numbers at the nine British conservatoires of 2,478 between 2008 and 2010 (HESA, 2011).

However, it should be noted that conservatoires are very different organisations in comparison to both universities offering music degrees, and the contemporary private popular music colleges. The nine British conservatoires are elite institutions offering

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<sup>19</sup> These are the Joint Academic Coding System (JACS) codes that group subjects together into subjects used by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) to report statistics, see: <http://www.hesa.ac.uk/content/view/1776/649>

<sup>20</sup> The UK's Universities and Colleges Admissions Service: <https://www.ucas.com/>

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.icmp.co.uk/>

<sup>22</sup> Tech Music School became part of the BIMM Group in 2010 and was renamed BIMM London in 2014: <http://www.bimm.co.uk/london/>

training predominantly in classical music performance and composition and receive preferential government funding in order to maintain a supply of classical performers and composers to the UK and the world's orchestras. This preferential funding allows the nine institutions to maintain a regime of one to one teaching and provide extensive ensemble practice, and performance spaces that other institutions would find it hard to emulate. The new popular music colleges do not seek to match the conservatoire approach (although some universities do aspire to do so) and generally deliver teaching in small and medium sized groups<sup>23</sup> rather than one to one.

The statistics quoted above indicate a very large, and growing, popular music cohort within UK Higher Education and one that has flourished from the cultural divide between classical and popular art forms. Cloonan and Hulstedt (2013) found that the majority of courses in popular music are delivered by universities that are relatively new to the sector - the majority established after 1992 when former polytechnics in the UK were encouraged to become universities:

Popular Music Studies [PMS] is an overwhelmingly “new” subject area within UK Higher Education [HE]. When combined with the fact that “new” universities dominate the provision of PMS within UK HE, there is evidence that PMS is doubly “new” in that it is a “new” subject within “new” HEI's [Higher Education Institutions] (2013, p.68).

Likewise institutions such as BIMM are also new providers specialising in a new subject. Cloonan and Hulstedt conclude that practitioners in this novel subject ‘remain somewhat confused about what they should be teaching.’ (2013, p.77). The current cohort of young musicians on such courses have come through a school system that has only recently begun to embrace popular music, and yet they are now studying their chosen vocation to degree level. Without a deeper level of data and analysis (which is difficult due to the lack of detailed data from HESA, with little or no data being available currently for private providers) it is not possible to know how many of these young musicians might previously have opted to study another subject or indeed to study classical music, but it is likely that

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<sup>23</sup> From ten to twenty students for instrumental teaching.

some would have. It appears that a large number of young musicians wish to study popular music and that they are engaging in informal as well as formal learning, as Green (2002) established.

## Chapter two: Literature Review, Bourdieu's Thinking Tools

### Bourdieu's Conceptual Framework

Although I have used constructivist learning theory to help my understanding of learning in this thesis (see chapter three), I have also looked at the world of popular music education through the lens of the work of Pierre Bourdieu (1977, 1984, 1990a, 1992) who provides a more overarching theory of social and cultural practice. In this chapter I will begin by defining the key concepts from Bourdieu's work that are relevant to my research. I will also trace the way these ideas have been developed and applied by Bourdieu and others, and how I will use them to analyse the key themes I have identified: situatedness; identity practices; authenticity; and creativity.

Bourdieu has much to say about the arts, including musical taste as a signifier of social position 'nothing more clearly affirms one's "class", nothing more infallibly classifies, than tastes in music.' (1984, p.10). In fact Bourdieu argues that only taste for food is more ingrained than taste for music, later saying 'the flaunting of "musical culture" is not a cultural display like others...Music is the most "spiritual" of the arts of the spirit and the love of music is a guarantee of high cultural status.' (1984, p.10). Bourdieu concludes '[m]usic represents the most radical and the most absolute form of the negation of the world, which the bourgeois ethos tends to demand of all forms of art.' (1984, p.11).

Bourdieu's theory is, as Wacquant puts it, '[a] total science of society.' (1992, p.10). His model seeks to bridge conflicting positions between structure and agency, whilst also explaining how cognitive, cultural and social worlds function together to produce meaning. Bourdieu's theory accordingly bridges divides between the social/cultural and the cognitive domain and is thus psychosocial. As Bourdieu explains:

There exists a correspondence between social structures and mental structures, between the objective divisions of the social world - particularly into dominant and dominated in the various fields - and the principles of vision and division that agents apply to it (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p.12).

I see this point as crucial in re-uniting the fractures produced by dualist thinking. Our conscious world is both deeply social/cultural and cognitive. Thus, the construction of the world around us is mirrored by the formation of the world inside us, and our interpretation of how the internal and external worlds work. Therefore in my thesis I will draw on scholarship from sociological, educational and psychological disciplines.

## **Capital**

For Bourdieu there are three main systems that maintain the ecology of our society and the interests of particular dominant groups. The first is capital from Marx (1976): a term used to define economic assets that may be owned and exchanged such as money, goods, labour, and stocks and bonds. Sociologists have taken this word and applied it to anything individuals or groups might possess or make use of to our advantage including knowledge and education, social standing, and access to the resources of social networks. Bourdieu's notion of capital is likewise multi-faceted, consisting of four fundamental 'species' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p.119).

Bourdieu's capital can be economic, cultural, social, and symbolic. Economic capital is financial capital, or wealth. Cultural capital defines the social assets an individual holds, it is informational capital, including education, knowledge and practical understanding. Social capital is the capital that individuals belonging to a social group or class may access (including group resources of economic, cultural and symbolic capital) by benefit of their membership of that group or class (and for musicians affiliation to a musical genre or style). Symbolic capital is honour or esteem bestowed on individuals or groups that arises from the other forms of capital, which has to be recognised as legitimate in order to become useful and bring its value to that individual or group.

## Field

The second system in Bourdieu's model is field. Bourdieu describes fields of cultural production as socially structured spaces that contain a pattern of objective 'magnetic' forces acting on any individual entering the field (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p.106). Cultural fields of production and practice include the artistic field, literary field, scientific field, musical field, etc. Fields are often extensive in scope, for example the fields of economics, politics, power, and religion. Fields can also be more specific, such as the fields of art, literature, education, and science; and they may intersect. It is indeed possible for agents to be a part of more than one field. As Burnard (2012) explains, for contemporary musicians access to power and position is complex and depends as significantly on who you know, as much as it is contingent on the eminence of the music you make:

The field bestows recognition and success. Success is important for the field, positioning these individuals, as is the establishment of field networks, mutually beneficial field relations, and associations with key figures in the field (2012, p.271).

As Burnard explains further '[f]or music, the structure of the field influences the possibilities of having music published, broadcast, downloaded.' (2012, p.222). She proposes that Bourdieu's concept of field may also be extended to apply to musical genres and the industries that maintain and support those genres 'in the field of music, the discipline of music is a field, the musical genre or tradition is a field, and the industries of each genre are fields, within, for instance, the popular music industry.' (Burnard, 2012, p.214).

The definition I will adopt here is broader and closer to Bourdieu's original concept. I see the domains that Burnard describes as existing as realms within a unified cultural field of music. Therefore, the fields I am examining are music and education and in this context they are intersected by the fields of science/technology and the economic field. The field of music includes the genres and industries of music, which occupy their own places within the field but do not constitute their own cultural fields of production. According to

Bourdieu the overarching field of literature and the arts, which includes the field of music, holds a privileged and autonomous position in relation to the fields of politics and economics. Nevertheless, as Bourdieu notes '[t]he fields of cultural production occupy a dominated position in the field of power: that is a major fact ignored by ordinary theories of art and literature.' (1987, p.144). The field of music is thus regulated by relationships with the field of power, a 'meta-field' that, according to Wacquant sits above and encompasses the others (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p.18).

For Bourdieu popular music is a particular case where its 'evolution consists of the increasingly professionalized search for technical solutions to fundamentally technical problems...a process of refinement which began the moment popular music became the subject of learned manipulation of professionals.' (1993, p.119). Education is likewise an important field for Bourdieu as it is the primary, formal mode for the inculcation of 'habitus' (1990a, p.53) through the mechanism of 'symbolic violence' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p.15). Bourdieu defines symbolic violence as power wielded over social actors that imposes values and hides its true partisan nature:

Every power to exert symbolic violence, i.e. every power which manages to impose meanings and to impose them as legitimate by concealing the power relations that are the basis of its force, adds its own specifically symbolic force to those power relations (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977, p.4).

Fields and the positioning of agents within those fields are contested when the rules of the 'social game' (Bourdieu, 1987, p.63) become altered and re-written, and this may occur when a field's boundaries change and when power within the field changes hands. The popular music industry has long had an autodidactic tradition, one that served it well whilst it held on to its ability to control and exploit its intellectual property (Easley, 2005). Since the birth of the popular music industry, music business professionals began to develop a system of apprenticeships for young musicians, facilitated by Artiste and Repertoire (A&R) departments, alongside a suite of specialist support services. Recording

companies provided teams of ‘old-timers’ (Lave and Wenger, 1991)<sup>24</sup> to support and develop young musicians in order to support their transition into the professional realm (Passman, 1991, Burnet, 1996, Harrison, 2000).

However, this system relied on those young musicians being willing to scratch a living, often through claiming unemployment benefits, whilst developing their commercial musical profile. Although the last UK Labour government did launch the rather short lived *New Deal for Musicians* scheme in 1998,<sup>25</sup> designed to support unemployed young musicians, this scheme was subsumed into the *Flexible New Deal* by Labour in 1999 and finally scrapped by the coalition government in October 2010.

As Cloonan (2003) points out in his comprehensive review of the system in Scotland, a new understanding between the popular music industry and government had led to the scheme being designed to replace the traditional unofficial apprentice system in the industry that had relied on young musicians claiming state benefits. However, this attempt to support young musicians did not continue, and consequently as government began to reduce welfare provision to tackle the national deficit, young musicians were caught in a double bind between a failing industry and the withdrawal or reduction of state benefits.

Alongside these changes to state support the UK, in the 1980’s and 1990’s this global multi-million dollar popular music industry that had been in rude health since its heyday in the 1950’s and 1960’s also came under attack from its customers. As Seybold *et al.* record under the title *the day the music died*:

Arne Frager, founder of The Plant, a well-established recording studio in Sausalito, California bemoans the revenues of the music industry. Paralyzed by Napster, MP3, and Gnutella free distribution networks, the whole music industry suffered a 50% cut in earnings. Many of the recording studios like Arne’s fell silent for the first time in 27 years (2001, p.4).

Steve Knopper’s book, *Appetite for Self-Destruction: The spectacular crash of the record industry in the digital age* (2009) tells a story of complacent and technically incompetent executives, desperately trying to maintain their grip on a multi-billion dollar global

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<sup>24</sup> Seasoned professionals with many years of experience in the industry.

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.delni.gov.uk/index/finding-employment-finding-staff/fe-fs-help-to-find-employment/newdeal/new-deal-for-musicians.htm>



industry. As Kusek and Leonhard point out, the changes in music distribution have simply led to a shift in the dispersal of power across the field of music. Record companies had assumed because of their size and influence that they were the music industry, but they were not: '[w]e have passed through the Industrial Age to the Information Age, and music will never be the same again.' (Kusek and Leonhard, 2005, pp.38).

The record industry also considered music and music makers as simple consumer products rather than understanding music as the complex and multifaceted experience that we, musicians and music fans, know it to be, and one that often defies attempts to market its inherent appeal (Dannen, 1990). It is possible that musicians and their managers will be the ones to control the future industry using the worldwide web to reach their customers directly. Instead of being controlled or influenced by the big recording labels with their exposure via television and radio, this new mode of production interacts directly with music producers:

The kids turn to the Net, which they use for many hours a day as a "next generation radio," digging for new music and finding their own treasures. Here, they feel that they can control and select what they are going to hear...This is a completely new way of discovering music and hanging out with your peers in a free-form digital environment. What kid wouldn't like that? (Kusek and Leonhard, 2005, p.102).

However, it is more likely that as the change in production and distribution from the traditional music companies to the new media organisations is consolidated, that power will simply change hands from one elite to another, and as Adorno put it, the culture industry will endure and continue to commodify and standardise all forms of art:

The pervasiveness of music, the way in which products have become a direct extension of their advertising image, all these phenomena taken a closing of the gap between the culture industry and everyday life itself, and a consequent aestheticization of social reality (1991, p.23).

Whatever the outcome, as Wikstrom concludes: '[i]n spite of turbulent times, the love for music will not fade, and great music will continue to give us goose bumps and euphoria. There always will be a demand to make and to listen to music'. (2009, p.178).

To conclude, the genre of popular music has begun to re-establish its equilibrium under the influence of a new and powerful elite, a technically astute group who have largely swept away the old structures of influence and replaced them with new ones more suitable to the conditions of the modernity. Consequently, music (and music makers) continue to be exploited commercially; the influence of the field of power continues to be pervasive and dominant, even in the most spiritual of the arts (Bourdieu, 1987, p.144).

### **Habitus**

The third part of Bourdieu's model is habitus. Bourdieu used the term habitus to describe a set of dispositions that are located within the individual agent acting in the social world. Bourdieu's early work<sup>26</sup> defines habitus as 'systems of durable, transposable, dispositions' (1990a, p.53), or individual ways of relating to the social and cultural world. Agents therefore become acutely, if unconsciously, conditioned to their position in, and disposition to, the fields around them. For Bourdieu, habitus is socially constructed and developed as we navigate our lives in social and cultural space, and it comes with consequences 'to give a social definition, an identity, is also to impose *boundaries*.' (1982, p.120). We develop our habitus by learning how to fit in, learning how and who to be, developing 'a feel for the game' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p.61).

My own interpretation of Bourdieu's use of this word is that habitus is an agent's subjective and embodied response to the objective structures of the fields that an individual interacts with: objective structures that encompass the cultures, histories, technologies and struggles for power within those fields as well as the influences of race, class and gender, which I will discuss specifically later in this chapter.

Habitus is durable, although also subject to change as Reay points out '[h]abitudes are permeable and responsive to what is going on around them.' (2004, p.434). Habitus is thereby embodied within the individual and responsive to the social and cultural world as it interacts with the changes in flux of the 'magnetic' 'power lines' of force within fields

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<sup>26</sup> Originally published in French in 1972.

(Bourdieu, 1971, p.161). As Bourdieu points out, habitus is in some ways empowering as well as limiting '[t]he habitus, as society written into the body, into the biological individual, enable the infinite numbers of acts in the game.' (1987, p.63). Bourdieu also refers to habitus as working in two ways. The first is the conditioning of agents when the field, or the relationship between fields, structures the habitus. Secondly Bourdieu refers to the cognitive response of the individual that makes the field(s) meaningful to that agent. These are structures that govern the social world, the mind and the body. Field is thus enmeshed with habitus, and together they are mutually dependent for their reproduction across time and social/cultural space. Furthermore, reality is largely hidden through largely unconscious conditioning of habitus and field, and its 'misrecognition'<sup>27</sup> (Bourdieu, 1977, p.5) but there is always potential for agency if agents are able to see through this conditioning and understand the workings of the mechanisms behind it.

For Bourdieu, the intersection of field and habitus is where objective structures and the embodied dispositions of habitus collide, promoting practical actions including exclusion. Moreover, it is also the function of habitus to produce 'doxa' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p.98). Doxa is a word used by Bourdieu to describe social knowledge within a field that is un-contested, enshrined within that field as part of what is understood as common sense. Using Bourdieu's insight into dominance within and between fields, we could make the claim that learners tend to adopt formal, legitimised strategies enshrined within disciplines (such as traditional approaches to notating and reading music) even if those strategies were not the ones they had originally learnt by. Thus, by adopting disciplinary knowledge we may also adopt the pedagogy that is enshrined within the field of that discipline (Healey, 2000, Huber, 2006).

Bourdieu also argues that habitus is unpredictable and follows the 'fuzzy' logic of practice (1990a, p.87). Thus, the way habitus acts upon agents is also dependent on the state of the field, which may be in flux. Habitus can be either enabling or constraining to

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<sup>27</sup> Bourdieu use the word misrecognition to describe the way agents fail to recognise the reality behind the forces of field and habitus.

agents. As Hodkinson *et al.* point out '[o]ne way of understanding learning is as a process through which the dispositions that make up a person's habitus are confirmed, developed, challenged or changed.' (2008, p.39). And that learning can 'change and/or reinforce the habitus of the learner. In these ways, a person is constantly learning through becoming, and becoming through learning.' (p.41). Bourdieu's position is supported by the work of Mezirow (1990), Lave and Wenger (1991) and Jarvis (2006) in the assertion that reflexive and experiential learning has the potential for individual transformation.

Nevertheless, Bourdieu's notion of habitus is often criticised as leaving little room for reflexivity, agency or individual social transformation (Jenkins, 1992, Lahire, 2001, Widick, 2003). Reflexivity can be defined as the capacity for agents to recognise social structures and forces and therefore affect agency, although in the context of academic research it is also used to describe researchers' awareness of issues of validity and reliability, which I will discuss in chapter four. However, over his career Bourdieu developed his conceptualisation of habitus, to allow for greater reflexivity and thus individual agency, principally under conditions of stress and change in the power relationships that shape fields. For example in *an Invitation to Reflexive Sociology* Bourdieu states that:

Times of crisis, in which the routine adjustment of subjective and objective structures is brutally disrupted, constitute a class of circumstances when indeed "rational choice" may take over, at least among agents who are in the position to be rational (1992, p.131).

Here Bourdieu is principally referring to those such as scientists and academics, whose habitus demands reflexivity. Therefore, the reflexivity employed by academics becomes a key to reflexive agency during periods of change in the structures of fields, or the relationships between them. Furthermore, more recently scholars have argued for a hybrid conceptualisation of habitus, more suited to contemporary globalised social conditions (Lahire, 2001, Maton, 2003, Sweetman, 2003, Adams, 2006). I am particularly convinced by the very sophisticated model proposed by Conde (2011) that allows for agency and acknowledges the influence of psychological, idiosyncratic, individual,

biographical and inter/cross-cultural forces on agents, whilst also placing habitus as central in the formation of individual identity.

My own conceptualisation of habitus is likewise a hybrid one where identity is significantly, but not completely, constituted as Bourdieu's habitus and where cultural and psychological differences also have a part to play in the formation of identity. As Davey points out, in her work, *Narratives of Transition*, habitus does not preclude change and/or agency:

Habitus is frequently criticised for being overly deterministic and unable to account for individual change. I argue that if habitus accents continuity, it recognises potential for change too, and this is most likely realised through individual movement across social space, which Bourdieu describes as "field" (2009, p.276).

Strand concurs in that through the dialectic between habitus and field there is 'the latent possibility of transcending and changing both habitus and the social conditions.' (2001, p.204). However, there is always a cost to pay, as Bland argues - in order to succeed individuals have to make social, cultural and emotional sacrifices '[m]aking a conscious and painful effort to change one's habitus can offer a means to achieve success in an unwelcoming environment, but the cost of that change is family, friends and culture.' (2004, p.11). The young people Bland describes have lost the networks of support and learning associated with their class and have had to adopt those that dominate the discourse of the field of education, dominated by a middle-class dialectic.

Although we cannot alter the social and emotional costs of a change of habitus, we can allow learners more control over the process of learning and Freire's work (1973) suggests that the adoption of a critical pedagogy in educational settings may allow learners to experience learning as something they have control over rather than something that is imposed upon them. Ecclestone's (2004) study, likewise found that when students from non-traditional educational backgrounds are able to access the informal learning networks of social capital that they correspondingly become more discriminating in the choices they make so that '[t]he comfort zone that arose from these

interactions shaped the types of cultural and social capital that students could develop, or were prepared to develop.’ (2004, p.16).

Furthermore, the same sense of dislocation caused by habitus may also be experienced by academics themselves: as Hey, in her examination of the autobiographical work of female academics from working-class backgrounds, points out, classed social identity is problematic for these agents, and does not allow for easy or comfortable transition from working-class to middle-class identities:

That “escape” from the working-class is only permitted to a few and that it is never entirely escape, both because it is so often held onto wilfully as psychic and political defence against the truth of the impossibility of return (2003, p.331).

Through the interactions of habitus, field and capital, popular musicians are able to practice in social and cultural space. Through their ability to accumulate social capital, these popular musicians also accumulate cultural and symbolic capital through the acclamation of the media and music fans. Although this capital holds less value than that conferred on music that is ‘high art’<sup>28</sup> from a middle-class perspective. In seeking to find ways of engaging music students in reflexive practice, understanding the ways that young musicians interact with the field of music is an essential precursor.

In music, habitus can also be closely connected with the embodiment of a particular musical style or genre, as musicians may adopt the cultural conventions and dispositions of genre(s): identity practices embedded within the musical style(s) they prefer. These musical sub-cultures occupy their own corners of the social space or field of music: vying for recognition and forming communities of practice as described by Hewitt (2009a) who argues that musical genres consist of distinctive social networks that encompass both ‘musical’ and ‘extramusical aspects.’ (2009a, p.330). Furthermore, that these aspects include performance, transmission and pedagogy, each musical genre establishing its own ‘norms’ and ‘traditions’ of practice (2009a, p.331). This is a topic that I will return to later in my discussion of genre and how it relates to authenticity, identity practices and

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<sup>28</sup> Here I am referring to music that is considered to be closest to the spiritual ideal as defined by Bourdieu (1984, p.10-11).

creativity for musicians. Although musicians are able to work across a wide range of genres this is the exception rather than the rule. Individuals further develop social and cultural capital by engagement in genre based communities of practice, where they construct knowledge adapting to the rules of engagement set by their profession and the membership of field(s).

Finally, what I also take from Bourdieu is the use of habitus as a methodological tool. As Reay points out 'habitus is primarily a method for analysing the dominance of dominant groups in society.' (2004, p.436). In fact, what it explains best is the way that those with power consciously, and un-consciously, learn how to maintain that power, recognising others like themselves, excluding those who don't fit in because of their class, race, gender or identity. Underlying the work in this thesis are the personal learning journeys of all those in the study, including my own. The analysis of the development of identity practices within social, cultural, historical and technological situations during these learning lives is central to my methodological approach. By comprehending the way that our identities have been constructed, we may bring understanding to the way that identity is practiced and situated for others.

### Notions of Identity

Identity is a more commonly understood idea than that of habitus, and is a conception of individuality, a definition of the self founded on the principle of reflexivity. We may have individual identities and groups of individuals may also have specific group identities. As previously established, I consider identity to be constituted socially and culturally through the development of habitus, but also through encounters with psychological, idiosyncratic, individual, biographical and inter/cross-cultural forces, and in these domains agents may have the ability to be more reflexive. There is some recent research on the importance of the role of music in the formation and preservation of identity (Hargreaves *et al.*, 2002, Frith, 2004, Burt and Mills, 2006, Green, 2011). Moreover, studies into issues of musical

taste and the membership of musical sub-cultures (Hebdige, 2002, Huq, 2006, Wel *et al.*, 2008). The influence of musical role models, and the way that young people talk about music (Ivaldi and O'Neill, 2008, Hewitt, 2009b, 2009, Saunders, 2010), indicate that musical preferences are often formed and consolidated early in social development.

Bourdieu is quite specific in defining the individual nature of habitus and the way that it moulds both our inner and outer worlds. Moreover, although the collective history of habitus is a prevailing force in society, he allows for limited individual variations:

“Personal” style, the particular stamp marking all products of the same habitus, whether practices or works, is never more than a *deviation* in relation to the style of a period or class so that it relates back to the common *style* not only by its conformity (1977, p.86).

Furthermore, as Lawler points out, for the modern subject ‘[t]he notion of identity hinges on an apparently paradoxical combination of sameness and difference.’ (2008, p.2). The formation of identities may correspondingly be influenced by both social and psychological factors as Lawler proposes:

Identities can be understood as being socially produced: through narratives, through kin networks, through unconscious process, through governance and interpellation and through performance/performativity...an examination of the social world indicates they are lived out relationally and collectively. They do not simply belong to the individual: rather, they must be negotiated collectively, and they must conform to social rules (2008, p.143).

This is a position that is consistent with the ideas of habitus, but also allows for the individual/biographical, cultural and psychological influences on agents that a hybrid model encompasses. Bruner (1991) takes the idea further in his discussion of narrative and autobiography ‘(like the novel) involves not only the construction of self, but also a construction of one’s culture.’ (1991, p.77). For Bruner the self is thus, socially ‘distributed’ in the same way that ‘knowledge is distributed.’ (1991, p.76).

However, this socially constructed notion of identity is also contested by other contemporary sociological conceptions, where individuals appear to have much greater degrees of agency and the ability to mould their own unique identity: as a reflexive project woven from the culture around them, consciously, deliberately, and with responsibility.



This concept of identity is put forward by Giddens (1991) and Beck (1994). Giddens suggests that '[t]he self is seen as a reflexive project, for which the individual is responsible', and that '[t]he reflexivity of the self *extends to the body*, where the body is part of an action system rather than merely a passive object', and further that '[t]he moral thread of self-actualisation is one of *authenticity* based on "being true to oneself"'. Lastly that '[t]he line of development of the self is *internally referential*.' (1991, p.74-80). As Skeggs makes clear, this makes identity into individual property and ignores its profoundly social formation:

Identity has thus become refigured as something to be *owned and articulated as a property of the person*. It has become a property right, and struggles around gender, sexuality and, in particular, race, compete for moral authorization...Self responsibility and self-management, precisely the features identified by Giddens, become the mechanisms by which class is reproduced and refigured, individualised as a marker of personal volition and inclusion, excluding groups from belonging and participation through assumptions about their own take up of a particular form of agency, one to which they do not have access (2004, p.59-60).

Indeed, this would affirm the effectiveness of habitus to maintain and reproduce the status quo, and to hide the method of its reproduction, through misrecognition. If the middle-classes inherently develop a feel for the game, their voice dominating the discourses that legitimise practice, then the middle-class voice can legitimise certain behaviour and demonise or exclude others. Lawler adds that identity is intrinsically and increasingly social as we connect more through technology. It becomes seemingly vital that our identities are authentic: true to our origins, self-directed, and individualistic 'It's not simply that we are all connected (although we are – and increasingly so)...Lines are constantly drawn and re-drawn between "us" and "them", and these lines are drawn around identities such that "they" embody all of the socially disapproved forms of identity.' In her list of disapproved form of Identity Lawler includes 'inauthenticity (not being oneself)' and 'unawareness of oneself and ones origins (not knowing who you are).' (2008, p.143-144).

These are also characteristics of identity that are often debated and discussed by the music press in discourses around whether musicians have *sold out* or stopped *being*

*themselves* or have *forgotten where they came from*, and these crimes against identity may explain the meteoric rise and fall in popularity for popular musicians, examples include the very negative fan response to Bob Dylan playing an electric guitar at the Newport Jazz Festival in 1965,<sup>29</sup> and the press response to singers John Lydon and Iggy Pop selling butter and car insurance on television.<sup>30</sup>

### Gender, Race, Capital, and Class

There are three defining classifications that, although not directly the subjects of my research have influence upon this thesis, and they are gender, race, and class. All three have, their own bodies of research outside the bounds of the research questions I have posed here. Nevertheless, gender, race, and class are defining factors in identity formation (Frith, 2004), and musical authenticity: both of which will be discussed in detail in the analysis of my data, so require some discussion in order to contextualise my argument.

A key dimension largely missing from Bourdieu's work is the role of gender (McNay, 1999) that, alongside class and race may have huge impacts on some individuals in social space. As Skeggs points out, Bourdieu's theory falls short of fully exploring the position of women in social space. Skeggs' view is that:

Femininity is a form of regulation rather than domination. Yet it is embodied, and operates as a local cultural resource...unlike traditional forms of capital its value can only decrease with time, for it is youth specific inscription (2004, p.16).

The popular music industry continues to be controlled by men at almost all levels (Whitely, 2000, Leonard, 2007, Clawson, 2008, Lieb, 2013). Nevertheless, although many performers may seek to explore the limits of gender and identity within their music, it is also clear that for young women the popular music industry continues to be one where middle-aged, white, middle-class men still believe that sex sells product. As singer Charlotte Church puts it '[i]t's a male dominated industry with a juvenile perspective on

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/dylan-goes-electric-at-the-newport-folk-festival>

<sup>30</sup> <http://www.theguardian.com/media/2008/oct/01/advertising.television>

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/personalfinance/insurance/motorinsurance/5236374/Iggy-Pop-advert-banned-because-rock-star-would-not-be-covered.html>

gender and sexuality.' (2013). For young women a choice of a career in music may be even more problematic than choosing to work in other fields. Women only seem to be represented in the role of singers with the occasional stylistic exception, for example the female bass player in the indie<sup>31</sup> band as examined by Clawson (1999).

Indeed, musical instruments appear to carry enduring gender associations and these appear to be different depending on whether the music occupies a high art or low culture status. Even in classical music where both genders are more evenly represented, there are still *male* and *female* instruments (Delzell and Leppla, 1992, O'Neill and Boultona, 1996, Green, 1997, Harrison, 2007). So for young women in particular, popular music offers opportunities that are not only strictly defined but also time-limited and youth orientated. The music industry, dominated by its own discourse, replicated through habitus, ensures that the dominant and often middle-aged, white male view persists. As Bayton puts it the dominance of 'music played by and for men' (Bayton, 1992, p.51) has taken time to come to the attention of all those applying feminist critique.

Men are also often in the majority in both the traditional professions that support the production of popular music (lawyers, music managers, music journalists, record producers, sound and recording engineers) and the newer ones (web designers, programmers, digital entrepreneurs). Women entering the field of popular music must play the game in order to take part at all, and consequently women may also constantly question their place in the field they have chosen to enter. This may be because young women are less attracted by the macho culture of rock and pop, as portrayed in the media: already linked with the manipulation of young people's sexual attitudes through the medium of the pop video (Kalof, 1999), and increasingly, in the world of social media where music is now marketed. Boyce-Tillman (2008) also suggests that the absence of women from the world of professional music making is a function of the narrow focus of

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<sup>31</sup> The term 'indie' was originally coined to refer to bands signed to independent record labels not owned by the big multi-national recording corporations, it has become used to define a genre with its roots in punk and new wave (a movement that emerged alongside punk with a less anarchistic bent).

traditional music education and that a more holistic approach is required. Lamb makes an important link between power and the role (and habitus) of the teacher:

I conclude by wondering about the apprenticeship model of music pedagogy in relation to questions of artistry, power, privilege, race and gender, and the meanings that can be drawn from these questions with feminist theories (2008, p.177).

But more importantly than that, it is how we see women, or their absence, and the rules by which they are allowed to participate in music that matters. The scarcity or limited participation of women in popular music has been recognised, and although there may be some change in this regard Clawson sums up the way many female musicians particularly those participating in rock music, continue to feel:

Being seen as a novelty, being told that “you play well for a girl”, being ignored by sound men and judged on their looks all served to communicate to women their marginal status in the rock world, their position as musicians whose competence would always be evaluated differently (2008, p.112).

Race also continues to be a factor in the culture of popular music, as it is in society more generally. However, just as with the constant flux that exists over cultural control in popular music, we find that agents are able to maintain credibility and authenticity whilst also becoming highly successful as commercial musicians. In hip hop<sup>32</sup> (or rap) we now have long succession of female rappers who have adopted a feminist stance, from Roxanne Shante<sup>33</sup> to Missy Elliot,<sup>34</sup> Lauryn Hill<sup>35</sup> to Li'l Kim.<sup>36</sup> These women have used their status to raise awareness of issues from politics, racism and class, to misogyny and sexual and domestic violence (Collins, 2006).

Furthermore, race continues to be a defining characteristic of musical and cultural identity practices with strong political connotations particularly in terms of periods of racial conflict (Maultsby, 1983, Dowd, 2002). Rap and hip hop music are also the subject of an emerging body of research (Rich *et al.*, 1998, Forman, 2000, Sullivan, 2003) alongside

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<sup>32</sup> African American musical genre that emerged from the Bronx in New York in the late 1960's.

<sup>33</sup> <http://www.allmusic.com/artist/roxanne-shant%C3%A9-mn0000354140>

<sup>34</sup> <http://www.missy-elliott.com/wtf>

<sup>35</sup> <http://www.lauryn-hill.com/>

<sup>36</sup> <http://www.allmusic.com/artist/lil-kim-mn0000278439>

work that examines the ‘whiteness’ of country<sup>37</sup> music (Mann, 2008) and celebrates the transcendence of racial categories (Roberts, 2011). Finally there is also a continuing discussion of the ‘colonialism’ of the prevailing white Western view that places particular genres of music above others (Bradley, 2007), and lumps together much of the world’s indigenous musical forms under the generic title ‘world music’. As Bradley rightly points out this is a discussion that needs to extend to the classroom.

Class and capital are still very much key factors in music, and habitus is the defining mechanism of class relationships. As Bourdieu makes clear the ‘values’ that habitus embeds in individuals include language and taste, they are values ‘which most directly express the division of labour (between the classes, the age groups and the sexes) or the division of the work of domination.’ (1984, p.468). Reay likewise argues that ‘class continues to be an important part of social identity into the millennium despite a range of prevailing discourses which constitute it as irrelevant.’ (1998, p.259). The dominant discourse being that of the middle-classes, and one that argues that class itself is no longer a relevant factor. Reay concludes that ‘we need to rethink social class as a dynamic mobile aspect of identity that continues to permeate daily interactions.’ (1998, p.259). Savage *et al.* (2013) propose a more complex version of social class in modern Britain suggesting that ‘our use of measures both of ‘highbrow’ and ‘emergent’ cultural capital provides a more nuanced understanding of cultural boundaries in the UK than might be evident from a more orthodox Bourdieusian focus on high culture alone.’ (2013, p.243). Their work suggests seven class groups, including a much expanded set of groupings in the middle as well as clearly defined if small elite at the top with access to of all forms of capital, and at the bottom a fairly large group with little access to capital in any of its forms.

We should hardly be surprised that the popular music industry, with its long history of sharp business practice (Dannen, 1990) puts profit ahead of any aesthetic, or moral imperatives. As Skeggs points out, this is an industry that exploits alienation alongside sex,

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<sup>37</sup> A genre of American popular music that originated in the 1920’s influenced by folk styles from Europe and the Blues styles from African slave culture.

to produce profit '[w]orking-class antagonisms create commonly felt estranged emotions, forms of sensuous alienation, which the entire culture industry attempts not only to sublimate onto safe pathways, but also brand products through affect.' (2004, p.184).

What makes popular music authentic thus becomes determined by an agenda that is often raced, classed and gendered. A schema where male, white (and often middle-class) emotion has greater symbolic and cultural value, in line with Skeggs' observation that 'masculine dirt, sexuality and alienation have long been used to sell music.' (2005, p.971).

### Learning as Becoming

In order to facilitate agency as actors in social space we must develop a feel for the game by developing dispositions of habitus appropriate to the field(s) we are seeking entry to: a process of the development of identity practiced and situated within social, cultural, historical and technological contexts. The development of habitus and identity for young popular musicians is likely to be enabled, at least partly, through the informal networks of social capital or communities of practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991). Habitus for popular musicians has been, and continues to be, regulated by the struggles for power across the field of music and the changing relationships between music and the economic and scientific/technological fields. Musicians have had to negotiate seismic shifts in the way music has been marketed, bought and sold. This flux in the structures and rules of the field of music has produced limitations and opportunities as agents re-negotiate and shift their positions and dispositions.

Popular music students are also more likely to be: First Generation Scholars;<sup>38</sup> from working-class backgrounds; vocationally rather than academically focussed; and they are also more likely to be male (HESA, 2012). Furthermore, extensive research has been conducted on young musicians' fears and expectations when they enter Higher Education in music (Lebler and Carey, 2007, Creech *et al.*, 2008b, Lebler *et al.*, 2009). Comparing the

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<sup>38</sup> Students who are the first in their families to into Higher Education: <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/careers/aboutus/firstgeneration>

experiences of popular music and classical music students, Creech *et al.* (2008a) examined the issues of identity for these young musicians, and found that there was commonality for both groups in terms of their regard for the importance of performance, working with others, performance anxiety, and perseverance. But there were clear differences in the two groups' attitudes to the importance of musical technique, musical theory, playing from memory, and improvisation. Popular music students were less interested in technique and music theory, whilst classical music students were unlikely to be focus on playing from memory or improvisation.

These variances also speak of the different approaches to learning. The classical music students understandably fix their attentions upon the aspects of music that are required for them to succeed in the very competitive world of virtuoso classical performance, and accordingly in their musical studies. In contrast, popular musicians value playing from memory and improvisation (McMillan, 1997) as these are skills essential for informal musical learners, in developing their own musical *voice* and therefore also valuable to popular musicians in a process of learning as becoming. Musical and social background and motivations were also different, with those choosing classical music more likely to cite encouragement from family and friends as a motivating factor, and more likely to have been educated at a private school. Those studying popular music were motivated by inspirational teachers and well-known performers, and were more likely to have attended a state school.

Becoming a successful professional popular musician requires the formation of a recognisable musical identity. Colley *et al.* propose that 'a central aspect of students' learning appears to be a process of orientation to a particular identity, a sense of what makes "the right person for the job".' (2003, p.14). Colley *et al.* see this vocational habitus as an interaction between the students' identification with the 'wider vocational culture' and an '*orientation*' to that culture, rather than a wholesale '*adoption*' of the 'wider vocational culture.' (2003, p.14). Thus, learning is an activity that is embedded in social,

cultural, historical and technological contexts, but also retains potential for individual agency and variations of personal style (Bourdieu, 1977, p.86). I will further discuss this theme of situated learning in chapters three and six.

### Musical Creativity

Creativity is an under-researched and much debated concept (Amabile, 1996, Parkhurst, 1999). One definition of creativity is that '[c]reativity requires both originality and effectiveness.' (Runco and Jaeger, 2012, p.92). However, this definition ignores the social aspects of creativity, as artists do not act independently of those who consume, and consequently judge or value their art. Drawing on Bourdieu, Csikszentmihalyi provides a more situated definition of creativity:

[W]hether an idea or product is creative or not does not depend on its own qualities, but on the effect it is able to produce in others who are exposed to it. Therefore it follows that creativity is a phenomenon that is constructed through an *interaction between producer and audience*. Creativity is not the product of single individuals, but of social systems making judgements about individual products (1999, p.314).

Here Csikszentmihalyi is defining the way that cultural value is legitimised through the interaction of habitus and field. Furthermore, Csikszentmihalyi describes creativity as an interaction between agent, field and what he calls 'domain/culture' (1999, p.315). By this he means the specific networks of social and cultural capital that Lave and Wenger categorised as communities of practice (1991) and that I argue are often genre based in popular music, and situated as specific domains within the field of music. Bourdieu is also certain that creative works are produced in a social context and that the position of the individual creator within the field influences the way those works are received:

[T]he relationship between a creative artist and his work, and therefore his work itself is affected by the system of social relations within which creation as an act of communication takes place, or to be more precise, by the position of the creative artist in the structure of the intellectual field (which is itself, in part at any rate, a function of his past work and the reception it has met with) (1969, p.89).

Bourdieu is also referring to the way that art is legitimised by institutions or agents holding 'legitimizing' power, whereas other art forms that may have more popular appeal



(Bourdieu mentions jazz in particular) exist in fields that are contested by groups without the level of authority required to entirely dominate in the arbitration and legitimation<sup>39</sup> of 'good' taste.

De Souza-Fleith *et.al*, in their study of Brazilian musicians, suggest that '[t]he operations involved in creative process of the musicians in this study could be considered metacognitive strategies.' (2000, p.70). Furthermore, they state that '[t]he person's interaction with his/her environment is an essential element in the creative process.' (2000, p.71). Therefore, creativity requires reflexivity and is also bound by context. It follows that situatedness, social, cultural, historical and technological; learning as becoming; and metacognition, or reflection on practice, in practice play key roles in enabling agency; and consequently become important factors in the social construction of musical creativity.

For Burnard, there is a plurality of musical creativity in the field of music (Burnard, 2012, p.216). These multiple creativities include new and novel forms of authorship. They also include innovative approaches to composition: including group composition; de-composition or re-composition; technological mediation, embracing the sampling and recycling of music and musical forms; and the use of improvisation or 'improvisational performances' (2012, p.235). Thus, '[p]ersonal authorship and ownership in personal creativity can give way to a sense of communal authorship and ownership in communal creativity.' (2012, p.227).

As Burnard concludes, the value placed on composition in musical genres is diverse. Western classical music is the exception, rather than the rule, in seeing the individual composition by a master of the compositional art as the primary model for music making. As Burnard puts it 'most of the world's traditional musics, as well as the globally spatialized Internet forms, have *not* originated through formal acts of "composition."' (2012, p.235). That is not to say that popular musicians place less importance on

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<sup>39</sup> By legitimation I mean the way that cultural practice is validated and valued as conforming to social norms.

mastering theoretical and critical understanding. As pointed out by Hannan, popular music undergraduates in his study ‘demonstrated sophisticated understandings of the nature of musicianship...they felt it was important to understand how music works. They wanted to know how to listen critically in order to develop competence as musicians.’ (2006, p.155).

Burnard’s (2012) stance seems to support the idea that, for popular musicians, creativity is more important than technical mastery or proficiency. Furthermore, the value we place on particular musical forms may be obscuring the true nature and scope of musical expression. It would seem sensible to continue to learn in ways that help to promote creativity, and it seems that in some music classrooms this is indeed the case. As Fautley describes ‘music teachers, by the very nature of having to find strategies to teach group creative work, have developed ad hoc strategies to suit their own requirements.’ (2004, p.215).

### **Identity, Authenticity and the Art of Self-defence**

As Bourdieu pointed out ‘sociology is a martial art.’ (Carles, 2001). It allows us to illuminate how power and structure are negotiated in the social world. Foucault (1972, 1980) also recognises the way that the modern reflexive project of the self is actually a misrecognised playing out of power that utilises our own desires, in a discourse based around ‘technologies of the self’, (Foucault, 1988) to exert self-control. As Lawler puts it ‘[m]odern Western forms of government increasingly operate on the basis of managing populations, rather than punishing them: the demand is for “normality” rather than obedience.’ (2008, p.63).

For those without power in society, the only defence they have perhaps is to poke fun at the pretensions of the middle-class, and there has been a long history of working-class critique of the upper and middle-class in musical hall and popular song. Indeed, the middle-class also use authenticity as both defence and capital, as Skeggs points out ‘[f]or the middle-classes authenticity has moral and exchange value, but also offers protection

against accusations of pretentiousness.’ (2004, p.23). Indeed, as Archer *et al.* find in their study of young people and their attitudes to education, style and fashion become defences against derision and judgments of value:

Urban young people’s performances of “style” might be read as elements of the habitus that are intimately linked to the personal and classed, collective identities. We have suggested that these embodied performances might be understood as agentic practices that aim to generate value and resist derisory discourses that position working-class identities as “worthless” (2007, p.233).

Furthermore, as touched on above, the press and media make judgements on popular musicians’ musical authenticity: judgements of whether artists can be judged as being *true to themselves or their roots*; placing stock in authenticity and *coolness* as important parts of a valued, unique and ultimately a commercial musical identity. For young musicians, identification with a musical style that they, and their peers, consider authentic is particularly important. North *et al.*’s extensive empirical study explores the importance of music to all adolescents in forming their identities, and concludes that ‘music operates as a “badge” which guides adolescents’ social cognitions...adolescents’ self-concept and self-esteem are defined in relation to musical taste.’ (1999, p.90). Social and cultural identity practices fulfil individual emotional needs, altering mood and behaviour (Wells and Hakanen, 1991), and cognitive needs: the *play* of music making through the creative acts of improvisation and composition (Burnard, 2000).

Notions of authenticity and creativity are crucial to our concept of identity as musicians. Musical value is also deeply associated with notions of authenticity (Väkevä, 2009) that certain musical styles or genres are more authentic and creative, and therefore more valuable and important than others. Musical styles that are not contrived, but *real* expressions of human pain and joy and all that lies between, and consequently provide more valuable symbolic capital, and likewise spiritual and pure expressions of high art. This concept is not exclusive to the fields of classical music or Jazz but also extends to some genres within popular music that are seen to be more authentic/creative than others.

Some popular musical styles are seen as authentic because they are seen *to speak from the street*, and through musicians who have remained *true to themselves* and *where they come from*. Folkestad (2006, p.137) points out that in “rock mythology” musical training is considered not to offer any advantage. Rock musicians are supposed to do no practice, their performances viewed as some kind of spontaneous outpouring of creativity: a sacred and ritual act, requiring little or no preparation by the practitioner.

Authenticity also extends to classical music, in terms of the primacy of original musical scores and the use of original instruments of early classical works (Davies, 1991). The importance of authenticity is played out within all musical genres. Consequently, certain genres are seen to be more authentic than others, depending on how much they and their practitioners appear to subscribe to the *art for art’s sake* ethic that defines being *real* and *true to oneself* as well as *true to where you come from*. Despite the contentious nature of our taste for styles of popular music, these markers of musical authenticity appear to transcend class and style as constants, dependent only on the value judgment of those currently placed as arbiters of good musical taste. So the indie genre is more authentic than pop, and jazz more authentic than rnb,<sup>40</sup> but then you have to discriminate between the rnb of 1960’s motown, which is more authentic, although in the 1960’s it was also defined as pop, and *modern* rnb which is less authentic. Unless it can be classed as hip hop, which holds the trump card with its association with *cool* street culture. Few would have predicted in the 1970’s that electronic dance music<sup>41</sup> would become the most authentic musical movement of the 1980’s in the eyes of some.

Therefore, despite a culture industry that aims to influence its consumers’ choice through varied digital and analogue media channels, it is those consumers who may choose to be perverse and choose something else, something new, and consequently influence their peers through those same channels. Subsequently a new genre is born and a fan-base created. If the innovators and early adopters within a genre then *sell out* and

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<sup>40</sup> Rhythm and blues – shortened to rnb, an African American musical style that developed in the late 1940’s and continued to evolve to this day.

<sup>41</sup> A computer generated dance musical style that became popular in the 1980’s and 1990’s and has several distinctive variants including, house music, techno, garage and trance.

become more commercially orientated, then others will step up to take their place. Moreover, popular music has become a giant cultural omnivore, consuming its own practitioners and reproducing their music as product (or service), and their lives as promotion to market that product. Entire cities can become sites of musical cultural identity, for example Liverpool and the Beatles. As Cohen puts it '[p]opular music thus influences how cities are perceived, experienced and made meaningful.' (2007, p.226).

Authenticity is also important in musical learning for popular musicians, as examined by Karlsen's (2010) research into a Swedish music project in partnership with Lulea University of Technology's School of Music, called Boom Town Music Education (or BTME). BTME's pedagogical approach is based on the ideas of Gullberg and Johansson (2006, 2010) where students are able to come to the college as ready formed bands and pursue their own musical ambitions supported by old-timers and provided with their own onsite rehearsal space. As Gullberg points out '[s]elf image and identity development is often connected to musical genres mostly found in non-institutional environments.' (2006, p.162). This realisation led to the development of BTME as a live pedagogical experiment that 'will combine the advantages of formal music education with the strengths of informal learning.' (2006, p.1624).

Karlsen (2010) concludes that this approach is an effective hybrid between formal and informal learning approaches, and reminds us of the importance of authenticity in the learning choices for young popular musicians. Consequently, Karlsen suggests that there are four essential conditions for effective learning within a community of practice. First, it is to allow students to engage within multiple communities of practice. Next, to ensure they have access to old-timers within these communities. Thirdly, that they have access to appropriate technology to assist their music making. Finally, that they are supported in becoming actively and consciously self-reflective. She feels that we should worry less about learning being formal or informal and more about how we may meet our students' needs for authenticity in the process of learning and in their formation of a social, cultural

and musical identity. Furthermore, as Karlsen (2014) points out, particularly when working across cultural boundaries in multicultural environments, teachers are able to understand and support the agency of their students through ‘aspects such as shaping identity, regulating the self, expanding social understanding, creating cohesion, and affirming competence.’ (2014, p.422).

Hewitt (2009a) also argues that musical genres become communities of practice, as previously noted, providing social and cultural capital that establishes musical authenticity and validates identity. My concern regarding the informal apprenticeship of communities of practice is that these networks of social capital may also reproduce existing dispositions and inequalities in popular music this may be particularly true in regards to gender and race as discussed previously.

Vakeva (2010) also discusses the meaning of authenticity in modern musical genres, the digital technology that allows sampling and reworking of recorded music that results in ‘liquid songs’<sup>42</sup> that have a life and existence beyond the imagination of their original creator. Vakeva calls such compositions ‘compound art’ and claims that such re-invention and re-cycling of music to be a post-modern response to the modernist musical tradition of ‘ready-made artworks’. This organically structured approach combines multiple genre-based communities of practice of social capital that intersect, allowing musical learners to move between social networks whilst accumulating both social and cultural capital. Vakeva’s ‘liquid songs’ (2010) also become currency in such a communal environment, as they are traded for social and eventually economic capital.

In conclusion, in this chapter I have examined the relevance of Bourdieu’s ideas to my thesis, and the influence of capital, field, habitus and identity on agents, who happen to be popular musicians. Furthermore, I have examined the way that taste, creativity and authenticity in popular music is socially constructed and situated. Moreover, I have established how musical practice is embedded in the cultural field of music, and how

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<sup>42</sup>For a description see: <http://myweb.fsu.edu/mrm10f/essays.html>

changes in the way power is distributed across the field impact on that practice. I have also examined how notions of identity, gender, race and class impact on practitioners in the field of music, and how learning becomes a process of becoming, or acquiring appropriate creative and authentic musical identity practices within social, cultural, historical, and technological contexts.

This thesis aims to examine how we might use informal practices to ensure that formal learning also taps into the informal, the two becoming linked so that all forms of learning are recognised and legitimised by both learners and teachers. Furthermore, that teachers are encouraged to retrieve and reflect on their own informal experience in order to see learning through the eyes of their students, whilst their students likewise are encouraged to develop metacognition through reflexive practice. Thus, our students may become their own teachers and truly lifelong learners, with the ability to judge and steer their own progress. As McPhail summarises:

Central to teachers' work is the development of a dynamic interplay between forms of knowledge and pedagogic practice that acknowledges both epistemic and social dimensions of learning. In this way students are able to recognise themselves and their aspirations while also recognising the potential and power of the foundational knowledge of the discipline (2012, p.54).

In the analysis of my data in chapter five I will use Bourdieu's notions of capital, field and habitus to examine the themes that have emerged from the data, situatedness, identity practices, authenticity, and creativity. In the next chapter I will review the contemporary literature on informal learning in popular music and how it relates to my thesis.

### Chapter three: Literature Review, Informal Musical Learning

In this chapter, I will briefly discuss the development of theories of musical learning (using music education in schools as an example), discussing the work of contemporary researchers in the field of education, and music education in particular, and how their work has informed my theoretical model. Furthermore, I will define informal learning and discuss its relationship to social constructivist educational theory and examine how social constructivism provides me with a model of how we learn, which I have used to frame my empirical research. Finally, I will look at learning and teaching in music, the training of music teachers, how others research has informed my own theoretical position, and consequently the formulation of my research questions.

The recent omission of music in the Russell Group's list of 'facilitating subjects'<sup>43</sup> that young people are advised to study at A Level is bound to re-invigorate the argument over the importance of music in education at school. Pitts (2000) charts the long history of debate over the place of music in school based education and its role in developing young people. As she points out 'music education has been advocated only rarely for the acquisition of subject knowledge, but rather for its desirable cultural influence, its preparation for the profitable use of leisure time, and its development of sensitivity and imagination.' (2000, p.34).

The debate over the rationale for teaching music at school began with the idea that music should be taught as a barrier against the influence of social degradation (Macpherson, 1922, Winn, 1954), as a passive activity where the majority of learners were merely expected to appreciate 'musical masterpieces' (Scholes, 1935). Nonetheless, during the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century a movement for music performance for 'life and leisure' (Pitts, 2000, p.36) began to receive more attention (Board of Education, 1927). This movement lobbied for music to be taught at school as part of a more liberal agenda,

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<sup>43</sup> <http://www.russellgroup.ac.uk/russell-group-latest-news/154-2013/5530-facilitating-subjects/>



providing education in activities that could be engaged in outside of school and work, such as gardening, handicrafts, art and music. Furthermore, music educators began to argue that music in school could also support the emotional and imaginative development of children (Yorke Trotter, 1914, Brocklehurst, 1962).

This more aesthetic approach placed greater value on engagement in music and the arts as a method for developing skills of artistic and cultural self-expression, thereby, it was hoped, producing more creative and cultured individuals. Ultimately, this approach also began to encompass the idea that developing musical understanding and ability correspondingly cultivated children's transferable life skills such as 'concentration, organisation, self-expression and confidence.' (Pitts, 2000, p.40). In conclusion, Pitts notes that the development of music in schools has expanded: from music as cultural and artistic appreciation; through music performance as a leisure activity; to music as a form of artistic self-expression, through composition and improvisation.

For contemporary music educators the crux of this debate has been a tension between music as simple propositional knowledge and a more holistic approach where young people can experience the emotional, spiritual, social and cultural meanings of music. The arguments for a more aesthetic, creative and rounded approach to music education have been summarised by Finney (2002) drawing on the work of Swanwick (1988, 2001) who sees musical learning as a process where learners progress through 'knowing', (2001, p.35) and through this process internalise the spiritual, emotional and cultural meanings of music and music making. Finney summarises this as follows:

To know the blues aesthetically I might feel the weight and nuance of its gestures. I may know something of its sorrow and complaint. This may lead me to wonder why it was made. What did it mean? What does it mean now, to me in my life, to others, to all of us? I would like to sing and play the blues. How shall I get its feel? How is that effect created? The question "What chords does it use?" may then take on significance (2002, p.132).

Paynter (2000) also argues that musical teaching must embrace composition and that engagement in music allows the expression of the inherent musicality of human beings,

and allows learners to experience a kind of knowledge and learning not available in other subjects.

Green's book, first published in 1998, *Music on Deaf Ears: Musical Meaning, Ideology and Education* (2008a) defines the dual meanings of music: the first, its intrinsic or 'inherent' meaning eliciting a psychological or emotional response; and the second, the social meaning(s) of music. Green argues that the alienation of individuals towards certain forms of music (classical music in particular) is rooted in the way that the social elite fetishizes such music, and popular musical forms are consequently devalued. This is a crucial point for my own work in understanding what makes popular music students so resistant to music outside of their own preferred genre. It is not the inherent musical meaning of classical music that makes it inaccessible to some, but the way it is regarded by social elites, and not because the music itself is inherently elitist.

Carruthers (2008) asks if those of us working in Higher Education can learn from the more student focussed pedagogy that has developed in schools, by applying it to a Higher Education environment. He suggests that if music education is to do more than just train musicians then the focus needs to change from an emphasis on performance, theory and technical development, toward a greater focus on life skills such as confidence, self esteem and group working skills. This view is supported by Kokotsaki and Hallam (2007) who find that 'participative music making' brings benefits in terms of self esteem, social skills and confidence. Furthermore, Carruthers suggests that we should ask 'why' rather than just 'what and how' we teach (2008, p.129). For my own work, this is a crucial point: we often refer to how Higher Education produces graduates who have the skills that make them independent learners, including skills of reflexivity, metacognition and critical self-reflection. If we are to truly provide these skills to our students we must likewise develop them ourselves as teachers.

## Defining Informal Learning

As Conlon (2004) points out, the roots of the conceptualisation of informal learning lie with the work of Lewin (1935) and Dewey (1938) in their theories of experiential and reflective learning. The phrase ‘informal learning’ was later coined by Knowles (1950). However, academic research into informal learning really began in earnest with the work of Marsick and Watkins and Marsick and Volpe (1990, 1999, Marsick *et al.*, 1999) who defined informal learning in the following way:

Informal learning can be described as learning that is predominantly unstructured, experiential, and noninstitutional. Informal learning takes place as people go about their daily activities at work or in other spheres of life. It is driven by people’s choices, preferences, and intentions (1999, p.4).

As previously established in chapter two, popular music also has a long tradition of informal training *on the job*, so this conceptualisation that has emerged from work-based research is entirely apt. Eraut, who undertook research in public-health work environments, refines the definition of informal learning in the following way:

The term “informal learning” has been used increasingly in adult education for several reasons. It provides a simple contrast to formal learning or training that suggests greater flexibility and freedom for learners. It recognises the social significance of learning from other people, but implies greater scope for individual agency than socialization...It can also be considered as a complementary partner to learning from experience, which is usually construed more in terms of personal than interpersonal learning (2004, p.247).

Informal learning is therefore a slippery concept and one that is often categorised by *what it is not*, rather than *what it is*, however I feel that these two statements provide a working definition of the key characteristics of informal learning. Eraut’s further reference to greater focus on learning ‘that takes place in the spaces surrounding activities and events’ (2004, p.247) also underlines the importance of the authenticity of learning experience: some of the most important learning occurs through the process of being in a working or a *real world* environment, and that is difficult to replicate outside of those authentic locations.

Green first applied the concept of informality to the development of popular musicians in her book *How do Popular Musicians Learn: a way ahead for music education* (2002). What struck me initially about Green's description of popular musicians learning is how much it sounded like children in play. It then occurred to me that we refer to *playing* music, so perhaps this is something that has always been fundamental to the way we see the practice of music making. In the *Republic* (Translated, 1955) Plato identifies play as the most effective way to learn for 'children' and 'philosophers', who engage in serious dialectical play in order to discover the truth. This chimes with the work of Vygotsky (1930/1978) and Rogoff (1990, 2003) both of whom show how important play is in learning, where a child interacts with knowledgeable others to accomplish a cognitive, thinking task, thereby learning through social interaction.

In my own experience, learning to make music informally has always felt like play, and rarely like hard work. For me, music has been, and still is, an activity where time seems to fly by, where I am fully engaged and absorbed, and present in the moment. *Making* music is almost always a creative pleasure and that quality may be central to what makes such learning so enjoyable. This may likewise explain why I struggled to engage with music at school. The way music was taught at school lacked authenticity, creativity and the space for exploration. Thus, informal learning provided something that was lacking in my experience of the music classroom.

Informal learning as a concept shares many attributes with experiential learning which has a longer history in intellectual discourse, including much discussion of its efficacy as an educational model. My position is that experiential learning and informal learning are central to social life, and it is how we best transform experience into learning that is important, which we can do in a range of formal and informal ways. For Jarvis, drawing on Kolb (1984) 'learning begins with the transformation of experience.' (2006, p.12). He goes on to suggest that as well as using all our senses to learn, 'thinking', 'doing', and 'feeling' are the roots to more sophisticated forms of learning. (2006, p.18).

Experiential learning theory shows that: informal learning brings with it autonomy; it utilises convenient open and accessible methods; and informal learning helps to construct and cement social relationships, as well as providing freedom from the anxiety of assessment and potential disapproval, or even approval. Such learning is playful and 'unstructured' (or seemingly so), and such learning is also holistic, creative and aesthetic. Boud, Cohen and Walker define the assumptions made about learning from experience as follows: that experience is the stimulus for learning, it is constructivist, it is holistic, it is 'socially and culturally constructed', and it is influenced by '[s]ocio-emotional context.' (1999, p.225). Nevertheless, the tension in this position is that we do not always learn from experience, and may repeat prior mistakes. Perhaps this is because we do not recognise the lessons we have learnt from experience, as we do with the lessons we learn from formal learning. Moreover, this underlines the importance of reflection and metacognition for informal learning to be truly effective, valued and *visible*.

Schugurensky (2000) suggests a taxonomy comprising of three forms of informal learning. Firstly, self-directed learning, where individuals undertake deliberate 'learning projects', alone or together, that may include the presence of a facilitator. Secondly, where learning is incidental and unplanned, but where an individual learns from experience, and the learning is 'unintentional but conscious.' (2000, p.4). Thirdly, that learning occurs through socialization, where 'values attitudes, behaviours', (2000, p.4) are unconsciously acquired. Furthermore, Green agrees '[i]nformal learning practices may be both conscious and unconscious.' (2002, p.16). This point returns us to Bourdieu, habitus and identity, and explains how learning relates to habitus, where learning is mostly unconscious (except under particular circumstances where reflexivity is possible).

It would be easy again to fall into a dualist position and regard one kind of learning - formal - as superior to another - informal. But understanding how we learn most effectively has to bring rewards in terms of cultural capital. It is likely that much of what

we learn in our lives is learnt informally, to the extent that formal learning may only represent a small proportion of the whole. I would agree that that informal and formal learning may be seen as the two different sides of the same coin, as proposed by Folkestad (2006) - or perhaps a better analogy is one where formal learning is simply the tip of a pedagogical iceberg, where informal learning forms the greater part of our experiences of learning throughout our lives, as suggested by Coffield:

If all learning were to be represented as an iceberg then the section above the surface of the water would be sufficient to cover formal learning, but the submerged two thirds of the structure would be needed to convey the much greater importance of informal learning (2000, p.1).

Hodkinson *et al.* (2003) suggest the relationship between formal and informal learning is complex in that '[a]ll (or almost all) learning situations contain attributes of formality/informality', also that 'attributes of formality and informality are interrelated in different ways in different learning situations' that therefore '[t]hose attributes and their interrelationships influence the nature and effectiveness of learning in any situation', and '[t]hose interrelationships and effects can only be properly understood if learning is examined in relation to the wider contexts in which it takes place. This is particularly important when considering issues of empowerment and oppression.' (2003, p.5).

Although this explanation appears to muddy the waters, it also underlines how difficult it is to make a clean division between formal and informal learning; the two activities are often closely related and share common characteristics. Indeed, for musicians it hardly matters *how they are learning*, so long as *they are learning*. Consequently, promoting reflexivity, or metacognition, for learners is important in allowing them to understand how they learn best, and how their own epistemological beliefs are central to their personal development. Furthermore, it is power that is the most significant factor in defining learning, as Mak points out '*[f]ormal, non-formal and informal learning all deal with who controls the learning process.*' (2006, p.2). In a formal context that power is nearly always held by the teacher, whereas in most informal learning (group or individual and self-directed learning) power is more likely to be held (or shared) by the learner(s).

For the purpose of this thesis I have also adopted Green's principles of informal learning practice for popular musicians (2006, p.107). Green highlights five important characteristics that she observed in the informal learning practice of popular musicians. Firstly, allowing learners to choose the music, rather than teachers. Secondly, learning by listening and copying audio recordings (and by extension recording one's own performances to develop reflection and improve performance). Thirdly, learning in friendship groups with minimum teacher guidance. Fourthly, learning in personal and haphazard ways. Lastly, integrating listening, playing, singing, improvising and composing. Some of these things occur in formal learning settings. Nevertheless, the themes of self-guided group learning, the use of recordings (and the recording of performances in order to listen back and improve) alongside trial and error is what seems to define the particular informal learning approach of popular musicians.

In addition to these aspects, my own definition would add that informal learning normally (but not exclusively) occurs outside of formal educational contexts: that informal learning often occurs within communities of practice, which provide social and cultural capital and access to the informal guidance of old-timers (this point is echoed in my own experience and that of my research participants most of whom had some guidance from older experienced musicians and siblings/parents); that informal learning often occurs in groups, but can also be individual and self-directed; that informal learning does not follow a prescribed curriculum; and that informal learning is often practice based and problem focussed.

In *Music, Informal Learning and the School: A New Classroom Pedagogy* (2008b) Green provides a comprehensive evaluation of the *Musical Futures* project across several schools and examines both teacher and student experiences of informal music learning in the school environment. Green finds a certain wariness to informal approaches from the teachers in the project, which she feels arises partly from the constraints of the UK

National Curriculum<sup>44</sup> and school inspections by Ofstead.<sup>45</sup> The teachers in the project were also initially concerned over the perceived lack of structure, a loss of control, the devaluing of their own roles, and anxiety over coping with new and unfamiliar instruments and techniques (such as learning to play by ear). It is noteworthy that some of these anxieties also emerged from my research participants, which I will discuss later in my analysis of my data in chapter five.

However, as Green's project progressed, teachers began to find that informal learning enriched their teaching, and their students' engagement and learning, bringing insights into their own practice, and greater success for their students. Students welcomed the autonomy that came with informal approaches, and she found that '[o]verall, the levels of group co-operation and the emergence of leadership and musicianship qualities were higher, and were evident across a greater range of pupil ability, experiences and attitudes that teachers had anticipated.' (2008b, p.147). Green also highlighted areas of interest that had come out of her research that require further examination including the effect of social groups and gender, and the role of play, flow and creativity in musical learning.

Pulman's (2009, 2013) studies on group popular music performance suggest that using peer assessment of group and individual strengths and weaknesses, whilst tricky to manage, is also beneficial in developing his student's reflexivity in a Higher Education group learning setting. Interestingly, in light of some of the themes that have emerged from my own research around genre and authenticity, 'flexibility' and 'openness to different genres' (2009, p.133) are recurring themes amongst the attributes discussed by Pulman.

Green's (2007) study further refined in *Hear, Listen, Play* (2013) theorises possible differences between established learning styles, which she defines as 'inbuilt' and 'fundamental', and learning strategies, which are more 'consciously-acquired'. This work further refines Green's theoretical model established in *How Popular Musicians Learn*

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<sup>44</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-curriculum>

<sup>45</sup> The UK Government's school standards inspectorate: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted>



(2002) with four distinct approaches adopted by students in the study: impulsive; practical; shot in the dark; and theoretical. In fact, these four approaches could be reduced to two: practice based trial and error and theoretical. Students either find informal learning an easy fit or they don't, and some find it more difficult to progress without a theoretical understanding and constant teacher guidance. Green suggests that further research into the effects of variables such as age, sex, ethnic and cultural background, and the demands placed on learners by their choice of instrument. Likewise, issues of teaching styles that students have become used to, and the effect of musical learning outside of school, all need further investigation.

Furthermore, Green finds that informal learning stretches students at both ends of the ability range, the high flyers, and those who struggle with traditional approaches to teaching and learning. Informal learning likewise allows previously disengaged students to engage and lead group work, and informal learning by its nature puts learners in control of the process. Although, in a group learning context, individuals naturally emerge as leaders within groups, and therefore the distribution of power is consequently unequal: but power is still with the learners, whereas in formal settings the teacher habitually takes charge.

Green has had her critics (Allsup, 2008, Clements, 2008). Commentators who point to the fact that Green's approach conflates informal learning with popular music in a way that can be misinterpreted, falsely turning musical genres into pedagogic boundaries. Allsup (2008) also argues that learning needs formal as well as informal contexts and should not only be student centered, but democratic. Moreover, Clements (2008) points to the need to understand how all forms of music are valued in institutions offering music teacher training. Nevertheless, it is clear from my research that the experience of many of us who studied music at school has not, in the past at least, been of a consistently good quality. It is also clear that Green's approach is engaging more young people in music at school, and far from producing false divisions, appears to be engaging young learners in

popular and traditional musical genres. As discussed previously, it is the way that classical music is fetishized by powerful elites that has primarily produced a dichotomy between genres.

It is noteworthy that popular music is not the only musical form where an informal or non-traditional approach to learning has thrived. Outside of classical music, musical learning in genres such as folk and world music have long relied on a tradition of informal learning transmitted through an oral tradition. A tradition very like that in popular music, which relies on an ability to learn to play by ear<sup>46</sup> (Lilliestam, 1996, Thorgersen and Karlsen, 2010, Woody and Lehmann, 2010, Baker and Green, 2013).

Social learning, improvising or more commonly improvising together in an ensemble, or jamming,<sup>47</sup> are strong themes in all the research on informal learning in music and in the narratives of my research participants, as are methods for informal learning including playing by ear and the use of recording (as a source for learning a piece of music, and as a way of reflecting on and improving ones performance). Lines (2009) and Wright and Kanellopoulos (2010) both suggest that group improvisation can be seen as a specific form of informal learning that can be effective, both in teaching and particularly in educating music teachers:

[I]mprovisation might offer a route for creating an intimate, powerful, evolving dialogue between students' identities as learners, their attitudes towards children and their creative potential, and the interrelationships of the notions of expressive technique and culture... Such experiences for pupils and teachers alike might further extend the social and personal effectiveness of informal learning as music pedagogy (Wright and Kanellopoulos, 2010, p.71).

Furthermore, Hickey (2015) finds that amongst the teachers in her study, improvisation based approaches to music teaching lead to 'the establishment of a safe and egalitarian teaching space, lack of evaluation, [and] leader as guide.' (2015, p.425). Improvisation and jamming likewise feature in the discussions I will detail later with my research participants, and in their approaches to utilising informal learning practice in the

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<sup>46</sup> Learning a piece of music by listening to it rather than by reading notation.

<sup>47</sup> The practice of improvising within a group of musicians.

classroom. Improvisational techniques are evidently a useful tool for the development of informal educational approaches.

Alongside playing by ear, the use of recordings and recording is a recurrent aspect of informal learning, both in the research literature and the narratives of my participants. It includes learning from recordings and learning by recording one's own, or somebody else's performance,<sup>48</sup> as a way to reflect on that performance and improve it. These educational techniques allow musicians to develop technical ability, agility, and skills in composition and arrangement concurrently, by learning in action and by reflecting on their practice (Schon, 1983). By promoting informal learning, we also ensure that learners reflect effectively on their own practice. Lebler's work in the 'creation of a self-directed learning environment' (2008, p.193) with the 'creation of a learning community facilitated by recording technologies,' (2008, p.194) is a good example of informal learning principles effectively applied to the formal context of undergraduate Higher Education.

Lebler (2008) notes that popular music has often adopted the pedagogical approaches of classical and jazz, with teachers defining the curriculum. His approach is based on prior research, into the previous learning of his students, and the skills and expectations they bring to formal Higher Education (Burt-Perkins and Lebler, 2007). Lebler emphasises the importance of music students developing an understanding of their own strengths and weaknesses, taking a reflexive approach, using journal writing as a tool to develop metacognition. This reflexive approach extends to assessment, where Lebler foregrounds the importance of assessment *as* and *for* learning, where students are active participants, rather than assessment *of* learning where the students are passive recipients of evaluation (2008, p.194). For Lebler, this approach leads to graduates who have developed, and refined, skills of self reflection and metacognition that are useful to them in the field of popular music after graduation.

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<sup>48</sup> Popular musicians learn to emulate recordings, playing by ear and use recordings of their own performances to learn reflectively.

Folkestad (2006) also points out that the modern technology now allows much more access to music in many more forms than in the past, so that today's students already have much more 'sophisticated musical knowledge, acquired from a variety of outside-school musical activities.' (2006, p.136). In Folkestad's view the question is not, how do we get student musicians to engage in popular music communities of practice, and therefore to engage in informal learning and accumulate social and cultural capital, but, how do we as teachers tap into that informal learning, in a way that is beneficial for us as teachers, and our students? Folkestad sees research as the key tool in this regard, and advises that we look not only at what happens in the music classroom, but also at the musical interactions our students engage in outside school and beyond. My research follows this principle, by looking at both the informal learning narratives of the participants, and how excavating their own informal learning experiences can transform and potentially improve their own classroom practice.

There is an emerging body of research based on informal educational practice and theory in Scandinavia, including studies by Georgii-Hemming and Westvall (2010), Westerlund (2006) and Vakeva (2010), who see the 'garage band' informal learning model proposed by Jaffurs (2004) as a useful pedagogical paradigm for a wide range of creative arts. Jaffurs suggests that the informal learning model suggested by the practice of popular musicians may also be a viable approach in other 'modes of digital artistry'. The garage band environment, where a band member's parent's garage is the place where young musicians have their first opportunity to play together, and thus, learn together as Jaffurs describes:

How are popular musicians successful? For that matter, how are many cultures successful in the transmission of music? The learning is incidental, yet meaningful. Members transmit learning easily, the whole context is fun, the students want to be identified as musicians in the culture, and membership is ageless. I witnessed a group of intently serious musicians, fixing mistakes, helping each other, and not accepting someone's inability to accomplish the task (2004, p.199).

Jaffurs found that this garage band experience also shaped her own approach to teaching in a positive way, so that she began to want to find ways to integrate informal learning

into her formal lessons. Furthermore, Miell and Littleton (2008) found that in the (out of school) band rehearsal environment '[m]usic was thus the medium within which the interdependent processes of collective creative interpretation and identity construction were contested, mutually constituted and negotiated.' (2008, p.16). Indeed, it was in a garage that I played with my first *proper* band. A safe space to learn through trial and error, with the support of my peers, and from old-timers encountered in the community of practice of my own local popular music scene.

Informal learning by its nature implies an emphasis on *making* rather than simply *playing* music. *Playing* music implies, in its basic normative form, the performance of songs written by others or previously composed, and may or may not involve a degree of interpretation. Generally, *playing* music does not require particular skills of improvisation or invention, and emphasis is often largely placed on the practical skills of technique, accuracy and tone. *Playing* a piece of music additionally requires the technical competency to play by ear/from memory, or from some form of notation in real-time. *Making* music on the other hand implies the process of origination or composition, and the skills of creativity, such as experimentation, reflection, insight, innovation, and synthesis.

Therefore, informal learning also represents a rich seam of personal experiential knowledge, one that we may access through reflexive practice. Consequently, it seems important to find out whether we may utilise informal learning to make the formal learning we do more effective. My intention with this thesis is to establish links between informal learning, wherever and however it occurs, and the formal setting of the classroom. I will do this by asking the participant teachers to reflect on their own learning, and use this reflection to make connections between informal and formal contexts, using those connections to shape their own practice as teachers. As McPhail points out '[t]eachers' curriculum principles need to acknowledge both formal and informal knowledge.' (2012, p.53). Furthermore, Hager and Halliday suggest that 'the balance

between formal and informal learning needs to shift somewhat in favour of informal learning.’ (2009, p.234).

### Social Constructivism and Learning

My theoretical position is based upon the social constructivist approach to learning that has emerged from cognitive science in the investigation of ‘intelligence and intelligent systems, with particular reference to intelligent behaviour.’ (Posner, 1984). Social constructivism was founded on the work of Vygotsky (1930/1978) and develops the concept of constructing knowledge that began with the work of Piaget (1932, 1936), whereby ‘human beings understand the world by constructing working models of it in their minds.’ (Johnson-Laird, 1983, p.10).

Vygotsky’s ‘social development theory’ (1930/1978) highlights the role of social interaction in the development of cognition and, unlike Piaget who sees a child’s cognitive development as a precursor to learning, Vygotsky argues that ‘learning is a necessary and universal aspect of the process of developing culturally organized, specifically human psychological function.’ (1930/1978, p.90). Thus, social learning comes before cognitive development. Vygotsky also acknowledges that cognitive development may therefore differ across cultures as it relies on social interaction and the role of language, and that we must also recognise that most learning does not take place in school and that any social interaction may lead to learning for the participants.

Vygotsky’s work also features principles that are key to learning, such as the ‘more knowledgeable other’ (MKO) and the ‘zone of proximal development’ (ZPD) (1930/1978, p.84). Vygotsky defines the ZPD as the level of understanding aspired to and just above the current level of comprehension of a particular individual the domain where interaction with a MKO (parent or teacher) may guide the child’s cognitive development. The second key concept that has been derived from Vygotsky’s work is that of ‘scaffolding’ (Bodrova and Leong, 1998, Verenikina, 2003, Hammond and Gibbons, 2005), as a process of giving

support to learners at the correct level and time in order to support learning. However, Rogoff (1990) criticizes this idea on the basis that it may not be a universally applicable concept, for all cultures, or types of learning, and that in some contexts observation and practice are more effective approaches. What social constructivism does is put the situated nature of learning at the centre of intellectual and social development, providing a framework that explains the social and contextual nature of both formal and informal learning. This leads to the next key theoretical approach from constructivism, that of situated learning (Lave and Wenger, 1991).

Situated learning is where learning is both social and embedded in context. Lave and Wenger's work on cognition and situated learning (1988, 1991, 1998, 1999) has helped me to understand the importance of situatedness for informal learning. Lave and Wenger (1991) describe the informal learning networks that exist in contemporary society as communities of practice. These networks can be found within particular fields, and in particular industries. In the field of music, we find communities of practice, specifically within the context of musical genres, and music education (Countryman, 2009, Hewitt, 2009a, Burnard, 2012). Within each community of practice informal apprenticeships develop allowing those with expertise – old-timers - to mentor newcomers, who begin to interact within these networks through peripheral engagement with those old-timers and gradually move towards full participation as professionals in the field (Lave, 1991, Lave and Wenger, 1991, p.29).

Nielsen (2006, 2009, 2011) has recently re-invigorated the idea of apprenticeship and musical learning through practice arguing that it is a process of identity formation:

[L]earning by imitation and learning by performance. In both these ways the learning process involves and is organised around becoming a member of the musical culture and developing an identity as a musician (2006, p.1).

Here Nielsen underlines the ideas of learning through observation and practice, crucial to learning as becoming within a community of practice in the field of music. There are both strengths and weaknesses in Lave and Wenger's theoretical model. Lave and Wenger's

model explains things well in terms of new entrants to a workplace and those changing jobs, but works less well in explaining the way that existing workers continue to learn throughout their careers, and the role of formal teaching or training in the work place. As Fuller *et al.* note '[o]ur research demonstrated that experienced workers are also learning through their engagement with novices.' (2005, p.64). Likewise, Lave and Wenger fail to fully recognise the role of identity, or indeed the role of social class, gender or race in shaping individuals. Their learners seem to begin fully developed and ready-made. As Hodgkinson *et al.* point out in their discussion of Wenger's work '[h]is people seem to have no lives outside of the community of practice.' (2008, p.38). Furthermore, Lave and Wenger do not fully explore issues of power in the way that communities of practice function, although they admit that power and structure play a part, as Fuller *et al.* explain:

Lave and Wenger recognise that communities of practice are social structures involving relations of power, and acknowledge that the way power is exercised can make legitimate peripheral participation either an "empowering" or "disempowering" experience (2005, p.63).

However, writing very recently, Wenger has, to some extent, addressed both identity and power in *Learning in Landscapes of Practice* (2015) where he states that '[v]arious practices have differential abilities to influence the landscape through the legitimacy of their discourse, the legal enforcement of their views, or their control over resources.' (2015, p.15). Kubiak *et al.* writing in the same edited collection point out that 'identity and knowledgeability is best understood not as a function of participation in a single community of practice but in terms of multimembership.' (2015, p.79).

This aligns with Bourdieu's notions of field and capital, where agents may practice in more than one field, but are always subject to the meta-field of power. For popular musicians these communities of practice are networks of social capital that allow them to access old-timers and peers through the kind of informal and spontaneous social interaction described by Finnegan in her book, *The Hidden Musicians: Music Making in an English Town* (1989).



## Notions of Innate Talent

Another part of the debate over teaching music, particularly at higher levels, is the outmoded concept of 'innate talent'. The widespread idea holds that some individuals are born with gifts for specific forms of artistic expression and, by definition, others are not. Furthermore, these *talented* individuals must be identified and nurtured ahead of their less gifted contemporaries. Howe *et al.* in their paper *Innate Talents: reality or myth?* (1998), argue that there is little empirical evidence of inherited or innate talent and that although some individual physical or cognitive abilities may be passed on genetically that this does not constitute talent in the way it is generally conceptualised:

Innate talents are inferred rather than observed directly. One reason for assuming that they exist at all has been to explain individual differences, but these can be accounted for adequately by experimental ones such as training and practice, as well as biological influences that lack the specificity and predictable consequences associated with the notion of talent (1998, p.407).

Furthermore, Holding (2011) points out that identifying a young musician as talented may not be beneficial to their progress and although in the case of singers 'big hardy voices are born not made.' (2011, p.456). For most young musicians, it is the way that they are supported and encouraged that is really important, as she concludes:

In the end, the worth of talent as a construct is revealed as virtually useless when, in the absence of the training necessary to reveal it and the effort necessary to sustain it, talent, if it exists at all, vanishes (2011, p.457).

This has an interesting parallel with the idea of a natural instinct for pitch with the long held belief that some individuals seemed to be born with the ability to recognise pitch by ear, and others were simply 'tone deaf', or unable to distinguish pitch at all. In fact, the vast majority of human beings are able to discriminate pitch, and scholars point towards social factors in individual claims from those who, falsely, regard themselves as 'un-musical' (Sloboda *et al.*, 2005, p.225). This idea of being deficient musically also appears amongst the narratives of my research participants, one of whom recounting how his parents were told by his music teacher that he 'didn't have a musical bone in his body'. He went on to become a very successful professional popular musician.

We all have *talents* and these *talents* can be developed through learning and experience, we are all essentially creative and consequently musical, and it is only our own preconceptions and insecurities that tell us that we are not - or the preconceptions of others, who are in a position to be the arbiters of what is recognised as legitimate, and therefore who we can be, and who we can become.

### Defining Effective Learning and Teaching in Music

Learning, teaching, and learning to teach are also emotional experiences, as McNally finds in his work on the narratives of student teachers where 'their accounts are replete with emotional language – "butterflies", "nerves", "panic", "waking at two or three". (2006, p.3). These descriptions also sound very like the performance anxiety experienced by musicians. Nonetheless, as Sternbach points out, performance is not the only stressful aspect of being a student musician '[i]ndeed, many aspects of musical activities are probably more stressful for a student than they are for an accomplished professional. Students may find practicing more taxing mentally and emotionally than professional musicians do.' (2008, p.42).

Thus, music students have the normal stresses and emotions of performing as a full-time undergraduate student, some of which are social, such as living away from home independently and often for the first time, making new friends and forming long-term relationships. In addition, these students have challenges that are cognitive, such as learning to study, and the analytical and critical skills required in Higher Education. It is also clear that performing, learning, and teaching music can be emotional experiences.

Learning is a process that inspires passion, frustration, and anxiety. Learning may also be difficult and disturbing, as well as rewarding in the cultural and symbolic value it bestows. Therefore, music education is not just a matter of subject knowledge and technical skill, but also developing learners' transferable skills including group work, confidence and self esteem. Indeed, music education is far from being a simple enterprise.

As Burt-Perkins and Lebler recognise '[e]ducating music students for a "lifetime of learning", in a diverse musical profession is a complex task...a career in music is broad, wide ranging and diverse.' (2007, p.10).

Coulson's (2010) study looks at self-employed musicians from a range of genres and explores the importance of capital as crucial to their economic survival. She finds that these musicians enjoy a different range of challenges and rewards from those in more stable occupations. For these musicians, work is often short term and jobs overlap, requiring a high degree of skill to manage; early learning is crucial to the formation of habitus, and the accumulation of social/cultural capital required to enter the professional field of music.

Traditional music education is not open to all musicians and therefore many stumble into their profession and only succeed through dedication, perseverance, and the right connections to social and cultural capital. Consequently, if more popular musicians are seeking to study music formally than ever before, then we need to ensure that the education we offer is fit for purpose. We also need to appeal to musicians from all backgrounds and musical aspirations. Coulson worries that this is not currently the case:

If music teaching were able to find ways of reaching a greater variety of music learners, it might be possible for the ability and motivation of young people interested in all kinds of music to be recognised and accredited (2010, p.267).

Indeed, the growth of popular music provision seems to address this concern by allowing young popular musicians to develop and have their learning legitimised as cultural and symbolic capital.

Bassey (1981) underlines that effective learning is by nature student-centred, and Brown defines its purpose as being to produce 'self sufficient, creative thinkers and people who appreciate and value the subject being taught.' (2008, p.33). To be effective, learning also has to become visible to learner and teacher. Hattie's (2009) meta-analysis of eight hundred studies into pedagogy and learning argues that although we must encourage a student centred focus, passionate and accomplished teaching is still important and that

the key to effective education is that learning is visible to both student and teacher through the other's eyes. As Hattie writes '[t]he remarkable feature of the evidence is that the biggest effects on student learning occur when teachers become learners of their own teaching and students become their own teachers.' (2009, p.22). Brown also adds that '[u]ltimately, the students are treated as co-creators within the learning process and as individuals with relevant ideas about how learning takes place.' (2008, p.31). Tinto (1997, 2000, 2003) has also looked at how networks of social capital or communities of practice can be effectively supported and exploited for educational purposes and concludes that although '[l]earning communities do not represent a "magic bullet" to student learning,' that 'there is ample evidence to support the contention that their application enhances student learning and persistence, and enriches faculty professional lives.' (2003, p.6).

Biggs and Tang (1999) correspondingly suggest that teacher metacognition is a crucial condition for effective learning and they define three levels of thinking about teaching. The first position adopted is that 'the teacher's role is to display information, the students' to absorb it.' The second more sophisticated approach is 'the teacher's role is to explain concepts and principles, as well as to present information.' In the third and most effective approach 'the focus is on what the students do: are they engaging in those learning activities most likely to lead to the intended outcomes.' (1999, p.29). This is the central tenant of a student-focused classroom, where the teacher is focussed on learning rather than teaching. This approach allows learners to actually practice the skills and knowledge they are engaging with, without this opportunity much of the practical and implicit knowledge that can be learnt from action, and reflection is rendered inaccessible.

In *How People Learn* (NRC, 2010) the implications for teaching from contemporary learning theory are that '[t]eachers must draw out and work with the pre-existing understandings that their students bring with them' and that '[t]eachers must teach some subject matter in depth, providing many examples in which the same concept is at work, and providing a firm foundation of factual knowledge.' Finally that '[t]he teaching of

metacognitive skills should be integrated into the curriculum in a variety of subject areas.’ (2010, p.19-21).

Hattie also concludes that effective learning requires a mixture of ‘[s]urface, deep and constructed understanding.’ (2009, p.28). In other words, the integration of surface learning (the accumulation of propositional knowledge) with deep learning, or the ability of students to critically analyse new ideas and link them to existing knowledge and conceptual principles, so that they can become self-sufficient in their ability to learn from unfamiliar and new contexts in future. For Hattie, both forms of learning must work together in order for pedagogy to be successful. Consequently, learning is deeper when it allows learners to learn through problem solving, using new and existing knowledge to solve novel problems, with and without expert guidance. Learners need to do some of this themselves and therefore the art of combining surface and deep learning requires teachers who provide guidance, information and knowledge, and who also know when to step aside so learning can occur. My proposition is that surface and deep learning combine with metacognition to provide learners and teachers with an approach to learning that allows both tacit and explicit learning to occur, and that by reflecting on and recognising that learning we are able to better understand the forces that are at work in social space in order to affect agency.

### **Developing Metacognition**

Metacognition, or the ability to recognise and critically reflect on learning in any form or context, is central to my emerging theoretical model. Flavell, defined metacognitive knowledge as ‘knowledge or beliefs about what factors or variables act and interact in what ways to affect the course and outcome of cognitive enterprises.’ (1979, p.906).

In terms of my research questions, I am asking my research participants to develop their reflexivity and thus their epistemological position, through exploring their own individual learning histories and beliefs about learning and using that reflection to inform the way they interact with their students. My aim being to produce a learning environment where

learners and teachers are encouraged to recognise and reflect on their learning and teaching through metacognition.

There is an important link between the concept of authenticity of evaluation and assessment, and particularly formative assessment in the development of learner metacognition, as previously established the situatedness of learning is important to learners and this also extends to assessment. Authentic learning tasks, or tasks that are the same as those one would execute in a professional or work setting, are valuable in engaging learners, particularly with vocational subjects (McFarlane, 1977, Maclellan, 2004, Gibbs and Simpson, 2010). The work of Black and Wiliam (2003) highlights the importance of the often overlooked role of formative assessment in metacognition. Good formative assessment can lead to more engaged learners, with a better understanding of the situated nature of disciplinary knowledge and of the part that knowledge plays in the construction of their own identities.

Formative assessment is also crucial in allowing students and teachers to understand the same disciplinary language, as Wiliam says '[t]he solution is to work towards *bringing learners into the same community of practice of which the teachers are already members.*' (2000, p.14). This principle of metacognition, or the knowledge a learner has about his or her own knowledge and understanding, and the level of conscious control they are able to exercise over the process of learning, is central to the development of learners' ability to be reflective. As Sadler makes clear '[f]or students to be able to improve, they must develop the capacity to monitor the quality of their own work during actual production.' (1989, p.119).

Lebler's significant research into student centered reflective learning practice (2007, 2008, 2010a, 2010b) also shows that popular music students' prior social and informal learning experiences bring 'capacities' that those from more formal learning backgrounds lack. Consequently, Lebler argues that students should be supported to develop

metacognition through the use of assessment that not only measures attainment but also encourages and promotes reflection.

To understand fully this process of metacognition, or reflecting on action in action as Schon (1983) describes it, I have also used the work of scholars who have developed theoretical models that explain the idea of reflective practice. This body of work explores how professionals learn in practice, and how reflective practice can be used as a tool for learning in formal education. However, as Bradbury *et al.* point out, there has recently been 'a reversal of focus. Instead of reflection being the bedrock for the radical transformation of practice, instrumental approaches predominate, both in the literature and in professional education and assessment.' (2010, p.2). Conversely, reflection should be a process that challenges and undermines the status quo and emancipates individuals.

Professionals are often trained on the job, whatever the educational level required. They often serve an apprenticeship working with more experienced old-timers who teach implicitly through example, and informally in the way that they manage their juniors' tasks and provide a set of disciplinary references. These references set the standards expected as well as providing scaffolding to ensure the apprentices are able to reach those standards. Schon argues that for professional reflective practice or 'reflective practicum' (1987, p.311) to function in a Higher Education institution, learning by doing must become the core of the curriculum. Furthermore, that 'coaches' with professional experience are required as well as teachers, and that their role takes precedence. This seems to be played out with institutions such as BIMM where professionals are recruited and then trained to teach. According to Schon, this approach creates a community of practice that must also establish its own traditions, so that it may 'cultivate activities that connect the knowing- and reflection-in-action of competent practitioners to the theories and techniques taught as professional knowledge in academic courses.' (Schon, 1987, p.312). When successful, the reflective process allows apprentices to internalise both the standards and the level of self reflection required to become self sufficient and professional in their own right. As

Schon points out '[w]hen a practitioner becomes a researcher into his own practice, he engages in a continuing process of self-education.' (1983, p.299). Both Lebler (2008) and Brown (2009) have also highlighted the particular importance of reflective writing for musical performers so that 'they can articulate the thinking skills that go beyond the mere knowledge-based and practice-based curriculum.' (2009, p.379). The reflective practitioner who engages in this lifelong learning is also likely to subsequently pass on that learning to the next generation, within his or her communities of practice.

Schon's theory has some limitations however. Firstly, it fails to recognise the role of other forms of learning, whether formal or informal, in the development of professionals, and secondly, Schon overlooks almost completely the domains of emotion and power. In fact, his model shows a narrow range of learning in a very transmissive 'master-apprentice' style, largely based on a cognitive model of learning and not recognising the social nature of learning and attendant issues of power, structure and agency. This may in fact be because Schon's work is a product of its time. As Webster points out:

There is little doubt that Schon's ideas drew attention to the reality that professionals (in fact all people) act in complex contexts and can develop expert tacit knowledge through reflecting on experience...it is important that educators who value Schon's ideas on reflection recognise their (partial) nature (2008, p. 71).

Eraut adds that Schon's work is 'a set of overlapping attributes' (1994, p.145) of informal learning rather than a coherent model 'Schon's important insights are most usefully clarified by regarding his theory as a theory of metacognition rather than a theory of reflection.' (1994, p.23). Eraut's own view is that work place or informal learning cannot be separated from its context 'professional knowledge cannot be characterized in a manner that is independent of how it is learned and how it is used.' (1994, p.19). In other words, taking informal learning approaches situated in a work environment, into different contexts, may not lead to the same results, as noted by Hodkinson *et al.* (2003).



## Teaching Music Teachers

My approach to this study requires teachers to negotiate some very difficult territory and for some this requires a change of outlook. Some teachers found this a challenge as it confronts both disciplinary knowledge and pedagogical traditions, whilst also undermining established academic dispositions. Moreover, as Cain (2015) points out, crossing cultural boundaries is often uncomfortable for music teachers. Such ontological and epistemological concerns are compounded by the lack of emphasis on teacher training in many Higher Education institutions. As Bennett and Stanberg note, teacher training is something that '[r]emains on the periphery of many music performance programmes in universities and conservatoria.' (2006, p.219).

Furthermore McNally argues that 'the early experience of teaching is characterised by emotionality and relationality rather than as a more cognitive or competence-related kind of professional learning.' (2006, p.79). McNally further proposes that informal learning should be a bigger part of teacher training. My own 2010 *Phase One Study* found that there is a strong link between the way teachers' reflect on their own learning experiences and the way that they consequently reflect on the way that they teach. Moreover, Nerland (2007) suggests that a reflexive approach to music education could lead to significant gains for the profession.

Haddon (2009) also finds evidence that students studying classical music also tend to teach using methods through which they themselves were taught. So this is perhaps something common to all musicians, or indeed all learners who become teachers. Haddon's study looks at how undergraduate classical musicians begin to teach, and finds it is experience, rather than training that shapes the pedagogic approaches of these budding teachers. Haddon recognises the dominance of the master-apprentice model in this context, and finds that this environment does not effectively introduce these student teachers to diversity and innovation in pedagogical approaches. Although passionate and enthusiastic, these student teachers lack the support and resources required to become

really effective in their classroom practice. One of the nascent questions from my *Phase One Study* is that of the role of the teacher in the music classroom. Traditional approaches to music teaching have often revolved around a master-apprentice model, which is critiqued by Westerlund (2006), and McWilliam (2008). The current progressive focus on researching informal learning has been important in directing us to a more robust theory of early professional learning in teaching.

Finney and Philpot (2010) propose that, in order for musical learning to move towards a paradigm that fosters teaching that is inclusive and student centred, the way that music teachers are taught also needs to change. They believe that traditional music education lends disproportionate weight to formal learning. It may also be the case that teachers (including those that have learnt informally) adopt traditional formal approaches because that is what they think they ought to do: the same may be true of those who teach teachers. This may well be because of the low value we assign to informal learning, its misrecognition. We simply don't see informal learning as legitimate learning and the knowledge generated by informal learning is likewise devalued.

By using informal learning as an integral approach to teacher training, Finney and Philpott (2010) aimed to retrieve informal experiences and thereby embed informal learning approaches within their trainee teachers' practice. This idea of 'excavating' or retrieving personal informal learning narratives in order to apply informal learning practice in the classroom struck me as what I was attempting to achieve with my research. Learning narratives can be considered to be tools for reflection and thus, metacognition. Pryor and Crossouard sum up the way that narrative can encourage effective reflexive learning:

Because identity forms a bridge between the social and the individual it also mediates between contexts. As the teacher narrates their own identities into existence, so students might be encouraged to see their practices and their texts as products of current identities and beyond this to consider them in the light of future or desired identities. Thus, the reflective process is a space where students can narrate into being new identities through their collaborative production of different texts (2008, p.1).

Pryor and Crossouard's study talks of texts, but one could as easily apply these principles to music making and in particular to musical composition.

Wright (2008) also recognises the role of teacher and learner identities, and perceived musical authenticity, in the alienation of students learning music at school. Language and power are significant factors along with teachers' habitus that is often one moulded by the classical idiom. Wright argues that music teachers must 'kick the habitus' (2008) in order to engage and motivate their students. When musicians become teachers they access, often subconsciously, a range of experiences they had as learners in constructing pedagogical strategies, shaped by their own habitus and learning preferences. The tricky issue for those of us attempting to recognise and utilise informal learning is that interventions may not always have the consequences that we intended. As Hodgkinson *et al.* make clear 'by increasing such formalising attributes, the nature of the learning is significantly altered, sometimes in ways that run counter to the intentions of those introducing the approaches.' (2003, p.5). It may also be that we need to deal with different cultural contexts differently, as Robinson claims 'I would suggest that music education research needs to be specific and transparent in acknowledging what kind of learning, what kind of achievement, and what kind of musical world is being studied.' (2012, p.118). Finney and Philpott also suggest that the "'ownership" of musical learning' (2010, p.151) should reside with learners rather than teachers and support the view that musical learning needs to be orientated towards *making* music (creativity) rather than focussed on the *playing* of music (technique).

I am particularly drawn to the models of teacher identity suggested by McWilliam (2008) where teacher identities are defined as the teacher focussed performative and transmissive, which McWilliam calls the 'sage-on-the-stage', and the more student-centred, 'guide-on-the-side'. She further proposes a move towards the playful and imaginative 'meddler-in-the-middle' (2008, p.263). For McWilliam, the concept of the meddler is one of a teacher who is able to become part of the student group, and can act in a playful and

challenging way, encouraging creative, inventive exploration. McWilliam appeals for '[e]xperimental, error-welcoming pedagogy'. One where we should also be '[t]aking play seriously.' (2008, p.267). Blair likewise concludes that 'informed doing, becomes something even more - a transformative musical experience enabling students to be more fully musical and, because of increased ownership in the process, become more confident in their developing musicianship.' (2009, p.45).

Although it would be easy to completely discount the role of the teacher, as pointed out previously, good teaching requires educators who know when to step aside and let learning happen. The teacher's role therefore is not diminished, if anything it expands. Rather than being the focus for activities, the teacher takes a supporting, advisory and at times an inspiring and playful role, promoting experimentation and challenging convention. The role of teaching in music is clearly critical, and is an area of little established research, partly because in the past one to one tuition has been the pedagogic tradition and been an inherently closed shop. Carey and Grant (2014) also point out discrepancies between teachers 'intentions' and 'pedagogical practice' and between 'teacher practice' and 'student expectations' in one to one musical tuition (2014, p.5). Bjøntegaard (2014) suggests that a mixture of one to one tuition, expert master classes and small group teaching is most effective in educating musical performers. Barrett's very interesting study of one to one teaching in composition shows that there are gains to be had through examining non-traditional approaches, particularly in the 'role of cooperation and collaboration in the teaching and learning process.' (2006, p.214).

Robinson's research (2011) with music teachers examines areas very close to my own work, exploring how popular musicians' learning narratives impact on the way that they teach. Furthermore, Robinson discusses the value placed on musical genres, and approaches to learning and teaching associated with those genres. Robinson's PhD thesis (2011) describes a case study project interviewing and observing the teaching of peripatetic instrumental music teachers. He concludes that these teachers 'seemed to have

arrived at a kind of idealised version of what an instrumental teacher should be: that is the teacher they would have wished for themselves.’ (2011, p.251). Like my own work Robinson also used interviews (eliciting the learning narratives from his participants) and observations (video recordings of one to one teaching sessions) as methods for the collection of his data. Coding and grounded theory were utilised to analyse data. Where Robinson’s work is different from my own is the context: his participants are teaching one to one, in isolation and developing individualised approaches to instrumental teaching - few of his teachers had any teacher training. In contrast my participants are working in an institutional environment, utilising group based teaching and the majority (all but one) have had formal teacher training. My research is aimed at retrieving informal experiences from popular musicians, and using those experiences to fashion new approaches to learning in the popular music classroom, and to identify what works.

In conclusion, there has long been a debate over taking a more inclusive, creative, and aesthetic approach to learning and teaching music. The current literature on informal learning in music defines an on-going project to re-invigorate the teaching of music, by drawing on informal learning practice derived from popular music practice, as identified by Green (2002). I see myself as a fellow proponent of informal learning and suggest there is a place for the exploration of informal learning practice across the range of music provision, from schools and colleges to Higher Education institutions. Learning is evidently a process of becoming (Lave, 1988, Lave and Wenger, 1991, Wenger, 1998, Wenger, 1999): a process of identity formation through ontological and epistemological exploration and development.

Successful learners develop a feel for the game, an ability to negotiate the influence of power on their own potential for agency. Learning is thus complex and dependant on a range of external and internalised factors, including our own social, cognitive, and cultural development. Furthermore, these principles relate directly to informal learning where

experience, intuition, reflection, insight and experimentation are crucial to the process of learning.

The research discussed in this chapter correspondingly demonstrates the importance of valuing the musical world(s) of our students, whilst also stretching them creatively. Meanwhile, informal learning allows our students to explore identity practices and develop themselves ontologically and epistemologically, so that their learning leads them to become valued and creative professionals in the field of music. Our popular musicians need to be able to be *making* music not just *playing* it, and we need to redefine our own habits and conventions as educators in order to achieve the best results for our students. Technique and technical skills are less important than the ability to innovate, adapt and create. Music is primarily a social activity, and one where we assign different values to discrete musical forms or genres, and recognise each other as having particular musical identities that partly or wholly define us.

## Chapter four: Methodology and Methods

### Introduction

In this chapter I will explain my methodological position, as well as the practical methods I adopted for data collection in the 2012 *Action Research Study*. I will also briefly describe the purpose of the *Phase One Study* (Irwin, 2010) further referenced in my *Critical and Analytical Study* (Irwin, 2011): both studies previously submitted as coursework for the EdD. The *Phase One Study* informed my approach to the empirical research design, and the development of my theoretical model. As I began to analyse data from the *Phase One Study*, Bourdieu's thinking tools - capital, field, habitus, and social constructivism as a theory of learning - began to inform my ontological and epistemological positions.

Furthermore, I am specifically using a case study approach in order to enable teachers of popular music to reflect on how they themselves became musicians, and how they might utilise that reflection in developing their own approaches to teaching practice. I seek to understand how informal learning in music can be applied as a useful and valuable approach to teaching popular music in Higher Education. Moreover, by asking popular music teachers to retrieve and examine their own informal learning experiences, and thus develop approaches in the classroom based on that reflexive practice, I aim to enable and promote metacognition. I have adopted this approach as one appropriate to the context I am operating within, as an insider researcher looking at teaching and learning in my own institution. However, I believe that the findings from my work are also more generally applicable across popular music education in other Higher Education Institutions.

In this chapter I will also discuss the ethical and methodological considerations surrounding my empirical work and the thesis overall. To begin with, I will proceed in outlining the research design from the beginning of my doctoral studies to the end of the data collection phases. I will then proceed to examine the formulation of my research questions; my choice of methodology and methods; how I selected my participants; the

research chronology; ethics, validity and reliability; and finally a description of the kind of data collected.

## Research Design

My empirical research consisted of two phases. The first, conducted in 2010 as the *Phase One Study*, established a link between the ways that the teachers in my study reflected on their own learning, which was informal on the whole, and how they reflected on the way that they teach their own students. The *Phase One Study* research consisted of semi structured interviews (Leech, 2002), and did not include classroom observations. The interviews were intended to elicit learning narratives from each participant, and then ask them to reflect on how their own learning had shaped the way they teach their students.

Additionally, the analysis of the *Phase One Study* began to identify issues around identity, power, learning, situatedness, and creativity, as important factors for musical learning. The second phase of my empirical work, the 2012 *Action Research Study*, built on what I had learnt from the 2010 *Phase One Study*, and helped to inform both my primary research questions as detailed in chapter one, and the further development of my theoretical understanding. The development of my theoretical model began with the theory of situated learning (Lave and Wenger, 1991) and notions of reflective practice (Schon, 1983), and developed to embrace social constructivism (Vygotsky, 1930/1978), and the sociology of Bourdieu (1977).

From my reading of Green (2002), my research questions and the 2010 *Phase One Study* were developed. These initial questions were simple and revolved around establishing a link between the learning experiences of my research participants, the way they talked about those experiences, and the way they described their own approach to teaching. The initial questions were:

1. How did you learn to play music?
2. How did you learn to teach music?



I also asked my research participants to discuss issues that they had come upon in their teaching practice, and how their own experience of learning, and learning to teach, had shaped their response to such encounters. The *Phase One Study* established that my research questions had validity and began to identify key themes emerging from the work, which I grouped together under the headings of meaning, practice, community, and identity - themes adapted from the work of Wenger (1998).

I began the *Phase One Study* with the fundamental questions outlined above, but no real idea of how I would examine them or collect and analyse the data. Therefore, my initial adoption of constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006) appeared at the time to be an appropriate methodology. As I began to develop a more sophisticated theoretical model using Bourdieu, I abandoned strict adherence to the principles of grounded theory and concentrated on using Bourdieu's thinking tools of capital, field and habitus to critically interrogate my data.

Throughout this process of evolving the theoretical frame for my research, I also continued to distil the themes that were emerging from the empirical work. In the *Critical and Analytical Study* (Irwin, 2011), I examined my data in terms of learning: informal strategies in the classroom – learning by doing and as experience; peer learning, and the impact of group learning in Higher Education on motivation and leadership; identity, or learning as becoming, habitus, musical capital and community; and authenticity, or musical and cultural meaning, as communities of genre. In refining these themes I began to look at how pertinent they were to my developing model. Accordingly, the practice of research and the analysis and theorisation of the data that emerged from the empirical work developed both simultaneously and heuristically. The fundamental aim of the work in this thesis is to unite these strands of practice and theory into a unified model that provides a firm basis for further exploration.

### **Action Research Study: Research Questions**

For the *Action Research Study*, I asked the participants to reflect on the five characteristics of informal learning as outlined by Green (2006) and design a teaching intervention that drew on their own experience as informal learners (see appendix one for full briefing document provided to each participant). Green's five principles are: allowing learners to choose the music; learning by listening to and copying recordings; learning in friendship groups with minimum adult [teacher] guidance; learning in personal often-haphazard ways; and integrating listening, playing, singing, improvising and composing.

The briefing document outlined the findings from the *Phase One Study*, explained the five characteristics of informal learning detailed above, and asked the participants to reflect on these principles: and to design a classroom activity based on one, or more, of those principles. When I interviewed the teachers in the *Action Research Study* I also began by asking them to talk about their own learning narratives (see appendix two) and the experience of reflecting on and using their own informal learning experience in class, using the simple questions from the *Phase One Study*, as outlined above.

My key research questions for this thesis are:

1. How might music teachers utilise informal learning practices effectively in formal classroom settings?
2. How can music teachers be encouraged to retrieve and reflect on their own informal learning experience in order to see that learning through the eyes of their students?
3. In what ways can music students be encouraged to develop metacognition through reflection on action in action (Schon, 1983)?
4. By what means can both formal and informal learning become visible and legitimate for both teacher and learner?

## Methodology

Somekh and Lewin define methodology as ‘the whole system of principles, theories and values that underpin a particular approach to research.’ (2008, p.346-7). My position is primarily influenced by my use of Bourdieu as my theoretical lens and, like Bourdieu, I reject the binary opposition between subjective and objective theoretical positions. As Bourdieu argues, if we escape this false dichotomy we consequently produce a more meaningful and comprehensive picture of the way society works:

We shall escape from the ritual either/or choice between objectivism and subjectivism in which the social sciences have so far allowed themselves to be trapped only if we are prepared to inquire into the mode of production and functioning of the practical mastery which makes possible both an objectively intelligible practice and also an objectively enchanted experience of that practice (1977, p.4).

Abandoning this binary approach brings understanding of the practical knowledge that underpins human society and reproduces ‘an adequate science of practice.’ (Bourdieu, 1977, p.3). Furthermore, in order to avoid the ‘scholastic fallacy’ of intellectual enquiry Bourdieu entreats the social scientist to become truly reflexive in making his or her position explicit and recognising how the intellectual field can become a lens that distorts reality:

Ignoring everything that is implicated in the “scholastic point of view” leads us to commit the most serious epistemological mistake in the social sciences, namely, that which consists in putting “a scholar inside the machine,” in picturing all social scientists in the image of the scientist (of the scientist reasoning on human practice and not of the acting scientist, the scientist-in-action) or, more precisely, to place the models that the scientist must construct to account for practices into the consciousness of agents, to do as if the constructions that the scientist must produce to understand practices, to account for them, were the main determinants, the actual cause of practices (1990b, p.384).

Here Bourdieu points to how researchers may project their own theoretical model onto society so that the essential logic of practice becomes obscured. Thus, by projecting pre-conceived theory onto the actions of individuals or groups in society, the researcher may ignore social agents’ own conceptions of practice and therefore risk overlooking the real reasons and origins. What I intend to do with this study, is to produce data providing a

rich description of practice, and interrogate that data in order to address my research questions. By utilizing Bourdieu's sociology as a theoretical framework, my methodology provides a set of criteria with which I will examine the data from my research participants in order to understand how they draw on capital through practice, and how these relations are shaped by the forces that shape the field, and the distribution of power within and across fields particularly where those fields intersect or undergo change. I have categorised the codes applied to the data into four overarching themes of situatedness, identity practices, creativity, and authenticity.

### **Narratives**

Narrative appears in three forms in this thesis and can be considered to be a methodological tool. Firstly, I approach narrative through the notion that identity is developed as narrative, a story woven and folded in social space, from our own memory and the experience and the stories of others, so that identity may be considered as 'distributed' (Bruner, 1991). This process allows individuals to understand their own lives, whilst also explaining them to others and asserting their value. Identity is formed through our understanding of our own experience and the interpretation of the world by others. This work of identity formation may not be an entirely reflexive project where we make conscious and effective choices as to who we wish to become, and certainly not one that all in society have equal access to. A summary of the learning narratives of the participants in the *Action Research Study* can be found in appendix two.

Secondly, narrative also has a huge significance in art and music and particularly the development of popular song. Just as with the formation of identity, songs tell life stories that are both individual and shared. In fact we may even become convinced that their (the songwriter or singer) stories are our own stories. There is a clear reaching out through songs to others, sharing narratives that are deeply personal but also collective and universal. There is a need to be understood, to tell a tale that establishes music's meaning, value and place in society.

Finally, narrative becomes part of enquiry as it does in this thesis, where the narratives of the participants provide both data for the researcher, and an opportunity for reflexivity for the participants. This approach works well when considering my constructivist position, as Gill and Goodson note '[b]oth narrative and life history approaches recognise that meanings are socially constructed, and human actions and agency are contingent upon social-cultural, historical and political influences'. (2010, p.2). Biesta *et al.* see narrative as a key to learning that is also made more effective by metacognition. They see three key concepts as important. Firstly, the 'narrative quality' is significant. Secondly, the 'learning potential' or 'the extent to which life narratives allow for learning from one's life'. Finally, there is the 'action potential' or the 'practical outcomes of narrative learning.' (2008, p.21). Although narrative has not been my only method, it has become a strand that unites all aspects of this enquiry. However, there is a fundamental methodological weakness in the narrative approach as pointed out by Bruner:

The theories or stories one constructs about one's growth and, indeed, about the "stages" along the path of that growth are not verifiable in the usual sense the term is used (Bruner, 1991).

Therefore, I must bear in mind that the narratives I gather are as much indicators of belief and interpretation, grounded in experience and reflection on that experience, rather than historical or verifiable factual accounts. In addition, as touched upon previously, the ability to tell a good story is not something we all have. As Skeggs points out, 'narrativization of one's experience is a resource; some are unable to present themselves as the subject of a narrative.' (2004, p.126). Thus, for some an inability to play the game by engaging in the narrative account of their lives excludes them from the reflexive project of identity.

Bourdieu also utilised a narrative approach in one of his later works, *The Weight of the World* (1999), in which he uses the stories of suffering of 'ordinary' people from France and America to make a sociological and political case against the withdrawal of the state from social responsibility. McRobbie (2002) criticises this work for its lack of reference to

relevant scholarship and lack of context. As she puts it 'the problem of interpretation without having recourse to historical and cultural context demonstrates that voice of pain is not enough.' (2002, p.131). Bourdieu argues that by telling these stories the individuals involved are able to see their own position in social space, and that the sociologist also benefits, through a greater understanding of the 'objects' of his or her study. So that the sociologist may 'understand that if they were in their shoes they would doubtless be and think just like them.' (Bourdieu, 1999, p.626). McRobbie agrees that such interventions do have an effect on habitus of those 'ordinary' people, but argues 'does better understanding necessarily lead to the kind of political and ethical outlook which Bourdieu would endorse?' (2002, p.133). My own view is that she is right, context is vital and the outcomes of intervention are often problematic. Nevertheless, those problems should not be a reason for inaction. I am convinced that we often worry too much about trying to make qualitative empirical work resemble quantitative research, when actually what should concern us is making sense of the very rich data that comes from qualitative empirical work, which by its nature is impressionistic. By seeking to understand others, we must surely better comprehend ourselves.

### **Choice of Empirical Research Methods**

In choosing the methods that I have, I considered the indicative strengths and weaknesses of each method and endeavoured to use methods that are appropriate and complementary, both to qualitative research and the topic at hand.

I have used interviews because they are effective in that they 'enable participants – be they interviewers or interviewees – to discuss their interpretations of the world in which they live, and to express how they regard situations from their own point of view.' (Cohen and Manion, 2007, p.349). Interviews are useful in eliciting answers to questions of *how* and *why*, and in the investigation of complex issues, but an interview is essentially a 'negotiated...construction-or reconstruction of a reality.' (Charmaz, 2006, p.27).

Interviews are therefore interventions where identity and relations of power come into

play and shape the interaction for both participants. Furthermore, interviews are a practical method for collecting information from a small sample, and produce insightful and rich data (2006, p.33). The drawbacks of interviews are that they are time consuming to conduct and analyse (Cohen and Manion, 2007, p.349). Surveys in comparison are cheaper, quicker and easier to evaluate, but do not work so well when asking open questions and dealing with small samples. Surveys are better suited to large scale generalisation and identification of patterns based on bigger samples (2007, p.206).

I have also used non-participant observation as a method, as this allows me to triangulate some of my data by observing behaviour in the classroom, so that I am able to see what my participants *do* (and how what they *do* is responded to by their students) rather than just placing reliance on *what they say they do* (2007, p.396). The main drawback to this method is the likelihood that behaviour will change because I am there observing it (2007, p.410). I had considered using video cameras to record the classes I observed, but the presence of a camera in class is just as likely to alter behaviour.

My choice of interviews and observation of classroom practice as two of my primary empirical tools originates from my epistemological position. Social knowledge construction requires social interaction and I am looking to produce data that provides a rich and comprehensive picture of practice. My interview approach also returns to the original meaning of the word 'conversation' as Kvale defines it 'wandering together with, [the interviewer] walks along with the local inhabitants, asking questions and encouraging them to tell their own stories of their lived world.' (2009, p.48). I chose my methods because they are both appropriate and complimentary, since they provide triangulation of my own observations with the interviews, where my participants described and reflected upon the same events.

### **Case Studies**

As Yin points out, case studies arise from 'the desire to understand complex social phenomena.' (2003, p.2). Thus, case studies are useful in answering 'how' and 'why' (2003,

p.1). Consequently, case studies are grounded in an assumption '[t]hat 'social reality' is created through social interaction, albeit situated in particular contexts and histories.' (Stark and Torrance in, Somekh and Lewin, 2008, p.33). Cohen and Manion add that 'indeed one of their [case studies] strengths is that they observe effects in real contexts.' (2007, p.253). For these reasons my case study approach works well with Bourdieu's thinking tools and social constructivist learning theory, as it allows me to look at my subject situated in context, and to construct a theoretical model from the practice I observe.

### **Action Research**

My choice of action research for the *Action Research Study* was born out of my increasing interest in the themes of identity, learning, power, and reflexivity that were emerging from my work. Thus, I am using action research to examine these issues whilst also providing an opportunity to my participants for their own professional development, so that both practice and theory may be enriched. I have adopted Somkeh's definition of action research as a collaborative and situated process:

[A]ction research integrates the development of practice with the construction of research knowledge in a cyclical process. Instead of being research *on* a social setting and people within it, it is research *from inside* that setting carried out either by the participants themselves or researchers working in collaboration with them. It has immediate impact since it is an integral part of day-to-day work (Somkeh, in Somkeh and Lewin, 2008, p.89).

I trialled the action research approach with some of BIMM's PG Cert students, an intervention which inspired passionate debate from the group and some interesting reflections on how informal learning might be useful in the classroom environment, including the study conducted by my research participant Richard, which he ran as part of his PG Cert studies and which is discussed as part of the data presented and analysed in chapter five.

Successful action research allows praxis, whereby practice and theory becomes a virtuous circle of action: data collection; reflection and analysis/theorisation; leading to



more action, and consequently to reflection as the action research cycle renews.

Employing an action research approach to the second phase of my empirical work allowed the collaborative construction of knowledge, concomitantly developing self-awareness, (my own), and that of my participants. Furthermore, the action research approach seemed to be a logical progression from the 2010 *Phase One Study*, and one that allowed the participants and myself greater potential for reflexive understanding, as a basis for action as Gaventa and Cornwall point out:

Through action upon reality, and analysis of that learning, awareness of the nature of problems, and the sources of oppression, may also change...Not only must production of alternative knowledge be complemented by acting upon it, but the participants in the knowledge process must equally find spaces for self-critical investigation and analysis of their own reality, in order to gain more authentic knowledge as a basis for action or representation to others (2001, p.77).

Therefore the *Action Research Study* provided opportunity for reflexive practice. Firstly by challenging traditional epistemological and ontological positions for some of the teachers in the project, encouraging them to re-assess their beliefs about effective approaches to learning. Secondly, it also allowed them to reflect on their own experience as learners, and make links between those experiences and their students' experience of their own pedagogy.

### **Observation in Class**

The classroom observations allowed me to see the interventions the teachers had planned in response to my briefing, and pick up on any tensions between their understanding of what had occurred and my own. However, the complex ecology of the classroom environment makes it difficult to assess the effectiveness of a particular intervention and I must also remember that, as Somekh and Lewin point out that '[w]hat is observed is ontologically determined, that is it depends to a very great extent on how the observer conceptualizes the world and his or her place within it.' (2008, p.138). During the observations for the *Action Research Study* I took notes, which are summarised in the description of each class observed in appendix three, and in a brief description of what

worked and what didn't at the beginning of chapter six. I have also made reference to the observation data in the critical analysis presented in chapter five.

## **Interviews**

As soon as possible after the teaching sessions I arranged for the participants to attend interviews. Winter describes action research as a method for the researcher to find their own voice 'to speak one's experience and one's ability to learn from that experience.' (1998, p.53). In the *Action Research Study*, I have aimed to engage teachers in a conversation in which we work together to construct knowledge (Baker *et al.*, 2002). We do this with the aim of producing and identifying practical, or horizontal (Bourdieu, 1977, Bernstein, 1999) knowledge and theoretical understanding that we are in turn able to utilise in the further development of practice.

The interviews with the teachers were between an hour and an hour and a half in duration. The majority were conducted in my home, and two interviews were conducted in my private office at work (both participants found it easier and more practical to do this). Interviews were recorded digitally onto two recording devices to ensure reliable capture, and guard against any equipment failure. Interviews were semi structured borrowing from the anthropological approach of participant observation, but combining this with a degree of structure. As Leech points out '[i]t's true that the type of interview you use depends on what you already know, but if you already knew everything, there would be little reason to spend time in a face-to-face interview.' (2002, p.668).

Each interview began with a common set of pre-determined questions but I also allowed room for adding additional questions in an open ended way. This method allowed the interviews to roam into areas that may not have been prompted by the initial questions. As Rapley notes, the idea of interviewers '*being* facilitative and neutral' (2001, p.318) is impossible and therefore '[w]hatever analytic stance is adopted you cannot escape from the interactional nature of interviews, that the "data" are collaboratively

produced.’ (2001, p.318). A synopsis of each participant’s own learning narrative can be found in appendix two.

### The Research Participants

The participants were selected based on information contained in their BIMM CV’s in order to produce a representative sample of teachers working within the college (particularly in the areas of performance and composition/songwriting), although as previously noted two participants were volunteers (they also fitted the profile I was looking for, in terms of age, gender and professional background). I selected the research participants, identifying individuals of a similar age to myself (approx. forty to fifty-five), and from a background that indicated they would have had significant experience as both professional musicians and teachers and similar mixes of formal and informal learning experiences (i.e. some educational qualifications, mostly in music, but not exclusively). I was also looking for individuals with significant industry experience. There was also a realistic gender balance, reflecting the gender distribution that exists in the institution.

The participants ranged in age from forty-two to fifty-seven years old, and two were female.<sup>49</sup> All the participants were white Europeans, three of the seven had formal music qualifications and six of the group had teaching qualifications (four of these six having completed, or were at the time of the action research in the process of completing, the BIMM PG Cert). Three of the participants had left school with either O-Levels or A-Levels or their equivalents. All the research participants worked at BIMM and were contracted; two full time, with the others being on fractional teaching contracts that included hourly paid teaching hours plus some administration duties. The majority of the group had taught elsewhere before BIMM, either as peripatetic music teachers or in schools and colleges. All research participants had taught at BIMM for at least five years.

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<sup>49</sup> This reflects the overall gender balance at BIMM with is 80% male and 20% female for both staff and students.

This sample is representative of the majority of staff working at BIMM, in that they are part-time teachers but also practising musicians, with a long history of performance and composition at a professional level. Furthermore, this group are consequently representative of many staff currently teaching popular music across a range of Higher Education institutions in the UK. The one thing that perhaps sets them apart from tutors in other institutions is that the majority of my participants had received teacher training through having completed, or being enrolled on at the time of the research, the BIMM PG Cert. I will discuss the implications of this difference in my analysis and conclusions.

Five participants were able to take part in the action research cycle itself, either directly, or by sharing their own action research, and the other two engaged with the research through the initial briefing (appendix one) and interview only. The five participants who were able to take part in the classroom action research were then asked to design and deliver a teaching session at BIMM, which utilised one or more of those principles from Green (2006)<sup>50</sup> and to invite me along to observe the session.<sup>51</sup>

After observing the participants delivering their informal learning class, I invited them to meet me for an interview. Although my *Action Research Study* only lasted for one cycle of action research, my hope is that what the participants learnt as part of the study will continue to feed into their own practice, and this was certainly what some of the participants said would be the case during their interviews. Below is a table (*Fig 1.*) showing how each participant was involved in the two phases.

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<sup>50</sup> See: Action Research Study Research Questions, section above.

<sup>51</sup> Details of the classes observed, the number of students, the class topics and the informal learning focus chosen by each participant teacher are detailed in appendix three.

<b>Pseudonym:</b>	<b><i>Phase One Study 2010:</i></b>	<b><i>Action Research Study 2012:</i></b>	<b><i>In Class Observation 2012:</i></b>	<b><i>Interview(s) 2012:</i></b>
<b>David</b>	No	No	No	Yes
<b>Clare</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Eddy</b>	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Sue</b>	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Stephen</b>	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Richard</b>	Yes	Yes	No-video	Yes
<b>Joe</b>	No	No	No	Yes

*Figure 1. Research Participants: Research Phases and Data Collection.*

In the *Action Research Study*, I employed a collaborative or participatory action research approach, described by Park as ‘action-orientated research activity in which ordinary people address common needs arising in their daily lives, and in the process, generate knowledge.’ (Park, 2001, p.83), my participants effectively taking on the role of co-researchers. Despite my best efforts, the composition of the group became rather messy as the empirical work progressed. I began the 2010 *Phase One Study* with a group of five, two of whom were happy to continue to be involved in the 2012 *Action Research Study*. Five others, new to the project joined the *Action Research Study* during 2012. Two of those joined quite late, and therefore were only able to take part in the interviews, but unable to trial teaching approaches or be observed in class (as the college teaching year had ended).

Participants were briefed and provided with a description of the research and the action research task, along with a consent form (see appendix one). At the initial briefing stage, the research participants also had an opportunity to discuss the research and their consent in detail, which several of them did. We discussed Green’s work, its implications for their practice, and my own developing theoretical model and motivation(s) for undertaking the study. For the 2012 *Action Research Study* I wrote a set of initial interview questions, some of which were derived from the 2010 *Phase One Study*.

## Ethics

The *Action Research Study* was put forward for ethical approval at the University of Sussex in April 2011. The university saw the project as low risk. All data for this project have been anonymised and kept securely. All participants were made aware of their legal and ethical rights and that they might withdraw from the study at any time prior to publication (see appendix one). My main ethical concerns are around the issues faced by any insider researcher, which may be exacerbated by my use of my own biography. As Campbell and Groundwater-Smith make clear '[t]he boundaries may become even more blurred when the academic researcher is engaged in investigating his or her academic practice.' Therefore, in using the theoretical lens of Bourdieu's thinking tools, I must also take both a critical and reflexive stance.

My own position, as a self-taught pop musician, teacher, and researcher, places me in the right place at the right time to contribute to the current debate over the value of informal learning practice. Nonetheless, my position as an insider researcher also produces inherent tension with my role as a senior manager researching practice within my own institution. This potential conflict is one I have done my best to relieve by making my independent position clear to the participants. As Sikes and Potts point out 'when the researcher is a manager [p]ower and authority issues can become especially significant.' (2008, p.39). In this study I have made it clear to all stakeholders that my role is as a post-graduate researcher, as far as possible all interviews were held outside of the work environment, and I have anonymised all information likely to surface in the public domain. Nonetheless, I can never escape the effect of the power inherent in the position I occupy.

What is important is that I acknowledge this issue of power and identity in my analysis of the data, where my position both as a manager, but also as a researcher, has influence upon my research participants. Working in a music college makes for ideal conditions in which to collect data and conduct interventions in the form of action research, but it does not insulate me from the effects of power on relationships. There was no pressure from

myself, or others in the organisation, for staff to participate and the consent forms I used clearly outlined participants' rights. Drake and Heath accurately sum up the guiding principles for an ethical position by an insider researcher:

The researcher...is in a position of developing an ethical perspective that is situated in and arises from the research in that context. Importantly this is informed by the personal ethical values that researchers bring to their studies, as well as by the various ethical codes and practices that are in place (2011, p.47).

Furthermore, there is the ethical issue of how revealing my own personal story reflects on my own position in the field that I currently inhabit. This is an aspect central to a discussion of ethics in the research process, because I run the risk of the work not being taken seriously within my institution and the wider academic field, as Dunne *et al.*, put it:

Very often the organizations we find ourselves a part of as adults, are themselves driven by instrumental rationality, with an intense focus on ends. Thus, they are unable to recognize the expression of the narrative self because to do so would transgress the boundaries of the bureaucratic self, the subject of controlled production (2005, p.150).

### Validity and Reliability

The terms validity and reliability come from the positivistic tradition and therefore sit rather uncomfortably in the qualitative/naturalistic paradigm. In qualitative terms what is more important is that my work is credible, transferable, dependable, confirmable, and thus trustworthy (Guba, 1981, Golafshani, 2003, Shenton, 2004). To achieve this aim I have used these four criteria for trustworthiness originally developed by Guba (1981) and further expanded on by Shenton (2004) to assess the validity and reliability of my research.

### Credibility

Credibility refers to whether research presents a true and accurate picture of the phenomenon being examined, and is the equivalent of internal validity<sup>52</sup> in the positivist tradition. According to Shenton (2004) credibility relies on a diverse range of factors,

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<sup>52</sup> In the positivist tradition internal validity is concerned with establishing that an experiment has been conducted in a way that minimizes the chance that variables confounding and therefore casting doubt on the findings.

including: the adoption of appropriate, and recognised, research methods; a familiarity with the context within which the research takes place; random sampling of participants to avoid bias in selection; triangulation of methods; 'tactics' that ensure honesty from research participants; 'iterative questioning'; the use of 'negative case studies'; feedback from research supervisors; transparency regarding the position of the researcher(s); member checks; peer validation; a 'reflective commentary' on the development of the research; a detailed description of what is being investigated; and comparison of the current research with other similar work (2004, p.73).

As discussed earlier in this chapter I have adopted recognised and established research methods, and a methodology that is congruent with my theoretical framework and ontological and epistemological positions. My epistemological position is constructivist, and I see the research I have conducted, both empirical and literature based, as contributing to my own (as well as my research participants') construction of the world around us, and more particularly my world as a musician, researcher, teacher and learner. This constructivist viewpoint has led me to the main method for the second case study, action research. As learning is socially constructed, it made sense to explore how interventions in teaching and learning might allow me to work collaboratively with the teachers in my study to produce new insights and knowledge of our practice as popular music educators, with the aim of reflecting on, and therefore improving, that practice.

Furthermore, I am also very familiar with both the field of popular music and the institution within which my studies have been situated - in both contexts I am truly an insider researcher. In terms of sampling, although I have not selected a random sample, because I needed to ensure that my participants had background of informal learning, I have endeavoured to select a representative sample, and two of the participants were self selecting. Additionally, all my research participants were volunteers who were encouraged to be frank and honest in their responses, and assured that their responses would be confidential, and their anonymity assured. The nature of the two empirical



studies is also longitudinal, covering a period from 2010 to 2013, producing a ‘prolonged engagement’ (Shenton, 2004, p.65) with my research participants. My own independence as a researcher was also emphasised from the beginning of the project, and all participants were also informed of their rights to withdraw from the studies at any time.

I have used complimentary methods (interview and observation) to provide triangulation, whilst also ensuring a degree of honesty from my participants; alongside iterative questioning, to identify any contradictions in the stories my participants were telling. Moreover, I have drawn attention to discrepancies within and between the narratives of my participants and the action research interventions, and I have explained my interpretation of these discrepancies in my analysis in chapter five. As Burnard *et al.* (2008) point out ‘there is no definitive answer to the issues of validity in qualitative analysis.’ (2008, p.431). As they advise I have used the concept of ‘constant comparison’ (Glaser and Strauss, 1967): reading and re-reading the data to search for themes and categories. During my analysis I have constantly revisited my data through an iterative process of methodological and theoretical development.

Moreover, I have made my own position clear from the outset, in terms of my background and beliefs and I have endeavoured to be transparent in this regard with my research participants. Ultimately in terms of an analysis of reflexive sociology, I must turn to Bourdieu and Wacquant who define the types of bias that ‘may blur the sociological gaze.’ Firstly, ‘the *social* origins and coordinates (class, gender, ethnicity, etc.)’ of the individual researcher. Secondly, their position in the field of study ‘linked to the position that the analyst occupies...in the microcosm of the *academic* field.’ Thirdly, ‘[t]he *intellectualist bias*, which entices us to construe the world as a *spectacle*.’ (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p.39). So in Bourdieu’s terms, I must not only be aware of where I come from, but also where I am now, and what I am becoming. There is a reflexive loop here, the process of becoming a researcher is influenced by my own identity and habitus, and the process of becoming also leads to further individual change: thus the shifting dynamic of

the transformation of my own identity and habitus impacts on project itself. This research is also an act of identity practice: as I seek to become a researcher, recognised through the acquisition of social, cultural and symbolic capital, I am therefore deeply and personally interested in this project's success.

I have considered both the commonly utilised methods for validation in qualitative research: respondent validation and peer review. Both have their inherent issues: respondent validation being problematic due to the gap in time between the research and the analysis; peer review requiring significant time on the part of the peer reviewer, with the additional risk that the peer reviewer interprets the data completely differently. In terms of member checking, the final transcripts of the interview data were sent to the research participants for their approval and comment. This was done as soon as they were complete so that the interviews were still relatively fresh in their minds, and all participants approved the transcripts with some very minor amendments. I have also used peer and research supervisor validation, I shared the transcripts and my analysis with my supervisors and other critical friends, who have fed back to me on the data and my interpretation through the process of writing up my research.

Finally, I have provided a reflective commentary that begins with my own narrative and extends to the history and development of my research and the iterative development of my theoretical and methodological understanding of my topics I am investigating. This commentary is complimented by use of a rich description of my data and its analysis, including additional detailed information on the backgrounds of my participants and my approach to analysis that is contained in the appendices, alongside comparison of my own work with other studies within the field in chapters two and three.

## **Transferability**

Transferability, or the extent to which my findings would be relevant to a similar study in the field, is the equivalent of external validity<sup>53</sup> in the positivist tradition. In qualitative work transferability is ensured by the 'provision of background data to establish context of study and detailed description of phenomena in question to allow comparisons to be made.' (Shenton, 2004, p.73). Additionally, the inherent limitations of case studies, and the highly contextual nature of qualitative inquiry, make it impossible to be certain that my findings are transferable. However, what I can do is present sufficient contextual and methodological detail, whilst also making the boundaries and limitations of my study clear, to allow other investigators to make an informed decision on whether my findings are applicable to their own context(s).

## **Dependability**

In the positivistic tradition dependability is termed reliability:<sup>54</sup> in simple terms if one were repeat to repeat the study, one should obtain the same results. However as Shenton points out 'the changing nature of the phenomena scrutinised by qualitative researchers renders such provisions problematic in their work.' (2004, p.71). However, as Shenton concludes this difficulty should not prevent me from presenting the reader with enough information and detail so that, should they wish to, they could repeat my work (2004, p.72). To this end I have included detailed descriptions of the research design and process, the gathering of data, and my reflective analysis of the research process.

## **Confirmability**

The principle of confirmability relates to objectivity<sup>55</sup> in the positivist tradition. To address this concern of researcher, or participant, bias I have used a range of methods to ensure triangulation, and applied rigour to my data analysis. However, I also acknowledge

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<sup>53</sup> In the positivist tradition external validity is the degree to which the findings of an experiment can be generalized to other situations.

<sup>54</sup> In the positivist tradition, reliability is the degree to which an experiment produces stable and consistent results.

<sup>55</sup> In the positivist tradition, objectivity demands that the researcher is free from bias and does not let his or her own beliefs impact on the results of his or her research.

that I cannot pretend to be a neutral observer, or that my participants are likewise objective, but, I can aim to apply my own principles by maintaining a reflexive approach in interrogating my participants' contributions. I must likewise continue be aware that my own position and enthusiasm for informal learning may influence the participants in my study, and combine with their own passion for the subject in some cases. My participants appeared to be open and honest with me, and shared a great deal, producing some rich and very useful data. Nonetheless, they and I are both products of the formation of identity and habitus, and I must be careful to acknowledge my own beliefs as well as those of my participants in the way that I analyse my findings.

I have carefully examined my theoretical position, and how this stance has allowed me to bring together conflicted ideas of structure and agency to produce a theoretical framework for my work. In this way, I have responded to the data directly and been critical, reflective and open to what my data is telling me, and adapted my theoretical model as the research has developed. I have moved from relying on the grounded theory methodology, and research specifically based on metacognition and the situatedness of practice, to a more sophisticated model, centred on Bourdieu's theoretical tools of capital, field and habitus.

## **Data**

The data produced from the research consist of interview transcripts, transcribed verbatim from the original recordings, and hand-written notes from the in-class observations. Data were anonymised using pseudonyms and stored electronically and securely using password protection. I used the Hyper Research<sup>56</sup> qualitative research software programme and Mind-Node Pro<sup>57</sup> mind-mapping application to process, code and analyse my data. Further detail on this process can be found below in chapter five, with an example of the initial coding of the data included in appendix four. In the next

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<sup>56</sup> <http://www.researchware.com/products/hyperresearch.html>

<sup>57</sup> <http://mindnode.com/>

chapter I also will discuss how I have analysed my findings and the meanings I have produced from my empirical and literature based research. The approach I am taking to analysis is to group together data from all the sources, from all participants and both the interviews and observations, and analyse that data under the themes that I have identified as important from the data itself, the literature, and from my understanding of the theoretical models I am using as a lens to examine that data.

## Chapter five: Findings and Data Analysis

My initial concern was to explore the nature and context of musical learning for professional popular musicians, who have also become teachers. In exploring the situatedness of learning I discovered the significance of the practices of identity, the importance of authenticity and the abiding investment in being creative. I will analyse my findings under each theme using social constructivist learning theory and Bourdieu's thinking tools, capital, field, and habitus, as my critical lens. I will begin with a summary of my approach to the analysis as well as an explanation of the focus of each analytical theme, and how the themes interrelate. The remainder of this chapter will provide a detailed analysis of the interview and observation data under each of the four themes.

### Data Analysis

The Phase *One* Study (Irwin, 2010) employed grounded theory as a method for the analysis of my data (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). During 2011, I began to use Bourdieu's work as a lens through which to view and interpret the data I had gathered, and analysed in the *Critical and Analytical Study* (Irwin, 2011). For the 2012 *Action Research Study*<sup>58</sup> I also used thematic content analysis and coding as a way of extracting topics from the data, taking an inductive approach. However, I did not follow the grounded theory method fully, employing a simpler thematic content analysis approach to coding and grouping codes together, to develop my four analytical themes. I then used mind mapping<sup>59</sup> to explore how the themes related, both to the data and my emerging theoretical model, applying deductive logic to refine my themes, their hierarchy and interrelationships. The rich nature of my data made this approach more logical and practical, allowing me to combine insights from my empirical data with my emerging theoretical model. The interview transcripts were individually coded, using the open coding approach outlined by Charmaz

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<sup>58</sup> The *Phase One Study* (Irwin, 2010) and *Critical and Analytical Study* (Irwin, 2011) are previously assessed element of the EdD course at the University of Sussex.

<sup>59</sup> <http://www.thinkbuzan.co.uk>

(2006, p.49-50), aiming to produce codes that accurately define actions or meanings and keeping those codes 'short, simple, active and analytic.' (2006, p.50). An example of this initial coding is included as appendix four.

Once coded, I began to sort and cross-reference the codes to identify the most common codes across the interview data using the 'frequency report' function in the Hyper Research software package. This allowed me to create key groupings of codes, which I then extrapolated into analytical themes, using hand written memos to analyse and interpret the data. My analysis has concentrated on looking at content, and meanings behind that content, and particularly the attitude of each participant to the topics and beliefs under discussion. The four analytical themes are:

**Situatedness:** the embeddedness of musical practice, and music education practice, in social, cultural, historical, and technological contexts: consequently, the effect of changes in the fields of music and education on musicians, both students and teachers, within the classroom, BIMM and the wider field of music:

- **Identity practices:** the practices that express and define individual or group identities, and impact the process of learning as becoming, including orientation to musical identities, professional identities, musical instruments or disciplines, and musical cultures;
  - **Authenticity:** the influence and effect of judgements of cultural and social value on musicians and musical learning;
  - **Creativity:** social and cultural judgments of what constitutes creativity: musical creativities, and their application and value in musical learning and musical practice;

I have developed a hierarchy for these themes, which is laid out in the diagram below:

situatedness is the top level from which identity practices emerge as a sub theme:

whereby individuals or groups identify with the situatedness of practice in social, cultural, historical, and technological contexts. Authenticity and creativity are specifically sub-

themes of identity practices:

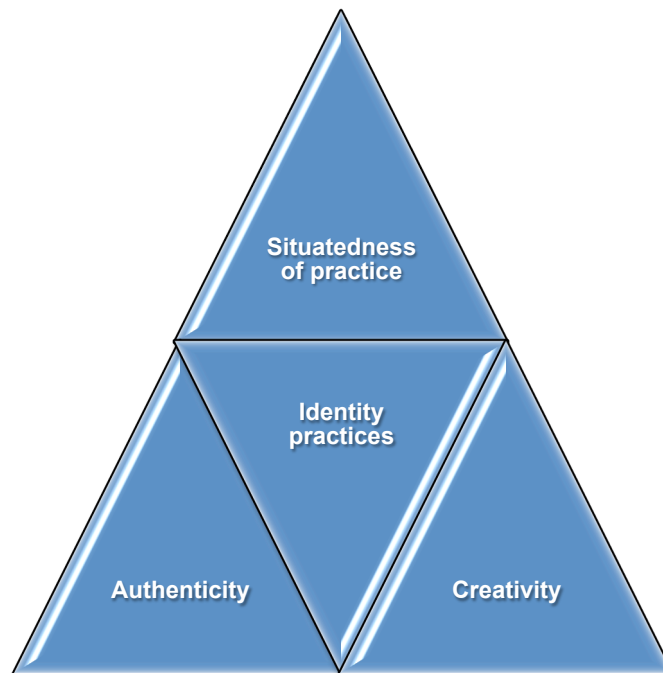


Figure 2. Analytical Themes

The first theme of situatedness I have linked with Bourdieu's concepts of field and capital, and his work on the logic of practice; individual agents being situated within fields and consequently subject to the power structures of those fields, the *rules of the game*, and any changes to those rules. Situatedness is also concerned with the way that communities of practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991) provide networks of social and cultural capital that also afford opportunities for situated learning where:

[L]earning is not merely situated in practice – as if it were some independently reifiable process that just happened to be located somewhere; learning is an integral part of generative social practice in the lived-in world (1991, p.35).

Thus, music and musical learning are part of social and cultural practices and are inherently linked with the social, cultural, historical and technological changes in the fields of music and education. I will also examine how fluctuations in the power structures of field impact on my research participants as musicians, teachers, and learners, situated in



the contexts of the popular music classroom; the communities of practice at BIMM; and the wider fields of musical, and educational practice.

The theme of identity practices explores the ways that individuals and groups come into alignment with the power structure of fields through the orientation of their own habitus and identity, a process of learning as becoming through the accumulation of social, cultural, economic and symbolic capital. From this theme emerge the sub-themes of authenticity, an aspect of identity practices and cultural capital important to popular musicians in establishing themselves within the field of music, and creativity, in the way that the musical output of popular musicians is socially and culturally identified as creative and therefore valued within the field of music.

In my analysis of the first theme I will begin by looking at the informal learning histories of my research participants, and how their narratives relate to those of their students. I will also examine the power relationships inherent in the practice of teaching, and the issues faced in trying to change these relations, utilising informal learning practices in the popular music classroom. Secondly, I will consider the social and cultural networks that exist within the fields of music and education, and in particular at BIMM. I will also discuss the different value attributed to different forms of knowledge, and likewise the worth attributed to formal and informal learning practice. Finally, I will examine the social, cultural, historical, and technological changes that have impacted upon the field of music and resulted in variations in the distribution of knowledge and power, changing the way that capital is distributed and accessed by those wishing to become professional musicians.

In the second theme, I have used the term 'identity practices' to denote the way that agents or groups align with cultural, social, historical and technological contexts, and may assimilate ideas or attributes from others - other individuals, groups, genres, traditions, or institutions - that become part of their own identity or habitus (Skeggs, 2004, Lawler, 2008). I have also used the phrase identity practices to avoid confusion with my

discussions of the concepts of identity previously discussed in this thesis. Identity practices neatly encompasses the model of identity that I have adopted, drawing on Bourdieu, whereby some aspects of individual or group identity are ingrained and unconsciously acquired in the form of habitus; but also contemporary identity theory where other aspects of identity are more consciously acquired through the development and maintenance of a narrative of self: a narrative that is developed through reflection and metacognition, producing reflexivity and providing potential for individual agency. This theme of identity practices further examines my participants' engagement with musical, professional, disciplinary and cultural identities, embodied within communities of practice - communities that provide the conditions for the accumulation of social, and cultural capital.

Emerging from the theme of identity practices are two sub-themes, of authenticity and creativity, identity practices crucial in defining the status and position of individual agents within the cultural field of music. Authenticity is particular characteristic of musical identity, providing access to social capital and thus leverage to agents in the social space of the field of music. Furthermore, authenticity is constructed socially and culturally: to be seen as authentic requires an identity that appears un-contrived, *true to ourselves* and *where we come from*. Musical genres may also be characterised as *more*, or *less*, authentic, depending on how closely they align to cultural and social judgments of artistic merit or purity over music that is considered to be produced on the basis of more vulgar commercial concerns.

Creativity relates both to ideas of authenticity, or originality, and more spurious notions of natural artistic and creative gifts, inherent musical or creative talent, and concepts of the spiritual nature of artistic endeavour. Creativity is also a social construct, bound by judgments of taste and style, providing those deemed to possess it with access to social and cultural capital.

## Analysis of Findings

### Situatedness

In this section I will analyse the data from the observations and interviews in terms of the situatedness, or embeddedness of practice in context, including the social, cultural, historical and technological contexts relevant to popular music. I will therefore begin to introduce the narratives of my research participants - Sue, David, Joe, Eddy, Clare, and Stephen - as I begin to analyse my findings. Through the process of researching this thesis, I have become particularly interested in the way that social structure, culture, knowledge, meaning, value, and power may reproduce inequality and enhance or limit the potential for agency. It has also become clear that the social construction of the world we inhabit, and access to capital in all its forms, is essential in determining how individual agents are situated within the cultural field(s) they inhabit.

### The popular music classroom

The specific social and cultural context I have examined in the *Action Research Study* is classroom teaching at BIMM, in both small group and medium/large group environments. The practice that I am observing and analysing is music teaching, and by association the practices of music performance, and composition in popular music. I have asked my research participants to take some, or all of the principles of informal learning defined by Green (2006) and apply them to classroom practice at BIMM. I have consequently observed the results, and discussed them with my research participants, encouraging them to reflect on their own beliefs, understanding, interpretation, and practice: practice that is deeply embedded in the culture, history and technological development of the fields of music and education.

For most of my participants, the kind of musical learning experience that they currently provide for their students in class was not available to them when they were learning to become professional musicians. Furthermore, for my participants there was

little opportunity to engage with popular music at school, as Eddy points out ‘it was always outside [school]...I met my band mates in school, they were my classmates as well.’ For most of my participants, music was also central to domestic life, and thus socially situated as Joe describes ‘I would always be around musicians, from a very young age...I saw a friend do a drum solo at school once, I was eleven and I went home and said, “dad I’m ready to learn!”’ Sue also described a childhood where music was an integral part of family life ‘I think everybody in my family sang or played something, it was just very natural part of growing up.’ For Clare, music was likewise situated socially and began at home, where her father became her first tutor ‘and he wouldn’t stand any out of tune-ness...I grew up listening to him playing the piano and him having a very high regard for music.’ Later Clare also began to expand her social/musical connections as many of my participants did in various ways:

[My social] life was music by that time, I was a eleven/twelve... I joined a local youth folk group, which was only fifteen people, and we toured, we stayed with families...and were very organised about the music.

So for my participants musical learning began as an activity situated in a social context, encouraged by parents and siblings and later facilitated through participation in more widely distributed communities of practice. Communities providing networks of social, and cultural, capital that allowed my participants access to old-timers, who acted as musical mentors, as Richard describes ‘I got in with some really good musicians in London, and I learnt a lot about jazz harmony.’ However, my participants were also aware that, despite popular music entering the school curriculum in recent years, their own students who have often had similar, but not identical, experiences of musical learning, are also likely to be engaging in music outside of the formal context of school, as David points out:

[A] lot of kids vote with their feet - they don’t see the value in it [formal education] because they’re doing it anyway outside, and all this stuff, which is irrelevant to them...as soon as they leave school worlds open to them!

In conclusion, for my research participants and their current students, musical learning is embedded in social practice, situated in the social and cultural networks of communities

of practice, and rooted in the wider cultural fields of music and education. In the classroom context, my discussion of informal learning in chapter three established how the changes in the way educators and policy makers have conceptualised musical learning have impacted on classroom practice: from a pedagogy that frames music as an art form to be passively appreciated, to one that promotes active engagement in creative music *making*. In chapter three, I also discussed the development of a social constructivist theory of learning. Together, these ideas have led to a shift in the way that music education is practised, with more value given to the socially situated, and constructed, nature of learning, and the critical empowerment of learners. This has consequently led to questioning of traditional notions of musical learning, embodied within a master/apprentice system, where power is exclusively in the hands of the master(s).

For informal learning and informal learners, a key point to emerge from my research has been the question of who has the power to choose the music that is studied. Successful implementation of informal learning practice, in formal learning settings, requires a change in the power relationship between learner and teacher for informal learning to flourish. My research participants recognised the power they have over their students and that giving up some of the power normally invested in the teacher produces benefits for their students' engagement and learning, as Sue describes:

Getting people to do things in groups and having it be student led, it really seems that's when learning takes place. Me standing up at the front, especially with music...[It] should be experiential...really that's when I am most comfortable teaching, when I observe learning occurring.

Stephen felt that if he steps away and relinquishes control, his students tend to learn informally, and thus develop trust and confidence in each other. Stephen also believes that letting them learn informally, in small groups, without teacher guidance produces the best results:

I mean most of those sessions; those little writing sessions we do leave them, completely. The best results come from those situations. If you sort of sit there with them as a fly on the wall or sort of, it doesn't happen really. The natural leader in that room...will constantly be checking to see if you're approving.

Stephen identifies issues with teacher identity that he finds difficult to resolve: students naturally look to him for approval and guidance, despite his efforts to step back ‘whatever you say and however much of a back seat you try and take, they know that you are a leader and they see you in a leadership role.’ Furthermore, Stephen points out that if he doesn’t allow his students more control of their learning they will do much of it without him.

This process of changing the role of the teacher is complex; it seems that when the teacher steps aside, the strongest character in the group will often step forward to fill the void. This issue of group dynamics is something Green (2007) also observed, finding that students who had been disruptive in teacher-led classes, became more engaged, adopting a leadership role when allowed to work in self directed informal learning groups. For Joe, the way that groups of popular musicians form into bands is seminal to informal learning, as bands form and begin to decide their direction and identity musically. Often band formation requires a process of negotiation between group members with slightly different musical identity practices, and affiliations to musical culture and genre. Joe’s approach is to facilitate this process through providing a theoretical understanding of practice:

I mean if we look at Tuckman<sup>60</sup> and how groups form, if that happens early on in the year and I’ve done those classes for about four years now, it really helps the class to kind of form a lot faster and then get to that performing stage where they are firing and I’m standing back and I’m not doing anything by that point.

Clare seemed to struggle the most with the potential loss of control that informal learning implied, and how this challenged her own role and authority as a teacher. As Clare put it ‘I was somewhat dismayed to realise that this is probably the best way that students learn...to look at how many of those ideas I regularly use and then feel ashamed!’ Despite her inclination to take the more traditional view when it comes to her role as teacher, Clare it is also very clear to her how important it is to try new ideas and take some risks ‘[w]e [the vocal department] were discussing things that had been a joy...the thing

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<sup>60</sup> Tuckman, B. (1965) Developmental Sequence in Small Groups. *Psychological Bulletin*, 63 (6).

that came up over and over again was when they [the students] were allowed to play with whatever ideas you gave them, when you were not using formal standards and goals.'

### **BIMM as a Locus for Communities of Practice**

As previously established, BIMM is the location of a community of practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991): a network of social and cultural capital. The students at BIMM are newcomers in this community, and the tutors are the old-timers, or more knowledgeable others (Vygotsky, 1930/1978), who engage with their students in the classroom, but also often outside the formal educational environment, at concerts and other musical events across the local music scene. BIMM students are therefore what Lave and Wenger refer to as 'legitimate peripheral participants' situated in this community, whereas their tutors as experienced professionals, who would be 'full participants' (1991, p.29). Sue describes how the *real world* performance focus of BIMM also brings benefits in terms of embedded practice and informal learning, allowing students to apply what they have learnt:

It's having a lot of college activities centred around things like the gigs [musical performances or concerts]. Because people have this goal, this actual thing that they want to do. They're doing a lot of work outside of the curriculum. You know, applying the learning they're getting.

David makes it very clear, what he believes young musicians coming to a popular music college like BIMM are looking for, above all else, is an opportunity to network 'trying out bands, that kind of thing is really what they want...they are quite big characters and they don't conform to the tightly knit, this is how it should be.' David's point implies that at BIMM, the informal networks of social and cultural capital constituted as communities of practice are more valued by some BIMM students than the formal education they receive.

For all the research participants, the situatedness of musical practice, and musical learning through membership of communities of practice, were implicit in their descriptions of their own learning narratives, as with Joe's 'I did the audition for this [popular music] college...and life changed immediately, I moved to London [and] met this

network that I still work with.’ To this day Joe asks students on their first day at BIMM to “turn around and meet your future musical colleagues.” BIMM provides a community of practice that is full of other aspiring musicians, music producers, music and event managers, music journalists, and songwriters. This community offers access to a wide range of peers: all aspiring to enter the realm of the profession of music and its allied services. This kind of social and cultural network of practice is also particular, if not unique, to an educational institution like BIMM.

The characteristics of this community of practice at BIMM mean that old-timers are doubly powerful: in their role as tutors, instructing, assessing and disciplining their students, and as professionals with the capacity to support their students as they enter the field of music. These teachers have the power to confer upon their students the benefits of social capital, through introducing them to their own social networks; access to cultural capital, through learning and knowledge; and symbolic capital, in the power inherent in the teacher’s role in assessing their students and the consequent award of a qualification (Searby and Ewers, 1997, p.371). It is revealing that although my participants talked a great deal about their roles as teachers, and about their role as professionals linking their students to the music industry, the teacher’s role as academic assessor was only really discussed in detail by Clare and Sue. Furthermore, none of my research participants questioned the power implicit in their position as examiners. It seems that this power to assess their students is something that these teachers may take for granted, profoundly embedded in their habitus as educators.

Different agents within a community of practice will also have different ways of assessing and analysing music, dependant on their position and the identity practices associated with their role and function within the field. We see this between the classical, jazz and popular music genres, but also between different technical or artistic roles within those genres. In Richard’s view, the popular music producer he asked to assess his informal learning classroom intervention was listening to the music his students produced



in a very different way from Richard himself 'he [the music producer] listens for mistakes, and he talks in terms of error a lot, and I didn't actually ask him that.'

The field of music also has its own disciplinary knowledge, distributed amongst genre specific communities of practice. Networks of social and cultural capital that encompass the vertical discourse of formalised subject knowledge, only accessible to those able to understand the language coded to the particular discipline, through the acquisition of cultural and symbolic capital, and the more universal, horizontal discourse of informal, practical knowledge (Bernstein, 1999). McPhail (2012) refines this model to define two kinds of knowledge important in informal learning practice in music education; the first being 'socially acquired informal knowledge', and the second being 'socially developed but formally acquired disciplinary knowledge'. As McPhail also points out 'a "progressive" approach to curriculum involves creating links between informal and formal knowledge rather than replacing one with the other or dissolving the boundaries between them.' (2012, p.43).

Sue spoke of the way that informal learning is valued by society '[m]aybe not less valuable but less legitimate, in a way there wasn't a stamp of approval, a seal hasn't been on it because it just came to you in a natural way.' It is clear that both Sue's family background, where music was intrinsically appreciated but also not regarded as a viable career, and her own experience have led her to understand that without validation informal learning, and informal learners, will continue to be regarded as less legitimate than formal learning, and formal learners. Thus, the cultural and symbolic capital accrued from informal learning may also hold less value than the capital bestowed by formal learning. Eddy also speaks of how he sought validation of the legitimacy of approaches such as playing by ear:

I saw Kevin [Eddy's tutor] do it that kind of validated it, there's a working musician that learns music by ear! "OK this is legitimate"...some of those classical musicians that couldn't hear anything, like wow, you're a great reader but you can't hear any of this!

Here the formal approach associated with high art and therefore legitimated, has been seen for what it is, just an approach that has benefits, but also disadvantages: e.g. the ability to read music from a score, but not the ability to play by ear. For Stephen in particular, who felt that informal learning was the main way that he learnt to play, it was all learning to him, formal or informal, as he had the good fortune to get musical teaching that was one to one:

I didn't really see a lot of difference in it...I was being shown to play guitar by my dad as well...This idea of showing someone how to play something. I had some drum lessons, privately at home, which were very much showing you how to play rather than using notation or performance study.

Stephen is certain in his view that it is only in comparison to formal learning that informal learning becomes conspicuous and therefore more valued. This is a logical position, the informal and the formal being 'two poles of a continuum.' (Folkestad, 2006, p.143). It is also an important point, that informal learning needs to be both recognized and valued in the cultural fields of music and education for teachers and learners to be motivated to engage with its practices.

I must also acknowledge that beyond the musical community of practice at BIMM, consisting of teachers and learners, there is another that revolves around the PG Cert: here trainee, and more experienced, teachers have built a network of mutual support as described by Joe 'the great thing about the post-grad [the PG Cert] is that we all did that together...so we could immediately try this stuff out...we'd have these epiphanies about teaching.' These two communities of practice are therefore related, interacting across traditional boundaries between professional and educational practice: the first connects students and tutors to the profession and social practice of music, whilst also connecting to the professional disciplinary knowledge of the field of music; the second connecting tutors to the profession and practice of music education, and to the field of education more widely, through the field's disciplinary knowledge and practice.

## The Fields of Music and Education

In terms of historical and technological contexts, as previously examined in chapter two, the cultural field of music has experienced a struggle for control between the *old guard* of the record companies and the *innovators* in the form of digital service providers (Seybold *et al.*, 2001, Kusek and Leonhard, 2005, Knopper, 2009, Wikstrom, 2009), changes that have been driven by the development of digital technology that has moved the production of music away from physical analogue reproduction, toward the adoption of digital and virtual music services. This change in the dynamics of the field of music has also altered the business model that the multi-national record companies had been founded upon: changing it from an industry based on the production, promotion and distribution of product, to a business where music has become an online virtual service. Furthermore, these historical and technological changes have not only resulted in a shift of power within the field of music, but also a shift in practice away from an emphasis on recorded music, back to one where performance is the main economic activity that sustains most musicians.

The shift in the modes of production in the field of music has also altered the relationship between producers and consumers, with consumers being able to access music producers more directly. Changes within the fields of cultural production are not uncommon: power and influence are habitually in flux as individuals and groups compete for domination and control within fields. The rules of the game of popular music have changed, and for some musicians this has been advantageous as they have been able to exploit new communication and distribution channels very effectively. They are able to do this by using their access to social, economic, and cultural capital, through engagement in multiple musical domains, situated within communities of practice that are often genre based. These networks of capital now include the musicians themselves, and their fans. Furthermore these networks intersect with the communities of practice of the industries that support and promote music: music streaming services; the music press; music

bloggers and DJ's; and some of the remaining recording, production and promotion companies.

For my participants the developments in technology during their lifetimes also produced new opportunities for learning as Richard describes his approach to using tape recording to improve his guitar playing (he now uses digital recording on his laptop to the same end for his students):

I had my vinyl record player, and I had my little amp that I'd messed up to get fuzz, and then I had my kind of seventies ancient cheapo cassette machine and I'd just record myself for an hour. I'd play a record, I'd play along to the record, and I would listen back, if there was one run that didn't sound perfect, I'd see what I could do to sort it out.

Digital technology has likewise brought a range of benefits to music makers, new ways of accessing knowledge and learning: from music on demand; to *how to* videos and online music courses; digital recording technology, which has taken music recording out of the hands of a small elite with access to expensive and bulky technology, and made it available to all - at an affordable price; and access to digital web based distribution channels and promotion/marketing through social media.

In this section I have examined the way that music and musical learning is embedded or situated socially, culturally, historically and technologically. Moreover, how BIMM functions as a place where the cultural fields of music and education intersect: where communities of practice are situated allowing teachers and learners access to social, cultural and symbolic capital. Within this context, and within the popular music classroom, and the wider fields of music and education, agents are also subject to the playing out of relationships of power and authority as teachers and learners, old-timers and newcomers. Through networks of social capital constituted as communities of practice, learners become professionals, and musicians become teachers, by assimilating cultural and symbolic capital. The role of old-timers as teachers, guides, mentors and assessors is central to the way these networks function. Likewise, disciplinary and pedagogic knowledge is embedded within both the fields of education and music, and consequently

within the communities of practice within those fields, where the interaction of field, habitus and capital assigns value to particular forms of learning, knowledge, and practice.

My findings are that musical learning is fundamentally situated and contextualised; we cannot hope to provide effective learning without explicit recognition of its social and cultural settings. As educators we must therefore pay close attention to the way changes in culture and technology impact on our field(s). We must also acknowledge the importance of power as a factor in all learning, formal or informal, and in particular its relevance in the process of utilising informal learning in formal learning contexts.

Finally, the value of different forms of knowledge and the consequent worth associated with the practices that generate that knowledge needs to be addressed, so that learners and teachers do not falsely discriminate between types of knowledge and practice, by valuing and rewarding the acquisition of formal vertical subject knowledge over informal, horizontal, practice-based knowledge. By recognising and valuing all forms of knowledge and learning, we ensure that formal and informal learning practices can be effectively utilised to the benefit of both learners and teachers.

### Identity Practices

In this section I will examine how informal learning is important in the process of learning as becoming, the formation of habitus, and identity - through individual and group identity practices. Furthermore, understanding those identity practices is instrumental in terms of the development of reflexivity and metacognition for both learners and teachers, who must become aware of the importance of their own cultural and social beliefs and dispositions, in order to become reflexive and develop the potential for agency. In the context of my study, the learning and identity practices I am interested in are those of professional musicians who have become music teachers, and by association the learning and identity practices of their music students, who also wish to become professional music practitioners. In the following sections I will discuss learning as becoming in terms of

musical identities, professional identities, musical instruments or disciplines, and musical cultures.

As established previously, learning is a process of becoming, of orientation with a musical and professional identity. As Welch *et al.* point out '[e]ducational and psychological research suggests a symbiotic link between musical learning and the formation of musical identities.' (2008, p.203). Thus, lines of influence between learning and identity flow in both directions, so that becoming, the development of identity and habitus is a process of learning, and learning is a process of becoming. This appears to be the case in terms of the narratives of the teachers who participated in the *Action Research Study*, and in terms of the way they see the development of their students. Identity practices are therefore an integral part of individual and group music *making*. As Welch *et al.* put it:

There are numerous ways in which musical practices and music itself are used as means for self-interpretation and self-presentation, and there is growing body of research on the formation and development of individual and group musical identities (2004, p.253).

The first way that the participants in my study identified with the idea of music as a career was through their families, some through immersion in music listened to by their parents or older siblings, and others more directly as their parents or siblings became musical role models, as aspiring professional musicians themselves, as Sue describes:

My mum wanted to be a professional singer, she had a duo with her brother who was a jazz musician and they used to play around in Boston Massachusetts together, when she was younger, and my older brother was a songwriter, he probably inspired me to want to write songs.

For Joe it was his father who opened up the world of music to him:

[M]y father's a drummer, was a drummer in the sixties, did a couple of years of professional [playing] and decided that it wasn't for him, so music was always in my family...he would take me to see his blues gigs that he was playing with, he set up a soul band and that kind of stuff, and I would hang out with him.

Families also made significant sacrifices to support musical ambitions, Stephen's stepmother used a prize she won at work in a chemical factory to buy him a drum kit 'they

gave her one hundred and fifty pounds as a prize, which she spent it entirely on a drum kit, quite an amazing thing to do really.'

For my research participants, informal learning became the only route open to them in order to pursue their ambitions to become professional musicians, as formal study in popular music was generally not widely available at school (except for in Sue's case where she joined a school choir and Stephen who was given some access to drum tuition). In various ways my research participants began to develop their own approaches to learning as Joe explains 'so I had a little Walkman, and I'd pull in the songs that I love to listen to, and I started listening to the drums, and trying to figure out what the fills were and the patterns were.' Moreover, books on the subject of popular music were often poor quality, and only Joe considered the books he had as (somewhat) useful in his musical learning '[o]nce I started to get the flow of how to hold the sticks, he [Joe's father] bought me a book, and the book taught me how to read [drum] notation.'

There is also the question of what kind of musician we become, and in popular music there appears to be a dichotomy between musicians who specialise in being very technically proficient and others who specialise in creative music *making*. Richard identifies himself in this latter category, producing music as content for the wide variety of media channels now available including the web, as a *creative artisan*:

Actually I make my money generating material, and there are plenty of successful musicians who don't generate any material at all. They simply regurgitate it to a very high level, and I forget about them, because I'm not interested in them. But of course the world is very interested in them...so there are two different types of creature that perform music.

Richard's explanation resonates with Green's (2010) definition of different musical learning preferences. As discussed previously my own interpretation is that there are broadly two kinds of music student is that the first kind sees the craft of music as an end in itself, and learns best in an informal social environment; the second type sees music as a means to an end, the end being the cultural status afforded to a virtuoso musician, and the consequent accumulation of symbolic and economic capital, preferring to learn within a

formal structured environment, and often in a one to one learning setting. Richard feels that musicians who are focussed on technique miss the powerful social and cultural significance of music and its diversity. For Richard, the great stuff happens between these two creative poles: the virtuoso, and the creative artisan.

My participants' immersion in music making through their families and friends also led to the development of an understanding of, and ability to reflect on, their practice as musicians. For Richard, becoming a professional musician, learning to work with an ensemble, and developing a feel for the game, requires a particular form of metacognition, or reflection on practice, in practice (Schon, 1983) as Richard explains:

And if you become a professional musician, the professional musician is kind of, looking over the stage, watching himself play with these other guys, and you drop the performance rather than you strive for the performance and you make the drummer sound good rather than try and sound good yourself.

Richards description, perfectly matches with Schon's definition of reflective practice (1983) and Flavell's description of his subcategory of 'task based' metacognition:

The task category concerns the information available to you during a cognitive enterprise...The metacognitive knowledge in this subcategory is an understanding of what such variations imply for how the cognitive enterprise should best be managed (1979, p.907).

Flavell (1979) also describes the two other key categories of metacognition: 'person', or the ability to recognise and reflect on one's own beliefs about learning; and 'strategy', which is a learner's ability to apply appropriate approaches to learning in any given situation. In this study I have encouraged my research participants to reflect on their own beliefs, as well as those of their students, about musical learning, through the use of educational practices drawn from their own informal learning as popular musicians. Furthermore, by reflecting on their own beliefs, my research participants have been able to see learning and teaching through the eyes of their students making learning more visible, and potentially further developing their own, as well as their students', metacognitive abilities.



For my research participants there are also identity practices related to their musical discipline or instrument. Clare places particular emphasis on the physiological aspects of singing, and the emotional effects that come from that physiology. Singers in popular music have some very particular demands placed upon them that in fact provide an example of the issues faced by all musicians and performing artists. Clare speaks of the particular physical and emotional demands of being a singer, and the way singers are set apart in music education, where the internal and embodied nature of their *instrument* places unique burdens upon them. There is equally an assumption in popular music that singers don't engage with musical theory in the way that some instrumentalists do. Singers also have to deal with their instrument letting them down unexpectedly 'I think we might have talked about this before, the shame of not having control over your body is one of the things, [which] make us [singers] different.' Clare goes on to explain that for her, singing requires an intimacy that goes beyond the fact that your instrument is part of your body:

Giving of yourself in that very intimate way, that's the other thing about the voice, because it is part of your body, there's intimacy there, it's like you're spilling your soul. I used to look at my hands sometimes when I played something at gigs...Like it was [their] fault [my hands]. You can't do that with the larynx.

After all, for most singers they are telling an emotional story or at least imparting a message that has explicit meaning for both the singer and the listener. For a singer, and in popular music the singer is also often the lyricist, it is a case of living through the story of an often traumatic event or emotional state: doing that over and over again every time you sing the song may not always be cathartic, as Clare concludes '[y]ou'd have to have the brass neck...a titanium neck to walk in with people you didn't really know, or some people who you plainly didn't get on with, and be giving of yourself in that intimate way.'

This point also underlines both the embodied and emotional aspects of learning (Crossman, 2007) that, although different in music, have commonalities with other subjects in that learners must always submit to assessment of themselves in some way. Teacher-, and more particularly peer-, appraisal can be inspiring and positive, but may

also be negative, and sometimes devastatingly so. For musicians, learning to deal with the reception their music receives is central to their ability to function in the professional world of music. Thus, developing self confidence (Pitts, 2000), as well as the ability to cope with, and effectively process, criticism, is an important aspect of music education.

Teachers need to be able to allow their students to give voice to their beliefs and emotional responses to assessment, as Crossman concludes:

The question is not how notions of professional behaviour may have led to an expectation that teachers “anaesthetise” themselves to some extent from these human aspects of their interaction with students in order to remain objective, but how they come to view the significance of emotions and relationships in making professional and ethical decisions (2007, p.325).

Clare, sees feedback particularly feed-forward, formative feedback, as a way of providing support and encouragement for learners, through scaffolding (Hammond and Gibbons, 2005). Moreover, all my research participants acknowledged the more general emotional challenges of music, in particular the levels of stress public performance can engender in young musicians. Indeed, formative feedback may be particularly effective in supporting the process of learning as becoming (William, 2000): likewise peer appraisal also has the potential to develop metacognition through self reflection (Searby and Ewers, 1997).

Sue is particularly concerned with the peculiar position of songwriters, who have to deal with the fact that their discipline is emergent and still fighting for acceptance and definition. Sue refers to the way that popular music songwriting has recently emerged as a discrete academic discipline ‘fifteen years ago [when] I first began teaching songwriting, nobody was teaching songwriting...[we] were making it up as we go along, because we had to!’ Sue believes that her discipline is now developing its own body of specific disciplinary knowledge, derived from popular songwriting practice, and an associated pedagogical approach, as proposed by Savage (2003) that also stems from that professional practice. For Sue, it is the identity of the songwriter and its peculiar creative conditions that have

gripped her imagination, and she sees the discipline as one that is inherently experimental and creative:

[T]here are no rules, there are conventions if you want a song to sound a certain way you can follow those conventions, but there aren't any rules: you can do anything you like and some people love that...I could break it down to five different ways of writing a song, and everybody has one that they favour...I think probably the most favoured way of writing songs that I've noticed from teaching at BIMM is jamming [improvising in an ensemble] that's what most of our musicians like to do.

The process of learning as becoming in professional music making, for my participants included an alignment with particular musical genres and cultures, and often particular musical heroes who in some cases were also mentors as Sue describes 'I listened to people, to singers that I really admired.' Eddy makes the same point 'it was [Jimi] Hendrix,<sup>61</sup> it was a lot of guitar players for some reason!' Moreover, alienation from particular cultures, and possible individual futures, became a motivation for my research participants. For Eddy, Joe, Richard and Stephen music became a way to escape working-class America or Britain, the chaos and competition at school and dysfunctional street culture: as Richard describes 'I didn't want to be a thug basically, there were a lot of thugs in my school. I remember thinking I'd like to get into music: so I did!' Richard describes how his own passion for Jimi Hendrix has become a measure of his own students' dedication. Richard tells a story that sums up his belief that without passion and dedication, young musicians are unlikely to succeed. Here Richard is talking of a meeting with parents worried about their son's engagement with his musical studies:

I knew that little 'Johnny' was a total shirker...so I took a bit of a punt and I said "OK, I'm going to tell you something here, when I was little Johnny's age I would have lost a testicle to be able to play like Jimi Hendrix. I'm not kidding I would have given it away, and I said Johnny's testicles are in no danger".

For some of my participants, music was also a way to stand out and be noticed by peers, teachers, parents and siblings, as Stephen puts it, describing his large and boisterous family 'it was really aggressive and over the top and nuts...I think retrospectively, [becoming a musician] that's the only way to stand out.' So for the

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<sup>61</sup> African American rock guitar player from the 1960's: <http://www.jimihendrix.com/us/home>

participants in my study becoming professional musicians and adopting identity practices that align with the culture and practice of popular music has resulted in agency, allowing them to escape, to some extent, their own social and cultural backgrounds. Although Eddy would become known for his jazz-fusion<sup>62</sup> guitar talent, his earliest musical identity stemmed from his working-class habitus. The music of the American urban working-class rock music: as Eddy points out ‘we were working-class Americans - you listen to southern rock.’ His story was subsequently one of conflicting identities as he began to be drawn to the delights of art music,<sup>63</sup> and away from his original working-class roots. Music got Eddy noticed, for it could shock as well as stimulate and charm:

I remember my tutor was “oh yeah, Eddy you’re into this wacky crap”. I’d never heard of the stuff like Arnold Schoenberg<sup>64</sup>, *Wozzeck* by Berg<sup>65</sup>...I learnt that you could put on the album and like scare the shit out of people! You could empty a room with it! That was appealing to me!

Eddy seems to enjoy the dissonance of his position, and its demonstration of resistance to fitting in with his own working-class habitus: he is a fish out of water but proud to be so and enjoying how shocking that is to others. For Eddy music may have also been an escape from the break down of his parent’s relationship:

[M]y parents were divorced so, my father didn’t really talk about it, my mother didn’t talk about it [becoming a musician] it was really my own little world, so they didn’t say “hey that’s great”, but they didn’t say...“your forbidden from doing it”, nothing like that, I think they just kind of let me go...“[h]e’s not going to become a doctor, but at least the police aren’t around like before.”

For all my research participants, there is also their identity within the field of education. The participants in this study became professional musicians first - none appear to have considered teaching as a career initially - and teachers later. When this group of musicians became teachers they all began to use elements of what had worked for them as informal learners in their approaches to teaching, and just as with their musical learning they began to learn to teach informally, accessing peers for advice, observing others teaching, and through trial and error. At some stage they all entered teacher training, Clare and Sue

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<sup>62</sup> A sub-genre of jazz with other musical styles as in this example rock

<sup>63</sup> Musical forms considered to be highly technically and theoretically advanced.

<sup>64</sup> Controversial Austrian composer: <http://www.allmusic.com/artist/arnold-schoenberg-mn0000691043/biography>

<sup>65</sup> Austrian composer and contemporary of Schoenberg: <http://www.britannica.com/biography/Alban-Berg>

before joining BIMM, but all of the others as students on BIMM's bespoke PG Cert teacher training programme. All the participants appear to have benefitted from their teacher training, particularly in terms of understanding their students better, as Clare puts it 'what it taught me more than anything else, was to look at things from the point of view of the student.' Joe also found the PG Cert at BIMM very rewarding as it allowed him to see his students as individuals with particular needs:

[F]irstly it got me to see the individuals in the group, rather than just seeing this big class and trying to teach them all the same way...and you don't see the individuals and the teacher training really got me to try and focus on the differentiation, the learning styles...that was a revelation.

For Clare, the way that teacher training allowed her to apply theory to practice was also significant in providing a creative and experimental approach to learning:

[I]t allows you to look at things generically and see the underpinning structures that you were already using, which allows you then to play with them, so its all about analysis and pulling things to bits, and being able to recognise why something didn't work, which is essential of course.

The BIMM PG Cert is informed by a social constructivist model of education with an emphasis on action research, and this theoretical model has clearly impacted on the approaches taken to learning and teaching by all the participants who have been PG Cert students. It has also influenced those who have not, by fostering a culture of reflective evidence based pedagogic practice at BIMM.

### **Alienation and Illegitimacy**

My research participants discussed their own perceptions of the effect of genre-based identity practices on their students' learning and their attempts to persuade their students to be more flexible. Richard sums his feelings up in the case of one mature student 'a forty-year old, wearing drainpipe jeans and listening to Iggy Pop- I get it, but I'm wondering why? And why are you so aggressively against everything else?' All the research participants discussed the transition from student to professional musician, and their belief in the importance of the teacher's role in guiding and supporting that evolution. Both Clare and Sue also raised issues around gender stereotypes and the way they impact

on musical identity practices in popular music, which, whilst disappointing, is not unexpected. David is also very clearly prejudiced against classical music, which he perceives as having clear class based associations of pretentiousness and privilege as David points out 'I always thought [music] education was all this hoity toity stuff.'

My research participants discussed the importance of combining informal approaches with formal ones in order to engage all their students, and the issues they encountered in implementing such an approach, as Stephen recounts 'what we found was that certain groups in the class were engaging with it at quite a high level, and other people were finding excuses to not do so.' Richard and Eddy in particular also identified some students for whom informal approaches are not as suitable due to their preference for a more tutor led and traditionally structured approach. As Eddy puts it 'there are students that need, like "you do it A to B and C."'

Notions of identity (Lawler, 2008) are also discussed by all my research participants, sometimes explicitly and at times implicitly, in their discussion of musical learning and teaching, and how the development of the musical identities of their students is important to them. As Richard puts it:

I teach these young men year after year, you see them changing over the course of the year and really changing over the course of three years: going into electronic art or whatever, things that young men are supposed to do.

Furthermore, they share a mutual belief that part of their job as teachers is to help their students to acquire the dispositions and qualities that characterise professional popular musicians, and to connect them into the industry they are entering (Creech *et al.*, 2008b). These qualities include such obvious aspects as hard work, the development of technical and theoretical skills, and dedication to constant practice; also more esoteric qualities such as creativity, passion, and a willingness to engage with musical cultures outside of their own preferred musical genre(s).

However, as discussed previously, agency allows changes in identity and habitus, that may also lead to social dislocation and a feeling of being 'a fish out of water' (Reay *et al.*,

2009, p.1107): the converse of Bourdieu's analogy whereby 'when habitus encounters the social world of which it is the product, it is like a "fish in water": it does not feel the weight of the water, and it takes the world about itself for granted.' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p.127). Studies of transitions from working-class habitus through education, underline the issues facing those wishing to realise the potential for agency through education (Bland, 2004, Archer *et al.*, 2007, Reay *et al.*, 2009, Webb, 2012). In the narratives of the participants in my study their engagement with music and education as professionals has allowed them to exercise agency, but in different ways. Music has enabled them to fulfil their own creative ambitions, and whilst becoming educators seems to have been an unintended consequence of a musical career, it is one that has also brought them social, cultural and symbolic capital.

The transitions that agents make in re-positioning themselves within or across fields seem to often result in a sense of loss, illegitimacy, and a fear of being discovered to be somehow not who we claim to be (Hey, 2006). For Sue, it is clear that what she perceives as the expected dispositions of formal education make her feel awkward and out of place 'I am uncomfortable when I have to do it, when it's in the curriculum, that lesson and I see it coming up and I think "oh my god! I've got to do this properly!"' Sue clearly feels that informal practice is considered less legitimate than the formal approach, that although informal learning practice feels natural to her, she feels that sometimes she must conform to formal conventions, and this makes her feel like a fish out of water.

In conclusion, learning is a process of becoming, aligning through individual and group identity practices with a musical culture, embodied as networks of social, and cultural capital within communities of practice. As educators it is therefore important that we understand, and make explicit to our students the ontological and epistemological changes and transitions inherent in the process of learning as becoming. Furthermore, learning is not merely a cognitive exercise: it is a social, cultural, emotional, and sometimes physical

one that creates the potential for personal transformation, whether or not individuals are willing, or able, to recognise and exploit that potential.

Teacher identity and identity practices within networks of professional knowledge and cultural and social capital are also important for learning, alongside the ability of teachers to learn how to adapt their role in the face of the dynamic flow of the classroom, and the differing needs of learners. Teachers must develop reflexivity through metacognition, in order to ensure they are responding to the needs of their students, and making learning and knowledge connected and visible, in all its forms.

My findings show that reflexivity and metacognition are the keys to unlocking experience as learning, and applying it to practice. Working through narrative and reflection on that narrative, and the practice that comes from that dialogue, is an effective technique that could also be explored actively with learners reflecting on their own experiences, and applying that experience to practice. In the next section of this chapter I will discuss the two sub-themes of identity practices that emerged from the study highlighting the importance of authenticity and creativity for musical learners and learning.

### **Authenticity**

Authenticity and creativity define status and position for popular musicians, within the cultural field of music. As discussed in chapter two, all music listeners appear to gravitate towards styles they feel are culturally authenticated (Hargreaves *et al.*, 2002). Therefore, musical authenticity is a vital and defining aspect of a musician's identity: musicians make great efforts to be true to their musical 'roots' in producing music that they believe to be creative, original and authentic. However, to become successful their music must also be socially and culturally authenticated by music consumers and critics.

Discernments of taste (Bourdieu, 1984) and authenticity also define the position of particular musical genres within the field of music. Such judgements are dependent on how close the particular genre is to the conditions that delineate contemporary high art or



low culture, and on the level of status afforded those who stand as arbiters of taste in the field of music. It appears in many cases that the attribution of artistic merit to a genre in popular music is inversely proportional to that genre's commercial value. However, there are examples of very progressive and innovative musical styles that have nevertheless become commercially successful: punk<sup>66</sup> and hip hop or rap<sup>67</sup> being obvious illustrations.

As previously established, the conditions within the cultural field of music are often far from static. As cultural and social boundaries shift, so does the definition of good taste. Individuals and groups vie for power within the field of music, and the rules set by those with the authority to make judgements on what is authentic and tasteful, and what is not, evolve and change. Young musicians are influenced by the flux of the 'magnetic power lines' (Bourdieu, 1971, p.161) within the social space, of the field of music as they become musicians: through learning from family, peers, and old-timers whilst navigating the social and cultural hierarchies around them, learning how to access the available capital.

Furthermore, musicians are not immune from the changing shape of contemporary social and cultural boundaries, with the traditional models of working-class and middle-class groupings becoming redundant as a more sophisticated landscape is mapped. Recent research 'reveals the polarisation of social inequality...and the fragmentation of traditional sociological middle and working-class divisions into more segmented forms.' (Savage et al, 2013, p.246). Therefore, the way that capital is distributed is also changing, and may have changed significantly since the participants in my study were growing up, and developing their identities as popular musicians.

As well as providing legitimisation for individual agents, judgements of authenticity also affect learning, as students and teachers bring pre-conceived ideas of what music is meaningful to them, or the musical domains they inhabit (Evelein, 2006). For most young musicians, musical authenticity appears to come from an allegiance to a particular genre that is formed through their own immersion in that genre, to the exclusion of all others.

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<sup>66</sup> Anarchistic musical movement in Britain and America between 1974 and 1976.

<sup>67</sup> Suburban African American musical styles developed in the America from the 1970's.

Stephen, in particular, aimed to challenge his students' rather narrow preconception of what constitutes musical authenticity by asking them to engage with genres from a much wider range of popular music, including those that they see as outside of their own preferred style(s). Stephen sees genre as both essential and empowering for the development of musical identity, and potentially a factor that conversely limits his students' advancement when they can't step beyond their own pre-conceptions:

Similarly with the Destiny's Child<sup>68</sup>...all the girls were going to write this big vocal arrangement: they were a bit more open to that than I thought they would be. I thought they would be like, "I don't do pop!" I think a lot of the boys in that group were, "I don't really do that sort of thing!"

Stephen's attempts to challenge these misconceptions around genre and his students' stubborn affiliations to a particular musical culture are partially successful, but his students' dispositions also appear deep seated and resistant to change: perceptions of cultural value and his students own habitus appearing to prevent them from engaging with music outside of their preferred frame of reference:

If you play them a modern arrangement like somebody like Rihanna,<sup>69</sup> there are some amazing creative ideas in some of those arrangements, and very bold. Very brave, and that was one of the things we tried to get over this year..."Don't discount some of that stuff, cos some of it's quite cutting edge in terms of production and ensemble work". But they can't get beyond the video and the identity [of the performer].

Stephen's initial motivation was to improve the levels of engagement, so that students didn't adopt a 'too cool for school' attitude leading to a lack of participation in class (Saunders, 2010). For Stephen's students, playing music created by somebody with whom they do not identify with is highly problematic. Thus, we see the effect of social and cultural identity practices in mediating and restricting learning (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977). Stephen has come to realise that for young musicians, their cultural affiliations are so fundamental to their musical identity that they are difficult to challenge until they feel able to take on the attendant risk of not looking *cool* to their peers:

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<sup>68</sup> American pop girl band: <http://www.destinyschild.com/>

<sup>69</sup> Barbadian female pop singer: <http://rihannadaily.com/>

What I noticed with the second year course, the one you observed, was that they really relished getting involved in certain genres. So that when we did a sort of Queens of the Stone Age<sup>70</sup> track, and the next week they had to write, and they all wrote something in that style. Because it's de-tuned and it's kind of dirge-y and the lyrics can all be about doom and they really seemed to enjoy themselves and get quite into that.

Richard also sees the same issues as Stephen, with students limiting themselves to rigid genre affiliations. For Richard, musical genre is a moveable feast 'it can be Babyshambles,<sup>71</sup> and The Libertines,<sup>72</sup> and it can be Toto<sup>73</sup>...it doesn't really matter.' Richard concludes that 'you have Miles Davis<sup>74</sup> and Charlie Mingus<sup>75</sup>...David Bowie,<sup>76</sup> you know, incredibly high-end technicians, and very interesting culturally.' It is clear that for Richard genre is important, but that it is the cultural significance of music that he sees as more significant than musical virtuosity. Eddy is also clear on how genre affects musical learning. His own learning history shows how he used his interest in art music to stand out from the crowd and to impress or shock others. He found that when he first came to BIMM there was a tendency for the guitar department to be dominated by particular genres and this is something he has done his best to challenge:

When I came here it seemed that a lot of the students were very into a certain kind of music, and solo performance was very, Joe Satriani<sup>77</sup> whatever it was, there were a few people doing a couple of different things - but my goal was to kind of widen that to get people to do some different things, and listen to some different things, consider different approaches.

Moreover, it is the habitus of the individual, intersecting with the conditions of field(s), that moulds the learning preferences of individual agents (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977, Bourdieu, 1990a, Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992) as they construct a model of the way their world works, and refine and adapt that model from subsequent experience. What appears to occur in the lifetime of a professional popular musician is a constant re-invention of musical identity and its practices in order to maintain authenticity and

<sup>70</sup> American rock band formed in the 1990's: <https://myspace.com/queensofthestoneage>

<sup>71</sup> British indie band: <http://www.babyshambles.net/>

<sup>72</sup> British indie band: <http://www.thelibertines.com/>

<sup>73</sup> American rock band: <http://totoofficial.com/landing.php>

<sup>74</sup> African American jazz trumpet player: <http://www.milesdavis.com/>

<sup>75</sup> African American jazz double-bass player: <http://mingusmingusmingus.com/>

<sup>76</sup> Innovative British rock singer: <http://davidbowie.com/nhc/>

<sup>77</sup> Virtuoso American rock guitar player: <http://www.satriani.com/splash/>

therefore credibility. Musical fashions change, and the rules of the game are also altered, as new cultural and industrial movements come and go (Seybold *et al.*, 2001, McLeod, 2005). This requires young musicians to learn the ability not only to tell a story that is convincing and authentic, but also to allow that narrative to change over time, maintaining their *cool* and creative *edge*. The important thing is who decides on what is legitimate and thus musically creative. When music was a product, this lay in the hands of the record companies, DJ's and music press. Now that music is more like a service, delivered directly, the consumer/audience has far more immediate influence than in the past, on what constitutes authentic and creative music making (Kusek and Leonhard, 2005, Knopper, 2009).

From the stories of my teachers in the *Action Research Project*, it would appear that being able to learn, reflect and change musical dispositions and affiliations, and thus navigate the social space of the field of music, is crucial to agency and brings access to capital. The ability to revise and adapt identity and habitus to become 'a fish in water' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p.127) is also very useful when it comes to stepping out of traditional teacher and student roles. In fact, this may be more difficult for young music students, who are likely to have less experience of formal, and informal, learning than their teachers. Thus, 'kicking the habitus' (Wright, 2008) implies challenges to teacher and learner identities as well as disciplinary knowledge, and steps outside of safe and well-trod paradigms. Most importantly it requires metacognition, to recognise and reflect on beliefs, practice, and strategies for learning, in order to affect agency. For popular musicians, great value is attached to being *cool* or culturally authentic, *making* and performing music that is also legitimate. Going to college to study music is neither seen as *cool* nor authentic (Archer *et al.*, 2007).

In conclusion, it is authenticity, alongside creativity, that are the primary criteria for making judgements of taste and style in popular music. Both popular musicians and music consumers may appreciate a musical genre aesthetically, but if that genre appears to be

contrived and inauthentic, in terms of their own cultural and social identity practices, then it is likely that they will not wish to engage with it. Our role as music educators is to introduce our students to the diversity of genre and style, but we must keep in mind that some learners will find it difficult to be seen to be engaging with musical cultures they find inauthentic, therefore we must be sensitive to concerns of social and cultural identity practice in the way that we teach.

### **Creativity**

Another sub-theme that emerged from my examination of identity practices is creativity - as the second aspect of cultural capital important to popular musicians. Creativity, like authenticity, is an aspect of cultural capital that defines a musician's position and status within the field of music. Creativity, or rather the multiple creativities as described by Burnard (2012), is also pivotal to the effectiveness of informal learning practice in the cultural fields of music and education, and within domains of genre based communities of practice. Traditionally, classical music education has viewed creativity as something that lies in the realm of mythically gifted or talented composers, trained in an elite Western form of professional music making. The ideal of the single, solitary and gifted musical genius, Mozart<sup>78</sup> for example, has dominated some approaches to music education (Burnard, 2012, p.235). As educators, we do our students a disservice if we maintain this cultural hegemony as Humphreys concludes:

The construct of creativity in music education should be expanded to encompass the entire array of creative activities practised by musicians everywhere: not just at the professional level, not just in art [classical] music, not just in composition, and not just in the West (2006, p.357).

For popular musicians, music creation is far more likely to be considered as a joint enterprise, an activity that is often integrated into a process of collective and iterative music *making*. Therefore, for popular musicians, the separation of music makers into specialist composers, who are less likely to be skilled performers, and expert virtuoso

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<sup>78</sup>18<sup>th</sup> century Austrian classical composer: <http://www.classicfm.com/composers/mozart/>

performers, who concentrate on the acquisition of technical and theoretical abilities, is less common, and music makers are often skilled in both *making* and *playing* music. Moreover, technique and theoretical understanding can be taught, but for the participants in this study, their belief is that creativity is something that must be practised and is therefore situated in the context of that practice (Amabile, 1996). Creativity is also a social construct (Csikszentmihalyi, 2013), constrained by notions of authenticity and originality, alongside often-spurious ideas of musical genius (Burnard, 2012) and inherent artistic or musical *gifts* and *talent* (Howe, 1998, Holding, 2011).

My research participants expressed a shared belief in the importance of creativity as prerequisite for musical success for popular musicians, as David makes clear ‘I think people will have to be much more creative, in the world we’re putting them out into.’ Moreover, all the research participants view music making through experimentation and improvisation as important to their student’s motivation to learn, as Clare points out:

[Y]ou have to come up with something really creative, when it [teaching] was really open, these were the ones [classes] when...the tutors and the students all came out of the room going “that was brilliant!” whether it was a rapping battle or coming up with their own jingle...whatever it was, those were the lessons that stood out.

David also sees creativity as emerging from limitations in technical ability, as he argues ‘bands who can’t play brilliantly...have to be really creative...hence Pink Floyd and the Beatles.’ For my participants, technical ability is therefore just as likely to be seen as limiting for their students, as it is empowering: as Richard describes in his discussion of creative rock and jazz musicians:

[T]echnique in music, [is] the death to most people like that, and then on the other end you have the musician, the muso who can’t tolerate anything that isn’t high end musicianship and doesn’t care about the cultural elements at all... so they are the two extremes, and in the middle...you have Miles Davis.<sup>79</sup>

Richard wants his students to be experimental, and challenge convention: Richard also made much of the dichotomy between musical virtuosos and creative artisan music-makers. Technique is indeed a means to an end, as is musical theory and notation.

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<sup>79</sup> African American jazz trumpeter: <http://www.milesdavis.com/>

Nonetheless, without some technique, as Clare argues, creativity is all but impossible ‘you need to stand on the shoulders of giants, to reach anywhere, you know, even to reach as far as they did to begin with, and then to try and reach any further.’ The issue is really where the emphasis lies, and the consensus appears to be that the focus has been far too much towards technique in traditional musical education, and this imbalance should be addressed.

For Sue, creativity in the classroom is about stepping back as a teacher and allowing students to learn from each other, in an experiential and imaginative way. This mirrored how she had learned from her siblings, who would invent games that developed musical appreciation and critical listening through questioning and play:

My brother and sister used to test me and my younger brother on what’s going on in this record. I was like, five, and they were doing this to us, and they knew what the instruments were, they explained them to us and they had some kind of a scoring system, we were their experiment. It was a game.

Sue feels that vocational learning must include informal approaches, and demands a less tutor centred approach. As Sue puts it ‘when I’m working on intuition I feel more safe...even if it’s just jamming...and you just sing gibberish, and then the whole thing emerges.’ Sue sees the practice of informal learning fostering creativity ‘It’s a genuinely creative way of teaching, it makes people think for themselves.’ Likewise for Eddy, it is allowing and actively encouraging improvisation that is most important. Eddy’s approach of using improvisational techniques as ‘an informal music education process’ is endorsed by Wright and Kanellopoulos (2010, p.71). Furthermore, the teaching session I observed was for Eddy all about encouraging his students’ creativity ‘in that class, it’s mostly to me, about being creative, and then trying to get them to invent things.’ Eddy believes that his approach to using informal practice improves student engagement with formal learning, including musical technique and theoretical understanding, and creates a virtuous circle as he describes:

Things we don’t think are creative, but have everything to do with creativity and gluing it to their own practice. And going look, “everything you created, that’s this and that’s that”. Rather than prescribing, rather than saying, “you need to do this

and that”, and oddly enough, the technical aspect the theoretical aspect, they improve, and I think that’s the key.

Stephen found that allowing his students to choose or manipulate the material they work with nurtures more inventive and imaginative learning that can produce some very bizarre and intriguing musical combinations. It is clear how strongly the habitus of young musicians is embodied in the way Stephen describes them. Nevertheless, Stephen is creating an environment where experimentation and creativity is expected from his students:

So we had quite a lot, where the same band [played] sort of heavy rock and then quite a camp [disco] arrangement. Which, was like wow! It’s like you got all the sort of tattooed people with the hair and the funny things in their ears doing quite a plausible sort of Lady Gaga<sup>80</sup> arrangement.

For Stephen, the key to creativity is in *making* rather than just *playing* music, by allowing students to compose and arrange, giving them ownership whilst also challenging them, to step out of their genre based strait-jackets and experiment with new identities (Pryor and Crossouard, 2010). Stephen’s work with large performance workshops clearly demonstrates the facilitation of a creative and dynamic peer-learning environment: a setting that allows his students ownership of content and style whilst also building on their social and communication skills. Indeed, MacDonald and Miell (2000) in their study of creativity and group music making find ‘that social and communicative factors are central issues to consider in determining the nature and quality of group compositions and performances.’ (2000, p.58).

Clare also implies that there needs to be a separation between teaching musical technique, where things are either right or wrong, and formal approaches work well, and teaching improvisation and interpretation, where judgements are far more subjective, and informal practice can be drawn on in order to make creativity a stronger focus in class. She may have a point, and it may be that for her this would be a very pragmatic way to settle her own tensions over the intellectual debate regarding formal and informal approaches.

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<sup>80</sup> Innovative American female pop singer-songwriter: <http://ladygaga.co.uk/>



Clare could clearly see the advantages of informal practices, and acknowledged that students needed to experiment and be creative, but she also felt strongly that this was a process whereby learners also needed to earn the *right* to be creative by demonstrating ability and application.

In conclusion, for these teachers informal learning practices do seem to have resulted in a more creative classroom. Informal learning encourages enquiry and creativity through exploration and experimentation, allowing students to support each other in providing developmental formative feedback. However, these accounts also point to an inherent contradiction, in that, when we use practices from informal learning that are normally situated outside of a formal environment, they begin to take on attributes such as teacher scaffolding, and instrumental approaches to assessment, that would not be present in informal learning outside of the classroom. This aligns with the thoughts of Hodkinson, on the way that the nature of informal learning practice may alter as the context it takes place in is changed (Hodkinson *et al.*, 2003). Richard for example uses the informal approach to work quite difficult material into the curriculum, using scaffolding to provide a firmer basis for student experimentation and improvisation:

So we had a little play around with these three chords to see what we came up with and we did. And so then we have more of a depth of knowledge about how it's built. So at least they know how the house is built before they try and go about emulating it.

As discussed above, creativity is hard to define but implicit in the practice of *making* popular music. There are techniques and approaches that clearly enable a creative ecology in the teaching and learning of music to flourish, including: improvisation and group based jamming; group composition and arrangement; and experimentation, including novel uses of technological intervention. Creativity also appears to be an important motivational factor for aspiring musicians and as such becomes a tool for encouraging engagement. With this in mind, why would we not wish to make the experience of learning to be a musician creative? In the next chapter I will summarise my conclusions, their implications

for my own institution and music education more generally, and the original contributions that my work makes to research in the field.

## Chapter six: Conclusions and Recommendations

### Introduction

In this chapter I will draw together my conclusions from my empirical and desk based research, and make recommendations for further investigation, both within my own institution in terms of learning and teaching enhancement, and more widely in the areas of informal learning and music education. My work examines the role of the popular music teacher in a Higher Education setting, and suggests that through reflective practice it is possible to make explicit links between informal and formal learning that are beneficial to both learners and teachers, links that consequently make both formal and informal learning practices both valued and visible. As established in the previous chapter, the situatedness of musical practice, and musical learning practices in social, cultural, historical, and technological contexts; the identity practices of agents; and learning as a process of becoming, are fundamental to the understanding of the nature of musical learning for popular musicians.

The opportunities available to popular musicians have changed significantly in the UK over the last twenty years (Cloonan, 2007, Wikstrom, 2009): the apprentice system facilitated by the music industry has all but disappeared, and record shops have been largely replaced by MP3<sup>81</sup> downloads and the Worldwide Web (Kusek and Leonhard, 2005). Technological entrepreneurs facilitate direct sales from music producers to consumers and have supplanted the middlemen (and occasional women) of the record companies (Knopper, 2009). Music sales are now facilitated by the rapid growth in web-based and mobile communication technology, and music has consequently become an on-demand service rather than a mechanical product. Consequently, changes to the structures of power and influence within the field of music and the technologies that support its production have allowed popular musicians the opportunity for more direct access to social, cultural and economic capital. Moreover, music education has changed over time

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<sup>81</sup> MP3 is the commonly used digital data compression format for music: [http://mpgedit.org/mpgedit/mpeg\\_format/MP3Format.html](http://mpgedit.org/mpgedit/mpeg_format/MP3Format.html)

(Pitts, 2000) with young musicians more likely than ever to encounter a diverse range of music in school and beyond, and new approaches to its teaching (Green, 2002, Green, 2008b), some of which have also been enabled and enhanced by contemporary technological developments.

My research participants all seemed to have a practical understanding of their own informal learning practice, and its inherent value. This was interesting, as one might have assumed practices associated with music that is considered the closest to the ethereal and spiritual ideal would be more highly valued. Although in the past this has probably been the case, in the twenty-first century cultural field of music the middle-class dominance of cultural discourse has allowed a much wider range of artistic expression cultural value. Hence, what is considered tasteful has expanded to encompass particular popular musicians whose music is regarded as having aesthetic, artistic, and intellectual worth. Cultural boundaries have likewise altered (Savage *et al.*, 2013) and in 2014, it is generally acceptable to appreciate Tom Waits,<sup>82</sup> Public Enemy,<sup>83</sup> Fela Kuti,<sup>84</sup> Miles Davis,<sup>85</sup> the Clash,<sup>86</sup> and Dolly Parton<sup>87</sup> alongside Elgar,<sup>88</sup> Handel,<sup>89</sup> Mozart<sup>90</sup> and Schoenberg.<sup>91</sup> Classical music no longer dominates the cultural field of music in the way it once did, when the taste for classical music was a clear indicator of membership of an elite social class. Although as Green (2008a) points out, classical music is still fetishized in a way that popular music is not.

Chapter two established that musical learning is bound by social and cultural situatedness, and is a process of identity formation (Lawler, 2008) and learning as becoming (Lave and Wenger, 1991). Furthermore, a musician's identity is partly shaped by socially and culturally influenced notions of authenticity and creativity, as well as more

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<sup>82</sup> Eclectic American singer-songwriter and occasional actor: <http://www.tomwaits.com/>

<sup>83</sup> Influential African American hip hop act: <http://www.publicenemy.com/>

<sup>84</sup> Nigerian afro pop pioneer and social activist: <http://www.knittingfactoryrecords.com/artists/fela/>

<sup>85</sup> African American jazz trumpeter: <http://www.milesdavis.com/us/home>

<sup>86</sup> Seminal British punk band: <http://www.theclash.com/>

<sup>87</sup> Influential American country and western singer: <http://www.dollypartonentertainment.com/>

<sup>88</sup> 19<sup>th</sup> century British classical composer: <http://www.elgar.org/welcome.htm>

<sup>89</sup> 18<sup>th</sup> century German born British classical composer: <http://www.handelhouse.org/>

<sup>90</sup> 18<sup>th</sup> century Austrian classical composer: <http://www.classicfm.com/composers/mozart/>

<sup>91</sup> 19<sup>th</sup> century Austrian-American classical composer: <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/527896/Arnold-Schoenberg>

tangible characteristics of gender, race, and social class, which together become determining factors governing individual agents and their freedom to affect agency in the field of music. The participants in my study articulate a clear understanding of the importance of these factors in shaping the development of their students, as they become professional musicians within communities of practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991). In answering my research questions my analysis has drawn strong links between ideas of learning, identity and metacognition (Flavell, 1979): demonstrating that through reflective practice music educators can retrieve, and make use of, informal learning in formal settings.

### **The Participants' Classroom Interventions**

In this section I will briefly describe what was successful, and what did not work in terms of the *Action research Study* classroom interventions, before moving on to discuss the surprises my research threw up and the implications of those surprises to my thesis. The classes I observed were excellent examples of teaching practice, student focussed and differentiated, with students engaged and active. Moreover, the informal learning and teaching interventions threw up some interesting results indicative of the action research method, where change is incremental, and actions may also lead to refinements in the method. For example, if I were to run these interventions again I would perhaps spend more time with the research participants in developing and refining their approaches rather than allowing them complete freedom in designing the sessions.

However, the classes did produce some very useful data, particularly when I asked the teachers to reflect on what worked and what did not for each research participant. Clare's session was perhaps the least *on task*, but nevertheless produced some very interesting reflections on her role as a teacher, the impact of curriculum and assessment design, and how best to support, and challenge, her students to excel. Sue's teaching session was also less successful than hoped: her students were simply not prepared to share their songs in

front of the group, although that might well have been in some part due to my presence as an observer. Nevertheless, this led to an interesting and revealing discussion of her teaching practice in songwriting, and the possible emergence of a distinct pedagogic approach in this relatively new academic discipline. Richard's intervention also provided some intriguing findings: his PG Cert action research project did not result in the outcome he had hoped for, his expert assessor disagreeing with his own evaluation. This led to some interesting discussions about the different way that music professionals with different roles and identity practices listen to music, as well as the how difficult it can be to gauge the amount of preparation that goes into a performance.

Eddy's session was more straightforward, using small group learning based around improvisation as an approach, with a minimum of teacher intervention. This session worked well, but did throw up issues for individual students who seemed to prefer a more structured, teacher-led environment. Again this became a thought-provoking point for discussion in Eddy's interview. Likewise, Stephen's session, the only large group and team taught session I observed, demonstrated the results of students working in self directed groups, outside of college, producing unique arrangements of other students' original compositions. This session was very successful in its aims and led to some insightful reflections on the dynamics of group work, group learning, identity practices, and individual social and cultural development in a musical context. Overall, the teaching interventions achieved what I had set out to do. They allowed the teachers involved to reflect on their own ideas about learning and their own teaching practice, whilst also trying out approaches that draw on the key characteristics of informal learning, as established by Green (2006).

### **Surprises and Implications**

I began the *Action Research Project* with some ideas of what I might find. I had hoped that by retrieving informal learning experiences, my research participants would be able to draw on those experiences and use them to inform their classroom practice. What I found

surprising was how engaged and open to the project my research participants were. I believe that this was partly because several of them had engaged in action research as part of the PG Cert, and had also investigated some of the ideas I was also exploring. However, I must also acknowledge my own position as a senior manager at BIMM, and that my own enthusiasm for the project, must have had some influence on my participants' attitudes to the research.

I was likewise surprised in finding that for some BIMM students informal approaches to learning are less suitable due to their own learning preferences toward teacher centered pedagogy. As discussed previously, I believe this is at least partly to do with those students' own learning histories and their exposure to more traditional teacher-led music teaching. Nonetheless, I have never advocated informal approaches as the only pedagogical method and see no real issue with addressing individual learner preferences, as long as they are explicitly understood and acknowledged by the teacher and learner as part of a reflective process. As Eddy put it, with these students it is simply a case of providing a little more structure and guidance, or as Clare framed it 'scaffolding' so that they can 'stand on the shoulders of giants'.

Furthermore, I must acknowledge that informal educational approaches do not always produce the same results when applied to formal contexts. As Hodkinson *et al.* (2003) and Eraut (1994) have established, practices established informally, and particularly in the workplace, are not easily transplanted into formal educational settings, nor can be expected to yield the same results. However, the findings and analysis of my research suggests that it is possible, with due regard to the importance of the situatedness of practice, identity practices including authenticity and creativity, to utilise informal learning practice successfully in formal settings.

Another fascinating aspect that emerged from the data is the very similar experiences that my research participants had of music at school, often, but not always, very negative to the point at which in some cases it is surprising that they persevered with music at all.

At school popular music was often perceived by their teachers as being inferior to classical music and thus devoid of any cultural value. Being told that they were not musically talented, and that their chosen musical culture had no value, appears to have provided some of my research participants with a motivation to prove their teachers wrong. Not only by disproving the view that they were not musically able, but also as a reaction to habitus (Bourdieu, 1990a, p.53) and the dispositions of the musical culture of classical music that their teachers belonged to. This is a good example of clashes between the culture of the two musical genres and also of agency. These individuals have been motivated by the lack of recognition shown to their own preferred musical genre by those in positions of power, and thus able to exert control through 'symbolic violence' (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977, p.4). These individuals have consequently rejected that coercion by refusing to conform to their teachers' particular cultural hegemony. However, such value judgments also appear to have long lasting effects on the musicians in my study and their own sense of worth, and some of my participants appear to continue to lack confidence in the legitimacy of informal learning practice, despite seeing it as effective for both themselves and their students.

In addition, all of my research participants could identify individuals, family members, music teachers, and other old-timers who took a significant role in inspiring and encouraging them to persevere in music. It is clear from my research participants' narratives that what is important for most musicians is to have this support early on, in whatever form and context. I am hopeful that the work done by Green, *Musical Futures*, and others to encourage young musicians at school will ensure that more young musicians maintain an interest in making music beyond school, whether that be as professional practitioners or not.

Another potential issue that emerges from this thesis is the way that networks of social capital and the informal apprenticeship to old-timers in communities of practice may act to maintain existing inequalities, and this may continue to be the case in particular with



gender and race in popular music. Without appropriate role models teaching at school and college it is likely that imbalances and stereotypes will persist. I was also initially surprised at how clearly notions of identity, creativity and authenticity appeared in the narratives of my research participants. Furthermore, these were topics I had not originally sought to explore in detail, as I considered my work to be focussed more narrowly upon the process of learning and teaching. However, once I had established the importance of social and cultural situatedness, and learning as becoming, these themes became much more relevant to my work and consequently led to further exploration of notions of class, gender, and race. Although these particular aspects of identity are secondary concerns in the work presented here, they are nevertheless still important to my theoretical understanding of the social and cultural nature of learning.

Finally I was also surprised by the way young musicians place limits on their own musical creativity, with affiliations to particular musical cultures. Although these associations offer access, through communities of practice, to social and cultural capital they also act as barriers to learning by limiting the repertoire that these musicians are willing to engage with. This is certainly one of the key obstacles to engaging young people with music of whatever musical genre and certainly one of the biggest challenges we face in music education as much of the research discussed in this thesis recognises.

## Findings

### **Situatedness and Identity Practices**

My findings are that musical practice and learning is profoundly situated in social, cultural, historical, and technological contexts. BIMM is a locus where cultural fields intersect, and where communities of practice are established, that work both within, and across, the cultural fields of music and education. In this setting of situated practice, individual agents are able to access, social, cultural, symbolic, and economic capital, depending on their position, and status, within the cultural field(s) they inhabit.

Old-timers or more knowledgeable others who are in the context of this study also tutors at BIMM, act as mentors and guides to students, or newcomers, entering the field and engaging with BIMM's community of practice as legitimate peripheral participants (Lave and Wenger, 1991). The distribution of power within fields is likewise important in establishing the rules of the game, for all within the field, as individual agents, or groups of agents, adopt dispositions that align with those rules. However, the magnetic power lines of field are often in flux, and therefore agents are frequently required to re-orientate themselves with the changing landscape within the field(s) they inhabit. Legitimation, particularly through judgements of authenticity and creativity within genre based communities of practice, is also important for popular musicians in establishing position within fields, and the practice based communities within those fields. Authenticity also comes into play in terms of the value both learners and teachers attribute to different forms of practice, learning, and knowledge within the cultural fields of music and education.

Power is an important factor in terms of the relationship between learners and teachers, or newcomers and old-timers, particularly when it comes to issues such as assessment, and the award of qualifications as symbolic capital. Thus the teachers in my study are especially powerful in their position as educators and practicing music professionals, in terms of the assessment of their students, but also as full participants in communities of practice, with the ability to introduce their students to their own cultural and social networks, allowing those students access to forms of capital: social, cultural, and subsequently symbolic and economic.

My emphasis on the situatedness of musical and educational practice within social, cultural, historical and technological contexts, and learning as a process of orientation to those contexts through identity practices, requires popular music educators to be aware of the influence of changing contexts on our field(s): our teaching practice, and our students. We should correspondingly endeavour to take a more democratic and critical approach to

our pedagogy, one that allows both teachers and students to challenge and revise previously static ontological and epistemological positions, developing a reflexive stance, whilst also recognising, and valuing, diverse forms of knowledge and learning practice more equitably.

In conclusion, the identity practices of social agents, or groups of agents, and the social and cultural situatedness of practice, underpin the acquisition of social, cultural, symbolic and economic capital, through the process of learning as becoming, whilst also providing the opportunity for the development of reflexivity, and thus the potential for individual agency. Situated teacher identity practices are likewise crucial, in the development of a learner-teacher relationship that facilitates a dynamic, critical, and egalitarian learning environment. Therefore, we must seek to make explicit the situated nature of learning as a process of becoming, in order to ensure that the experience of musical learning is one that provides the opportunity for personal transformation.

### **Learning as Becoming: Music Teachers**

For most of the teachers in my study there were also no formal popular music courses available when they, and I, were of school age. Young popular musicians may now go on to study popular music at college or university (Cloonan, 2005, Cloonan and Hulstedt, 2013). This structural transformation has produced a new landscape in music education that includes popular music as a more respected academic discipline. There is consequently a growing academy of specialist public and private music schools focused partly or wholly on contemporary music, alongside a burgeoning body of research literature on popular musical culture, practice and pedagogy. These adjustments in practice and field present music educators with a chance to reflect on current practice and the opportunity to transform that practice through innovation.

Music can be seen to have two meanings, an intrinsic meaning that elicits a direct emotional or psychological response, and a social/cultural meaning that is bound up with

group and individual musical identities (Green, 2008a). Musical learning is therefore a process of exploration of the emotional, cultural and social significances of music inexorably connected with the formation and practices of identity. Motivation for learners is consequently bound up in the value that is given to musical forms and, possibly more importantly, with the worth attributed to particular forms of knowledge and practices of learning and knowing.

The narratives I gathered in the 2010 *Phase One Study* confirmed that popular musicians do indeed learn through a process where playing, composing, arranging, reflecting on, and thereby improving, their music occurs informally, often within peer groups, and with or without guidance from old-timers. For these teachers, learning to become musicians was often iterative and haphazard. Furthermore, performing, improvising (or jamming), and composition were integrated into an experience of *making* rather than *playing* music. When guidance was available, it came through family and social networks of social capital provided within communities of practice, and through an informal apprentice system that existed in an industry where old-timers, managers and producers began to *shape* the identity of young performers striving to develop authentic musical creativities into commercial products.

It is noteworthy that these old-timers are often treated as *family* or in the case of the Beatles where their manager, Brian Epstein, was sometimes referred to as the fifth member of the group (Handley, 2012, p.1). This intimacy and trust between newcomers and old-timers seems to be important for the interaction and inculcation of habitus to work successfully. However, this form of interaction is not unique to popular music - in fact the master-apprentice approach of classical conservatoires is built upon a formalised version of this process.

The informal approach to learning also served these musicians well when they began to teach, and they often referred to the characteristics of informal learning in their own strategies for teaching. The *Phase One Study* found a strong link between the ways the

teachers in the study talked about their own learning narratives, and subsequently how they reflected on how they teach. Moreover, the majority of my research participants also initially learnt to teach informally, through practice and by trial and error, supported by their peers. Furthermore, through BIMM's PG Cert programme, teaching staff become part of 'a professional development community' (Pellegrino *et al.*, 2014), where they develop identities as educators through interaction within a BIMM PG Cert community of practice.

What my research also demonstrates is that by supporting these teachers in their development through the BIMM PG Cert, which places emphasis on social constructivist learning theory and utilises classroom based action research, where importance is placed on personal experience, investigation and reflections into teaching practice, these teachers have become much more receptive to the ideas of reflective and reflexive learning practice than might be the case if they had not been developed and supported in this way. Four of the participants who took part in my *Action Research Study* had engaged with BIMM's action research-led PG Cert in Learning and Teaching,<sup>92</sup> and one had conducted her own practice based research as part of a work based master of arts course. This entire group of participants found the experience of researching their own practice, and linking educational theory to their own pedagogy, inspiring and hugely rewarding. Indeed their enthusiasm is acknowledged as a potential factor in the validity and reliability of my empirical work.

As Cleaver and Ballantyne (2013) suggest, closing the gap between theory and practice is not achieved through the use of isolated constructivist theory, but through the application of constructivism in reflective self enquiry as they conclude:

[T]hat effective music educators today (in a postmodern, technological landscape) must pay attention to assisting student agency in "constructing an identity in music" rather than simply focusing on "training" students to become a particular kind of musician with particular skills (2013, p.238).

By retrieving their own informal learning my participants were able to allow their students the space to learn informally through techniques such as self directed group

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<sup>92</sup> Full title: Postgraduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching.

learning, trial and error, and improvisation in a Higher Education setting. Thus, through narrative self reflection and retrieval of informal learning practice as a method, my research participants have integrated formal and informal approaches in the classroom. Moreover, through adopting tactics that make visible the act of learning informally, and its role in constructing identity through identity practices that are culturally and socially situated, we may make musical learning more effective and democratic. In understanding and valuing all forms of learning as legitimate, and of equal worth, we likewise enrich the experience of learning and teaching.

We may also have to accept a different role as teachers, playing a part that puts us closer to that of fellow traveller than captain. Consequently, adopting a role that casts us as protagonists who facilitate learning playfully and creatively (McWilliam, 2008), through challenging our students' ontological and epistemological dispositions (Pryor and Crossouard, 2010) we create the potential for reflexive understanding and therefore agency. Through this process of transformation we might end up with less predictable learning experiences, but also more effective, creative, authentic and mutually beneficial ones. For my research participants in both studies, informal learning has formed the backbone of their practice over many years and become the *natural* way to learn. Formal learning has often simply been a route to gain social/institutional acceptance, or social and cultural/symbolic capital - additional disciplinary knowledge not easily available to informal learners.

### **Using the Principles of Informal Learning in Formal Contexts**

The 2012 *Action Research Study* confirmed that the way popular musicians learn influences their approach to teaching in a positive manner. It showed that they were able to implement teaching strategies based on informal learning that were, on the whole, effective. Particularly when encouraged to reflect on their beliefs and practice as musicians and educators, my research participants gave useful examples of the informal learning approaches they had used in class. For some this appeared to them to simply be

the most successful way of engaging their students. David's visual software, Stephen's band writing exercise and Sue's songwriting task are all strong examples of approaches taken from informal learning being utilised to change and enhance classroom activities.

Furthermore, the success of informal learning in any learning situation is dependent on aspects of the learning experience that militate against the particular approach taken, such as the dispositions of both learner and teacher towards the value of learning, and the effects of the distribution of, and inequality of access to, knowledge and power (Hodkinson *et al.*, 2003). Correspondingly, it is clear that informal learning is an integral part of identity practices and situated within social, cultural, historical and technological contexts as field, capital and habitus interact as an often unrecognised motivation for learning. As educators we need to understand how learners' identities are woven, through learning socially in a dynamic way, as the forces of field act upon them. The development of identity, habitus and consequently the accumulation of capital is fundamentally an incentive to learn, and continue to learn, throughout a musician's lifetime. If learning provides capital, through the development of social and cultural networks, and allows the consequent conversion of accumulated social and cultural capital into symbolic and economic capital, the motivation to learn becomes very powerful. Habitus, identity and the culture of genre, also allow young people to become interesting to themselves by providing them with the benefits of social, and cultural capital. It allows them stand out amongst their peers as individuals whilst excelling in something practical rather than academic, something that is therefore *cool* and culturally authentic.

### **Authentic and Creative Learning**

In conclusion, how do we make the musical learning experience both authentic and creative? This became a strong theme in the 2012 *Action Research Study*. The data from this study show that there are issues around ensuring that music education allows space for creativity, particularly in the classroom. The findings discussed in the previous chapter show that personal authenticity (being true to yourself, where you come from, and true to

your art), and musical authenticity (music that is considered high art or *cool* and therefore legitimated) are fundamental identity practices for popular musicians in the process of learning as becoming. Creativity appears to be both a route to authenticity and consequently capital, and hence a tool for creating the potential for agency. Nevertheless, what is creative is defined by a cultural and social interaction between artists, audiences, and cultural mediators (Csikszentmihalyi, 2013).

Those who are seen as the most creative popular musicians are able to access social, cultural, economic and symbolic capital and live the lifestyle of other social elites. Many rock stars from the 1960's and 1970's have been honoured with both industry awards and even knighthoods, surely the greatest measure of symbolic establishment approval. The same rock stars meet popes, presidents, freedom fighters and prime ministers, and appear to have huge influence across some privileged and influential groups.

Finally, the influence of field and habitus has implications here for the design of assessment, where possible, authentic modes of assessment that reflect creative practice appear most effective (Black and Wiliam, 2003, Pryor and Crossouard, 2008). Where authenticity is not practical, assessment design should be revised to ensure at the very least that assessment does not stand in the way of effective learning. If we concentrate on training our musicians to pass tests rather than create innovative and inspirational music then we surely do them, as well as ourselves, a disservice.

### **The New Conservatoires**

The growth of private vocational popular music education in the post compulsory sector (Fielden, 2010) has undoubtedly stemmed from the combination of a growth in demand amongst school leavers and a lack of supply in the public sector. The doors of the conservatoires<sup>93</sup> have largely remained shut to popular musicians, and many university music departments have also been slow to offer programmes that are attractive or

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<sup>93</sup> A college for the study of classical music or other arts, typically in the continental European tradition: <http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/conservatoire>



accessible to self-taught popular musicians. As previously established BIMM is a community of practice, a mono-technic where newcomers and old-timers interact, where learning is founded upon interactions within that community and a process of learning as becoming, situated within the field of music and its social, cultural, historical and technological contexts.

In the traditional conservatoire, focussed on classical music, students are taught formally, often one to one in a master-apprentice system, for most of, if not their entire musical training. They are inculcated into habitus as classical musicians, so that they develop a feel for the game within their own community of practice. Conservatoire students may likewise be described as *talented* or *gifted*, although it is just as likely that they are simply privileged in their access to both the capital required to train to be a classical musician, and the emotional and practical support of families with large reserves of social, cultural, and economic capital. These musicians know what society expects of them, and often have a socially constructed identity that is recognisably middle-class. Occasionally a working-class musician will enter this community of practice, Nigel Kennedy<sup>94</sup> for example. Nonetheless, as discussed previously in chapter two, making the leap from working-class to middle-class habitus can be difficult if not traumatic.

Most music, and particularly popular music, is produced collaboratively in one way or another (Burnard, 2012). This is perhaps why *Musical Futures* has been so successful in schools, and why further work is required at all levels of our education system to ensure that we are catering for creative musicians, as well as those with the technical and theoretical skills most valued by the conservatoires. In Bourdieu's terms, we need to change the rules of the game. Unlike other subjects taught in Higher Education, music appears to be unique in that in many institutions tradition has demanded that the study of music is concentrated around its high art form (classical music) a construct that is considered to be more culturally valuable, by some arbiters of taste, than other popular

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<sup>94</sup> <http://www.nigel-kennedy.net/>

forms of music. The new conservatoires, focussed on popular music, must therefore fashion their own unique position in the field of music. A status that is defined by a body of practice based research, where both disciplinary and practical knowledge support appropriate pedagogical approaches to educating the next generation of popular musicians.

### **The Practice of Theory**

Approaches to teaching music should develop metacognition in teachers and learners so that student musicians can continue to learn independently when they graduate, and teachers can reflect on and improve their practice. Our pedagogy also needs to plug students into the communities of practice that will support them throughout their careers. Thus, teaching needs to be reflective, whilst encouraging reflexivity, and the resources that support learning, flexible and creatively managed in order to facilitate both formal and informal learning.

Additionally, the music curriculum and student assessment must be designed in a way that accounts for the ways that students learn, and the conditions for the acquisition of both formal disciplinary knowledge, and informal practical knowledge, whilst providing sufficient opportunities for formative and authentic assessment. Student appraisal also requires a more inclusive approach to measuring attainment, so that students are not only being measured on a narrow range of technical and theoretical outcomes, but also on creative outcomes that fully reward them for their efforts in *making* music.

For this thesis another question must be: what is the place of this work in the development of the subject of music education? As Jorgensen puts it 'too many music teachers remain uninterested in music education research and are focussed almost entirely on practical matters.' (2008, p.340). She goes on to conclude that:

Not enough attention has been given to practice-driven theory, or to theory and practice as interactive, that is, theory impacts practice as practice also impacts theory. These more practice-driven, dialogical, or interactive conceptions of theory and practice would dignify practice in ways that have not been as common in music education research as I wish might be the case (2008, p.340).

I see my thesis as a contribution to this endeavour, bringing theoretical understanding to practice and a practical understanding of theory. Collaborative action research is the perfect tool for this undertaking as its iterative nature allows and in fact encourages praxis.

As Westerlund and Vakeva put it:

Theories of music education grant social experiments. Their prime heuristic import is not found in their descriptive value, but in their power to enhance cultural critique and thus support a reconstructive way of life that Dewey identified as “democracy” (2011, p.41).

In this way my research model forms an exemplar that may be used by others to examine music education theory and practice. The role of theory is to explain and perhaps improve practice, and by placing practice at the heart of our research we consequently improve our theoretical models.

### **Original Contributions to the Field of the Study of Popular Music Education**

I believe that my thesis makes original contributions to the field of education in three distinct ways. Firstly, my research has established a method for the exploration and excavation of personal learning narratives as a way to inform teaching practice and teacher education in popular music. Secondly, my work applies a hybridised version of Bourdieu’s thinking tools as a methodology for analysis of empirical data. Finally, my thesis has specific relevance in applying the principles of informal learning to group based learning in a Higher Education context, providing a contribution to both the practice and theory of learning and teaching. Additionally, by utilizing a biographical approach to retrieving and learning from experience, feeding that experience into an iterative action research cycle. My participants have been able to reflect on their own informal learning, and their beliefs about that learning, and by extension their students’ own ontology and epistemology, as part of an empirical research project and apply those reflections on their own learning to their teaching practice to gain a reflexive understanding of that practice.

The cultural field of music allows musicians to accrue social, cultural, symbolic and economic capital. Accordingly, musicians develop their musical identities through engagement with preferred styles and associated cultural affiliations, through participation in communities of practice. Throughout the process of learning as becoming, musicians identify with the situated social and cultural practice of music. Music students consequently develop a dynamic understanding of their learning: through reflection on and in practice.

If learning has the capacity to allow agency we need to ensure that its transformative effect is clearly recognised. Our approach to music pedagogy in Higher Education needs to ensure that informal learning flourishes within our institutions, which it can do by ensuring an environment that fosters interaction between old-timers and newcomers (Lave and Wenger, 1991). Furthermore, we need to ensure we are delivering a curriculum that is flexible enough to allow musicians to be *making* rather than just *playing* music (Paynter, 2000). And we should not be tempted to fall solely into traditional sage-on-the-stage (McWilliam, 2008) model of teaching and learning but allow our students to learn collectively, creatively, holistically, and aesthetically.

Music students should also be allowed to learn through trial and error at times with guidance, or not, as appropriate. When our students are learning, that learning should be visible and recognisable (Hattie, 2009). Despite the fact that informal learning is often unconscious, we need to find ways to recognise its occurrence and the factors that encourage its effectiveness, even if we cannot do that in the same way we do with formal learning. By retrieving our informal learning experiences we may also become more effective learners and teachers, as Green puts it:

For those teachers who believe in the potential of informal popular music learning practices, but who have *not* had personal experience of them, is to put themselves into the position of young popular musicians, and try out some informal learning practices for themselves (2002, p.214).

The essential thing for all of us, whether we are teachers or learners, and I would say that we are often both, is to strive to make musical learning into a consistently meaningful

and significantly creative and reflexive experience. Our approach to pedagogy in Higher Education needs to ensure that we allow informal learning to thrive both within our institutions and beyond them, for the good of our students. The music industry developed to become a very successful producer of product over some five decades, then lost control of its means of production and had to re-invent itself as a service, becoming a part of the digital media industry. Perhaps it is time that music education did the same and re-discovered itself as a more dynamic reflection of the true breadth of theory and practice within the fields of music and education.

### Recommendations

My recommendations for further work fall into two categories, the first is continued research into informal musical learning practice and the second is practical outcomes that can help to inform policy and practice within my own institution.

### Thoughts on Further Research into Informal Learning Practice

This thesis aims to bring new insights into the use of informal learning approaches in the music classroom, and it adds weight to the argument that learning is situated socially and culturally as a process of becoming, of alignment of identity practices embedded within the social, cultural, historical, and technological contexts of the field of music. Furthermore, notions of authenticity, creativity, and identity are all highly pertinent in the development of new pedagogical approaches. My aim is to encourage reflective and reflexive teaching practice that utilises narrative and action research to examine novel approaches to learning and teaching. What is clear is that using informal as well as formal methods has the potential to train a wider range of popular effectively musicians than reliance on formal models alone.

It has also become evident that teachers also require support in achieving this aim, and that even if they have had informal learning experiences themselves, they may still benefit from assistance in understanding how to turn reflection on their own experience into

something that works in practice. What is still to be established is the range of activity that might be most effective in re-balancing teacher and learner attention from formal to informal learning in music education. It might be beneficial to create a shared resource as *Musical Futures* have for schools, in the form of a musical informal learning cookbook or toolkit, a resource that educators could both access and contribute to.

This thesis and the empirical research that underpins it have also become a personal process of transformation in terms of both my ontological and epistemological positions. I began this process with some vague notions of taking a qualitative and subjective stance, of looking for social justice and wanting to know if my own experience of learning informally as a musician and teacher is shared with my peers. I have now adopted a position that fits my new understanding of the field of music and music education more rigorously and completely, a stance that brings me insight into the socially situated nature of my own practice within the fields I inhabit.

Furthermore, I have done my best to ensure that my theoretical position does not shape my empirical results in a way that distorts the narratives of my participants and the meaning of my work. As Eddy puts it, when referring to the relationship between playing by ear and musical theory 'theory confirms what the ear hears', I wish theory to emerge from of the logic of practice rather than imposing a construct, an artificial theoretical model upon that practice. Consequently, I have developed a method for the exploration of how both practical and disciplinary subject knowledge and formal and informal learning can complement each other in enhancing the experience of musical learning.

I intend that this research should inform debate on informal approaches in the classroom, including the exploration of this topic from the student viewpoint and the investigation of some of the remaining themes from this thesis, such as further work on the origins of musical learning preferences, and how to make all learning visible, whilst fostering and developing metacognition in both teachers and learners. There is also

further enquiry to be conducted with a view to improving course design, particularly around issues of the impact and design of curriculum content, and assessment.

### **Further Work on Informal Learning Practice at BIMM**

I am devising a teaching intervention on the PG Cert at BIMM that looks at this research and ask the student teachers to explore their own narratives of informal learning as part of their own reflective and reflexive practice. I have already delivered a day of intensive workshops to the BIMM Dublin cohort of around ten second year trainee teachers on the PG Cert. This workshop summarised my research and asked the group to devise their own approaches to using informal approaches. The results were encouraging, with tutors suggesting a range of approaches including the idea of using Brian Eno's set of cards 'Oblique Strategies'<sup>95</sup> as a teaching tool and also an intervention the tutors called 'musical roulette', where students would be asked to work in independent groups to produce a short piece of improvised music working to a set rhythmic backing. The pieces would then be stitched together to produce a new piece of music. I am also about to deliver a similar teaching session to entrepreneurs as part of the Wired Sussex, Fuse Box project.<sup>96</sup> This intervention will test how my ideas might translate across disciplinary boundaries into the creative arts and more widely.

I also intend to bring some of the themes that have emerged from this thesis to my institution's Learning and Teaching Enhancement Committee, particularly in terms of developing the curriculum and assessment regime and supporting teachers and students so that we begin to identify barriers to informal learning practice and remove them where possible. It would be rewarding to effect a change that encouraged a wider range of pedagogical approach that foregrounds informal learning, in policy, training and practice, and then to monitor them through the action research of PG Cert students. Another complementary approach might be to examine the current curriculum and assessment

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<sup>95</sup> <http://www.enoshop.co.uk/shop/oblique-strategies.html>

<sup>96</sup> <http://www.fusebox24.co.uk/>

diet and look at the most frequently assessed qualities and skill sets, with the intention of using this data to identify where potential changes could be made.

We still have the issue of teachers' default positions, their tendency to teach others the way they were taught. And that disposition is of course radically sculpted by their own experience situated in the social and cultural spaces of the field of music. This is true of both the conservatoires and the new popular music colleges. What is crucial now is that the lessons learnt so far become the basis for change that can then be reflected upon in order to direct further work. It is possible, of course, that all we are doing in making popular music a legitimate academic subject is reproducing existing inequalities, but that die is already cast.

Finally, it is the development of research as a tool in the development of the theory and practice of music education that is the primary contribution this work has to make, as Jorgensen reminds us:

By combining descriptive and empirical as well as normative and abstract matter, this approach acknowledges that music education by definition straddles theory and practice and since it is conducted as a social enterprise often in a public sphere, requires philosophical reflection along with empirical research...The significance and richness of these questions are sources of hope and encouragement that the scholarship we do in the future can be better than what we have done in the past (2008, p.341).

For my part I agree, the questions at the heart of my research have always been mutually simple and complex: how do we learn and how do we teach? For musicians, the practice of being, or rather becoming a musician is as yet not fully understood. We must endeavour to understand and explain more of this process so that we can ensure our own theory and practice as music educators is the best it can be.



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## Appendix 1: Action Research Briefing Document

### Rationale

My intention with the work we are going to do is to begin an Action Research Study with a view to developing and extending good practice in the use of *informal* learning approaches in a classroom environment. This work has stemmed from a case study I conducted last year into the learning histories of five popular music teachers.

The publication of Green's (2002) text *How Popular Musicians Learn*, focussed debate on whether 'traditional' music pedagogy serves popular musicians well. Green's later book, *Music, Informal Learning and the School: A New Classroom Pedagogy* (2008) sets out a range of possible approaches aimed at teaching of music in school more effectively with an emphasis on a student centred approach. When I first read Green I was struck by her assertion that although traditionally popular musicians learn informally they may adopt traditional teaching methods when teaching their students. My initial response to this claim was to want to know if this was true in my own field and whether this behaviour was inspired by institutional approaches to teaching and learning or individual choice based on expectations of staff wishing to meet those established expectations.

Green (2006) defined the five key qualities of informal learning in popular music, relevant to classroom teaching as:

- (1) allowing learners to choose the music
- (2) learning by listening and copying recordings
- (3) learning in friendship groups with minimum adult guidance
- (4) learning in personal often-haphazard ways
- (5) integrating listening, playing, singing, improvising and composing.

The main themes of self-guided, student centred learning and the use of recordings (and recording), alongside the idea of a 'trial and error' as an approach to learning.

(Green, 2006)

We will use Green's taxonomy as a guide in the work we will do.

## Case Study (2010)

The initial motivation for this case study came from my own experience, as a 'self taught' musician this led to an interest in the way that musicians learn outside of formal education and how this informs their teaching. The study was based on a narrative approach eliciting life stories from five teachers of popular music.

I utilised two empirical methods, teaching observations and open 'active listening' interviews that encouraged stories to develop. All participants had a history which included both formal and informal learning and they are all active and successful practitioners as well as teachers. Data was analysed by coding to develop categories, themes and theory. The Interviews were open but based around two key enquiries:

- How do these musicians learn?
- How does their learning inform their teaching?

The findings from my case study resonate with the theories being developed by other researchers. The ideas developed around the theory of situated learning, including the work of Lave and Wenger (1991), are also central to my developing theoretical framework. Lave and Wenger describe legitimate peripheral participation as a form of apprenticeship where learners study within a community of practice and contribute to the productivity of that community. The answer to my initial question seems to be that, yes these musicians do integrate the informal methods by which they learnt into their teaching practice, which seems to contradict Green's assertion that the default position is to adopt formal traditional teaching methodology. However, it is also true that this may continue to be the case in schools, conservatoires and universities where the traditional 'master apprentice' model is dominant. The respondents in my case study showed that they have a demonstrable passion for learning and teaching, and speak on these subjects with zeal. They are reflective, self critical and very positive towards their own experience as learners, they reflect on their actions, indulging in practical 'reflective research' (Schon, 1983) by emulating practice-based scenarios experimentally to produce valid and effective learning and teaching experiences, and they place a high value on the opportunity to share good practice with colleagues through observation and discussion.

## The Action Research Approach

Action Research allows an iterative cycle to develop with enquiry and research informing decision-making and further interrogation. Action Research is also often employed within educational contexts, allowing a dynamic relationship between theory and practice that is both critical and analytic. This approach to research is also concerned with changing things for the better and is therefore highly appropriate for this particular research project, which aims to share and disseminate good practice in teaching and learning. Winter, describes Action Research in the following way,

Action research is about seeking a voice with which to speak one's experience and one's ability to learn from that experience. It is also about helping others (our students, our patients, our clients) to find their own voices. Action research is decentralising the production of knowledge. (Winter, 1998)

My approach to this Action Research Study will be as follows:

- Ask participants to reflect on their own learning and teaching and identify an informal approach that might work in the classroom
- Observe the use of the technique in a class
- Interview the teacher to discuss the class and the observation

Attached is a consent form for the on-going Action Research Study, you have the right to opt in or out and the right to withdraw consent. Of course I very much hope you will choose to take part in this very interesting project.

Mark Irwin  
Head of Higher Education  
Brighton Institute of Modern Music

## Do we Teach the Way we Learnt? Participant Consent Form

If you consent to being interviewed and to any data gathered being processed as outlined below, please print and sign your name, and date the form, in the spaces provided.

This project - Do we teach the way we learnt? Is being conducted by Mark Irwin as part of his doctoral studies at the University of Sussex. The study has ethical consent from the university and all employers involved in the study.

Interviews will be around 30 minutes and will be recorded for ease of transcription.

You have the right to withdraw from the study at any point – if you wish to withdraw please contact Mark Irwin.

All data will be treated as personal under the 1998 Data Protection Act, and will be stored securely.

Interviews and surveys will be recorded and transcribed by Mark Irwin.

Copies of interview tapes, surveys and transcripts will be kept securely.

A copy of your interview transcript or survey will be provided, free of charge, on request.

Data collected may be processed manually and with the aid of computer software.

Please indicate, by ticking ONE of the boxes below, whether you are willing to be identified, and whether we may quote your words directly, in reports and publications arising from this research. The options given relate to confidentiality and publication.

- ☐ I Consent to being a part of the study
- ☐ I may be identified in reports made available outside the research team and the university, and in publications.
- ☐ I do not wish to be identified in reports made available outside the research team and the university, nor in any publications.
- ☐ My words may be quoted provided that they are anonymized.
- ☐ My words may not be quoted.
- ☐ I consent to anonymized data from this study being shared and archived.

By signing this form you are agreeing to the following statement:

I consent to the processing of my personal information for the purposes of this research study. I understand that such information will be treated as strictly confidential and handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Please print your name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 2: The Learning Narratives of the Participants

### The Participants in the Action Research Study

The five teachers who completed the *Action Research Study* were Clare, Eddy, Sue, Stephen, and Richard. David and Joe only took part in the interviews. The participants were asked to reflect on the principles of informal learning practice and their own experience to devise a classroom intervention, which I would observe.

Each tutor took their own approach to the action research based on their individual interpretation of Green's ideas. Clare used a blues style to explore improvisation; Eddy looked to develop creative part writing skills; Sue used techniques of peer formative assessment; whilst Stephen and Richard, both engaged with group based song-writing and arrangement.

David and Joe did not follow the research design as closely as the others as they did not take part in the action research. For these two participants my questions centred on their own learning, learning to teach, and using informal learning in class. For David in particular, it was the development of his software that uses informal learning theory in its design that was the main topic. For Richard the approach was also modified: he had offered to share work from his own action research study, using informal learning. I did not observe his teaching, but saw a video of a class where he was conducting his own action research into informal learning. Consequently my interview questions concentrated on his research and his and our collaborative analysis of its results. In the next section I will summarise each participants background as informal learners.

#### David

David is in his forties, grew up in Ireland and has a background in music production rather than performance, having dropped out of formal education as a teenager. As David puts it 'I always thought that [formal] education was this hoity toity stuff... very academic, but wasn't actually relevant to the real world.' David had heard about what I was doing, and

my interest in the work of Green, and approached me asking to be involved. David had grown up wanting to play popular music and very influenced by British bands of the sixties and seventies, who he considered to be more creative in their music making than those from America.

For David, whose background included playing and writing music, and whose professional career was a recording engineer, informal learning in music began with listening. David learnt to appreciate music in a recording studio environment where the level of fidelity is very high. Thus, recording engineers become experts in critically deconstructing music, able to hear the whole and being capable of re-focussing on constituent parts at will. He saw this ability as something important for his own students, as musicians, to master 'listening to things in isolation, you understand the building blocks'. In other words, if you can learn to listen in a way that allows you to pick out the detailed construction of a musical piece, what each instrument is playing, and then learning to play or make music of complexity becomes much easier. David goes on to point out:

I had it in my head - this is how I learnt, this is how everybody I've ever known has learnt to play music! And funnily enough I did get a place at the college of music... to study and I turned it down to work, to start an apprenticeship at this recording studio.

But David found that his students were unable to listen in the way he wanted them to. He then realised he had learnt to be an engineer by watching and listening, and that an interactive audio-visual learning tool could facilitate the kind of learning he was trying to allow his students to access. David's software 'Multi-Player', now branded as *Band Player*,<sup>97</sup> is now used in several schools subscribing to *Musical Futures*.<sup>98</sup>

I decided to see if there was a way of teaching music, or getting them to visualise what was going on. So I created this thing that I called the multiplayer [Band Player].

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<sup>97</sup> <http://www.3firemusic.com/>

<sup>98</sup> <https://www.musicalfutures.org/>



What David is describing is a virtual band of professional musicians, one that a student can play along with and observe in real time replacing any of the instruments available. The *Band Player* software also allows you to play the song slower or faster and stop and start as you wish, or loop (repeat) a particular section. BIMM began to use the software for its own first year undergraduates in October 2013 and it has been very popular with students and staff.

## Clare

Clare is also in her forties and, unusually for the group as a whole, had learnt to play both formally (as a classical musician and as an instrumentalist, partly through one to one tuition) and informally (as a popular musician and a singer in less formal settings):

I've never had a proper singing coach in my life, my music teachers noticed that I had a voice and I was able to harmonise very quickly and easily, so I got the specialist treatment as in, "you are Mary in the nativity, you are the soloist in the choir", and indeed I think from the age of five I was in a choir, the kids choir in the local village. So I learnt experientially.

Her father was her first teacher and had learnt informally himself. He passed on his music informally through daily family life, playing records and sitting around the piano encouraging his children to play on a Sunday afternoon. Clare's family were poor and she had little in the way of financial support:

I was fourteen or fifteen...on scholarship, and used to have get up at five o'clock in the morning, three times a term...get myself to the station, walk, which was about a mile away, with a very heavy French Horn and my bag, buy my ticket and get myself to Manchester from Hull, to have a one hour lesson with someone from the BBC Northern Symphony Orchestra and come home again, completely on my own.

At the time of interview, Clare had just completed an MA in Education. Clare's work had focussed on the use of a feed-forward approach to providing feedback to students. Her initial strategy for using informal learning was to be less conventional and structured in the classroom:

My approach was, I think my overall feel about this whole idea of this informal learning, is you have to sort of blow it open and let things be a lot looser.

## **Eddy**

Eddy is in his mid-forties and began to play music (on the guitar) at the age of fourteen. He had no one to teach him and the books that were around were not a great deal of help. Eddy's family was relatively poor and not at all musical, so although they didn't discourage his musical ambition there was also little done to support it. Eddy began to learn by watching those who could play, 'looking at him play and looking at some other kids play', though he soon realized that 'it wasn't something that I was going to be able to do completely on my own.' Influenced by working-class American guitar music, Eddy began by playing by ear and from memory learning from recordings as many of my participants had. Eddy concludes 'I could hum all those records to you now, I still have them in my head'.

Later on Eddy then began to take tuition, first from his cousin and then from an older timer who introduced Eddy to jazz and music theory. As his musical taste widened Eddy bought books on harmony and theory and taught himself from them, he realised that he had found a way into formal learning. For Eddy it was also a way to stay out of trouble:

I ran with a bad crowd before that, it kind of put me on a good track...I was getting into a lot of trouble: this kind of kept me off the streets so to speak!

## **Sue**

Sue is in her fifties and has had a career as a singer/songwriter in the 'indie' musical genre. Sue had been previously signed to a commercial record label with several self-written albums to her name and is also a trained teacher, although her formal education was in fine art. Sue also grew up in America where music is not generally a core part of the school curriculum. Sue's background was likewise relatively poor. But Sue did come from a musical family, one where 'it was assumed that everyone liked music, and that everyone could do it':

My mum wanted to be a professional singer, she had a duo with her brother who was a jazz musician...my older brother, he was a songwriter he probably inspired me to want to write songs.

For Sue it is that confidence that music was something that she could do. But for Sue music had snuck up on her as a career 'by stealth, in spite of all my best efforts!' Sue's first introduction to music was through singing at home. Moreover, Sue came from a very musical and artistic family, as she describes:

My first instrument I guess is voice, I think everybody in my family sang or played something. It was just very natural, part of growing up.

### **Stephen**

Stephen's family were working-class, but not very musical (his father played the guitar a little). Stephen is also in his forties and a drummer, and for Stephen a primary motivation for playing music was getting away from his large and chaotic family. His family were in other ways, very supportive, his stepmother in particular:

She worked for Lever Brothers I think, she came up with some idea, she was only a sort of a shop floor worker, and they gave her one hundred and fifty pounds as a prize, which she spent it entirely on a drum kit.

Stephen began his musical story at school 'I was always tapping on things and that was a source of immense annoyance'. Stephen's potential began to be recognized by his teachers and he was provided one to one teaching by an elderly drum tutor, who had a very 'traditional' approach:

He said for the first year, were just going and work on the drum roll, immediately they'd just fall away in great numbers and there was only me and one other kid left after a couple of weeks.

Subsequently Stephen also got involved with the school orchestra, which also became an escape from the turmoil elsewhere at school:

I wasn't that interested in the direction, in terms of the classical pieces at school, but I quite liked the social side of it. It was just a nice different world, that wasn't, the competitive aggressive nightmare that some of the areas of the school were.

Like others in the study Stephen also used technology in the form of tape recorders, to learn and improve

I was recording myself playing along to records like Regatta De Blanc<sup>99</sup>, I would have them on the headphones and I'd play and record on another machine to see if it sounded good.

## **Richard**

Richard also began his musical learning informally. He came from a working-class background and is one of the older members of the group. He began as a self-taught musician but also participated with formal opportunities to engage with music:

I was self-taught from fourteen to seventeen, and I then decided, stupidly, that I wanted to do classical guitar. Did my 'O' Level music and then I did my 'Higher' music, which is the Scottish equivalent of 'A' levels. I went to music college for two years and got a couple of diplomas and then realised that I was never going to make any money out of classical guitar, so I went back to playing rock-based jazz.

His parents did encourage him to play classical music but this rather backfired:

They tried to get me to do piano lessons when I was five, and I didn't want to, I didn't like it. And then, I did do violin lessons when I was nine, where I basically cried, for three weeks because I wanted to play pretty tunes and it sounded appalling and I begged them to give up. I did it all on my own really, so it was probably the way round I would have to do it.

Richard also made good use of available technology in devising sophisticated approaches to learning to play pop:

I had my vinyl record player, and I had my little amp that I'd messed up to get fuzz, and then I had my kind of seventies, ancient cheapo cassette machine, and I'd just record myself for an hour, I'd play a record, I'd play along to the record, and I would listen back, if there was one run that didn't sound perfect, I'd see what I could do to sort it out.

## **Joe**

Before my interview with Joe we talked about the subject of networking in music, and one thing he told me struck me as worth recounting. For Joe, it was at Music College that he met the people that he has worked with ever since, his network of social capital. For popular musicians, and probably all musicians, this social capital is fundamental to their learning and the formation of musical identities. It is the creation of a community of

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<sup>99</sup> 1979 Album by the Anglo-American new wave band the Police: <http://www.thepolice.com/discography/album/reggatta-de-blanc-23426>

practice, a social network of peers and old-timers that supports musician's personal development throughout their careers. For Joe, his musical identity began to be developed by his father who immersed him in live music from a young age. Joe's whole family seemed to be musically focussed. Joe didn't like school and playing music soon became his obsession:

Dad would be taking me to gigs, and I would hit the kit, I've got a brother who's six years older than me who was heavily into Micheal Schenker<sup>100</sup>, Rainbow<sup>101</sup>, and AC/DC<sup>102</sup>, Abba<sup>103</sup>, ELO<sup>104</sup>. Dad was into blues<sup>105</sup>, motown<sup>106</sup>, stax<sup>107</sup>, and mum was into show tunes, or Bread<sup>108</sup>, the more acoustic kind of stuff, and classical music. I became really obsessed. Practising every day and it was like, this is good, and 'he's got some structure'. I wasn't very academic at school.

For Joe these early experiences developed his passion for music and his musical identity. Joe's exposure to networks of social capital, from an early age, allowed Joe to feel that becoming a professional musician was something within his reach. Joe's parents were also supportive in that they could see he was struggling at school and needed something to put his energies and ambitions into. Eventually Joe was also given the opportunity to play in the school orchestra. Music became a part of Joe's identity that allowed him to excel in the field of formal education that had previously been a huge struggle for him. Through his exposure to a broad range of music within his family, Joe also developed eclectic music listening habits. Joe correspondingly learnt informally from his peers:

We used to go and sit in his big garage with two drum kits and just swap fills and ideas, play together. I learnt a lot through doing that because he played so differently to me. He was a double bass drum player, and I was using kind of a jazz orthodox thing, and [we] looked at how we could kind of bend the rules a little bit with our playing.

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<sup>100</sup> German 'heavy metal' (guitar based rock music) guitar player and member of the band UFO: <http://www.michaelschenkerhimself.com/home.php>

<sup>101</sup> British 'heavy metal' band from the 1970's and 1980's: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Rainbow/189246591087656>

<sup>102</sup> Anglo-Australian 'heavy metal' band from the 1970's and 1980's (but still touring): <http://www.acdc.com/us/playacdc>

<sup>103</sup> Scandinavian pop band from the 1970's and 1980's: <http://www.abbasite.com/>

<sup>104</sup> British 'melodic' rock band from the 1970's and 1980's: <http://www.elo.biz/>

<sup>105</sup> Late 19<sup>th</sup> century African American music from the southern states

<sup>106</sup> African American record label based in Detroit in the 1960's and 1970's and featuring rnb and soul (African American musical style combining church gospel music, rnb, and jazz)

<sup>107</sup> American record label from the 1960's and 1970's originally based in Memphis specializing in soul music

<sup>108</sup> American 'soft' rock band from the 1970's: <http://www.last.fm/music/Bread>

## Appendix 3: Descriptive Account of the Classroom Interventions

### What the Teachers Did

#### Clare

When I observed Clare on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2012, I discovered that a great deal of thought had gone into her class and it was very highly structured. The lesson was for nine singers, and aimed to develop her students' skills of interpretation and improvisation. Clare's students were also preparing for a performance exam, and some of the teaching session was dedicated to discussing what the students would need to know for that assessment. The class began with Clare identifying the challenges of the musical piece: a soul inspired Elton John song, written in a conversational style, and challenging in terms of timing and modulation. As Clare put it, musical stylistic judgements in some genres are very individual:

[T]here are things that are right and wrong about blues improvisation, you can hit the wrong note, you cannot hit enough of the blue notes to give the right essence for the feel of the backing track, but there's so much that's subjective.

Clare then led a discussion of strategies the students had adopted to learn the song. The students had used a diverse range of self-devised practise methods. Clare asked the group if they had thought to research how other singers learn their parts. They replied that they had, and the consensus was that it is better to learn words and music at the same time. Likewise, that listening to and learning big sections of music in one go is less effective than learning the song line-by-line. Clare then worked with the students to play the song through, using the keyboards in the room for a pitch reference. Each student was asked to identify the notes and find the musical key that most suited their vocal range. Clare also asked the group to consider issues of technique, musicality, and genre/style/idiom. She finally asked the students, 'where can we show brilliance, where can you put some of yourself into this?'

After a discussion of how the performance would be graded, each student who had prepared and was ready performed the Elton John song, and each student received feedback from his or her peers and from Clare. This part of the lesson seemed to be extremely effective and illustrated Clare's interest in giving good developmental feedback. Clare established a very safe, mutually supportive environment in class where her students felt able to perform and take (positive and negative) criticism for their performance on the spot. To be able to accept such evaluation from a teacher and peers is not an easy thing for a student to do, particularly with a relative stranger and outsider to the group observing.

My impression at the time was that Clare was keen to maintain the structure and authority that she felt was important for learning, particularly in preparing the students for assessment. Clare was also eliciting her students' own invented approaches to practise, and in this way she was drawing on informal learning, if not directly facilitating it. This lack of focus on informal learning may have stemmed from two issues; firstly, I think Clare may have forgotten about my coming in to observe and tried to make an existing lesson plan work with the idea of informal learning. I asked Clare about this in our interview and she admitted that she had to improvise a little with her lesson plan, as the curriculum required her to prepare the students for the forthcoming assessment. Secondly, I also feel that Clare's background, which includes a significant amount of classical training, makes it more difficult for her to relinquish the structures, authority and approaches that have worked very well in her teaching practice for many years.

## **Eddy**

When I observed Eddy teaching on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2012, he was teaching a class of ten guitar students. The lesson aims were to address the task of expanding his student's vocabulary of chord voicings: alternative versions of chords. Eddy's class began with discussion of the importance of a wide musical vocabulary in the development of individual musical identity or genre-based styles. Eddy then asked his students to form groups whilst he

demonstrated some alternative chord voicings, making constant references to musicians such as Andy Summers and Miles Davis and their use of unusual chords. Eddy then asked his students to engage in small group composition and arrangement, employing techniques of self-directed peer learning through trial and error.

Eddy kept an eye on the process, but did not generally intervene unless asked to by his students. When Eddy did intervene without invitation, it was to encourage or challenge students to come up with something more innovative or imaginative. Eddy's students appeared fully engaged and seemed to enjoy the task. Some members of the group found the task more of a challenge than others and tended to ask more questions before settling down to work. Conversely, some students in Eddy's class seemed to find the whole process normal and natural and immediately began to adopt leadership roles within their peer groups.

## **Sue**

When I observed Sue on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2012, she was conducting a seminar session with nine songwriting students. The session began with an explanation of the goals for the class. Firstly, to review work being prepared for assessment. Secondly, a group task writing a 'lost song from a famous album' and thirdly, critiquing story-telling lyrics. Parts two and three were where Sue intended to use informal approaches. There ensued a discussion between Sue and her students about the way the students' work would be marked and judgments of quality including 'can a bad song get a good mark?' However, part two did not occur as none of the group had written, or were willing to share their 'lost songs'. Sue consequently moved on to part three of the lesson, which began with a discussion of the theme of storytelling in lyric writing, with narrative and biography as lyric writing forms. She played *Hurricane* by Bob Dylan (Dylan and Levy, 1975), *Martha* by Tom Waits (1973), *Fairytale in New York* by Kirsty MacColl and the Pogues (Finer and McGowan, 1987), and finally *The Last Time I Saw Richard*, from Joni Mitchell's *Blue* (1971).



Sue used these four songs to trigger discussions around the way that narrative was being used in each example and she allowed the students to discuss each one in groups and provide feedback using pre-prepared critique sheets. The intention was to use the same approach to peer critique of songs presented from the groups. But, none of the nine students present were ready to play their songs to their peers. I asked Sue about this and whether they felt inhibited in bringing in their songs for peer and tutor critique:

Some groups have done, and it's been great and the comments from the group have been amazing, they've really put their finger right on it. Offered ways of fixing problems, and all sorts. But I think they're very nervous of it. When I teach the adult songwriting class, they will bring stuff in [in fact] sometimes I've got sixteen year old students in the [adult] group it seems easier in a less formal adult evening class to bring in songs.

So it may be that the formal classroom environment does inhibit informal approaches and likewise peer learning. Then again, perhaps it was also my presence as an observer, sitting there with a notebook that put them off? Sue did not let this become an issue, and used the time to expand the group work critique of the four recordings.

### **Stephen**

When I observed Stephen on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2012, he was teaching a large group session in the main performance space at the college. The task Stephen had set revolved around student bands performing mostly original material and receiving written and verbal feedback from both peers and tutors. Two tutors ran the session with around thirty-five students in a two-hour timetabled session. As Stephen explains, the way the module I observed being delivered has changed in response to Stephen's own action research, conducted as part of his PG Cert:

We changed the rules so they had to work with each other [performance students had to work with songs written by songwriting students] with [original] raw material we gave them; we got them to re-write [arrange] it themselves.

Stephen's motivation was to improve the levels of engagement so that students didn't adopt a 'too cool for school' attitude (Kenny, 2010) leading to a lack of engagement in class. This issue had occurred when he first took on teaching the module. Stephen's response to

the poor attendance of some of his most talented students was to bring in original material, something his students had already asked for. More radically, this was also material written by other students (songwriting students). This gave some control of content back to the students and introduced an element of self-directed informal learning. Stephen's method had some unintended consequences with one cohort taking to the task and expanding the brief beyond what was intended, by writing their own songs from scratch.

### **Richard**

Richard's own Action Research Study for his PG Cert involved applying some of Green's concepts to the classroom environment. Richard had designed a piece of research that aimed to compare students applying formal and informal approaches to tasks he had set. The results would be judged by Richard, the students themselves, and an 'expert' assessor, a music producer, who viewed the sessions on video as I did. Richard had read Green's *How Popular Musicians Learn* (2002) and had the view that:

You know, there's one thing that Lucy Green says about popular musicians - I can't quote it but it's something like seventy percent of their technique is self-learnt. The funny thing about it is that technique actually isn't that important in this, technique is merely there.

Richard correspondingly sees two kinds of guitarists in his classes:

There are the different learners: some are really obsessed with technique as [an] end, and some are only interested in technique as a means to an end.

Richard was equally sure of the way that Green's work had influenced his practice:

It was quite interesting. I tried some different things, and it's really affected my teaching actually, which is the main reason I've been doing it. The first experiment was to give them rote learning - so they had to learn these parts. Quite high-end and then we discussed the elements, and got them to write parts, and I compared them and got their opinion of it. I got their peers' opinion of it, and I got the expert's opinion of it. The expert disagreed with the peers, and funnily enough he disagreed with me!

## Appendix 4: Example of Coded Data (initial line by line coding)

<p>Default Font and Size <span>▾</span> A A <span>►</span> Related Media</p> <p>Playing from memory Playing by ear</p> <p>Learning from recordings Playing by ear Playing from memory Playing from memory Learning from recordings One to one tuition Mixing formal with informal One to one tuition Mixing formal with informal Students choosing the repertoire Mixing formal with informal Role of music theory Learning from recordings Musical mentors</p> <p>Learning with others Peer and group learning Trial and error learning Trial and error learning</p> <p>Learning by playing covers Making music Learning by playing covers Making music Learning by playing covers</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Display Codes In Context Default Font and Size <span>▾</span> A A <span>►</span> Related Media</p> <p>Learning by playing covers Making music Learning by playing covers</p> <p>Parental encouragement to play Parents ambivalent to musical aspirations Parental encouragement to play Music as an escape Parents ambivalent to musical aspirations</p> <p>Siblings attitudes to musical aspirations Sibling rivalry</p> <p>Parents negative about musical ambitions</p> <p>Parents ambivalent to musical aspirations Running with a bad crowd Music got me off the streets and out of trouble</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Display Codes In Context Default Font and Size <span>▾</span> A A <span>►</span> Related Media</p> <p>Teaching the way we learnt first attempts to play music</p> <p>Trial and error learning Books not fit for purpose Books not fit for purpose Peer and group learning Trial and error learning Musician in the family Parental encouragement to play One to one tuition Mixing formal with informal Learning by observing and listening Can't do it on my own Natural musical talent Can't do it on my own</p> <p>Age I first started playing music Dedication and passion for music Giving up other things to play</p> <p>Early musical influences</p> <p>Early musical influences Non musical family Natural musical talent Early musical influences Working class background Early musical influences Playing from memory Learning from recordings Playing from memory</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Display Codes In Context</p>	<p>Q: So those recordings were the source material for learning and you used the recordings to play along to?</p> <p>A: Yeah, you could, you could say I started playing before I played- because like I said I'd already categorised, I already mentally locked in all that stuff so when I got to play, it was just a matter of completing it, you know, clicking it on and going, oh that's how your fingers make that sound, the sound were already there, I could hum all those records to you now, I still have them in my head... But yeah it was records... and, and when I was taking lessons with my second cousin- his name was Kevin Kuhn, I mean, he showed me how to do that as well- so it was a mixture of formal and informal, you know- he was studying with Pat Martino at the time, so he would be like OK- lets go through the more formal aspects of making sure your fingerings are good, now let me show you how to apply that to this Lynyrd Skynyrd record, because he would allow me to bring in things, and I would bring in something, from whatever it was that I liked, and he would show me how to relate that to what they were doing, and I was like oh, so it was kind of a mixture... it was you know, here's how to- I watched him transcribe on the spot, so that gave me a valuable skill... that you could listen to an album and figure it out, so then I sort of learned how to do that- I emulated him and then brought that into my own... practice, so...</p> <p>Q: And were you playing with other people at the time?</p> <p>A: From the start, yeah, even when I was completely- had no clue- we would just, somebody had a little amplifier... we would both plug into it! And it would sound horrible! Two people coming out of a six-inch driver or something! Yeah but from the start, I tried, even though, even though I was completely incompetent, all kidding aside, I had no concept of anything... But, getting... I think that was important- just to get a rhythm, just a like [taps table] OK this is what a drummer- even if I can't play, that drummer can keep a beat, so even if I can't play 'Smoke on the Water' its like OK I can... you know...</p> <p>Q: Did you compose your own songs at that time?</p> <p>A: Just playing other peoples stuff... Yeah, was pretty humble about it, I was like- I don't even know how... the way I looked at it was I won't even think about that, that never entered my mind because I couldn't play other peoples stuff! I mean usually, you know- for me that was... I just wanted to play my heroes stuff at first, then I figured I'd worry about writing tunes once I got a couple of chords and things... but, yeah at first I didn't make anything up, you know it was completely just emulation, so it was the usual....</p> <p>couple of chords and things... but, yeah at first I didn't make anything up, you know it was completely just emulation, so it was the usual....</p> <p>Q: Were you encouraged by your family to play?</p> <p>A: Yeah... they were pretty um, I don't think they were either encouraging or discouraging; I think they kind of just, they were oddly silent about it... My mother would take me for lessons, lessons with Kevin for about four or five months... but no it really didn't we didn't discuss I never discussed any of those sort of things- my parents were divorced-so, my father didn't really talk about it, my mother didn't talk about it, it I just think they kind of- it was really my own little world, so they didn't say- Hey that's great, but they didn't say you know, don't ever, you know-your forbidden from doing it, you know... nothing like that, I think they just kind of let me go... they were oddly silent now that I think about it, yes absolutely, quiet about it...</p> <p>Q: Were your siblings more encouraging?</p> <p>A: No, we didn't speak! I have an older brother, my brother is older, he's four or five years older than me, we had no relationship... I don't think we started getting along until I was in my twenties actually!... He was out doing his thing....</p> <p>Q: So it was your peers at school and your guitar teacher who offered most encouragement?</p> <p>A: Totally... I think Kevin had told me at one time that I- I think that he gleaned from my mother that, that she wasn't thrilled about it I think that what happened was as I started to progress- I think my mother saw this and went, you know. Hell, you know, my kid is not going to become a lawyer now! So I don't think she was too pleased about that!</p> <p>Q: So actually she wasn't very happy about you playing music - but she didn't say that to you directly?</p> <p>A: That's what I think happened, I ran with a bad crowd before that, so I think in a lot of ways, its interesting, in a lot of ways I think this kind of put me on a good track, because, yeah I was getting into a lot of trouble and things of that nature, so I think this kind of kept me off the streets so to speak!</p> <p>Q: So she was happy that you were doing something positive?</p> <p>Q: How did you learn to play?</p> <p>A: I got a guitar in a swap for a skateboard helmet from a neighbourhood kid, an ah I really just started to um poke around with it- I didn't know how to tune it, so I didn't know what to do with it in those days there weren't any ah, there weren't any books or anything you know... everything that was out there was a piano book actually, which was kind of odd, so even if it was a Led Zeppelin thing it was a piano book which was basically useless! So, you know, right, so um... I learnt a little bit from some neighbourhood kids that knew a couple of chords but again I didn't know how to tune the thing, so it didn't make any difference and it really didn't help much- so... um... one of my second cousins is actually a New York session player who played on Broadway, so my mother suggested I go and see him for a couple of lessons, just to get it straight... so that helped a lot, that was, he showed me how to tune the thing and showed me a lot of different things... so, but from that I did a lot of, we went get into it, that was the big start to it, so I think- looking at him play and looking at some other kids play, ah, but I, it was clear to me at that time that I couldn't do it on my own it wasn't something, I didn't have an aptitude for picking it up and making logic out of it right away, I just wasn't that... I had I guess some talent but it wasn't something that I was going to be able to do completely on my own...</p> <p>Q: What sort of age were you?</p> <p>A: I was fourteen, I started late, comparatively, but when I started I went headlong into it... I was playing football and that was the end of my football career, I remember the coach coming up and saying- 'hey McGill where are you?! And I was in the joy of learning to play guitar...</p> <p>Q: What sort of music were you into at that time?</p> <p>A: That's a good question, ah, at that time what was popular in my neighbourhood and what I had grown up listening to was my brothers records, and that was essentially Hard Rock, so that would be, ah, um... Hendrix, and he didn't play- nobody in the family played, my father was an electrician, my mother, a sales person, my brother kind of a chef, there was no musical talent anywhere in the family- but it was Hendrix, it was a lot of guitar players for some reason, there was Robin Trower, Little Bridge of Sighs, Johnny Winter, ah Lynyrd Skynyrd, I mean we were working class Americans, you listen to southern rock and you'd listen to, that was what you'd listen to... there was a lot of guitar based things... I think that was good for me, because... when I got the instrument and I finally figured out what way was up I already had- Ted Nugent or whatever it was... I already, do you know what I mean, I already had heard it in my head so I knew what it was supposed to do, I just had to figure out, all the lines were in my head so, that was, that's what I started out with...</p>
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Default Font and Size	Related Media
<p>Transcribing musical parts</p> <p>Learning from recordings</p> <p>Mixing formal with informal</p> <p>Examples of Formal learning</p> <p>Examples of Informal learning</p> <p>Learning from recordings</p> <p>Transcribing musical parts</p> <p>Examples of Formal learning</p>	<p>taught myself- I took five or six months of formal lessons at the beginning and the other three years I would always try to read, or I would get articles from magazines and things, and then I would get these records, and you know of course, I had Frank Zappa albums, so I would try and figure out "Montana" and then write it out... and things, so it kind of made me realise that I did want to go into music education, at least on a collegiate level, wanted to get it, so when I studied for BA I kind of figured, OK I wanted it to be music at that point...</p>
<p>Autodidactic learning</p> <p>Competition as motivation</p> <p>Competition as motivation</p> <p>Classical music</p> <p>Competition as motivation</p> <p>Learning from recordings</p> <p>Examples of Informal learning</p> <p>Getting to college</p> <p>Mixing formal with informal</p>	<p>Q: Did you learn from your friends and peers at school?</p> <p>A: I think it was all my own effort- I played in a lot of bands, but... there weren't a lot of good players, in the school, there might have been like one or two people who were older than me, but... it was so competitive, that nobody, it was very angrily competitive! There was another guitar player who ironically I'm friends with now on Facebook, we kept in contact and all... But I remember that he was a year or two older than me, and he, he just would have anything to do with me, and he was taking classical lessons- so he was a little better than I was, but then I kind of overtook him after a while... But no, I mean... not really... most of it was... strange, you know, just like- learning from recordings- but also kind of trying to formally self teach myself- by getting harmony books and trying to learn, get out o my own and so, I kind of wanted to do both, because I figured- If I want to go to College, I have to have some ammo, I cant go in there, and at that time you had to know about four part writing to get in and all that sort of thing- you know...</p>
<p>Playing by ear</p> <p>Transcribing musical parts</p> <p>Playing by ear</p> <p>Reading music - learning</p> <p>Playing by ear</p> <p>One to one tuition</p> <p>Learning by observing and listening</p> <p>Musical mentors</p> <p>Playing by ear</p> <p>Learning from books</p> <p>Sight reading music</p> <p>Mixing formal with informal</p> <p>Recognising informal process as learning</p>	<p>Q: When you were learning a piece, would you do it by ear or transcribe it, or both?</p> <p>A: A bit of both, yeah it would depend on the piece... yeah, yeah- a lot of it by ear too, I figured it, you know- the Zappa stuff was stuff you could maybe get in sheet music, but I figured if I could hear that it would be better- so my reading really wasn't... it was, it was OK, but a lot by ear and again from watching Kevin do that, when I was a young student... That was a real eye opener that he could, I could bring him anything and he could just go- oh its... and I think what happened, was I learned the places on the neck where things happen, cos- you know, you identify one sound or another, I heard that, Hendrix does this it sounds the same so its kind of the same finger... you know... you put it together, so that's kind of how... a lot of it by ear- but I would get magazines... where they would have things written, or I would get scores and try to- I couldn't sight read really well, but I could piece it together, so I figured that would help to... that was all self, formally- informally self taught... kind of thing...</p>
<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Display Codes In Context</p> <p>Default Font and Size</p> <p>Related Media</p>	<p>Q: Did you recognise this as a learning process?</p> <p>A: Yeah, absolutely, um... yeah it was weird because that sort of thing was, you know, was just- the way things were in school at that time um... it was, you know, I think so, I mean I would read about musicians and I would try to learn what they were doing and then try and put it together, mostly learn it by ear first and then figure out the theory- you know I knew enough theory to go oh</p>
<p>Recognising informal process as learning</p> <p>Playing by ear</p> <p>Practice and then theory</p> <p>Playing by ear</p> <p>Learning by observing and listening</p> <p>Playing by ear</p> <p>Legitimising the informal</p> <p>Legitimising the informal</p> <p>Teaching the way we learnt</p> <p>Transcribing musical parts</p> <p>One to one tuition</p> <p>Teaching the way we learnt</p> <p>Legitimising the informal</p> <p>Transcribing musical parts</p> <p>Legitimising the informal</p> <p>Teaching the way we learnt</p> <p>Using technology</p>	<p>A: Yeah, absolutely, um... yeah it was weird because that sort of thing was, you know, was just- the way things were in school at that time um... it was, you know, I think so, I mean I would read about musicians and I would try to learn what they were doing and then try and put it together, mostly learn it by ear first and then figure out the theory- you know I knew enough theory to go oh that's an augmented eleventh thing or whatever it is, but yeah by ear, and I think I did recognise that it was- and I think, since I saw Kevin do it, that kind of validated it- like- oh there's a working musician that learns music by ear... OK this is legitimate... learning- do you know what I mean-like this? Yeah like there's guys making a living at it- and he's playing in New York and he's a Pit Orchestra musician, in. he was working in Broadway at that time, he was studying with Pat Martino and all, it was like- so if he's doing it its OK!</p>
<p>Learning to teach</p> <p>Teaching the way we learnt</p> <p>Encouraged to play at school</p> <p>Encouraged by an enlightened music teacher</p> <p>The role of the teacher</p> <p>Learning by observing and listening</p> <p>Learning to teach</p> <p>Trial and error learning</p> <p>Transcribing musical parts</p> <p>Learning to teach</p>	<p>Q: Are the techniques that you developed techniques that you use in your own teaching?</p> <p>A: Absolutely, um... you know, whether it's... I don't do it that much here- in terms of transcribing that is, you know... But at home, yeah absolutely- if I take a private student or something like that absolutely, OK lets listen to this and figure out how it relates... although I do that here too now that I think about it... But I don't go through the laborious task of, OK lets, you know, go through this or whatever in a pedantic sort of way... But yeah absolutely, umm... and like I said, when I saw Kevin doing it, and then later on when, when I was in high school and we were playing through all these Yes tunes and all in the school band, he had taught me, he had told me, the band teacher told me he had transcribed that stuff, because its not on sheet music- here are the charts, I wrote them out I listened to the album I figured it out... and then later on I figured that's how Wagner learned, you take Beethoven scores and go what going on with the cello part and... Realise that the masters did this, so if that was good enough for them! Yeah, oh, I definitely use those sorts of techniques in teaching- yeah absolutely... But, you know the way I look at it, give the students a shortcut- what took me all those years of vinyl albums and all- obviously things have come a long way since then...</p>
<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Display Codes In Context</p> <p>Default Font and Size</p> <p>Related Media</p>	<p>Q: How did you learn to teach?</p> <p>A: Umm... from Kevin, and also, ah... when I was in High School I started and I looked at the way that my tutors in High School had taught... because there were some things that were... again my band teacher was pretty, encouraging teacher, he didn't know anything about the guitar but he was pretty encouraging and, and err... fairly advanced in terms of a collection of different teaching methods, you know, at the time he wasn't just, you know- the person with the ruler, going like this... he wasn't that at all, he was very, very keyed in... So I think from watching... my teachers in school, so, who were all band teachers and those sort of things, and then trying it on my own, I would have neighbourhood kids come, even when I was younger, saying teach me this and teach me that... and eventually when I started going on to... when I went on to College that really helped me a lot, because obviously we were studying education... and I was studying with some excellent teachers, who weren't only great players but were really fine teachers that had... a real, a real gift for pedagogy, I felt- so I would sort of model after that- but design it for my own needs, you know, so my students- their interests were a little different, so people playing rock or whatever, its, I would borrow what I needed and then just, OK, you know, but I need to apply it to the music that people are interested in learning...</p>
<p>MUSIC GOT ME ON THE STREETS AND OUT OF TROUBLE</p> <p>Parents ambivalent to musical aspirations</p> <p>MUSIC GOT ME OFF THE STREETS AND OUT OF TROUBLE</p> <p>Music at school</p> <p>Too cool for school</p> <p>Classical music</p> <p>The influence of genre</p> <p>School music teachers attitude</p> <p>Encouraged by an enlightened music teacher</p> <p>Examples of Informal learning</p> <p>Music as a social activity</p> <p>Too cool for school</p> <p>The place of musical theory in musical learning</p> <p>Classical music</p> <p>The place of musical theory in musical learning</p> <p>One to one tuition</p> <p>Early musical influences</p> <p>The influence of genre</p> <p>Classical music</p> <p>The influence of genre</p> <p>Musical identity</p>	<p>Q: So she was happy that you were doing something positive?</p> <p>A: He's not going to become a doctor- but at least, you know, the police aren't around like before- is this recording on?</p>
<p>Musical kudos amongst peers</p> <p>Transcribing musical parts</p> <p>Learning from recordings</p> <p>Mixing formal with informal</p> <p>Examples of Formal learning</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Display Codes In Context</p>	<p>Q: What about school, was there music at school?</p> <p>A: Some, its not well funded in the states- and even then it wasn't- there was a school band, but I had no connection to that because it was a school band, you know- they played at football games, American football and it was mainly what we would call band instruments, you know woodwinds and brass and those sort of things, it wasn't until later on, they started a group playing rock, Actually my few fond memories of High School was actually... doing some of that stuff, The band teacher actually transcribed some pretty odd stuff, I mean like, Yes and this progressive rock crap- and we played it, and it didn't actually sound that bad, so, and whatever was going on then, and I guess then was the Police and ah... you know- things of that nature... so, but no I didn't really... it was always outside it was always a, really... I mean I met my band mates in school, they were my, you know they were my classmates as well, but it was mostly outside of school, although I did take music theory classes, which were beneficial, they were geared towards classical, four part writing, and these sort of things... But I could see that, you know I was interested in that stuff, and I kind of worked through, I used to cut school and I was kind of a nerd- I would cut school and work out a Chopin Polonaise, you know! It was pretty strange, and through studying with Kevin a little bit I started to learn about, um, more advanced musicians, like John McLaughlin- he was kind of into fusion at that time, and that was big, this was late seventies early eighties so there was still John McLaughlin and Alan Holdsworth and Pat Martino- and this kind of, And we were called 'muso' players, so I kind of realised this Lynyrd Skynyrd thing is nice, but if I'm going to go further with it I've got to go to another kind of music... But in school they didn't talk about that stuff- it was mainly classical, and I learnt a lot from... in fact the last year, I got into Avant Garde music, I remember my tutor was "oh yeah, Scott your into this wacky crap", he would give me like, I'd never heard of the stuff- like Arnold Schoenberg, Wozzeck by Berg and it was great it was like, it was school that was positive I learnt that you could put on the album and like scare the shit out of people! You could empty a room with it! That was appealing to me...</p>
	<p>Q: Did you find that gave you Kudos amongst your peers?</p> <p>A: Yeah, yeah, yeah that was how I decided that I wanted to get into music in college, that sort of stuff led me to it and I would listen to Frank Zappa and try to you know, transcribe that stuff, and at point I was almost good enough- I almost formally self taught myself- I took five or six months of formal lessons at the beginning and the other three years I would always try to read, or I would get articles from magazines and things, and then I would get these records, and you know of course, I had Frank Zappa albums, so I would try and figure out "Montana" and then write it out... and things, so it kind of made me realise that I did want to go into music education, at least on a collegiate level, wanted to get it, so when I studied for BA I kind of figured, OK I wanted it to</p>



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<p>Making music</p> <p>Creativity-its importance and application</p> <p>Learning by doing</p> <p>Student engagement</p> <p>Creativity-its importance and application</p> <p>Trial and error learning</p> <p>Trial and error learning</p> <p>Creativity-its importance and application</p> <p>Creativity-its importance and application</p> <p>Self reflection</p> <p>Self reflection</p> <p>Self reflection</p> <p>Student centered active teaching</p> <p>Student centered active teaching</p> <p>Playing by ear</p> <p>Legitimising the informal</p> <p>Creativity-its importance and application</p> <p>Creativity-its importance and application</p> <p>Guide on the side</p> <p>One to one tuition</p> <p>Student centered active teaching</p> <p>Creativity-its importance and application</p> <p>Formative learning</p> <p>students should be comfortable in their own skin</p> <p>Formative learning</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Display Codes in Context</p> <p>Default Font and Size</p> <p>Related Media</p>	<p>think I was trying to get the students to experiment with different chord formations, and invent them- and go oh, these are new sounds, and then we can kind of look back on it- and go oh, that goes there- and also link it with stuff they've already learned in school here, so if they've learnt some sort of chord progression, or something, or a tune in another class- show them that those things you've just come up with - they relate to that, so, its really copper fastens, it really helps them learn, ah... not only the concept, of the hearing of it, and that, again the legitimacy of invention, that's OK- throwing your hand down and going I like it... is fine! That's good... I think that's it for me... Invention and creativity...</p> <p>Q: In the class I observed you were asking them to improvise- to be creative whilst you acted as a guide- but without telling them what to do, they had to find their own way to a solution, is that correct?</p> <p>A: That's it, and that's the way I was taught- when I went to Dennis Sandole too, he was all about that, he was of the highest order, but no two students sounded the same because he kept off of that- he just said go, create, use the material in your own way, create- lets see what you come back with, and you'd go OK... Yeah, not to make any judgments...</p> <p>Q: Or give them the answer, but give them tools they can use when you're not there?</p> <p>A: Absolutely... That's the idea that's the exact idea, they should be comfortable in their own skin... you know as musicians of course as people as well, that's, that's the idea exactly, exactly... Not this is right and that wrong you know...</p> <p>How do you think that approach works- have you found it successful?</p> <p>A: Umm... I think its successful that I see, I see technical and conceptual and creative progression throughout the year, without me going 'you do it like this- you do it...' you know- without that stuff, and I think, yeah I suppose there are a few students think, that a... probably might respond better to that, I mean, I guess there are students that need, like you do it A to B and C and that's how you do it and that's it... I guess some people respond to that... But, the way I gauge it is, again, from the beginning and- you know, I just watch their progression as musicians and usually I see an upward trajectory, so... And I have enough experience that when I can see that, OK this person's coming out of their skin now... So yeah I see what they come in from, um... usually from month to month or whatever I look at it and say wow this is real progress, because I'll even tell them that, because at the beginning of the year, you had trouble doing this- and now look, now your doing all this... you know...</p> <p>Q: Do you think that they are becoming more creative musicians?</p> <p>A: I think so, my educated guess is that, yes, its sort of, its teaching the technical aspects and all those, the theory, things we don't think are creative, but have every thing to do with creativity and gluing it to their own, you know- practice and going look - everything you created, that's this and that's that, rather than prescribing, rather than saying you need to do this and that... 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But its certainly, exactly- prop it up a little more, pull it away, see what happens, prop it up, and we improvise- you know... and the way I look at, at teaching too, in this sort of manner is, if I know enough about, what's going on, I have to have my err, I have to have, my expertise has to be on as very high level to be able to do that- you know, to be able to improvise- you know, if you don't know, I find if you don't know a lot about something you have to stay by the recipe, whereas if you have the knowledge and the confidence, and the ability, you have more, ironically have more ability to lay back and let it happen, because, your first in an area where you can be comfortable doing that, but yeah sometimes there is anxiety, but I find most of the time that students like it... they like to go OK this is a concept, let me try and see what I come up with...</p> <p>Q: How important is 'jamming' in this context as a creative outlet?</p> <p>Q: Were your teachers at College also 'ear players'?</p> <p>A: Yes, well both, they had it all together, these were people who could, you know... my teacher *** (Tom Giacchetti)- he could hear anything- he gave me that and you know, for the road that I was going into, which was becoming a professional musician, umm... able to do anything, any job, it was very clear to me that I was up against people like him... who were very high level, this man could hear, next to everything and just write it out, read anything, hear anything by ear and emulate it, he had it all together, so the ear and the reading- he had it all, so I realised at that point that I better...</p> <p>Q: So Jazz musicians have to be able to play by ear, whereas pop musicians could play from a score?</p> <p>A: Yeah, and rock musicians, when I came up playing in school even, it was like wow I have to learn that when you play that note, it doesn't sound good, and then just try and link the terms to it, like OK, if I play like that, your doing that a major note or something... and if it sounds like shit! 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Assessment design supporting creativity

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The effect of musical genre

Flexibility in approaches to teaching and learning

The influence of genre

Encouraging creativity

Assessment design supporting creativity

Mix of IL and FL successful

Diversity of approaches available

Examples of Informal learning

Student centered active teaching

Self reflection

Student centered active teaching

Student engagement

Role of assessment in learning

Student centered active teaching

Self reflection

Research informed teaching

Teaching the way we learnt

though I've learned ways of working with the assessment- designing the assessment, but working with that in particular with what we do and getting the sort of creative aspect done- cos when your talking about two twenty minute performances, that's a pretty open, that's actually not a very restrictive, I mean there are criteria obviously, but in a sense its a pretty free thing, you know you can negotiate the genre, and talk about the pieces that your using and as long as they fit in with a certain timescale and you have the gear to do it... that's what's good and that's why I wanted- you know to diversify it, when I came here it seemed that a lot of the students were very into a certain kind of music, and solo performance was very, Joe Satriani whatever it was, there were a few people doing a couple of different things- but my goal was to kind of widen that to get people to do some different things, and listen to some different things, consider different things for approaches you know for solo performance there's a wide swathe of things you can consider- you know ambient music, ah... I don't know anything- there's, there's tons of things, so yeah, so my particular err... situation, the assessment is fit for purpose I think it works very well...

Q: What have you learnt from this process of engaging with this research?

A: In a way, what's good about it is its a re-affirmation that combinations of methods, for me, seem to work- you know, that I like using, I like to have a lot of arrows in my quiver and I like even within informal learning techniques, I like to use a lot of different ones, and I like to see what works where, and again improvise, and that for me seems to work out the best, for myself and for the students- you know, and I always ask the students too, what are you looking for, what are we missing, I mean even during the course of the year- I don't wait until the end of the year, you know I'll do, I don't go every ten minutes- 'How are we doing- does everybody like this' you know, but certainly within the terms- you know- what do we think about the direction?, what's missing? You know we've got these, we've got assessments and you want to learn about that and you want to learn about this, what are we thinking, what's missing, what's strong and what isn't, that back and forth discussion is good, I think the students appreciate it, they don't feel like they're being overly interviewed about it and at the same time it lets me know, the specific characteristics of that cohort, which are of course different each year- like get the student feedback- last year it was, like Scott your playing too much, now I backed off of that and now, of course its like your not playing enough, all right- yeah so I'm like trying to find it! For me its like a re-affirmation, for the work that your doing, ah... luckily I mean, in a sense I think it worked out well because that's the way I've been taught and that's the way I teach so it kind of worked out for me... you know in terms of where this is going...

38 mins

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Q: How important is 'jamming' in this context as a creative outlet?

A: Totally, I mean that's how I make music, err I, my records are that we play a lot and we record it and then go, what do we have- that was interesting, that's not good, take that out- you know a lot of it grafting, and we do the same thing here, we get, exactly, here's a concept- and I may put on a couple of recordings and reference it- and go, now that's how people are using that, but- you know, here's what they're doing, OK now try to model something maybe after that but more what your doing and try to use the open string, this is what your doing- you know with you style and it seems to, it seems to work really well, yes the concept of jamming and experimenting and getting into small group or even as individuals getting up and playing is excellent because they flesh it out right there, they can revise from there and reflect, I think its an exposure to a concept that's usually pretty good...

Q: What are the barriers that limit your ability to make this kind of approach work and limits creativity?

A: I think maybe the learning environment, when your in a classroom and your in the same classroom, if your talking about a concept that's more band orientated, well its hard to, you know- obviously its hard to, create a situated environment when everybody's in the same... so I would say those sort of things- sometimes it would be nice to break out and go OK, were going to do something where you do half the class and you talk about a couple of things, OK now lets go down the hall and plug into an amp and see what that's, see now... and I used to do that lets do ten or fifteen minutes, I'm going to tell you about what up, what I'm thinking, see what's to come back with, we used to do that, yeah I've got a few people in the other room, lets plug in and see if that works, or it could be a failure; why was that, why is it great, I hate it you like it- why? Lets talk about it, you know, that sort of thing, yes so in a, in a sense its nice to have that flexibility, I mean that would really make it...

Q: What about the curriculum and assessment?

A: Well, I think, I think pretty much in terms of my module especially I think it fine, I think that the way we approach it, its almost as though I've learned ways of working with the assessment- designing the assessment, but working with that in particular with what we do and getting the sort of creative aspect done- cos when your talking about two twenty minute performances, that's a pretty open, that's actually not a very restrictive, I mean there are criteria obviously, but in a sense its a pretty free thing, you know you can negotiate the genre, and talk about the pieces that your using and as long as they fit in with a certain timescale and you have the gear to do it... that's what's good and that's why I wanted- you know to diversify it, when I came here it seemed that a lot of the students were very into a certain kind of music, and solo performance was very, Joe Satriani whatever it was, there were a few people doing a couple of different things- but my goal was to kind of widen that to get people to do some different things, and listen to some different things, consider different things for approaches you know for solo performance there's a wide swathe of things you can consider- you know ambient music, ah... I don't know anything- there's, there's tons of things, so yeah, so my particular err... situation, the assessment is fit for purpose I think it works very well...