

Editorial

The articles in this issue encompass topics that range from the musical behaviours of primary school children in Singapore, to the use of podcasting in an undergraduate programme in Wolverhampton, UK, and from the musical role models of secondary school children in Stoke-on-Trent (also in the UK), to the impact of the social and cultural context on school music education in Hong Kong. This issue also brings together articles that explore how university music students develop skills as instrumental and vocal teachers and reconsiders how musical skills can form a meaningful relationship with music education research. These articles, taken together, reflect the richness and diversity of contemporary music education research and the range of contexts in which it takes place. How should music educators respond to the changing tapestry of cultural themes and diversity which underpin the field of music education?

Such diversity was mirrored in the recent highly successful research symposium – *Teacher Research: Making a Difference in Music Education?* – which took place at the University of Cambridge, Faculty of Education last November as part of the 25th anniversary celebrations of the founding of the BJME. We welcomed distinguished speakers from across the UK and the USA, as well as practising teachers engaged in research, to consider the role of teacher research from a range of perspectives. The occasion was honoured by the presence of all past BJME editors including the founding editors: the esteemed music educator and composer, John Paynter, and the author of a number of seminal books on music and music education, Keith Swanwick. This issue begins with a report of this inspiring event.

It is entirely appropriate that an account of such an occasion, which looked at the role of teacher research in improving and enriching music education, should be followed by an article, *Research education shaped by musical sensibilities*, which considers the under-explored area of how musical skills can contribute to music education research within a qualitative research paradigm. However, as the author, Liora Bresler, points out, this is ‘... not about the simple transfer of music skills to research. Rather the focus is on the cultivation of affective, cognitive and embodied ways of doing and being prevalent in musicianship in a qualitative research context’. She argues that one of the challenges of qualitative-based research is to be able to empathetically engage with the object of the research whilst avoiding falling into habitual patterns of perception. In the course of her stimulating article she explores different ways in which we engage with and perceive music, giving particular attention to the processes involved in improvisation. The article concludes with an elaboration of how she applies these ideas in her own teaching. Here, she provides some valuable examples of reflective practices for research students to ‘form an intensified relationship with what they study, getting beyond their habitual ways of seeing and hearing’.

The next two articles both address children’s engagement with music in their daily lives. In an ethnographic study of *Musical behaviours of primary school children in Singapore*, Lum observes and identifies details of the musical behaviour and engagement (their musicking) of a class of Singaporean children during a typical school day. He demonstrates the multifarious ways in which the children deploy music and musical devices in the daily activities through the use of rhythmic play. Ivaldi and O’Neill – *Talking privilege: barriers to musical attainment in adolescents’ talk of musical role models* – explore how

adolescents 'construct the notion of social status and 'being privileged' through their talk about musician role models'. Their findings include the fact that when presented with different role models young people's talk focuses primarily on the 'category to which they do not belong, rather than their affiliation with their own subculture'. The perception of privilege is not located in the playing of an instrument as such, but rather in the types of expertise the musicians demonstrate and the connotations that these have in terms of social identity and distinctions.

The following pair of articles focus on undergraduate students, firstly as teachers and then as learners. Teaching one's instrument (including voice) has long been perceived by music students as a useful financial safety net which can support them during their studies and as they begin their careers as performers and composers whilst, at the same time, offering useful musical experiences. Liz Haddon, in *Instrumental and vocal teaching: how music students learn to teach*, explores the attitudes of nine undergraduate students involved in such teaching, including what they consider to be the important qualities of a successful teacher and also their 'understanding of some of the key concepts in teaching and learning'. She finds that few students receive or actively seek out any formal training or support for their teaching roles, relying instead on their remembered experiences of their own teachers. Consequently their teaching can be unimaginative and fail to meet the individual needs and aspirations of those being taught.

In *Sociopolitical culture and school music education in Hong Kong*, Ho and Law employ a mixed method design to examine students' and teachers' attitudes towards multi-cultural music education and in particular, the extent to which Chinese music and other musical cultures are integrated within teachers' music education practices in Hong Kong.

The very ubiquity of iPods has, somewhat paradoxically perhaps, led music educators to underestimate their potential as tools for supporting teaching and learning. The final article 'A tutor in your back pocket' describes a research project from the University of Wolverhampton, which explores the potential of iPods and podcasting for supporting undergraduate students within a popular music degree programme. The project first considered ways in which iPods and podcasting might enhance module delivery whilst at the same time supporting students in developing the necessary technological skills for engaging with them. Materials and resources were then developed for dissemination via iPods and podcasts and students asked to use these as a means both of supporting learning and through which assessments could be submitted. The project was evaluated using structured interviews which focused on key questions such as whether podcasts could become a replacement for conventional lectures and seminars and the extent to which they could enrich the more traditional pedagogical processes.

In his contribution to the past editors' perspectives in the previous and celebratory issue of this journal, Keith Swanwick remarks that 'It is perhaps in the reviews that professional debate has become most evident' (2008: 231). This issue's book reviews section continues such debates, and in covering topics ranging from secondary school and instrumental teaching to ethnomusicology and music and the brain, reflects once more the diversity of concerns and wide-ranging interests of those involved in music education.

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Reference

SWANWICK, K. (2008) 'Reflection, theory and practice', *British Journal of Music Education*, 25 (3), 223–232.