Overcoming the red-feeling: the development of confidence to teach music in primary school amongst student teachers

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The music curriculum, along with the other arts in primary education in England, is under pressure from an increasing governmental focus on 'core' subjects. Recruits to the profession are particularly important to the long-term health of music in schools. As part of a longitudinal study to evaluate the efficacy of the university-based arts courses in preparing student teachers, the author looked at the factors affecting music. In so doing it emerged that feelings of confidence were a significant feature in the profile of successful students. The findings from this longitudinal study contribute to our understanding of how students perceive their development as teachers of music and the other arts in primary schools. The subjects of this study were students following a four-year Bachelor of Arts in Education BA(Ed.) course that prepared them to teach the full range of school curriculum subjects as generalists. The analysis of a series of semi-structured interviews reveals a complex interaction between prior experience and beliefs, and the quality of school experience.

Introduction

Class teachers in English primary schools are required to teach, in principle, all the subjects of the National Curriculum. In practice this is not necessarily the case, and the government's current preoccupation with the Core subjects means that some Foundation subjects get short shrift. This is particularly noticeable in the provision of music which, although a statutory entitlement, is, in my experience, patchy in terms of:

- continuity of learning, and vulnerability to timetable pressure;
- breadth and depth of content;
- suitability of accommodation and quality of equipment and materials;
- the expertise and confidence of teachers.

Music education has suffered from a decline in support from centrally funded services. The national inspection service has acknowledged that there is a continuing need for substantial in-service training to improve the quality of arts teaching in primary schools (OFSTED, 1998). It could be said that the situation is accepted as inevitable. The training of music teachers has never been a priority for the Primary sector. The provision of general arts courses on Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programmes has also been very variable (Cleave and Sharp, 1986) and has suffered recent further cuts (Rogers, 1998).

Another significant factor is a deeply rooted view held by large numbers of people,

including teachers that being able to 'do' or teach music requires special gifts that are only attainable by, or given to, a chosen few. The emphasis on overt technical performance skill seems to mark music out as the special specialism. By the time they reach secondary school, children often think of ability as being stable or fixed rather than malleable (Austin and Vispoel, 1998). Consequently, student teachers will often have arrived at a view of their own musical abilities (or lack of them) well before they arrive at university to train as primary teachers (Bouffard *et al.*, 1998). Thus, a cycle of low expectation may risk being perpetuated.

The course at the University of Exeter aims to prepare students to teach music with some basic understanding, skill and confidence, and thus challenge this perception. The assumption is that if students engage with the subject in the earliest stages of their professional preparation, they will be more likely to see music teaching as a normal part of their future practice.

This longitudinal study set out to look at the efficacy of courses in music, and the other arts, in fulfilling these aims. It found that a number of factors bear heavily on students' growth as confident and competent teachers. These factors are not all particular to music. However, the subject's marginal position in the curriculum and the attitudes and beliefs students bring with them to the course combine to make their influence more pronounced.

Previous studies have focused in particular on students' experience of teaching art, music, drama and dance during teaching practice, and on the ability of school-based teachers to support them (Green *et al.* 1998, Green & Mitchell 1998, Rolfe & Chedzoy 1997). With recent changes to the pattern and emphasis of teacher training (DfEE 1993 and 1998), the part played by schools has become much more significant. Schools and Higher Education (HE) institutions are now considered to be in 'partnership'. The preparation of students to teach (both for subject and pedagogical knowledge) is a shared responsibility. Immediately this presents particular problems for subjects that receive little attention or status in the curriculum. Student teachers may be placed in schools where music is taught well and generously resourced. However, they are just as likely to find themselves in a school with a more mixed picture and sometimes no models of even reasonable practice available. Another issue that seems to affect music more than perhaps any other subject is the practice of deploying bought-in specialists, or at least a teacher other than the class teacher. A common experience of students on placement (that has also affected specialist music students) is that the student is not able to teach music. The school either pays for a specialist to visit, and does not want to 'waste money', or the specialists themselves do not want to relinquish their teaching. As I have remarked elsewhere 'the teaching of music should never be the exclusive responsibility of one teacher – this is rare in other subjects and perpetuates the extra-specialism and elitism surrounding music' (Hennessy, 1994: 3). The students in this study encountered all these situations. There is no reason to believe that this is exceptional to the catchment (mainly south-west England but also schools in Birmingham and London).

This article investigates how the school placements and the attitudes and previous experiences of students affect their growth of confidence to teach music.

Context

Three fundamental factors appear to affect the nature and speed of student teachers' professional growth: prior experience; content of the ITE programme; and the quality of school experience they encounter (Kagan, 1992).

A number of studies have investigated how students' experiences as learners have shaped their teaching. They suggest that these exert a potentially powerful influence on:

- their responses to the initial training programme;
- their perceptions of their own and others' practice.

(See Goodman, 1986; Calderhead, 1988; Calderhead & Robson, 1991; Kagan, 1992; Nettle, 1998.) Some believe that personal values and beliefs about teaching merely become elaborated during training and are resistant to any real change (Tabachnick & Zeichner,1984; Zeichner & Liston, 1987; McDiarmid, 1991). However Nettle (1998) affirms the existence of both stability and change in the beliefs of student teachers as they progress through their courses. Bramald *et al.* (1995) concluded that experience of an institutional programme can shape students' attitudes and developing practices. They argued that courses are not homogenous and that the seeming lack of impact described in earlier studies had given too little regard to the characteristics and, consequently, the effect of individual course components.

Kagan (1992) reviewed twenty-seven empirical studies that investigated changes in the behaviour, beliefs and self-image of student teachers. Three of these looked at the influence of university course-work. They confirmed a view that, for professional development to take place, prior beliefs had to be modified and reconstructed (Calderhead & Robson, 1991; McDaniel, 1991; Weinstein, 1990). Knowledge of pupils and how they learn was identified as a key feature in affecting change and challenging previously held opinions about teaching. To acquire this, direct experience of pupils was regarded as essential, together with the presence of good role models, i.e. experienced teachers.

The shift towards a more school-based model of training in England has meant that the class teacher's role is becoming increasingly significant in supporting and influencing the development of student teachers (Dunne & Dunne,1993; Whitehead & Menter, 1996). Brown *et al.* (1998) suggest that this model of partnership between schools and training institutions may, however, present students with 'situated learning contexts which are not only diverse but also have potentially disparate if not overtly conflicting discourses and agenda' (p. 301).

This lack of consistency in the experience of student teachers in school is a concern in ITE (Green *et al.* 1998). The theory of 'situated cognition' (Brown *et al.*, 1989) emphasises the importance of school-based work and the crucial impact of the particular models of teaching with which students come into contact. This theory sees learning as a process of enculturation where authentic activities provide students with important insights into professional thinking and practice. This enculturation takes place not only through activity *per se* but also through 'cognitive apprenticeship'. Here, the experienced teacher models an activity, provides support for the student to undertake the task and finally empowers the student to continue independently.

This holds true also in contexts where there is an absence of 'authentic activities'. In

such a situation, there is nothing to challenge or modify the student's 'inherited' views (e.g. that only specialists can teach music). It is here that lack of opportunity to consolidate and develop new learning in the classroom may gradually erode the impact of a university course.

Method

The present research developed from earlier studies (Rolfe & Chedzoy, 1997; Green *et al.* 1998) into students' views on the effectiveness of university-based courses in preparing them to teach the arts, and their views of the support given to them by teachers during school-based work. They raised several concerns including those related to confidence to teach the arts. It was, therefore, decided to seek to identify the factors that had the most impact on levels of confidence.

This paper draws on interview data collected over three years, from students following a four-year education degree leading to a BA Ed. with qualified teacher status (QTS) in the Primary age range. The programme requires students to study all the subjects included in the English National Curriculum (DfEE 1995) alongside two ten-week periods of school-based work. The first takes place in the third term of the second year, and the second in the first term of the fourth year (see Table 1). In the first two years all primary students follow courses in music, art, dance and drama which aim to provide a practical and theoretical basis for teaching. The emphasis is on students' engagement in making and appreciating, with tutors providing models of planning, teaching and evaluating.

Table 1. *Pattern of university (U)- and school (S)-based work*

	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3
Year 1	10 weeks U-based	5 weeks S-based – 5 weeks U-based	10 weeks U-based
Year 2	10 weeks U-based	10 weeks U-based	10 weeks S-based **interviews**
Year 3	10 weeks U-based	10 weeks U-based with 2 days per wk S-based	10 weeks U-based
Year 4	10 weeks S-based **interviews**	10 weeks U-based	10 weeks U-based

The beginning of the research coincided with the development of a new system of partnership in which schools and universities were required to work together. School-based teachers and university tutors were now collaborating in a formal and accountable system of support for student teachers' professional development.

A sample of twelve second-year students collaborated in the research. Tutors were asked to suggest students who were not expected to experience difficulties in school or be at risk of failing the degree course. The researchers sought a representative sample across the six subjects from which students choose their specialism. These subjects were art, English and drama, humanities (history, geography and religious education), maths, music and science. Nine of the sample were female, reflecting the gender imbalance typical of

recruitment to primary teaching. The students knew the aims of the research and confidentiality was ensured. At every stage students were given access to the data and invited to share their views of the research.

Arts tutors interviewed the students on six separate occasions using a semi-structured interview technique (following Mischler, 1986). The interviews aimed to elicit and articulate their feelings and experiences before, during and after periods of teaching in school that took place in the second and fourth years of the programme (see again Table 1). They were asked to describe particular arts lessons that they had planned and taught and to reflect both in detail and more generally on their achievements, difficulties and aspirations. They were also asked, before and after each placement, to gauge their degree of confidence to teach each of the four subjects on a scale of 1–5.

In their research on primary teachers' attitudes to teaching science and technology, Holroyd and Harlen (1996) conceptualised confidence as 'a feeling of self-assurance, a feeling that some task can probably be completed with the knowledge and skills one possesses and without having to call on others for rescue' (p. 326).

This concept proved useful as it focused on the individual's view of perceived confidence rather than that informed by an observer. In this study the students talked about their experiences, reflected on and evaluated their practice. They were not observed in classrooms by the researchers.

Interviews were recorded in school and at the university, and the transcripts of interviews from the first placement were analysed by creating categories that appeared as themes or recurring patterns. The source of the categories therefore lay with the participants in the study and not in the related literature (Constas, 1992). A process of analysis (after Cooper & McIntyre, 1993) was then followed, based on the assumption that the initial categories would change and develop as they were applied to the data. Categories related to confidence were identified (see Table 2) and found to be consistent with those drawn from the interviews conducted after phase 1 (see Table 1).

Table 2. *Factors which contribute to confidence*

1. Prior personal experience
- practical engagement and participation
- schooling
- beliefs and values
2. University course
- development of subject knowledge
- pedagogical knowledge
- practical participation
- ideas and resources for teaching
3. School-based experience
- opportunities to teach
- opportunities to observe
- support and feedback from teachers
- feedback from children
- support from peers

For this article I have used the data from the ten students who were not following the specialist music course.

Findings

In every case students throughout their course declared that music was the subject in which they had least confidence. If one believes that subject knowledge is a principal factor in the development or presence of confidence, it is interesting (and alarming) to note that seven out of these ten students had learned to play at least one instrument during their primary schooling. All learned recorder; two learned the violin, two took up second instruments at secondary school (trumpet and flute), two learned piano and one the organ outside school. All had ceased lessons and stopped playing by the time they were fourteen years old. Three students claimed never to sing, including one who believed she was 'tone-deaf'; only one still sang regularly. All but one of the ten described negative experiences of music at secondary school: it was 'boring', 'too difficult', 'in every lesson we just tapped away on keyboards', 'I was made to sing on my own in front of everyone'.

Such experiences seemed to have left many of them with feelings of inadequacy and a strong belief that in order to teach music one had to be an accomplished performer: 'you can't do music unless you're very good at it', 'there's a lot of pressure to get it right because of notation', 'music needs more practical skills than other arts'. This belief changed for two students in the light of teaching experience, but, for the majority, it remained deeply embedded in their thinking.

Despite the presence of music on the timetables of all the schools, students rarely were able to teach coherent sequences of lessons. Several had no experience at all. In the interviews prior to their final placement, four students had had no experience teaching music, and three others had taught less than three lessons. Only two students had positive experiences: the result of active support and guidance from teachers who had responsibility for music in their schools. Evidence from the initial interviews conducted before the placement showed that, despite positive responses to their university course, several students felt anxious about teaching music

> Kate: 'I could go in and teach it but I would be frightened if a child turned round and said ''Why are we doing this? What's this for?'' and I wouldn't have a clue'.

Kate believed that there are more specialist practical skills in music than in other subjects. She did not seem to recognise that there are *any* special practical skills necessary for teaching dance, drama or art. This view seemed to stem from an anxiety about the need to perform:

> . . . there's an emphasis on your own abilities and you get that red feeling. It's the performance, that's what I don't like. I'd never sing or play an instrument in front of the class, they'd be critical, infants would be all right but KS2 no.

Tom who went on to teach dance with great enthusiasm (and no prior experience apart from the short university course) throughout both placements, shared this view of music:

> I think one of the main problems with music is you regard it as being something you can't do unless you're really good at it . . . you have a similar thing with art but not quite as much

because you've got your own personal way of doing things. If you're playing a set piece you can't play it to your own interpretation . . . but if you're producing a picture then you can put yourself into it, there's no specific structure.

Other students had similar concerns: 'I might not know whether what they are playing is any good', 'I see music as very technical', 'I'm not sure about managing and playing instruments', 'If I say something wrong then they've got a misconception for life'.

It emerged that such comments were made as often by students who had some conventional musical skills (playing an instrument, reading and playing from notation, active interest in listening), as those who had none. There is no evidence from the data that subject matter knowledge acquired through playing an instrument had any impact on their initial level of confidence or their later motivation to teach music. One might tentatively suggest that the experience of learning and then giving up at a fairly elementary stage (after four or five years) led students to believe that they were inadequate as musicians. They might have seen those who carried on learning as the 'musical' ones.

It is worth noting that students who felt they had no musical skills were determined to overcome this. Dan declared 'it's something I've got to come to terms with because I'm so terrible at it and frightened of it'. In all cases, and there may have been a bit of tutor-pleasing here, the students stated that they were keen to do some teaching of music. The desire to 'have a go' was a common assertion. They also understood that, ultimately, it was not an option and that they were expected to teach all the curriculum subjects.

Once in school, the students' initial ideas and beliefs about music teaching were either reinforced or challenged by their experiences and observations.

Negative reinforcement occurred when there were no or very limited opportunities to teach. This was the result of a variety of factors:

- The class teacher assumed that a generalist would not want to teach so did not attempt to include music in the student's timetable.
- Music was squeezed out of the timetable because of 'more important' work (a reflection of low status).
- The bought-in specialist music teachers had to do what they were being paid for.

It is clear, however, that the more determined and assertive students were able to overcome such obstacles by asking and negotiating.

Initial low levels of confidence were challenged and changed when the school's approach to music was positive and, more typically, where individual teachers gave active and practical support. These teachers were usually, but not always, those responsible for music.

Julia is an example of a student who set out with very little confidence in her ability to teach music but was transformed by her experience. She found the content of the music lessons with her class rather daunting and in consultation with her class teacher, observed a Year 1 class (five-year olds) to see how their lessons were structured. She went on to teach three lessons focusing on group compositions (music in response to pictures and vice versa) with the support of the specialist who gave her substantial feedback. She was pleasantly surprised at how positive this was: 'I honestly thought I'm never going to achieve something that sounds good or that the children are happy with . . . I realise that it

doesn't matter what my ability is because as long as I set it up right and get my aims across then it's up to them. They don't want you interfering – just give support and advice to get the structure. It's so different to maths where you've got to know how to do it, it's what they want to do, their interpretation.' This student's experience of teaching music had resulted in a quite unusual reversal of the more typical view of the relative importance of teacher's subject knowledge in different art forms (cf. Tom's remarks above). Julia felt that art and dance required more 'technical' knowledge and 'structure'. Music and drama were much more focused on children's ideas. This had developed as a result of the particular contexts in which she has observed and taught. However naïve her view of the teacher's role in teaching composing, the experience had given her confidence and a positive attitude that she carried into her final practice. Unfortunately her experience here did not contribute to her development:

> Music wasn't being pushed at the time because it was the school performance . . . but I followed a tape with the kids once and that was it. It was awful actually but [the teacher] said it counts as music and she was happy with that.

Before this final practice Julia's confidence was quite high. (She rated it at 2 on a 5-point scale with 1 as most confident.) In her final interview, after this last placement it had dropped to 4.

Julia's negative experience of following a pre-planned scheme was echoed by Claire. She felt that it gave no scope for her to plan her own content or even use her preferred approach to teaching:

> I want to stretch myself a bit more and try more things, knowing that what they're getting is not enough. Like with the music we follow a tape each week and because there are ten episodes on the tape [BBC 'Time and Tune'] if you don't follow it you don't reach the end, [the purpose] of the whole thing . . . I feel they haven't had the basics, even just clapping rhythms, and they find it difficult to listen to a tape and they end up messing around, they sing a lot and that's about it.

Tom believed that confidence came from positive comments from tutors and teachers, and from the degree to which he was able to match his skills to a task. In his experience of teaching, Tom found that many teachers were very ready to give him responsibility for arts teaching: 'so far my experience is [that] the student can do arts . . . I think it's something they [teachers] don't value too highly'. Tom had a good range of opportunities to teach both music and drama. He taught a music lesson every week focusing on rhythm work through singing, games and listening activities. He was most excited by his first music lesson:

> I think because I had so little experience . . . I was really dreading the lesson . . . although I'd planned in a fair amount of detail I was still very, very nervous and when we actually started working because they were enjoying it so much . . . I couldn't believe how engrossed I was, I completely forgot the time . . . They reacted really well to the games . . . it was the whole co-operation between everybody that took the pressure off me having to be a manager . . . I could get involved.

His final school placement was not quite as supportive towards teaching the arts. The class teacher did not teach music. As a consequence, he consulted the music specialist and a fellow student for help with his music teaching. He described a music lesson in great detail

and with enthusiasm. As in his second-year experience he chose to focus on rhythm, developing a piece built on combining rhythmic patterns derived from words. He was proud of what the pupils achieved:

> they could see that in the real world that's what rhythm is so it's not just a dictionary definition. It's all the social skills and the enjoyment they felt when we changed volume and tempo and they could see how they impacted on the composition . . . I think this is more important than the knowledge bit . . . enjoyment of music is massively important.

In reflecting on his teaching during the term, Tom found that the constraints of the timetable and the attitudes of the class teacher strongly affected what he was able to do. He was frustrated by the time and accommodation for music and in the end only taught a few lessons. It seemed impossible to change the system in the school whereby a specialist taught all the music.

In response to a question about the relative importance of experience and subject matter knowledge he showed growing understanding:

> subject knowledge reinforces your confidence in new situations but it can't by any means replace experience and trying things out in a co-operative and supportive way with other people . . . you need subject knowledge but you need organisation . . . you need to be able to build a web of things together till you get effective teaching.

In his first job he hoped to '*be awake to what's going on and to keep trying as best I can to keep abreast of changes . . . you've got to always build on what you've got to go to the next stage of development*'.

Discussion

The initial impetus for this research was to evaluate the effectiveness of the Foundation Arts course in giving 'generalist' non-specialist students a reasonable level of understanding and confidence to teach these subjects in school. Certainly the practical nature of the course appears, in the case of these students, to have been quite successful in doing this. However, music still suffers from its élitist image. The discussion looks at how music fared in comparison to students' confidence in other arts subjects and seeks to identify factors that influence this.

Prior experience and beliefs

Calderhead (1988) observed that students' schooling can be a powerful influence on their emerging practice but that the influence is not consistent across all students. Dance was the subject that they and others had had least prior exposure to, either as learners or audiences. Without obvious preconceptions and fixed attitudes it appeared that they began their training to teach dance with a 'clean slate'. This compared sharply with their generally rather negative views of music. In art, approaches that enabled them to use the work of artists as models for techniques and ideas, avoided the anxieties surrounding 'teacher as performer' that seemed to be attached to music. For some it seemed that their own musical education may have contributed to the feeling that performance expertise

was paramount. It appeared that the more counterproductive experience they had had, the less successful the course was in instilling confidence in the students. Equally, many attitudes that the students held reflected those of some of the teachers with whom they worked. This sometimes meant that students who arrived in school eager to 'have a go' quickly lost their confidence when faced with a class teacher who lacked enthusiasm or expertise. They were more likely to hear teachers openly admitting to not teaching dance, drama or music (art less so) and handing it over with little planning guidance (apart from the use of schemes or schools broadcasts).

University course

The taught courses were generally well received and considered to be enjoyable and relevant. In the best instances they provided students with new-found understanding and enthusiasm as well as teaching ideas they felt confident to try in school (cf. Bramald *et al.*, 1995). Music was least successful in this respect, seeming to suffer most from the idea that there are 'rights' and 'wrongs' in music (one student likened the subject to maths). Students defined musical ability in terms of measurable and visible (or audible) skills. Unpacking prior beliefs seems to be a greater task for the music course. There is less of a mismatch for the other arts where there is less difference between students' prior experience and understanding, and what current practice proposes. Mills (1989) noted that 'confidence in students' potential to teach music needs to be communicated by the whole course, not just the music component' (p. 137).

Teaching ideas

Students felt less anxious when they chose teaching approaches and subject matter that carried the least risk of the teacher having to perform, create or demonstrate skills such as drawing, expressive movement, or singing.. They were most comfortable when they could re-create, quite accurately, an activity they had previously experienced. Students described lessons in which the techniques or ideas were demonstrated 'by proxy' or avoiding personal exposure (an artist's work, pre-learned dance steps, rhythm work using spoken words).

A greater focus on *children's* music-making (particularly in composing) rather than the teacher's also helped to make students less anxious about their own skills.

The teaching ideas that students most readily used and felt confident in were:

- ones they had positively experienced as learners themselves (i.e. on the university course);
- those which allowed them to adapt the task to their own level of skill;
- those with a clear organisational framework; and
- ones that reflected their own interests.

Tabachnik and Zeichner (1984) also found that students tended to cling to the 'latent culture' they brought with them into the classroom and lacked the confidence to implement new, preferred approaches.

Support and observation in school

All the students provided ample evidence of the central importance of observing and working with children in classroom settings with knowledgeable and supportive teachers. The response from children was often the most immediate and effective factor in motivating students to progress. Kagan (1992) also observed that pupils can be the most powerful agents in challenging students' previously held beliefs. When positive comments were made, the confidence of the students and their positive attitude towards teaching the subject increased dramatically. The support of a teacher and constructive feedback seemed to outweigh all other factors. Resources might be limited, subject knowledge flimsy, accommodation inadequate and anxiety levels high. However, none of these presented the obstacle to practice that the absence of encouragement and positive comments from a class teacher did.

This was an issue that faced even students who were arts specialists. They were often left to do what they liked, 'get on with it', with little real support or specialist input. This could offer great freedom to experiment and take risks, but equally there was no mediation, or constructive feedback. Students rapidly began to lose confidence and started to feel de-skilled. Confidence in student teachers is a fragile structure, easily damaged through neglect as much as through unconstructive criticism. The class teachers' role in nurturing confidence is perhaps not always fully acknowledged within partnerships. The 'cognitive apprenticeship' model of learning (Brown *et al.*, 1989) is likely to contribute significantly to developing students' professional self-esteem.

The advice and support of other students should not be underestimated. McNamara (1995) revealed that a knowledgeable friend or teaching partner could provide well-matched and accessible ideas. Student teachers sometimes felt more comfortable about sharing worries about subject knowledge and teaching plans with their peers, than with more authoritative figures.

Opportunities to teach

Independent practice takes time to develop and not only needs the 'situated' and 'authentic' context of school (Brown *et al.*, 1989) but the opportunity to teach these particular subjects in a sustained way. For students and novice teachers, the understanding of how to teach seems dependent on the particular characteristics of a subject. The subject matter knowledge, and practical, management skills required tend to obscure any possible pedagogical commonalties that a more experienced and confident teacher might apply to different teaching situations.

For instance, Tom's teaching of dance, and to some extent music, was, by the fourth year, showing responsiveness, professional reflection and imagination. He was one of a few students who taught an arts subject regularly throughout both placements. His confidence, as a result of substantial experience, motivated him to *ask* to teach dance and contributed to his ability to teach in a responsive way. It is noticeable that those who had less sustained experience were more preoccupied with their teaching performance: managing activities and controlling children's behaviour. They were also less assertive in asking to teach certain subjects and more dependent on the active support of their class teacher.

The research project

An important factor to be mentioned, finally, is the impact of participation in this research study on these students' attitudes, teaching activity and development. At various points over the three years they remarked on the positive effect this had had in motivating them to plan for teaching the arts, to ask questions about the arts curriculum when making preliminary visits to placements, and to think and reflect on their beliefs and developing practice.

Raising expectations of activity and thinking by some kind of special attention is a useful strategy. We purposely did not set out to focus particularly on the quality of students' teaching in the arts; there has to be *some* experience established, be it unremarkable, before notions of good teaching can develop.

We would argue that the situation with teaching the arts is not wholly to do with the nature of the arts themselves but to do with their marginal status in the curriculum. Students have less contact as observers and teachers with these subjects than most others. History and geography might also suffer but students seldom worry about being able to manage the teaching of these. It is, understandably, the practical management of music and the other arts that initially presents an obstacle and a preoccupation. The subject specific 'knowledge' related to teaching the arts is, in the student teachers' mind, very bound up with how a practical music lesson actually happens: seating arrangements, organisation and distribution of instruments, controlling noise levels and behaviour. In art lessons the control of materials, especially working areas, paint, water and glue, are uppermost in the beginning teacher's mind, as well has how to make sure that every child has a 'product' at the end of the lesson. It is worth considering that the children's lack of exposure to such activities may have exacerbated some of these problems. Sometimes a student initiates practical work that children have not experienced in a regular and routine way. Their reactions can, as a result, be exuberant and difficult for an inexperienced teacher to contain. Whatever model of teacher training is being used it is clear from this research that without models of even quite average practice, visible and audible support for the arts curriculum in schools and sustained opportunities to teach, it is difficult to see how students are to develop.

The arts are special, but not so special that they should be rarely seen. Music does seem to present some particular difficulties for students and teachers alike, largely a product of the way musical behaviour and ability are traditionally defined and assessed. Whilst we still meet students who see themselves as 'failures' or 'unmusical', ITE courses and their partner schools need to work actively and overtly to restore and develop student teachers' musical confidence. Regular engagement, positive feedback and high expectations are the obvious, yet often neglected, factors which will do this.

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