

Editorial

It is taken almost for granted that when one hears the words age-related responses, singing, gender stereotypical behaviour, and educational quality in music education, what will follow in the next sentence is a reference to issues of concern in music education. At the forefront of this issue, however, are positive ideas and innovative practice where pupils gain a different perspective on music. As well as supporting music learning, the implication here seems to be about the potential to make music pedagogy radically different and thus to help increase pupils' confidence and motivation. One of the central tasks of music education, and a key issue that emerges in this collection of five articles by eight authors, is the potential that music has to provide opportunities for musical participation and how this in turn increases the effectiveness of education.

A particular view is constructed on the development of age-related changes in musical preferences in elementary (or primary) school children by Reinhard Kopiez and Marco Lehmann. From within the educational context of Germany, we learn how a quantitative study of 'open-earedness' (defined as 'the tolerance towards unconventional musical styles') utilised a sound questionnaire to measure the aesthetic reactions to music in elementary school children. Several interesting explanations for the decline of open-earedness between different age groups are offered.

Advocacy on the potential use of singing in music education is well documented. However, studies conducted in settings seeking to promulgate a psychological view of pre-pubertal children possessing speech and voice disorders remain relatively rare. An important study by Tiija Rinta from Finland/UK reports on the impact of singing on children's psychological state with children from a British school and children in a Finnish School. The findings show that singing has a positive effect on children's overall vocal functioning and well-being. Tiija suggests that children would benefit from a curriculum which focuses on and takes every opportunity to make connections using singing as a means of developing vocal functioning.

The third paper moves into university studies with a focus on the content of instrumental lessons and gender relations from within five Australian higher education institutions. Katie Zhukov employs observation techniques to investigate the priorities of topics explored in advanced instrumental lessons. Stereotypical gender behaviour among the teachers and towards their students is identified. She utilises a large number of categories of observed behaviour, reporting only on the results for lesson content to demonstrate the different insights that can be obtained from teacher verbal utterance and physical action and the frequencies in each category. A call for future research to consider gender implications in all aspects of music teaching and for the importance of topics being taught in higher education and their power to reveal attitudes associated with stereotypical male and female roles in teaching is well considered.

With increasing demands to meet higher standards of educational quality and more explicit measures of accountability in higher education sectors, the directions and strategies

for judging educational quality remain unexplored research territory. We are only beginning to learn about the mismatches between teacher and student situative perspectives on learning and teaching effectiveness. Cecilia Ferm and Geir Johansen report interesting research from Norway from which questions emerge about the need to rethink teacher–student relationships, and suggests that teachers must have rich and flexible knowledge of the subjects they teach. They must understand the central facts and concepts of the music discipline, and how these well-specified pedagogical ideas are best put into practice and informed by theory.

Reporting on a fascinating project involving peer learning in professional conducting, Brydie-Leigh Bartleet and Ralph Hultgren produce some of the most engaging reflections on and explorations of the value of research involving peer learning and do so in part by shaping partnership on the podium. A video exemplar offering supplementary viewing of data will be made available on the BJME homepage: journals.cambridge.org/bjme.

Taken together this set of papers and book reviews share and seek some new approaches and new directions for music educational research that take us closer to the work and lives of teachers and students. They offer vivid accounts of a varied array of methodologies ranging from sound questionnaires to the use of narrative accounts, with implications for classroom teachers, music therapists, university lecturers, policy makers and researchers. The provocation that they offer to researchers and practitioners is to acknowledge and build upon new ways of thinking about learning and teaching music and how these might be facilitated and supported by new developments in research.

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