# Mentoring trainee music teachers: beyond apprenticeship or reflection

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*This article explores the theoretical concepts of 'apprenticeship' and 'reflection' in Initial Teacher Education music mentoring. It presents two case studies of Secondary music mentoring and relates these to the theoretical concepts. The article argues that a more integrated view of music mentoring might be provided with reference to Kolb's (1984) theory of experiential learning.*

## Framing the Problem

Is learning to teach more a matter of mastering techniques or reflecting on teaching? This question is important for mentors and tutors involved in Initial Teacher Education (ITE). A teacher-trainer himself, Dewey (1859–1952) saw the choice as follows:

> On the one hand, we may carry on the practical work [i.e. 'teaching practice'] with the object of giving teachers in training working command of the necessary tools of their profession; control of the technique of class management; skill and proficiency in the work of teaching. [. . .] On the other hand, we may propose to use practice work ['teaching practice'] as an instrument in making real and vital theoretical instruction; the knowledge of subject matter and of principles of education (Dewey, 1904/1964: 313–314).

The approach in which trainee teachers were given 'working command of the necessary tools of their profession', Dewey called 'apprenticeship', and he subsequently identified 'real and vital theoretical instruction' with encouraging trainees to consider their beliefs and practices in relation to their reasons. He called this 'reflection'. This article explores the theoretical concepts of 'apprenticeship' and 'reflection' in ITE music mentoring. It presents two cases of Secondary music mentoring, considers how they might be said to relate to these theoretical concepts and proposes a way in which the concepts might be integrated.

### Learning through apprenticeship

During the last 20 years there has been a renewed interest in apprenticeship approaches to learning. Studying the apprenticeship of Vai and Gola tailors in Liberia, Lave and Wenger (1991) were stimulated to inquire,

> how apprentices might engage in a common, structured pattern of learning experiences without being taught, examined, or reduced to mechanical copiers of everyday tailoring

tasks, and of how they become, with remarkably few exceptions, skilled and respected master tailors. (p. 30)

Drawing on various studies, they argue that apprenticeship is more than simply 'learning by doing'; rather, learning is seen as a concomitant of 'legitimate peripheral participation' in social practices. In Lave and Wenger's analysis, the activities of 'communities of practice' (groups of people who act together with the intention of achieving some declared or undeclared aim) constitute the primary, generative phenomenon and learning is one of its characteristics. Thus learning is not seen as a product of an individual mind, but is gained through the involvement of the whole person and is shaped by the whole community of practice. Lave and Wenger (1991: 85) suggest that there might be a contrast between their notions of learning and those that underpin contemporary Western notions of schooling when they say, 'Becoming a "member such as those" [i.e. a successful apprentice] is an embodied telos too complex to be discussed in the narrower and simpler language of goals, tasks and knowledge acquisition'.

The concept of apprenticeship has been discussed in the field of teacher education. Brown and McIntyre (1993: 12) say, 'Experienced teachers are analogous to 'master craftsmen' . . . in school-based components of their pre-service education, student-teachers should learn through gaining access to the 'craft knowledge' of experienced teachers'. Using Lortie's (1975) notion that 'craft is work in which experience improves performance' and that complex craft skills 'cannot be learned in weeks or even months', Brown and McIntyre report on 16 cases of expert Primary and Secondary teachers. From these case studies they develop a model in which teaching is seen as undertaking routine actions in pursuit of two types of goal: (a) gaining and maintaining 'normal desirable states of pupil activity' and (b) achieving pupil progress. Brown and McIntyre (1993: 107) argue that, in pursuit of these goals, teachers do not reflect on alternative forms of action. Rather, 'Experienced teachers' effectiveness was dependent on a fluency of action which would be possible only if the action was spontaneous, largely automatic, and based on only very limited conscious examination of available options'.

When learning to teach is viewed as an apprenticeship, the prime means for learning is through practical experiences of teaching under the direction of the mentor, who provides advice and acts as a role model. Smith and Alred (1993: 109) see mentoring in these terms, with the personal qualities of the mentor as paramount. The mentor offers 'a model of what the trainee might some day become', not simply, 'a model of the professional teacher' but a specific, able and inspiring individual, who might be 'warm, amusing, ironic, in love with their subject, respectful of their pupils'. Similarly, Van Manen (1995) suggests that learning to teach is a matter of acquiring a type of knowledge that, following the 19th century German philosopher, Herbart, he calls 'pedagogical tact'. Acquiring pedagogical tact, understood as, 'a form of practical knowledge that . . . becomes real in the very act of teaching' (Van Manen, 1995: 45), teachers act from a morally principled position which is understood by 'the whole embodied being of the person' (Van Manen, 1995: 36). Hence,

By observing and imitating how the teacher animates the students, walks around the room, uses the blackboard, and so forth, the student teacher learns with his or her body, as it were, how to feel confident in this room, with these students. This 'confidence' is not some kind of affective quality that makes teaching easier, rather this confidence is

the active knowledge itself, the tact of knowing what to do or not to do, what to say or not to say (Van Manen, 1995: 47).

### Learning by reflecting

People who see teaching in terms other than a skilful craft, sometimes describe it as a matter of 'professional artistry' (Fish, 1995). They agree that there are craft-like, relatively routine aspects to teaching, but argue that these are not the most important. Rather, the 'problems of greatest human concern' are 'incapable of technical solution' (Schön, 1983). Learning to teach is therefore a matter of developing the ability to interpret situations wisely (Elliott, 1993) by reflecting, understood as, 'active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusions to which it tends' (Dewey, 1933: 118).

There are various views about what reflection is, and how it is achieved. For Dewey (1933) reflection can change 'a perplexed, troubled or confused situation' to 'a cleaned up, unified, resolved situation'. He posits five aspects of reflective thought which include intellectualising (which changes felt perplexity into a solvable problem), generating suggestions or hypotheses, elaborating one or more hypotheses (e.g. reasoning about possible consequences) and testing one or more hypotheses through action (Dewey, 1933: 199–209). Schön (1983) makes an important distinction between reflection-in-action, which is a matter of thoughtful experimentation whilst performing actions (he gives an example of jazz musicians improvising), and reflection-on-action, which is retrospective. Elliott (1991: 53) argues that, through reflection on experience (i.e. reflection-on-action), teachers form a stock of 'cases' which are used to understand new situations. 'Practical wisdom', he writes, 'is stored in the mind . . . as a reflectively processed repertoire of cases . . . which are primarily utilised in attempts to understand current circumstances'. Zeichner and Liston (1996) distinguish five traditions of reflection, each defined by the general orientation of its content. Reflection can be oriented towards subject matter, or it can have to do with putting educational theory into practice, or it emphasises the development of the learners, or issues of justice and democracy. There is also a tradition which sees reflection as an end in itself. Although Zeichner and Liston (1996) reject the last mentioned, they see the others as being fruitful ways of framing the reflective process, which is essentially a matter of relating teaching to different types of aims which are generated by the world outside the classroom.

Several writers explore the notion of levels in reflection. For Handal and Lauvas (1987) reflection about actions is relatively superficial, whereas reflecting on the reasons for these actions occurs at a deeper level and reflecting on the values that underpin these reasons (the ethical or political justifications) is deeper still. For Korthagen and Vasalos (2005) levels of reflection are likened to the layers of an onion: reflection about behaviours is at the outer edge and, progressing inwards, deeper reflection concerns matters of competences, beliefs, identity and mission. For many authors, the practice of counselling is an appropriate model for mentors to encourage reflection (Handal & Lauvas, 1987; Shaw, 1992; Martin, 1995; Tomlinson, 1995). This involves not giving advice, but helping trainees to find their own way forward by clarifying problems and exploring underlying causes and possible solutions. Martin (1995: 9) suggests that mentoring sessions

can 'enable the student to reflect deeply on their experience of teaching, and to arrive largely at their own conclusions'. Korthagen and Vasalos (2005) make a sharp distinction between mentoring, which involves professional development, and counselling, which has a therapeutic purpose. They nevertheless present reflection as an inward journey, particularly in the case of 'core reflection' which happens when a trainee has a problem which cannot be solved simply. In such cases they suggest that trainees be encouraged by their mentors to examine specific, problematic events in order to articulate how they would like things to be. They then examine the limiting factors in themselves which prevent this ideal from being realised. Using the 'onion' model of reflection, the mentor encourages the trainee to realise that s/he possesses, at a deep level, certain 'core qualities' that can be brought to bear on the situation. Examples include empathy, flexibility, sensitivity and courage, precise qualities varying according to the individual. Finally, trainees are helped to activate their core qualities in order to plan new, improved behaviours.

In summary, the theoretical concepts of apprenticeship and reflection provide different perspectives on learning to teach. Although different writers understand the concepts in different ways, the differences between them outweigh areas of overlap. In the apprenticeship concept, teachers possess know-how and trainees learn by participating in teaching, by emulating teachers and by acting on their advice; the emphasis is on the whole person fitting into the teaching community. In the reflection concept trainees think through issues themselves, mentors prompting them to think deeply and/or adopt wider perspectives. The emphasis is more on the development of the individual mind.

### Music mentoring

Music education has a long tradition of learning through apprenticeship for, especially in the conservatoire tradition, learners are taught by an expert player or singer, often in a master–apprentice relationship (Hays *et al.*, 2000). In schools, the teacher in charge of music has been seen as 'director' of music, conducting choirs, orchestras and classroom activities (Swanwick, 1979; Paynter, 1982). The language of 'direction' implies a submissive attitude on the part of the learners and so does not encourage reflection. But recent curriculum development recognises the need for learners to reflect; for example, the current English National Curriculum for music speaks of developing pupils' ability to 'discriminate, think critically and make connections between different areas of knowledge' (DfEE/QCA, 1999).

There is little empirical research into mentoring in music. However, Persson (2000: 25) suggests that musical maestros, who tend to comprise the teaching staff in conservatoires, 'may at times be unsuitable teachers and mentors'. This is because, 'It is not in the tradition of the maestro . . . to qualify or defend decisions or instructions. The conservatory culture is highly authoritarian' (ibid.: 34). Conway (2003: 75) – in an interview study of 13 American beginning music teachers – found that the most common themes, discussed in mentoring meetings, were to do with 'budgets, fund-raising, tours, weekend events and other duties'. Classroom management issues were also raised frequently, although 'Very few of the beginning teachers said that they spoke to mentors about curricular issues' (ibid: 77). Conway concludes that the focus of much of the mentoring was on survival rather than development, saying:

I am concerned that merely surviving during the first year of teaching will not encourage teachers to develop a reflective teaching practice that is so desperately needed in education. Beginning teachers need to be asking curricular questions and interacting with experienced music mentors in meaningful ways about instruction (Conway, 2003: 77).

## Methods

The cases reported here formed part of a larger study of mentoring on a one-year Post-Graduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) course. The trainees had previously taken a first degree in music. The PGCE course was administered by a partnership of one university and a number of secondary schools and, in accordance with government regulations (Teacher Training Agency, 2000), the trainees spent one-third of the course in the university and two-thirds in two schools. Here they were mentored by a music mentor – often the Head of the music department – in consultation with a 'lead' mentor who was a senior manager in the school. The music mentor, the lead mentor and the university music tutor were responsible for assessing the trainees against a series of competence statements ('Standards': TTA, 2000). The course handbook indicated that the music mentor had a major responsibility for mentoring, requiring music mentors to observe the trainees' teaching and to carry out a timetabled meeting once a week during the placement under study.

The study asked, 'How do mentors mentor trainee music teachers?' A qualitative, multiple-method case study approach was used to provide an understanding of the 'lived' experience of the mentors and trainees (Merriam, 1998: 6). Data were collected by observing timetabled meetings between mentors and trainees, by interviewing trainees and mentors and by studying documents relating to the course. Five mentor-trainee relationships were studied, from the same PGCE course. (For ethical reasons, the course researched was not the one I taught on.) For each mentor, three mentoring meetings were observed, recorded on digital audiotape, and transcripts were made. Each trainee and mentor was interviewed once so that their individual perspectives on the mentoring could be explored. Data were analysed and themes were drawn out inductively and subsequently related to three different theoretical models. The cases presented here were selected because they were seen to embody contrasting approaches to mentoring which, to some extent, could be understood with reference to the theoretical concepts of apprenticeship and reflection. Thus these two cases, telling the stories of two mentoring relationships, are summarised from around 10 hours of observations and interviews and 70,000 words of fieldnotes and transcripts. What is presented here is a distillation which highlights the differences between the cases. In the reporting, names (but not gender) were changed: mentors' names begin with M and trainees' with T.

## Findings

### *'Mandy' and 'Tamsin' at 'Rodin Girls' School': 'This is how I would do it'*

'Rodin Girls' School' is a large comprehensive school on the edge of a medium-sized city. It has a mixed catchment area with girls from both professional and deprived backgrounds.

The school has a high percentage of girls with first languages other than English; it also has higher than average examination results. Because it was a training school 'Mandy' mentored two PGCE trainees at the same time; I studied her mentoring with 'Tamsin'.

Mandy was the Head of a two-person department, and had previously taught in two different schools. She had studied at the Royal Academy of Music and had worked as an untrained teacher before training to teach. A first-study singer, she conducted three choirs in her school. She told me, 'We've got very, very strong extra-curricular activities . . . you can see that we're a good department. We're going out and doing stuff. We've got fantastic results. We've got music going on all the time'. In her interview she was naturally lively and talkative, talking quickly, and using her hands expressively. She said, 'the secret is to be passionate . . . I'm passionate about music and I like children so that's a bit of a winning combination'. She was 'still excited' by teaching music, believing that, 'All lessons should be fun' and 'What I'd like to do the moment they [the pupils] walk in the door is to be giving out, giving them undivided attention'. She saw the process, by which she had learned to teach, as instinctive:

> I remember just fighting for control in the class. And then suddenly you've got control. I mean I don't have to think about control now. But I'm finding it quite difficult thinking, 'how do you get from being that teacher to being a teacher that has good control? . . . is there a plan that I can tell somebody else, 'this is how it goes'?

Asked about her own mentors, Mandy described her first Head of Department who was, 'a very good all-round musician . . . very energetic and very encouraging . . . understanding how to get the best out of people' in contrast to her second Head of Department who 'wasn't a good role model'. She described her approach to mentoring as, 'not dictatorial', saying, 'I'm not telling them, "do this" but I am saying, "this is my plan. This is how I would do it"'. She said she was 'quite excited' about mentoring trainees because,

> it keeps you on your toes a bit. It makes you evaluate what you're doing and sometimes I think it's quite nice for children from the school to have other people in. They will have a wealth of experience in areas that I haven't got and I can help them with things. I thought it would be great.

Nevertheless, it appeared that Tamsin's placement had started badly for, although Mandy thought both her trainees 'understood everything' they felt they did not know exactly what they were expected to teach. Mandy told me,

> My perception was that I'd allowed them flexibility and freedom and their perception was that they were sort of going home worrying . . . and I then sat down with them and said, 'Right, ok so this is the plan and you can be very flexible about it but that's a plan'.

After this, things improved for both trainees, as Tamsin explained, 'We observed ['Mandy'] and [her colleague] teach the lessons that we were going to teach so that we could nearly copy them word for word. That was what we did most of the time'.

Each mentoring meeting in this study occurred immediately after Tamsin had taught a lesson which Mandy had observed, whilst typing her observation notes on a computer. The focus, at the start of the meeting, was always on this lesson. Mandy offered a lot of

advice in these meetings, speaking between 80% and 85% of the words and sometimes continuing, without input from Tamsin, for considerable passages of time. For example,

> I think sometimes you're a bit scared to tell them off. If, like, someone's mucking a round, it's that whole, we were talking about it yesterday, the global awareness of the whole room. So that, you know, you're hearing da da da da da [sings] and they're putting it on demonstration [i.e. using a keyboard's 'demo' function]. I think, maybe when you're starting, you're really keen to go and help a particular group because you feel safer doing that. Just be kind of quite laid back, and let them do things on their own, as long as they've got clear instructions. Watch what's going on.

Some of this advice was illustrated with striking images. For example, Mandy told Tamsin that the pupils should treat the musical instruments, 'like a new-born baby' and she pointed out that, 'If you talk over the top of them, it's like singing a wonderful aria next to a drill'. Although Tamsin listened to this advice, she often responded only by nodding or saying 'yeah' and it was not always clear what she thought of it.

Several times, Mandy explained what she did herself, saying, 'It's worth doing the technical demonstrations like I was doing', 'Personally, I would have had a recap session at the end, okay?' and 'I would've said, "hold this in your hand"'. She sometimes demonstrated how she responded to pupils, whispering to check fidgeting, raising her voice to attract attention or just staring to indicate disapproval. She showed Tamsin how she gave instructions, saying, 'And I say, "Right, the instruction now is put the instruments away. That means absolutely not a sound. Nobody talks. And please, help each other"'. She also said, 'you've got to find what works for you' and humorously admitted that she didn't always follow her own advice, saying, 'In an ideal world, I think I might have stopped and started them a little bit more. But, having said that, that's in an ideal world...I'm not saying I do it'. [Both laughed.]

Mandy recognised that Tamsin would also need to observe other teachers in the school, saying, 'Watch some good people, you know possibly in PE...how do they get silence?' and, 'Go and watch [Mrs H]...She has massive noise in there. I mean, it would drive me bonkers. But see how she then gets it quiet'. Another feature of Mandy's mentoring was the regular praise of Tamsin. For example,

> I thought it was good, you picked her out to be the one to hand the sheets out. That was an excellent idea. And the other thing I thought was lovely was when you bring in a personal story...you've got very specific, brilliant subject knowledge. So there's no question in my mind that you are going to be a teacher.

In her interview Tamsin reported that she had had very few 'sit down' meetings with Mandy because, 'she didn't have time at lunchtimes or after school to sit down and talk...so there were only a couple of times that it could've happened'. Instead, she was given Mandy's observation notes and had short discussions whenever there was a problem:

> she was actually quite good at, if I had a problem I would just say it to her while she was running somewhere else and...it would be little grabbed conversations but...towards the end that was as much as I needed.

When I asked Tamsin what she contributed to the mentoring meetings, she said,

> I think she always felt that she ['Mandy'] had to be the one talking…When we had those little quick sessions afterwards if there was something I was reading I didn't agree with, I'd talk to her about it and she'd explain herself.

Asked, 'what makes a good mentor?' she said,

> T: having the time to answer questions probably because…all mentors are going to be busy to differing extents but they're all going to be busy and if they have time for you that makes them a good mentor.
>
> Interviewer: You felt that she'd got time for you?
>
> T: I think so…she just was there when you needed her.

Nevertheless she recognised that Mandy's mentoring approach might have drawbacks, saying, 'She gave me a lot of very good ideas but I have a feeling that I may have to forget about them and relearn'. In conclusion, although she didn't always contribute a great deal to the mentoring meetings, I understood that Tamsin appreciated Mandy's mentoring, and she met the requirements of the placement.

### *'Marcus' and 'Tracy' at 'Northam' School: a two-way process*

'Northam' is a large, 11–16, comprehensive school in a leafy suburb of a small town. The school also draws from a more deprived area of the town, particularly from a housing estate. The music department had its own building, with three main teaching rooms, six practice rooms and a recording studio. There were three full-time music teachers, 14 peripatetic teachers, 250 pupils having instrumental lessons in school and 16 extracurricular ensembles, so Marcus (the mentor and Head of Music) had a lot to do in addition to his mentoring. He played clarinet and saxophone out of school, taught privately and ran sectional rehearsals for the county wind orchestra. He told me that his own music making enhanced his teaching, which he tried to make spontaneous, saying, 'I prefer doing the things which are more flying by the seat of your pants really. You know, just getting the kids to make music and get a buzz from making music'.

Marcus had mentored seven trainees before Tracy, and described his mentoring style as, 'sort of light and easy…a two-way process…a dialogue'. He said that he advised trainees, for instance 'in the routines that work in this particular establishment…to actually establish control within the classroom…to find appropriate resources to work with the classes'. In addition, 'they need to have some understanding of the broader picture of the responsibilities because it's quite awesome really, everything that's demanded'. He also said, 'I personally find it quite hard to challenge the students…it's this tension between working with them as a colleague and working over them, as it were, as a mentor and trying to nurture them'. Mentoring sessions were carried out every week for around 50 minutes. These tended to focus on the university's requirement to set and monitor targets, reviewing the previous week's targets and setting new ones. Sometimes these were the same every week; as Tracy said, 'Behavioural management was a thing that carried on right the way through'. Marcus gave her 'general targets' such as, 'work on acceptable behaviour in and

out of the classroom' and she found this, 'very useful' although, she said, 'when I wasn't feeling too great it might have gone through one ear and out the other'.

Tracy confirmed my impression that Marcus helped her to find her own way of teaching, saying, 'He wanted me to come up with my own ideas . . . he didn't enforce things on me, he suggested and said, "well it's up to you"'. The meetings I observed gave the impression of an equal relationship, with Marcus speaking between 54% and 58% of the words. He asked questions and advised in roughly equal measure. This use of questioning was something that Marcus wanted Tracy to do for herself. The following exchange illustrates how Marcus engaged in thinking aloud, helping her to discover how to deal with a difficult pupil:

M: Have you thought about ways to deal with [Paul – a pupil]?

T: Yeah. Well, the time that I had them, I was giving them a listening test. And I didn't want to remove him, because I wanted to see how he did in the test. But he was disrupting the rest of the group.

M: He's fine if you give him practical work, he's motivated, he's on task. Sit him down and try to get him to do some listening work and he's far more likely to cause a problem. And the question is, why?

T: He actually did all right on the test . . . he did well enough.

M: He's not immensely bright; it's not that. His playing skills are fairly limited . . . I think he probably has a bit of a confidence problem relative to the other kids because there are some very bright kids in his group. And his way of coping with it is, be loud. So . . . when they're doing the practical stuff, you really need to build [Paul] up, okay? Perhaps spend a little bit more time working with him one-to-one, in small situations.

Marcus also used questioning to help Tracy find her own way forward. The following example illustrates how he helped her to plan a lesson, after she had previously had problems with the behaviour of a class:

M: What are you going to do that's going to be different?

T: Well, if I can, I'll line them up.

M: But do you think that it will work, you lining them up? [. . .] part of the problem on that afternoon is that the other two teachers on this corridor have both got tutor groups across the other side of school,

T: Yes.

M: So they're going to be late. I can predict now that they will be late.

T: Yes.

M: So their classes will be kicking off in the corridor because the kids will be here before the teachers. But you'll be here in time [. . .] Is it wise to think about lining yours up at that stage? Or is there something else you can do?

T: Well, another thing I'd do . . . is actually stand in the doorway as they come in so that they're forced to come in single file . . . So, if I can't get them into a line I could at least get them coming in single file.

M: That would be good.

T: So at least they're not, you know, coming in as a whole.

When Marcus offered advice, he almost always explained his reasoning, saying, for example,

> if you do have to . . . raise your voice or anything like that [do so] from a position of strength not because you've got to the end of your tether and you're just about to lose it . . . because they're testing your boundaries really. Because at the end of the day the kids will want to be secure. And they feel insecure if they know the teacher is insecure. So they want you to be completely in control but they want freedom within that.

However, Tracy did not pass the requirements of the placement. Her account of this centred around the role of the external examiner, who had observed her teach a lesson. Tracy told me that the pupils, 'were in a particularly rowdy mood, and it wasn't particularly smooth running although . . . I thought, 'Well, it went a bit badly but hey, they achieved what I wanted them to'. However, she described her interview with the external examiner as follows:

> She didn't say anything positive in two hours, it was just negative, negative, negative and by the end of it I felt really horrible. She was criticising everything . . . if I'd done it, it was wrong, you know. And every time she asked me a question, I'd start to answer and she'd just butt in and stop me and I just, she made me feel like a three year old being told off for being naughty . . . From that day I went from being a competent, well-organised student to being a totally incompetent student.

According to Tracy, Marcus was 'as bemused as I was' by her failure. Marcus himself told me that Tracy's failure was due to problems with class management, which stemmed from poor planning. In retrospect, he said, 'I think what I would have done would be get much, much deeper in to the planning with her in the early stages and really take her through what she was planning . . . and point out the pitfalls before they occurred'. There were other problems which he did help her with, and which she didn't appear to solve:

> She had a tendency to talk to only two or three kids in the room in one limited area although the kids would be sitting in a semi-circle right the way around the room. And no matter how much I raised that issue with her, which was raised on a lot of occasions, the problem never improved. It was almost as if she was sort of totally unaware that it was happening.

Marcus felt that this lack of awareness lay at the root of Tracy's problems:

> Because she came as a fairly able musician I think she thought the teaching was going to be very easy for her and she didn't seem to really take on board when she found things difficult, when things were going out of control . . . When I was pointing things out to her there would always be a reason for it . . . There was always an external factor . . . I felt in the end that she was really in denial about the issues that needed facing.

Tracy's problems were exacerbated because she was found to have glandular fever at some point in the placement. This meant that, 'There was always one day a week when she

wasn't in, and when she was in, she wasn't always in a fit state to be in front of a lively class'. Noticing this, Marcus had contacted the university and, 'organised the timetable so that she had less teaching'. He felt that she was 'treated more than fairly' and yet, 'she had quite a big chip on her shoulder' and she felt 'victimised' because she was ill.

Although Tracy was unhappy with her university tutor and the external examiner, she had no such qualms about Marcus, telling me, 'I appreciated so much the fact that [Marcus] always had a couple of minutes even when he was busy. He always made the time. He always put in the effort'. On the other hand, she told me that his positive attitude might have had its drawbacks:

> I said to him, maybe you've been too friendly, maybe you've been too positive because you know, he very rarely will say anything negative. And I think that's just his nature. He's just a very nice, friendly person. I think, if he'd given me a bit of a kick up the bum sometimes and said actually this is wrong . . . part of me thinks maybe if he'd been a bit negative about some things I might not be in this situation.

In summary, Marcus and Tracy shared the conversation in their meetings fairly equally, Marcus helped Tracy to solve her own problems, and was very positive, but this could not prevent her from failing although, after my research finished, Tracy successfully completed another placement at a different school and qualified as a teacher.

### Discussion

The research literature contains examples of both apprenticeship and reflective approaches to ITE mentoring, in subjects other than music. For example, although many mentors take an apprenticeship approach, giving advice in an authoritative way (Ben-Peretz & Rumney, 1991; Dunn & Taylor, 1993; Haggarty, 1995), others apply a more tentative approach, viewing teaching as complex and problematic (Stanulis, 1994; Hawkey, 1998). I believe that the cases reported here provide evidence that music mentors take different approaches to their mentoring, which can sometimes be understood with reference to the theoretical concepts of apprenticeship and reflection. Probably this is because the mentors' ideas about mentoring are broadly consistent with these concepts. To see Mandy's mentoring as an example of an apprenticeship approach and Marcus' as a reflective one is too simplistic; in both instances the mentoring was complex and dynamic, not reducible to theoretical concepts. Nevertheless, we can say that Mandy's emphasis on learning by observing, her use of demonstration, praise and advice, of 'little grabbed conversations' and the fact that she viewed her own mentors as good or bad role models, indicate that her view of mentoring had more in common with the apprenticeship concept than the reflective concept. In contrast, Marcus' use of thinking aloud, of questions to prompt thinking, his use of long meetings and his wanting to get 'much deeper' into Tracy's problems, indicate a view of mentoring which has more in common with the reflective concept. These differences were apparent despite the tightly structured nature of the particular PGCE course under study.

Given these findings, the question arises: which concept is preferable? For most writers on the subject the answer is clear. Conway (2003) articulates the majority view when she says that reflection is 'desperately needed'. Yet this answer might be too simplistic because many writers on reflection, following Dewey, have taken a somewhat one-dimensional

view of apprenticeship, seeing it as simply a matter of 'passing on lower-order craft skills' (Brooks & Sikes, 1997: 18) and underplaying the mind-full nature of intelligent action. (Critics of the apprenticeship concept tend to cite examples such as carpentry, rather than playing the violin!) However, in these particular two cases the more reflective approach to mentoring was also the less successful and there is evidence in the literature that, 'not all preservice teachers reflect as much or as deeply as teacher trainers hope . . . Some even seem to be "antireflective"' (Strand, 2006: 31). It seems that individual trainees find themselves suited to particular mentoring approaches, perhaps when these are congruent with their concepts of, and approaches to, learning. Kolb (1984) explains how people develop individual approaches to learning:

> Through their choices of experience, people program themselves to grasp reality through varying degrees of emphasis on apprehension [i.e. 'reliance on the tangible, felt qualities of immediate experience'] or comprehension [i.e. 'conceptual interpretation and symbolic representation']. Similarly, they program themselves to transform these prehensions via extension ['active external manipulation of the external world'] and/or intention [a process of 'internal reflection']. This self-programming, conditioned by experience, determines the extent to which the person emphasizes the four modes of the learning process: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation (Kolb, 1984: 64, quotes in brackets appear on p. 41).

Although Kolb's analysis of the learning process might lack some of the descriptive detail in the apprenticeship or reflective concepts, it offers a more integrated way of thinking about learning to teach. It explains why some people, emphasising the modes of concrete experience and active experimentation, relate better to an apprenticeship concept whereas others, emphasising the modes of reflective observation and abstract conceptualisation, adopt a more reflective concept. But for Kolb, a good learning environment is not one which is adapted to learners' particular learning styles; rather, effective learners are those who, 'involve themselves fully, openly and without bias in new experiences . . . reflect on and observe their experiences from many perspectives . . . create concepts that integrate their observations into logically sound theories . . . and use these theories to make decisions and solve problems (p. 30). He goes on to speak of 'a strong need for integration of the four adaptive modes' (p. 31), strongly implying that the most effective learning environments are those in which all modes are activated.

### Implications for practice

Kolb's learning styles concept appears within a theory of experiential learning, in which learning is presented as a cycle: concrete experience informs observations and reflections, which lead to abstract conceptualisations which inform active experimentation. This theory is both individually and socially situated; Kolb quotes Bradford (1964) who describes a group learning experience as, 'a transactional process . . . Individuals learn to the extent that they expose their needs, values, and behaviour patterns so that the perceptions and reactions can be exchanged' (Kolb, 1984: 36). It also has much in common with Dewey's reflective process, described above. However, whereas for Dewey, reflection was a staged

pattern of relatively undifferentiated thinking, Kolb's theory suggests that each learning mode requires a different type of mental activity. Concrete experience involves a concern with the uniqueness of the present reality and requires feeling and intuition; reflective observation involves a concern for how things happen and requires watching and reflecting; abstract conceptualisation involves a concern for building general theories and requires thinking and analysing; active experimentation involves a concern with what works and requires doing and applying.

When learning to teach is conceptualised in these terms, mentoring becomes, at least in part, a matter of guiding trainees to make the most they can of each mode of learning, whilst recognising that they might find some modes easier than others. Mentors might use this theory to evaluate the opportunities they provide for their trainees to access a broad range of relevant concrete experiences, to observe and reflect on these experiences, to theorise about their reflections, and to experiment in their teaching. Although activities such as team teaching, mentoring meetings, writing essays and joint planning might focus on different parts of the cycle, each can become a starting point for mentors to help their trainees to activate all modes of learning, integrating apprenticeship and reflective concepts holistically.

There are implications for course design too. A traditional course design can appear to separate experiencing and experimenting, which are sited in schools, from reflecting and theorising, which are situated in universities, but Kolb's theory implies an iterative process in which university elements draw explicitly on school experiences and vice-versa. Finally, there might be implications for continuing professional development (CPD) for, if learning to teach is a matter of integrating concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation, why should CPD be different?

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