

Editorial

In this issue two main themes can be discerned: the professional practice and experience of music teachers; and student experience at music college and university.

Three of the papers focus on teachers, including music co-ordinators in primary schools, primary school generalists who teach some music, and young music service teachers. Gary Beauchamp and Janet Harvey in their study of three music subject leaders maintain that music is different in its pedagogical demands because of its specialised skills base, and that subject leaders have to be both leaders and managers. Schools need to recognise the complexity of their role and be prepared to give them the power of actual decision making. The study of 71 non-specialist teachers by Hilary Holden and Stuart Button provides a complementary but closely related perspective, showing non-specialists to be less secure with music than with other subjects; in fact music was found to be the subject which most teachers ranked last on the confidence scale of subjects. Worryingly these teachers felt their training did not equip them to teach music effectively. The authors urge the senior management of schools to instigate a collegial strategy to allow for greater collaboration between specialist and non-specialist. Readers of this journal will know only too well that providing effective support for non-specialist teachers of music is a matter of longstanding concern.

Whilst there is a growing literature concerning primary school teachers as subject specialists or as generalists, little has been written about music service teachers. David Baker's investigation of inductees is therefore particularly timely, bearing in mind the increased profile recently of music services. This group of young teachers reveal the powerful influence of their childhood and adolescent musical experiences, which have coloured their attitudes for good or ill towards schooling and training. Baker suggests that poor understandings of instrumental and vocal pedagogy within the school contexts might be redressed by involving higher education institutions in closer partnerships with music services.

In the second half of this issue we turn to questions of student experience at music college and university. Rosie Burt and Janet Mills follow 13 music students during their first term at a conservatoire, when musical performance is a key concern for students, which can engender all sorts of tensions and feelings of inadequacy. The students' first assessed performance is shown to be pivotal in their negotiation of new identities as music students, and this finding reminds us that students need to be carefully supported through their transition into higher education. Clearly, sensitive assessment practices are critical to students' development as musicians, and Desmond Hunter's paper considers how collaborative learning can be fostered and assessed in performance and other aspects of music education. Assessing the learning process, rather than solely measuring outcomes, demands that lecturers know their students as individuals – a factor that contributes in turn to the students' sense of belonging to their music department. In her discussions of student experience at a redbrick university, Nicola Dibben illustrates the importance of this sense of belonging, and considers how this is affected by socio-economic background. Evaluating the notion of 'widening participation' which is prominent in higher education policy at the moment, Dibben questions the extent to which music departments are able and willing to meet the challenges of broadening curricula and student populations.

Underlying these two groups of papers is the important task of instilling musical confidence: in trainee music teachers, amongst generalist teachers who may be required to teach music, and in future performers. Too often in education we focus on imparting musical knowledge, skill and awareness: this issue acts as a reminder that aspiring musicians need confidence and enjoyment too, in order to fulfil their potential whether in the concert hall or classroom.

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