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Instrumental and vocal teaching: how do music students learn to teach?

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A survey of final-year music students at the University of York for the Investigating Musical Performance research project[1] found that 45% (23 of the 51 students in the year group) regularly gave instrumental or vocal lessons. Semi-structured interviews with 16 students revealed a range of teaching activities including workshop leading, one-to-one lessons and group teaching. This paper examines the attitudes of the nine students engaged in giving instrumental[2] lessons and explores their development as teachers and their understanding of some of the key concepts of teaching and learning. Findings suggest that students learned to teach through increased experience rather than formal training, and although they were enthusiastic, reporting benefits to their own learning and performing, they could have been more pro-active regarding their development as teachers and more resourceful in their approaches towards lesson content and materials, strategies relating to modelling and motivation and the teaching of practice techniques. Increased provision of support and training opportunities could be made by Higher Education institutions, by giving students feedback regarding their effectiveness as teachers, opportunities to discuss their teaching, and enabling learning through mentoring partnerships with more experienced teachers.

Introduction

Existing research into the development of singers and instrumentalists has explored many aspects of skill acquisition and musical performance such as practice, motivation and attitudes towards performance itself. However there is little research to date on what must be one of the most significant factors: the contribution and development of instrumental (and vocal) teachers. Mills (2004a) studied conservatoire students and their teaching, but focused on quantitative rather than qualitative data. The present study uses qualitative data from interviews with students to examine the development of musicians as instrumental teachers.

Instrumental teaching is not a planned career aspiration for many musicians (Gaunt, 2005). It often provides a back-up to other work, and for freelancers, relative stability and security. In the UK, a lack of provision and awareness of formal training programmes means that musicians often begin to teach with little support from significant others, and can have a very partial understanding of how to teach effectively. Their teaching 'evolves', and with experience and reflection they *may* become more effective teachers. In some countries, such as Sweden and Germany, pedagogical training is required for instrumental teachers seeking formal employment. However, in the UK, it would appear that the majority of instrumental teachers effectively teach themselves to teach and many

are unaware of possible training opportunities.[3] This has serious implications for their pupils – future musicians and teachers. Burwell (2005: 199) found that: '. . . of the nineteen tutors who participated in the research project, none had formal qualifications in either post-compulsory education or specialist instrumental teaching'. The Gibbs report (1993: 51) noted that: 'whilst the majority of private music teachers in this survey were found to be qualified professionally, most lack qualifications which endorse preparation for teaching'. This report recommended training schemes for new teachers, a review of teaching diplomas and accreditation schemes, continuing professional development and membership of teaching organisations.

The lack of training and therefore restricted awareness of other possible means of delivering tuition means that the prevalent model of master–apprentice tuition (Jørgensen, 2000) continues by default: such teachers tend to teach in similar ways to their own teachers (Mills & Smith, 2003). Hallam (1998: 241) suggested that this situation is perpetuated by the relative isolation of many instrumental teachers, leading to 'an inherent conservatism in the instrumental teaching profession which has tended to inhibit innovation and prevent the spread of new ideas'. Kemp (1996: 230) described teachers operating in 'unregulated and unsupervised circumstances that have no inbuilt process of monitoring of quality control'. Daniel (2004) found that teachers who had received individual tuition were less likely to try group-teaching than those who had been taught in groups, and noted the considerable benefits to students who receive tuition in a group context: understanding the roles of performer, listener and assessor, developing self-evaluation, gaining increased motivation and a greater range of feedback. However, many teachers are hesitant to explore other modes of tuition, preferring to continue with the model of passive learning (Hallam, 1998) to which they are accustomed. If the demand for 'talented, well-trained, versatile – and qualified – musicians who can teach and lead in a wide range of individual and group learning settings' (Rogers, 2005: 59) is to be met, then prospective music teachers need to experience the range of contexts in which music teaching and learning takes place.

Participants and method

In order to explore how musicians learn to teach, music students in their final year of a three-year degree course at the University of York were invited to discuss their teaching. Of the 23 students who engaged in teaching, 16 were available to be interviewed, of whom seven discussed their experience as workshop leaders and nine discussed their experience as instrumental teachers. This article concentrates on the experiences of those giving instrumental lessons.

Semi-structured interviews using open-ended questions, explored the reasons for teaching, how students learned to teach, their awareness of models of teaching that they had received, their thoughts on lesson structure and content, modelling and motivation, performance opportunities and examinations, their aims and approach, the pupil–teacher–parent relationship, the qualities needed to be a successful teacher and challenges and rewards. The transcribed data from these semi-structured interviews was coded by hand and analysed through the methodology of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (Smith, 1995).

The students started teaching at a mean age of 17.89 years, between ages 15 to 21. They tended to teach an average of 4.89 hours per week, with a range of 1–8 hours a week. Their

pupils' ages ranged from 4–60, with the majority being 'beginners'; either young children or peers studying another subject at the university. Two students gave group lessons in a school; all the rest taught one-to-one lessons. Only one student had any training and none had a teaching qualification, although some held performance diplomas.

All but one of the interviewees planned to continue teaching after their degree; three were about to begin formal training towards a PGCE or higher degree in Community Music; and for the remainder, teaching would be part of their intended freelance activities, apart from one who planned to work in business and enterprise.

Starting to teach – why teach?

Many students reported a fairly casual beginning to their teaching; it seems that mostly other people suggested they gave some lessons. Four students had started teaching while at school, teaching children for whom they were acting as 'babysitters' or pupils that their own teachers could not accommodate. Two were asked to teach because of a shortage of teachers; two assisted youth orchestra rehearsals and two taught fellow students at the university. Students found teaching enjoyable and rewarding, and noted that it helped their own playing. It might also help achieve future goals:

> I wanted to get experience of teaching because I was thinking about what I might do after university. It's quite a good pursuit in that you're passing on what you know, and that, in itself, is quite a fulfilling thing, and at the same time you can earn money, which is something from a practical perspective that I need to do as well.

Learning how to teach

Only one student embarked on a teaching course before beginning to give lessons. This finding is comparable with that of other surveys including Gaunt (2005) who interviewed 20 conservatoire teachers and found that only one had any training. The York student attended a short course to teach piano provided by a music school in Hong Kong. She needed Grade 8 to enrol, and the course prepared her to teach beginners aged 6–10:

> I went through a training from the company that employed me – how to teach children, how to communicate with their parents. It lasted for one or two days . . . the trainer would introduce some games which we'd play with the children – how we'd introduce the piano to them, and how we would tell them to sit at the piano and how the position of the hands should be. We were told to play all the pieces before we teach, although it's very easy for us. After the training we were not really assessed but we are asked to demonstrate the teaching . . . and afterwards they suppose we are ready, and they won't supervise any more unless they get some complaints from the parents.

Generally, students learned to teach through a combination of instinct and comparing models from past and present teaching that they had received:

> I've never really been taught how to teach. I'm teaching piano by thinking about the way that I was taught and remembering books that I used and pieces that I played. I

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> think subconsciously I've picked things up from lots of different people . . . it's definitely helpful having had lots of different teachers.

This conscious or unconscious transference can contribute to the creation of 'tradition' in teaching, and one's teacher can be an enduring presence:

> When I look at myself and some of the kids I was teaching for a while, I saw a lot of my old teacher coming through – all his lack of compliments and his stern way of doing it. But I knew what I didn't want to be, and what I did want to be . . . he was a really good teacher but he is a bit of a monster! So it was trying to combine being a good teacher and keeping discipline and then at the same time being fun and having a nice time with them wanting to do it.

This student also recognised transference in her use of material: 'some of the techniques and exercises I consciously thought: "that worked; I'll use that" and then it sort of adapted into my own way, but the other way round as well: suddenly I realised I was doing things that I hadn't intended to do'.

Some students benefited from a module taken in their second year on Community Music, which included workshops on communication and motivation. Only three students mentioned observing lessons, one as a teaching assistant and the others as accompanists. Although some students had read books on teaching, the majority preferred to ask their current teacher or peers for advice. The following view was atypical: 'I often go away for a week and think about a certain pupil or problem . . . and might . . . ask advice or read up to find out how to solve the problem'. Training would be welcomed: 'it would be quite interesting if there was some sort of class or workshop on how to teach, talking about different ideas of what you do at different stages', particularly at the outset: 'I would definitely have liked some formal training, especially when I was considering starting . . . one can just start as a teacher with no qualifications/training . . . isn't that a bit worrying?'

Students saw their future development in terms of increased experience rather than training: 'I'd really value the opportunity to gain my own experience and to learn my own lessons from the various mistakes or good things I managed to do'. This view correlates with those of conservatoire professors interviewed by Mills (2004b: 194) who mainly felt: 'that they had learnt to teach primarily by doing it, and then reflecting on their teaching intellectually'. Day (2004: 1) noted that '. . . teaching is not only about intellectual and emotional engagement with others . . . but also intellectual and emotional engagement with self through regular review and renewal of purposes and practices'. However, the students were generally unlikely to receive structured support and feedback or to engage in reflective practice. They tended to rely on their own experiences as learners to inform their teaching and were likely to create teaching habits based on subconscious transference of behaviours and methods from their former teachers. Although they could have had more awareness of training opportunities and pedagogical literature they were nonetheless fairly confident about their teaching.

Planning and materials

Students were unlikely to plan lessons or to be dynamic in their selection of teaching material: 'I don't do lesson plans . . . I think it would lose all the spontaneity and enjoyment

from both sides'. Pupil vagaries were one reason: 'I don't really plan my teaching . . . the girl who I taught, one week she'd have done no practice; another, she'd have learnt a couple of pieces and be doing really well. It's not like teaching a class where you can plan a lesson'. However, students were aware when their own teachers failed to plan: 'Some teachers I've had in the past . . . have had lessons so back-to-back that there hasn't been enough time for them to prepare'. This particular student was the only one to mention the importance of keeping notes, and the usefulness of written reports at the end of term. Students did not mention long-term planning either, possibly because they tended to only teach their pupils for a short time while at university. Beach (2005: 13) suggests considering 'the basic overarching aims you have for your pupils' and then from these creating lesson aims, and Harris and Crozier (2000: 17) also state: 'effective instrumental teaching . . . does require both structure and direction' and that teachers should always remember: 'both the short-term and longer-term aims of your curriculum' (2000: 17).

Generally, it would seem that students relied on the teaching material that they were using to create some kind of structure and then responded to their pupil's progress. They also found it very easy to fall back on the familiar: 'the books that I went along with were the ones that I used . . . I followed those because that's what I did and I knew what worked'. Students may have also used books brought by their pupils but did not mention sourcing new material themselves. Perhaps when they begin to teach a larger number of pupils and a greater range of levels they may be more inclined to explore new material and also to create their own. It seems that safety lies in the 'method' presented in the books that they are familiar with, and the knowledge that they themselves were successful through using these books validates their continued use.

Lesson structure and content

Students tended to be spontaneous in their approach: 'I've got a first lesson explaining what singing is, but after that it's just a weird and wonderful journey to see what we find'. The first lesson appeared to be the most constructed: 'If I'm teaching a new pupil starting the violin for the first time, I'd have a fairly set routine of things: to look at the strings and then maybe hold the bow . . . then pluck some strings to a tune'. Subsequently, a pattern may emerge: 'I think it's always good to start with some technique, just to get warmed up. I'd start off doing some scales and things; scales then piece, and I'd always do it that way round'.

The student who received training from the music school in Hong Kong was required to follow a rigid structure, adhering to a syllabus and teaching sight-reading and theory in every lesson. The system aimed to create teachers of a uniform standard, producing pupils who progressed through a content-centred method with little freedom for either teacher or pupil. Other students had a more flexible, person-centred approach:

> I think the one thing I've learned is that you don't have to know exactly what you're doing for the entire lesson, as long as you have . . . lots of ideas you can just zone in on, depending on what kind of person you're dealing with. The more you get to know them the more things you know that they like to do so you can kind of adapt'.

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Technique was seen to be important, but there was an awareness that it might encounter resistance and therefore required creative solutions: 'write down some fun exercises disguised as pieces which are built on scales, and then, before they know it, they're doing scales anyway'. A similar approach was described with sight-reading: 'That's something I learnt from the violin teacher that I had . . . she'd just say "let's play some duets" and I'd be playing some fairly complicated music not realising that I was just practising my sight-reading'. Harris (2006) describes these kinds of connections between different musical elements creating a productive and consistently musical learning context. The more experienced students integrated different elements in their teaching: 'I'm linking . . . sight-reading and performance and confidence-building at the same time, and yes, constantly working on their technique during pieces', and also reinforced learning: 'Always recap each lesson . . . trying to make sure they've got it in their mind'.

It would seem that students with more teaching experience were better at assessing the individual learning styles of their pupils and tailoring lessons to suit their needs: 'I think it just comes from when you see each individual pupil and you learn how they deal with things . . . it is quite an individual thing that just comes with knowing people'. One student mentioned finding it easier to deal with pupils who learned in a similar way to himself: 'It often puzzles me if something doesn't work for someone that works for me'. Another said that: 'after a while of teaching the same children you are able to understand how they learn and can adapt to them, which means you are learning as well'.

Modelling and motivation

Sang (1987: 158) found that: 'teachers who have stronger modeling skills and apply those skills in teaching are more likely to produce students who perform better than teachers who do not'. Students recognised the power of modelling and gave examples of various contexts when its use was beneficial:

> If I explain something, I always demonstrate it . . . if there's a new piece I always play it to them so they get an idea of how it goes. I think it's important to demonstrate things, especially to young children, because they won't always understand what you say.

Modelling can promote understanding and can also give confidence and inspire. One student mentioned: 'using something that I would play and asking them questions about it . . . so [they can relate to] music that looks far more complicated than what they're doing'. Students recalled the importance of modelling from their own lessons: 'I've had a few teachers on different instruments and the ones who play a lot, you can relate to them much more than those who just talk and tell you what to do. Those who play it show it, and that's always a bit of inspiration'. However, others had mixed views about modelling:

> If you demonstrate something, it's almost not being taught: it's copied. It's sometimes better to let the student get it wrong a couple of times but then get it right on their own; then they've learnt it themselves. I think that's more useful than saying: "this is what it is" – I don't think it is learnt properly that way.

It may be that this student found it hard to detach his own learning style preferences from the needs of his pupils. Another view was that modelling was appropriate for

beginners, but not for more advanced pupils: 'I think sometimes it's a mistake to sit there and play them the whole piece because it's kind of like giving them a recording to listen to, and then they just copy the recording'. This would seem to assume that the pupil is skilled in playing by ear and would be able to recall every nuance of the model. One final use of modelling was mentioned in the context of the teacher as performer, consciously demonstrating confident and enthusiastic performance.

As with modelling, attitudes towards motivation also related to different pupil ages: 'To start off with, a lot of it [the responsibility for motivation] is the teacher, because the little ones who have only just started school don't have the motivation to do homework'. With a more advanced pupil, awareness of the pupil's needs is important:

> I ask her what she wants to do . . . we're trying to make her a bigger sound and loosen up . . . but also, at the same time that's very boring, so she needs something to keep her going so we do the pieces. I try to motivate her to show her that this is getting better and then just keep telling her she is getting better . . . I'm not going to tell her if she isn't, but she is starting to.

The teacher has to be able to see the needs of the pupil as distinct from his or her own needs, and should aspire towards developing skill in assessing the effectiveness of different strategies. Hallam (1998: 99) stated that: 'the aim of the teacher should be to promote intrinsic motivation in students'. Modelling can promote motivation, and although students were unclear about whether motivation should be the responsibility of the pupil, the teacher, or both, they recognised its importance in one-to-one lessons, as well as the difficulty in establishing how motivation is created. Modelling may be one of the most powerful and dynamic tools, and although these students use it, they could develop its potential still further.

Examinations and performance opportunities

Students had mixed views on examinations, and often felt quite passionate about them:

> I'm sure . . . exams were quite a good way of seeing how people are doing, but I think there's something quite wrong with the system now, in that the whole point of it seems to be to make people achieve these results instead of measuring how well people are actually doing. It's just trying to make people fit into this category of grade or that one. There is so much emphasis on having them . . . to fit into the system . . . but if I had a pupil who didn't want to I wouldn't put pressure on them . . . remembering friends at school who really didn't want to do it and eventually gave up the instrument because they were being forced to.

Over-reliance on exams was mentioned:

> There's the results from exams . . . there's also the fun of learning through music and doing something that's off the beaten track of exam stuff and moving on to something that builds the music tuition more as a whole . . . I think exams are in some ways pretty pointless. You do get kids now that are just going straight through them, back to back . . . I just don't think it's a right way of teaching – they come out as machines, not as musicians.

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However, certain aspects were considered to be useful:

> I think they are very good for the structure . . . the actual exam is quite daunting for a young person just to go through, and I think it is a really good character-building kind of thing. The actual exams . . . make them think a little bit more of music and why they're doing it.

Gaining external feedback was also seen as beneficial: 'when someone else says the same thing, the pupils seem to take more notice', although the use of examinations as feedback regarding teacher-effectiveness was not mentioned. Examinations could create motivation, and were considered to promote learning in a range of areas: 'They cover all bases with the sight-reading, with aural . . . one of those might lag behind if you didn't have to do well', but this comment also reveals the expectations involved. For the student from Hong Kong, parental and societal pressure meant that examinations were expected:

> It's quite competitive in Hong Kong – when they are applying for secondary school, teachers will look at their extra-curricular as well as academic results, including participation in examinations or competitions. I don't want to push any of my students for examination . . . but because of the society, the background, I have to do that.

Those teaching their peers felt that: 'Older pupils don't care about it; they're not here to get any qualifications from it; they just want . . . to get better and expand their repertoire'. However, none of the students would impose examinations on their pupils: 'I basically ask them what they would like to see as their goal, and if exams are what they see as their goal I can go in that direction, and if it's not I won't.'

Performance opportunities were seen as very important. The following benefits were noted:

> It helps children to build up their confidence and may help them later in life, such as in interviews or standing in front of people and talking. It is important that the children know that they are doing well and a performance is a good way for them to acknowledge good feedback from clapping and kind words. It's nice to have something to work towards in lessons as well. It helps children from a young age to recognise what feeling nervous is and they are able to deal with it more effectively as they get older – the more they perform, the easier it is.

Several students mentioned their own lack of confidence in performing situations and ascribed this to having few opportunities to perform when they were young. This made them keen to encourage their pupils to perform.

Aims and approach

Students articulated their aims in terms of teaching goals, including giving pupils constructive advice and trying to: 'make things interesting in the hope that people are inspired'. Remembering their own experience as learners was helpful: 'you've got to have a goal . . . if you're not working towards anything you don't know why you're doing it'. Approaches changed in response to different pupil ages and levels. For beginners, fun was seen as important, but: 'when it comes to grade 7, 8, students are like grown-ups and it's more important to focus on the skills'. These could include theory, '. . . listening to excerpts of different periods of music . . . which gave a wider understanding and injected

a bit more style'. The length of a lesson was also seen as important: 'In some schools they do 15-minute lessons . . . completely pointless . . . you can't get anything going . . . but for younger people, an hour is quite long'.

However, the teaching of skills such as how to practice efficiently was not mentioned. Krampe and Ericsson (1995: 86) noted that: 'Methods of deliberate practice are taught by teachers who usually are experienced performers themselves', and Jørgensen (2001) found that 70% of students said that their former (pre-conservatoire) teachers had not given any advice on effective practice. It would seem that whatever the ability level of the teacher, an important aim should be to enable the pupil to practice efficiently.

The importance of guiding pupils towards self-reliance as learners was not mentioned either. Hallam (2006: 115) stated that: 'All students need to be facilitated to become independent learners so that they can adapt easily and rapidly to new musical environments and draw on the skills they have learnt to satisfy current needs.' This view may again be one that develops with increased experience: the conservatoire teachers that Gaunt (2005: 253) interviewed loved teaching but ultimately believed that: 'your role is to get rid of your role'.

On considering their development as teachers, students mentioned gaining confidence and noted that their ability to communicate with pupils improved: 'With each student you learn something . . . if you're having similar problems with different students . . . you have more broad directions you can go . . . just see which one sparks them off'. Changes to their identity as teachers also emerged: 'I've got a bit more strict . . . it's about that she gets better, otherwise it's all a bit of a waste of time'. The greatest change was observed by a singer: 'I'm less flirtatious. I used to think that it was a popularity thing and that I've got to be impressive as a person the whole time. I'm much less caring about that now . . . it's much more serious . . . it's much more a musical thing'.

Pupil–teacher and parent–teacher relationships

All of the students mentioned the need to relate to the pupil: 'You need to understand where they're coming from and what they think, and how they deal with issues, however old they are'. This understanding generally related to the pupil's musical aims rather than their personality: 'You've got to understand what they want from the lessons and then kind of plan them around what they want and what you need to do to make them better.' One student had a different connection: 'It's quite emotional, quite intense . . . I think you have to be quite close to the person . . . I view them all as mates, in a way, and I think it's quite important that you also have a friendship with them. You really have to look after your pupils – it's more a relationship than a service . . . I definitely try and get to know them'.

Students showed awareness of some of the potential difficulties in the relationship, such as teacher dominance:

> It's quite easy when you're just starting piano to sit there and be kind of taken over by the teacher . . . I always ask: 'Am I drifting from what you wanted out of the lessons?' It's easy to think: 'I'm the teacher and we're going to do this' and sometimes it doesn't work and can put them off quite a lot.

Another student felt that: 'A lot of people think that you're going to judge them, because if you're teaching you've automatically got a power – you're better than your pupil, but you

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need understanding, not judging'. Students noted that the way they talked to pupils was crucial: 'You don't want to sound patronising to them . . . you have to word your ways quite carefully'. Not damaging the pupil's ego was important: 'He wouldn't like me to tell him that he was doing something wrong, so I have to be quite careful'; and not assuming prior knowledge was essential: 'I was quite worried that I would subconsciously take things for granted that they would know, and I had to be really switched on to think: "no, they don't know anything". You literally have to get down to the basics'. The challenge of maintaining teacher-authority and achieving a balance between fun and discipline was mentioned by many students: 'The hardest thing is to come out of the friendly zone to get it going, trying to be quite strict about it . . . it's really difficult to do that on a one-to-one level.'

Reflecting on one's own experiences as a learner can be helpful:

> The teacher needs to develop her ability to empathise with the pupil, and to recall the emotions she had and still has as a learner. The more she is in touch with her own feelings the more easily she will be able to identify with those of her pupil (Mackworth-Young, 1990: 85).

Sloboda and Howe (1991) found that qualities such as warmth and empathy were as important as specifically musical abilities for those teaching beginners.

The parent–teacher relationship was hardly mentioned, possibly because the students taught more pupils their own age (student-peers) than children. Parental support in general and support with practice sessions was deemed useful, although it did not appear that students actively enlisted it. The student who mentioned this relationship most was the one whose training in Hong Kong included how to communicate with parents. She felt that the most difficult aspect of teaching was:

> . . . compromise between parents and teachers. The parents will want their children to develop very quickly. They want them, for example, to proceed to another grade once a year, but actually if the children are not good, we're forcing them to do something they're not able to do. It's hard to persuade parents that their children are not good enough because they really believe their children are the best . . . the parents are employing us to teach the children, so it's hard to get a balance.

Students could be more aware of the importance of parental support; Macmillan (2004: 295) stated: 'parental involvement is beneficial to progress on a musical instrument. However, few music teachers are known to actively encourage it'. She found that those who did, tended to have undergone pedagogical training, or had more teaching experience. Davidson *et al*. (1995/6) found that general parental support was more important than specialist musical parental input, so even if parents have no specialist musical knowledge they can still make a significant contribution to their child's learning.

Qualities needed to be a successful teacher

Students described many important qualities: 'Patience! An ability to communicate ideas, to be able to think on their level and explain things in a way that they'd understand, and enthusiasm!' Communication and confidence were seen to be linked: '. . . it's important to be quite confident, so that the pupil hasn't got any doubt of what you're saying'. Musical

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abilities are vital, and motivating abilities are needed: '. . . to be able to make the students interested in playing music'. Modelling was important: '. . . to demonstrate, and be a good example for the student'. It also helps to be organised, but to have flexibility as well as authority: '. . . an ability to control a situation and remain in charge without being aggressive or too strict'; and a sense of perspective: '. . . just being aware that having one bad week doesn't mean that that's the end of it'.

All students thought that fun was important: '. . . it does serve a purpose in getting them to free up and relax'. Fun could also transmit the teacher's enthusiasm and energy, which was seen as vital: 'They have to get across a passion for something . . . getting them to really love music'. Teachers should aspire to create: '. . . pupils who achieve, and who also like what they are doing and want to achieve, whatever level they are'.

The successful teacher also needs to be able to accept the responsibility of teaching. One student was highly aware that: '. . . if you have a bad teacher, that's it, really, your playing isn't going to be that good'. For another, the resultant damage could extend further: 'You have it on your mind that if it all goes wrong and you kind of scare them off and they just give up and don't ever do music again it's all on you'. However, one student showed a different attitude to responsibility, possibly developed through increased teaching experience:

> I don't see that as a difficulty – I think that's an honour. That's probably one of the reasons I do it – it's to be in charge of something, to be a kind of leading arm around the shoulder at times. To be asked for advice . . . it's a privilege, and if you've got an answer it's even better!'

Teachers also need to be able to deal with insecurity, particularly if they are teaching on a freelance basis: 'I was very conscious that I wasn't contracted, so it was "they've got to have fun . . . so they come back and pay for another four hours"'. The same student appreciated that entering pupils for examinations helped: 'From my point of view, it's a security thing: I know that they'll be coming to their lessons for the next two terms while we're working on the grade.'

Qualifications were not important to most students, although the perspective from Hong Kong was different: 'I don't expect every parent to know the difference between teaching diploma and performance diploma – they just look at the titles and my name and decide whether I'm good or not'. This student aimed to 'achieve a higher diploma' so that she could teach higher grades, and was also the only one who wanted a career as an instrumental teacher.

Challenges and rewards

Students felt that dealing with pupil attitudes was one of their biggest challenges: 'I think the hardest thing . . . is to teach somebody who's just really not interested', or: 'When . . . the younger ones . . . tell you: "I want to go home" – what do you say to that?' Sensitivity was often required:

> I think it's hardest when you've got a pupil that's shy or embarrassed or feels awkward – I find it really hard to get them to open up. Because music's such an expressive art,

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you've got to allow yourself to open up, and you've got to allow yourself to be taught in that way.

Problems could also occur as a result of different musical tastes: 'All the children ever wanted to do was just to play pop songs, and that wasn't really what I wanted to teach', and from inadequate school resources: 'We only had two keyboards in a room, so there were two of them on a keyboard – it was badly organised and quite stressful'. It seems that it can be difficult for young instrumental teachers in schools to assert authority and claim their right to better working conditions. Evaluation of the effectiveness of the teaching could also be challenging: '... things like knowing that you're pushing [and] ... talking to them the right way; that's the difficulty with teaching'. However, one student felt that the biggest challenge was: 'Balancing your teaching commitments to your performing commitments; you're a manager, and juggling's hard work.'

In a study undertaken by Mills (2004b), teachers mentioned that teaching helped them address their own practice and playing techniques, introduced them to new repertoire, improved their communication skills, created an impetus for self-reflection and gave them a platform to play in front of a potentially critical audience. Students in the present study felt they had benefited in similar ways: '... definitely in the early stages it made me a much better singer because I was analysing stuff all the time. And if you're giving examples to someone, you have to do it right yourself; you can't be lazy.' Thinking about a pupil's problems encouraged self-analysis: 'If a pupil has a mistake or an area they need to work on I'll think: "Do I need to work on that?"'.

Teaching can help students to practice more efficiently, but not all students felt that this applied to them: 'I suppose you learn to explain things ... but I don't know if it has a direct effect. If you know how to have disciplined practice and you know enough to explain to other people then why wouldn't you do it?' Nevertheless, all students reported increased confidence as a result of their teaching and felt that they were better able to deal with rehearsal and performance situations.

The most rewarding aspects included observing the pupil's enjoyment and development: 'Seeing people do things they might not have known that they could do', and helping the pupil meet their goals: 'We'll always try and set a goal ... it's a kind of dual thing: you're happy they've managed to learn it, they're happy because they've learnt it, and it makes them want to learn more'.

Conclusion

Students in this study engaged in teaching with commitment and enjoyment, although most were untrained and received little support or feedback. They could have been more resourceful in their choice of teaching materials, lesson content and structure as well as pro-active in terms of creating support for themselves. They tended to rely on the memories of their own learning and on models of previous or current teachers to inform their work, and were unaware of training opportunities and recent pedagogical literature. Although they saw their development primarily through increased experience, some training would be beneficial, particularly with regard to their awareness of individual learning and assessment of the effectiveness of strategies towards modelling and motivation. They would also have

benefited from an awareness of health and safety issues and an understanding of child protection issues, neither of which were mentioned.

Students stressed the importance of providing performance opportunities, and generally saw examinations as useful goals. However, the use of examinations in providing feedback on the effectiveness of their teaching was not mentioned, and, in general, students did not actively seek feedback. Modelling and motivation were acknowledged as important aspects of teaching although in some cases students found it difficult to separate the needs of the pupil from their own. The pupil–teacher relationship was discussed, but the parent–teacher relationship was mentioned less, presumably because students are generally teaching peers rather than children; however, the benefits of parental involvement should not be overlooked. Students could also consider the importance of teaching effective practice techniques and of enabling their pupils to be proactive learners. All students found that teaching had increased their confidence and given them an improved understanding of their playing or singing, greater awareness of what was happening in their own lessons and an increased ability to cope with rehearsal and performance.

Enabling students to learn with a variety of teachers, giving them the opportunity to observe other teachers in action so that they can experience a range of teaching and learning experiences and providing pedagogical modules in the context of Higher Education musical learning could be positive moves towards developing understanding of varied approaches towards teaching. The teachers of those who are beginning to teach should also be openly willing to offer support, advice and the opportunity to observe teaching sessions. Mentoring schemes could enable student teachers to learn while receiving support. Students should be encouraged to think beyond the short-term, with respect both to pupils' development and their own, and actively to seek feedback and to engage in self-development and reflective practice. Students' perception of teaching and learning could also be informed by experiencing different kinds of tuition, such as within a group, or learning instruments from other cultures and musical genres. Developing a dynamic, reflective and responsive awareness of issues within instrumental teaching should enable student teachers to remain enthusiastically engaged with their own teaching, as well as playing a vital part in creating inspired, confident and creative musicians.

Notes

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2 The term 'instrumental' is used here to refer to both instruments and voices.

3 Courses and diplomas are offered by the main music examining bodies and other professional organisations such as the European Piano Teacher's Association (EPTA), the Dalcroze Society, the British Kodály Academy and the British Suzuki Institute. The Royal Northern College of Music has a Postgraduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) course with specialist Instrumental Teaching in wind, brass, strings or percussion in collaboration with Manchester Metropolitan University. The University of Reading offers a postgraduate distance-learning programme: 'Music Teaching in Professional Practice', and modules are available as part of other conservatoire and university courses.

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