THE PROBLEMATICS OF PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE PRIMARY CLASS TEACHER AND THE VISITING MUSICIAN: POWER AND HIERARCHY IN THE PURSUIT OF DIALOGIC RELATIONSHIP

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Abstract

Conceived in response to earlier research confirming the consistent and long-standing trend of low musical confidence among primary school teachers in the United Kingdom, this study examines the concept of partnership between class teachers and visiting musicians within the primary music classroom. From the dual perspectives of music educator and ethnographic researcher, I investigate dynamics of power and hierarchy present within the primary class teacher and visiting 'specialist' musician relationship, which is a typical aspect of current music education teaching practice. Using Christopher Small's concept of musicking, issues of expertise, talent or giftedness, musical identity, musical confidence and power within the teacher/musician relationship are closely examined. In turn, through study of a programme of collegial classroom musicking, I seek to trial and propose a specific model of dialogic partnership for music education within the primary school that aims to disrupt the continuing cycle of low musical confidence among primary teachers which, in turn, affects their attitudes to teaching music and to their perceptions of musicality among the children whom they are teaching.

Dedicated to the memories of my Grandmothers,
Ivy Rose Trenholm and Gwendoline Eva Regan.

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Prologue

Mid-July 1996, Fiji

The conductor raises his arms to gain the undivided attention of the one hundred and fifty young choristers. They are seated in four rows forming a semi-circular arc within the rustic ceramic tiled and wooden clad hotel function room. The eager and focused young singers look up at the conductor, fall silent, straighten their backs, raise their scores and await his instruction. He surveys his audience and having ascertained their collective readiness, gives them an upbeat. With his downward stroke, they begin to sing together in eight parts with practised expertise. I am seated in the second row of the first soprano section. I stare in panic and without comprehension at the music in my hands. My mouth moves yet very few notes emerge. The music, a contemporary composition, specially commissioned for this choir and about to have its world premiere is fiendishly difficult with tricky text, unusual intervals, complex rhythms and constantly changing time signatures. This is the first time any of us have seen this piece, yet all of the other members of this elite youth choir seem to be sight-reading it with relative ease. Apart from the audition to win my place here, in which I made terrible errors and numerous promises to try and improve, I have never had to sight sing under pressure and without help before. In my choir at home, we are taught pieces aurally, using the score only as a guide to maximize inclusion of as many young singers as possible. I am so terrified of being exposed as unable to read the piece and the subsequent ridicule that might follow that any chance of making sense of the music slips rapidly past as each bar is sung. I draw inward, allowing my long hair to cover my face and my shame as I clumsily attempt to make use of my stronger aural skills by listening to those around me. I try to sing whatever they do, a fraction of a second later, in the hope of avoiding discovery by my peers, or even worse, the esteemed conductor. I am fifteen years old, far from home, out of both my musical and social depth and I feel a total failure. My former triumph at singing my way from my northern, English home town in which I attend a comprehensive school and an informal children's choir, into this prestigious national choir on this world tour of a lifetime collapses into misery, fear and panic.

December 2006, Gateshead

Dr Rose[1] welcomes the three primary teachers to the singing training session and introduces me and Jane[2] to them, adding that we will be the musicians who will work together with them once the music project begins. She pours us each a cup of tea and encourages us to take some chocolate cake. We sit in a circle in one corner of the large room, around a bright green plastic children's table. The room we are meeting in is within a newly opened, prestigious concert hall. The rest of the building is monochrome, all black granite floors and white walls, encased within an impressive steel and glass dome. This room in contrast however, is designated for the music education of young children and is decorated with brightly coloured soft furnishings. Drums and tuned percussion instruments line the shelves and friendly-faced soft toys sit upon squashy beanbags in the main portion of the room. A smiley faced elephant looks down benevolently on our meeting from a garish wall hanging. This room is very familiar to me. For the past two years I have taught music classes in here for children under the age of five and their families. Dr Rose invites us to stand, again in a circle, and she teaches us several songs that we might use when we work together next term. She provides sheet music but also teaches us each song aurally, breaking them down into simple call and response phrases that we can repeat and absorb. I feel wonderful. As the most 'experienced' of the musicians present (with the exception of Dr Rose herself) and learning new repertoire in the way that suits my musical skills best, I am thoroughly enjoying the training session. I feel excited about the project upon which we are collectively about to embark and I like and respect my new mentor, Dr Rose, feeling 'safe' under her guidance. She has ensured all of our respective musical skills are accounted for by providing sheet music but teaching each song in manageable sections. The abundance of sweet treats provided has given me a very positive association with her, my new project colleagues and the repertoire being learned. I look across the room at my colleague Jane and see that she too is singing with enthusiasm. Amanda, the most experienced of the three teachers is also singing along, contributing ideas for how these activities might work best with the children she teaches. Kathryn, a teacher with a few years of teaching experience is less animated but joins in and agrees with the points that Amanda makes. Sally however, a newly qualified teacher, looks often to Kathryn for reassurance. She sings

[1] Pseudonym for the lead research designer.

[2] 'Jane', 'Amanda', 'Kathryn' and 'Sally' are also pseudonyms.

along quietly but does not actively engage. She shifts her weight from foot to foot and remains withdrawn throughout the remainder of the training session.

These two contrasting accounts of my youthful experience of music education and later as an emerging music educator illuminate the key significance of *confidence* in relation to musical identity and the feeling that one possesses musical ability. They also highlight the potential harm to burgeoning musical confidence that can result from notions of 'talent' and the continued prevalence of the traditions of Western classical music within our music education system. Western classical high art music and the conventions that it entails create strong barriers, both real and perceived, for those who have received little or no instruction in it, creating a divide (which is arguably related to class, issues of cultural capital and socio-economic status) between those who have been instructed in and understand music and are therefore, 'musical', and those for whom it remains a mystery. In the case of the latter, their lack of knowledge and subsequent perceived lack of musical ability is often assumed to be the result of a lack of talent or giftedness and for many, this can become a source of embarrassment and to some degree, shame.

This thesis and the research presented within in it seeks to challenge assumptions of what it means to be 'musical'. Based on a commitment to the notion of 'universal musicality' inspired by the work of the music philosopher and educationalist Christopher Small, I have set out through my work with primary class teachers to explore the teaching of music in primary schools, subverting notions of musical talent and attempting to increase the musical confidence of primary school teachers through the development of a model of dialogic partnership.

In the following introductory chapter, I introduce the circumstances and experiences that led to the development and implementation of my own research by describing my involvement in the music education project briefly referred to in the second narrative account given above. The recent historical account given now of that project provides a close examination of my first experience of classroom research, and how my own subsequent practice as researcher was influenced by the insights gained.

Chapter One: The 'Music Potential' project - a recent historical account of a primary school based music education research project

1.1 Introduction – The Music Potential project

Some years ago, I was involved in a research project, designed and reported on by others[3], that explored collegial ways of working between primary teachers and musicians in order to raise teacher confidence in music teaching. My roles in this particular project were several: visiting musician to the two participating schools; co-researcher, together with the (four) other teachers and musicians involved: and – importantly for the discussion that follows here – as a research participant *being researched*.

My professional experience up to the point of participating in this first research study had been as an early years musician with three years' experience in making music with children aged 0-4 years in pre-school settings. My role also included supporting parents, carers, teachers and early years professionals to feel confident about musicking[4] with young children through the provision of training, modeling pedagogy and creating resources such as songbooks and CDs.

The invitation to be involved in this project was extended by the project leader Anna[5], a colleague of mine at the time, along with the research designer and consultant, Dr Rose a leading music educator based at a local university. My interest in the study grew upon meeting Dr Rose and hearing of her intention that I would be part of a co-research team comprised of the teachers, musicians and researchers.

This invitation to 'do' research appealed to me at this point in my professional life as I was keen to be involved in research and saw this project and the opportunity to work

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[3] The culminating report was unpublished and I do not cite it directly within this thesis in the interests of protecting the anonymity of participants.

[4] I use here Christopher Small's neologism 'musicking', which he coined in order to direct attention to the act of *doing* music, conceiving 'music' principally as verb rather than noun. (Small 1998b)

[5] Pseudonym.

alongside Dr Rose as an opportunity to put my academic ambitions to use in the field of music, a field I had always wanted to and intended to work within but wasn't quite brave enough to enter during my late adolescence.

This reticence to pursue my professional musical ambitions was heavily influenced by the pressurized experience of being part of an elite youth choir, described in the Prologue. Post A-Level, I had hoped to go to music college and train to be an opera singer, but I found that many of my chorister peers were applying and auditioning unsuccessfully. Reflecting back upon this period, I recall a truly visceral fear that arose from the choral experience recounted in my 'story' above, of the possibility of rejection and negative judgment of my singing voice and musical capability. Although I felt sure that my voice was 'good' enough and that my technical singing and performance skills would likely pass muster, I was terrified of failing auditions because of my inadequate sight singing and theory skills. In reaction to this fear, I chose to apply to attend a mainstream university to study English Literature, a subject in which I could safely excel, rather than study music at all. This was a subject I had been formally assessed in and been successful many times and therefore I felt confident in my abilities and could proceed without risk to confidence or pride. This seemingly incongruous choice of undergraduate course in comparison to my ambition was a direct result of my lack of confidence in my own musical abilities and this is something to which I will make repeated reference later in this thesis as a crucially significant point of shared experience with the primary school teachers with whom I have been working in my research.

Throughout my university years however, I remained musically active, taking subsidiary modules in music performance skills, performing as soloist for local orchestras and choirs and finally, choosing to undertake Masters research on gender and music. I enjoyed the research and writing elements of my Masters course immensely and missed using those skills in my practical work in music education, a field I at last felt confident to enter once I had reached my mid-twenties when I began working within an organization that prioritized teaching skills far above the quality of one's sight singing capabilities. Therefore, given my own experiences of the negative effects of faltering musical confidence, Dr Rose's research focus, the lack of musical confidence of primary teachers, interested me greatly. Entering into the project, I

found that the support of Dr Rose and the project co-researchers considerably boosted both my musical and academic confidence.

I proceed now to give greater detail about the design, implementation and findings of this first project. I will also explore the challenges I encountered and knowledge gained from participating within it and how these influenced and informed the design of my own later research.

1.1.1 Impetus for the Music Potential project

This first project was conceived in response to a 2006 study carried out by Holden and Button, who surveyed the attitudes about music teaching and pre-service music training of 71 'non-specialist' primary teachers (Holden and Button, 2006: 23) from 12 schools within one Local Education Authority situated in the north-east of England.

Holden and Button's findings provided evidence of a pervading lack of confidence among teachers to teach music at primary level, owing mainly to a lack of training and on-going support. While this study was limited to one region, its findings taken together with other literature and research centring on similar issues (Mills, 1994, McCullough, 2005, Wiggins and Wiggins, 2008, Welch and Henley, 2014) indicate a general trend across the United Kingdom that has existed at least since the early 1990s. Holden and Button suggested that:

> The implication is that while teachers are confident in their own pedagogical skills, they are less secure with music subject matter, content and knowledge. (Holden and Button, 2006: 36).

In addition to highlighting the number of teachers who possessed low confidence in their own music teaching skills, Holden and Button's research also considered solutions in order to improve teacher confidence by asking the teachers what support they found to be most useful in terms of improving their ability and confidence to teach music. Reporting on the teacher responses to their survey they state:

> The survey response indicates a strong preference (58%) for in-class support by a music specialist […] Class teachers interviewed spoke in favour of in-class support, describing a difference in children's music since receiving this form of assistance,

> and how a different teacher can stimulate activity […] Partnership teaching is a way of working together, sharing ideas and encouraging teacher confidence. Although in-class support from a music coordinator was the least frequently received, this was identified as the preferred resource above all other forms of training. (Holden and Button, 2006: 35)

The following recommendations were made by Holden and Button to effect positive changes for teachers teaching music in primary schools:

> It is suggested that senior management consider instigating a collegial strategy, to allow collaboration and cooperation to be improved between the music and non-music specialist. We believe an approach of this kind may foster mutual trust and lead to the professional growth of the non-music specialist. However, this assumes that a music specialist is available in each school, which we know is not always true. In these cases, there is perhaps a need for music consultants to support teachers in musical pedagogy and practical ideas. (Holden and Button, 2006: 36)

Employing these recommendations as a starting point and as compelling evidence of an issue meriting further study, Dr Rose's research project sought to extend this area of enquiry by exploring the collegial partnerships suggested by Holden and Button. We also hoped to examine the ways in which the relationship between primary school teacher and visiting musician or music consultant might be understood, developed and enhanced in order that children's 'musical potential' (Holden and Button, 2006: 37) would be best realized.

The inclusive idea of musical potential as presented by Holden and Button as opposed to the more exclusive notion of musical talent was quickly seized upon by the teachers and musicians involved in our new research project and this term came to be adopted as the working title of the project by a consensus of opinion within the first few weeks of working together. I will now use the title 'Music Potential' to denote this initial project for reasons of clarity.

1.1.2 Implementation of the Music Potential project

The Music Potential project was carried out over six months in two phases, the first in the spring term of 2007, preceded by the music training session described within the Prologue, and the second phase in the subsequent summer term. The findings of the initial three-month phase of the project were presented in an evaluative report written by two external researchers who observed eleven sessions during the first phase. The

research was undertaken in two participating schools in the north east of England dubbed in the report as 'School Rural' and 'School Urban', pseudonyms I will retain here in the interests of anonymity.

1.1.3 A community of practice

All the participating adults in the project were committed to improving their pedagogical skills, both musically and in general terms in order to optimize the music education of the children involved, and for future groups of children in the interests of the study's legacy. This commitment, in addition to the collaborative nature of our approach, the process of exploring and negotiating ways of working and the resultant collective learning among the musicians and teachers lent themselves to Wenger's concept of 'communities of practice' (Wenger, 1998), according to this definition:

> Communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly.
> (Wenger 2006: 1)

In what follows, I will draw substantially upon Wenger's conception for my initial framing of the research described.

Wenger attributes three characteristics to communities of practice to distinguish them from other communities, such as neighbourhoods, that are not practice-based and where shared pursuit of knowledge is usually not taking place.

The first characteristic of a true community of practice according to Wenger is 'the domain', which he describes as the identity of a community defined by shared interest and a shared competence that separates the members of the community from others. The second characteristic is 'the community' who, in pursuit of their shared interest in the domain, build relationships with one another by participating in joint action and discussion, supporting and encouraging each other, sharing information and skills and interacting with one another in order to learn. The final characteristic of a community of practice is 'the practice' itself. In addition to their shared interest, the members of the community of practice must be practitioners in their domain as we, the teachers and musicians all were, developing 'a shared repertoire of resources, experiences, stories, tools, ways of addressing recurring problems' (Wenger 2006: 1). Wenger adds

that the development of such shared repertoire and resource takes constant interaction between participants over an extended period of time:

> Over time, this collective learning results in practices that reflect both the pursuits of our enterprises and the attendant social relations. These practices are thus the property of a kind of community created over time by a sustained pursuit of a shared enterprise. It makes sense therefore, to call these kinds of communities *communities of practice*. (Wenger, 1998: 45)

I turn now to portray the development of our own community of practice by describing how the teachers and musicians worked together over the period of two academic terms.

The Domain

The domain was the shared interest between the teachers and musicians in improving primary teacher confidence in music teaching in order to increase all children's musical potential. In pursuit of this goal, the domain also included exploration and 'testing' of various ways of working together in the collegial model recommended in Holden and Button's study (2006). Our community of practice had a shared identity from the outset of the project as a result of our common wider practice in the field of primary education and we all had shared pedagogical competencies, although these were not necessarily in the same subject areas.

The Community

Our community was comprised of three primary teachers and two musicians, myself included. On the periphery of this community were the two field researchers Researcher A and Researcher B[6], Anna, the project leader and Dr Rose, the project designer and consultant. These peripheral members shared our interest in the domain, the project purpose itself, and were all, collectively, instrumental in its creation. I would argue however, that it was solely Dr Rose who participated in the actual practice of the community through her facilitation of the initial singing training described earlier and the discussion sessions that she provided for the teachers and musicians to introduce and familiarize us with the project and its aims. These took the

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[6] Pseudonyms for the external field researchers adopted to enable free discussion of what transpired during the project from my perspective.

form of one initial discussion and introductory meeting between Dr Rose, the three teachers and two musicians, one session for singing and suggested repertoire training for the same participants, and one half-day demonstration session in the two classrooms in School Urban. In this practice-based classroom session, the musicians observed Dr Rose leading singing with children with the support of one of the teachers in order to see and experience some aspects of pedagogy and to gain some further ideas about the style of repertoire that might be used for the research project.

I would note here that the labeling of one project participant as 'teacher' and another as 'musician' already tends to create a hierarchical imbalance based on perceived deficits or possession of musical knowledge and skill, perhaps even risking perpetuating the very attitudes that this project and my subsequent work aimed to dispel, namely, the belief that to teach music effectively you must be a musician and therefore, 'musical'[7]. I acknowledge this dilemma in my use of these two terms 'teacher' and 'musician', which I nevertheless employ to distinguish between professionals and their respective roles, but hope to move away from the attendant notions of hierarchy. In any case, I have used pseudonyms throughout not only for reasons of preserving anonymity, but also to evoke a flavour of the human relationships and striving for equal partnership in this first project and then in my subsequent research.

In School Rural we worked in Amanda's Reception class of 19 children. Amanda was an experienced teacher and had been involved in other music projects prior to this one. She sang daily with her class and played the guitar, but was still unsure about the quality of her singing voice. In School Urban, the research was undertaken in Sally and Kathryn's Year One classrooms, each containing approximately 30 children. At the beginning of the project, Sally, a newly qualified teacher, described herself as coming from a 'musical family'. She had played the violin as a child, although she did not recall ever actually enjoying playing the instrument, describing this as a 'lack of enjoyment' that led to a 'lack of doing' (Bremner, 2013: 100[8]). However, she was

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[7] Researchers A and B used 'teacher' and 'musician' in their writing up of the Music Potential study in order to denote respective roles in a way that seemed to accept rather than challenge any inherent 'hidden' meanings as I eventually sought to do in my own later work.

[8] I give here the correct reference for 'Sally's' comment, from her published chapter in a Music Education anthology, but retain my own pseudonym for her.

unsure about singing with her class of children, particularly in the presence of other adults and had been negatively affected by a detrimental comment from a child about her singing voice not being 'nice'.

In a later written account of her perspective of the first singing training session with Dr Rose, the one described in the Prologue and in which I myself felt so affirmed, Sally describes feelings of inadequacy, anxiety and shame that mirror my own earlier account of sight-reading in the youth choir. She recalls:

> I was looking forward to having a music specialist coming in to teach singing to my class, but was terrified at the thought of actually having to teach singing in front of them. I felt very strongly that I did not possess the singing voice that would allow me to teach singing competently. This feeling continued at the next meeting…During this session we sang in a circle with our shoes off. I remember singing quietly so that no one could hear my voice, while the others appeared to sing with confidence and enthusiasm – the way that this confidence 'oozed' from one of the other generalists in particular intensified my insecurities. I know from documentary evidence that we were taught some basic singing techniques and some songs that we could use as initial repertoire. However, my recollection of this session is dominated by my feelings of insecurity. Singing like the specialists seemed an impossible task and I could not empathize with their confidence. My perception of them was that they were 'musicians', while I was not, and that only being a musician enabled you to teach music effectively. Conversely, not being a musician meant that you could not. This insecurity and apprehension appears to have overridden any sense of learning during this session on my part. (Bremner, 2013: 83-84)

Sally's account not only resonates with my own experience of being out of my musical depth aged fifteen, it also brings into sharp relief the seriousness of low teacher musical confidence along with the powerful potential for change that music education research can bring about. When the project first commenced, Sally could not conceive of herself as being a 'musician' and therefore as able to teach music well. Her lack of confidence in her own musical ability, despite the five or so years in which she studied the violin, impeded her ability to be able to take advantage of advice and training, so severe was the distress that she experienced. She viewed herself as being so far down in the strata of musical hierarchy that even the benevolent Dr Rose was unable to assist her in gaining confidence at first.

The third teacher, Kathryn, was also reticent about singing in her classroom and elsewhere, especially in the company of other adults that she perceived as being competent singers (stated by Kathryn in discussion with Dr Rose).

Jane and I visited each school weekly for a half-day during the two phases of the project to ensure continuity and engender familiarity between the children and us. As the more experienced of the two musicians involved, my role included providing encouragement in music teaching terms to Jane, who, at that point had only a few months experience as a musician working in schools but long experience of informal music making within the folk tradition.

The Practice

In the earliest weeks of the project, I was mainly concerned with eliciting positive responses and levels of engagement from the children and teachers. The music activities I was leading focused mainly on singing activities and would typically include simple songs, both new and familiar, vocal play and cooperative singing activities such as playing and singing with sheets of Lycra fabric to promote group singing, movement, pulse and rhythm development and cooperation. All activities were chosen and devised by Jane and me in addition to the repertoire Dr Rose had taught us earlier, while mindfully incorporating ideas from the children and teachers, with the aim of engaging the children and enabling the teachers to successfully lead them in our absence.

The work in which I had been previously involved placed high emphasis on ensuring *children's* enjoyment of and participation in music making. However, from informal discussions with the teachers and Jane, and from my own observations of what was happening when we all worked together, it became increasingly apparent that the most interesting developments were occurring and might occur further in terms of the *teacher*s' own 'musical self-esteem' (Mills, 1994: 6), a term which I use here to encompass teachers' confidence to teach and lead music in their classrooms, the development of their own musical interests and technical skill, but most importantly, the development of their own belief and ability to claim that they are themselves 'musical'. We seemed to be exemplifying a point made by Mills:

> If self-esteem is good for children, then it seems likely that it is good for teachers teaching music. Teachers with musical self-esteem can, like those who help children compile their Records of Achievement, enable less confident colleagues to develop it…Through music consultancy, rather than specialist music teaching, a more positive cycle of musical confidence can be generated. Children become the teachers of tomorrow. The musical self-esteem of teachers will, progressively, rise. (Mills, 1994: 5-6)

The approach of our community of practice closely replicated the consultancy method described in the above citation and also in the recommendations made by Holden and Button, as previously discussed. This, along with the strategies put forward by Mills, and by Holden and Button, all draw upon the Vygotskian premise of 'scaffolded' learning. Although not a term directly used by Vygotsky himself, the metaphor of 'scaffolding' has been adopted by scholars of his work to describe effective teaching and learning within the Vygotskian 'Zone of Proximal Development' where the child is supported (or scaffolded) in their learning and development by their social environment (Berk and Winsler, 2002: 26).

Daniels describes scaffolding as:

> A form of adult assistance that enables a child or novice to solve a problem, carry out a task or achieve a goal which would be beyond his unassisted efforts. (Daniels, 2001: 107)

Most scholars of Vygotsky's theories discuss them in relation to adult-child teaching and learning relationships. However, as Daniels suggests, a scaffolded approach can also be usefully employed in order to develop the skills and learning of a *novice*. It was this more collaborative approach to scaffolding that the musicians and teachers used in the initial weeks of the project, a way of working together in which Jane and I modeled vocal activities and repertoire to engage the children in singing and other musical activities for our project colleagues to observe. Then in turn, we observed them lead similar activities themselves after which we reviewed and discussed successes and areas for development for us all.

In addition to the musical responsibilities and activities described, the team of musicians and teachers was also tasked to act as researchers in the field, all agreeing

to keep reflective diaries to observations as the project progressed. We also consented to ensure almost constant review of the work by way of regular group discussions about the development of the teachers' musical self-esteem and the children's musical enjoyment and progress. These discussions quickly came to include on the development of the *musicians*' confidence and pedagogical skill to manage the children's contributions and behaviour. At this point, we began to diversify the initial approach of the musicians *teaching* the teachers and move toward more 'equal' ground in which respective classroom expertise and knowledge was increasingly freely offered and shared. Our approach now expanded upon and began to move beyond the music consultancy method proposed by Mills and by Holden and Button. We began to consider *all* of our respective expertise, not just the expertise of the musicians, and to include *all* participants, musician and teacher alike, to act as consultant and scaffold or conversely, novice when required. Previously nervous Sally recalls this shift in thinking and action as being profoundly transformative, stating:

> At the beginning, I was content to be an observer while the music specialist[9] led the sessions […] However, as the project progressed I started to become more involved in the singing sessions, co-leading and even leading them, and offering suggestions and opinions for subsequent sessions. The catalyst for my involvement was the positive encouragement offered by the specialist, and the reassurance that she was not there to judge or assess me. The development of a comfortable relationship meant that after approximately four weeks, I felt happy and secure enough to 'have a go'. As soon as I became actively involved in the sessions, the music specialist told me that I *could* sing, that I had good ideas, and that I was perfectly capable of teaching singing […] In doing this, the specialist gave me 'expert' status, and as a result, and further boosted by the skills and techniques that I was learning, my self-perception quickly started to change […] This confidence increased weekly and within approximately eight weeks of the project I was leading sessions both with and without the specialist present. My increase in confidence was likely to be a result of several factors, the most salient being the specific partnership model we were developing; feeling increasingly 'comfortable' in the relationship which was being formed meant that I was more likely to 'have a go' while quite sure that if I got something wrong it *did not matter*. I was also positioned as co-partner in the project, which allowed – in time – for a feeling of equality; the specialist was there to help me learn how to teach singing, while I could simultaneously impart some generalist teaching skills to her. (Bremner, 2013: 85)

It was in this repositioning of expertise and in the departure from traditional hierarchical notions of teacher and learner that we began to collectively break new

[9] I am the 'specialist' to which Sally refers.

ground within this first project. This move beyond mere music education consultancy informed the purpose of my own subsequent research, in which I tried to further develop and explore this kind of egalitarian classroom partnership.

What transpired then might be seen as a 'reciprocal' version of Janet Mills' consultancy model; but in this instance, the entire gamut of teaching skills, strategies and expertise were being modeled, shared and scaffolded in addition to music teaching skills, thus resituating all professional participants, musician and teacher *alike* as 'expert' and 'specialist' in their respective contributions.

This resituating of expertise is at odds with the more traditional perception and promotion within the educational field of primary teachers as 'generalist' and therefore multi-skilled, but nevertheless skilled to a lesser extent than a 'specialist.' I would argue that the terms 'generalist' and 'specialist' are inherently unhelpful, these labels creating an immediate imbalance of power stemming from possession or lack of knowledge, skill and expertise which serves to 'raise' the 'specialist' above the 'generalist', and thus to banish forever the possibility of equal partnership to effect positive change. Likewise the term 'non-specialist', as used by Holden and Button (2006), indicates none of the skill, in reality, that is *of course* possessed by the generalist. I suggest that the term 'partner', applied to *either* teacher or musician depending upon who is leading or advising in any particular context, might act as a more helpful term. In the Music Potential study, we held fast to the term 'partnership', in the act of giving professional advice and support, and found it more useful than any of the other terms discussed above. We agreed that there were many ways with which to approach music teaching, as opposed to one, 'correct' pedagogy and, began to explore different kinds of musicking with the children. This was particularly successful in Amanda's Reception classroom where there was less constraint in the form of curriculum targets and assessment and where it was also influenced by her commitment to child-led learning. This entailed the enabling of the children to contribute their ideas, thus enabling them also to become participants within our community of practice.[10]

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[10] It was in Amanda's classroom and with Sally as earlier cited, that the tenets of dialogic teaching and learning (Alexander, 2006) first became evident. I will explore the concept of dialogic teaching and

Throughout the project, I encouraged the other adult participants to review and critique my teaching as I was doing for theirs. This they did, especially as we became more familiar with one another, in the spirit of supporting me to better teach and engage the children. My project colleagues often suggested ideas for repertoire and insights into individual children's needs or interests, and this enhanced my ability to teach the children music and also my pedagogical skills more generally.

The reciprocal partnership approach was thus extremely enabling, but without this fundamental notion of reciprocity, it may well have reverted to the more typical consultancy model – with the musicians being the consultants and the teachers the passive recipients, in turn arguably more detrimental than helpful to the acquisition of music teaching skill. It may also serve to position the musician more firmly as 'expert' and teacher as 'deficit' or 'inexpert' thus threatening the equality of relationships within our community of practice. This project showed that such music partnerships are unlikely to 'work' unless there exists between the partners a real commitment to and understanding of the basic principle of viewing *both* teacher and musician as 'expert'. At the beginning of this project, as we can see from Sally's account, and again in my own later research, it proved very difficult indeed, despite the warmth of each relationship, to challenge the preconceptions and expectations of teachers, children (and even, to some extent, on my own part), in relation to *who* should be teaching music in classrooms, along with teacher's views of their own musical identities and abilities[11].

The importance of the establishment of a partnership in which one individual's respective skill or expertise will not deter the learning and development of another, is supported by McCullough's study of primary teachers' thinking about music within education, in which she found that the majority of teachers included in the study believed that in order to be musical one must have technical instrumental skills (McCullough, 2005: 221). Instrumental skills, within the range of which I include

learning in later chapters, describing how I came to utilize this concept in the development of a dialogic model of partnership for primary music education.

[11] This issue of pre-patterned responses in relation to primary music teaching is a crucial problem and point of tension within my own research and will be discussed in Chapters Four, Five and Six.

vocal skills, are impressive, and teachers and children enjoy the experience when a visiting musician demonstrates them. However, they have been developed over the course of time. These skills cannot be replicated easily or quickly by teachers who do not already possess them and so this demonstration can serve to further deter the teacher and perpetuate the widely held assumption that effective primary level music teaching requires a great deal of pre-acquired musical skill.

In my experience of supporting teachers within this project, I found that while they responded positively to my input, they were initially disheartened by their inability to match the quality of my trained singing voice. In the case of Sally, this was as a result of her acceptance of the notion of talent, causing her to believe that regardless of the amount of vocal practice and training she undertook, she would never be able to display vocal skills and the ability to teach and lead singing in her classroom as she had not been born a confident singer. In her own subsequent account, she explains:

> During these sessions I felt as though I was learning skills and techniques but still lacked confidence in my ability to do it myself. Perhaps this was because the specialist had the 'talent' of a wonderful singing voice, which was something that I did not possess. (Bremner, 2013: 103)

This presented me with an interesting challenge in terms of how to retain the quality of my singing and legitimacy of my professional skill and the many years I spent developing my voice, while simultaneously ensuring that I do not perpetuate pre-existing deficit perceptions held by teachers about their own musical abilities.

However, as we can see from Sally's earlier account cited to illustrate the effect of the partnership model on her self-perception of herself as musically able, by participating in this project and the resultant community of practice, Sally underwent a transformation in terms of her own perception of her singing voice, musical skill and the value of her own contributions to the project and pursuit of knowledge. In fact, Sally's 'story' and her transformation to become a teacher with musical self-esteem continued positively as she later undertook a Masters degree in music education under the tutelage of Dr Rose, writing her dissertation on this shift in self-perception and recasting herself as musically skilled and knowledgeable when working in partnership with less musically confident colleagues for her own research.

The 'partnership model' cited earlier by Sally as being salient in her ability to dramatically reverse her concept of her musical 'self', is synonymous with the reciprocal consultant model enabled by the development and existence of a community of practice. As Sally's 'story' tells us, unexpectedly during the course of the project, a repositioning occurred from that of teachers as 'generalist' and musicians as 'specialist' to an equal professional partnership and a community of practice that fits with Wenger's own definitions[12]. In addition to the raised confidence and skill of the teachers and Jane, the effect of my involvement in this project was a considerable improvement in my ability to employ positive behaviour management strategies and communicate effectively with young children, all of which combined to vastly improve my own professional skill and confidence.

1.1.4 Extending the Music Potential project: building a research study

The Music Potential project was the direct catalyst for the undertaking of my own later doctoral research. My own study was deliberately similarly designed in that it too was based in Key Stage One classrooms[13] and involved three teachers, all with varying lengths of teaching experience and on a spectrum of musical confidence, although they all confessed to being under-confident in relation to music teaching.

The co-researchers involved in the Music Potential project were excited by the transformation of their own professional practice and we agreed that further testing of our model of partnership should take place. This has formed the basis of my own research which sought to make the case for the usefulness of developing communities of practice and reciprocal learning partnerships within music education as a means to improve primary music teaching and the pedagogical skills of *both* specialist and generalist, with a particular emphasis on singing. Wenger states: 'Communities of practice allow us to see past more obvious formal structures' (Wenger 2006: 2) and my further research, grounded in my experience of the initial project, which now serves as a pilot study, has explored the notion that teachers and musicians working within communities of practice with defined reciprocal, equal and dialogic

[12] See 1.3 for Wenger's own definitions.
[13] Key Stage One is the National Curriculum learning stage for children aged 5-7 years in the United Kingdom.

foundations are enabled to circumvent real and perceived barriers caused as a result of the inherent hierarchies within music teaching as happened in the initial project described above. Consequently, I sought in the implementation of my own field study to replicate such a community of practice by employing these reciprocal, collegial and scaffolded approaches when working with teachers.

Key to this endeavour, and highlighted in Wenger's recommendations for the successful operation of communities of practice, is the amount of time allowed for the necessary working relationships to form and develop. The findings of the pilot project strongly suggested that both musicians and teachers felt that a positive and 'safe' relationship had been established between them after working together over a period of four weeks. Furthermore, a 'turning point' occurred at a point between six to eight weeks in to the project in which both musicians and teachers felt that a repositioning of expertise into a more balanced partnership. Crucially, this 'turning point' came after the departure of Researchers A and B, who had observed a number of our musicking sessions in the first six weeks, following up with each of us in individual interviews in order to write an evaluative report on the project for its funders. The effect that the presence of Researchers A and B had on the beginnings of the project and on the musical self-esteem of the teachers *and* the musicians will be discussed in detail in Chapter Three in relation to research methods, and issues of hierarchy in research, along with decisions that I made about my own research in relation to ethics and validity influenced by the experience of being observed by external field researchers. However, I note this briefly here to highlight that the partnership model between teachers and musicians started to flourish only once the observations of activity had ended, loaded as they were (and to some extent, as is any situation in which one is being observed) with assessment and judgment. Whether or not this was a question of correlation, or of direct cause, remains unclear; a similar sense of this 'turning point' did occur in the subsequent extended research, corroborating the factor of Wenger's sufficient *time*, that in turn will be argued as a pivotal element of my model of dialogic partnership. The negative effects of these particular evaluators' approaches were nevertheless acknowledged by all of the participant teacher and musician researchers, and may well have extended the period before the transformative 'turning point'.

Through my own later research I hoped to explore both the emerging model of partnership and some of the new insights emerging from the pilot project about how to support the development of primary teachers' musical confidence, ultimately optimizing equality of musical opportunity for children. These insights included the aforementioned significance of time together to develop partnership relationships, approaches to teaching and repertoire, along with the importance of time to reflect together at the end of each interaction. They also included considerations of how to challenge traditional notions of who is best placed to teach music in the classroom when a musician is present, the effect on power structures when technical expertise is evident in one partner and not the other, and how to best ensure the sustainability of such music projects beyond the tenable period of time in which the musician and teacher are able to work together.

Based on the experience of the Music Potential pilot project and on the areas of specific interest to me outlined above, I have formed the following research aim and accompanying questions:

1.2 Research aim

Drawing upon the insights arising from the pilot study, to explore in depth a dialogic model of partnership between primary class teacher and visiting musician, which resituates teachers as active and self-perceived competent co-musickers and which allows parity of contribution and status to both teacher and musician.

1.3 Research questions

1. In what ways might the relationship between primary class teacher and visiting musician be better understood, developed and enhanced in order that the teacher's musical potential may best be realized?

2. What are the crucial aspects of this model of partnership?

3. Does this model of partnership positively affect teachers' perceived and actual musical competence, and their music teaching confidence?

As I will presently explain, the idea of ‘partnership’ is ubiquitous in the current educational context. However, it is seldom acknowledged as problematic; there seems to be a pervading acceptance within the fields of both education and music education that the act simply of designating a relationship as being one of ‘partnership’ brings into existence the implied equality of this term. In fact even from the relatively brief research project described throughout this chapter, it becomes clear that this *cannot* be the case, that in fact there are layers of complexity which any simplistic designation may tend to conceal, and even perpetuate.

I move now to an initial consideration of these questions via an exploration of extant literature that relates to the themes already introduced.

Chapter Two: Review of the Literature

Overview, context and introduction to key concepts

2.1 Introduction

The Music Potential project outlined in the previous chapter serves as an example of the myriad of complex issues at play within primary school music education. These issues are at once personal and universal. On a micro-level, taking the example of the teachers involved in the project just described, they are clearly subjective, bound up with low musical self-perception, inherent personal beliefs about talent or 'giftedness', along with self-constructed barriers related to technical musical knowledge and instrumental skill. On a macro-level these same beliefs and personal doubts about musical ability also apply. As can be seen in the work of Holden and Button (2006), Mills (1994) and McCullough (2005) (as discussed in the last chapter), the current status quo in primary education in the United Kingdom is one in which the majority of class teachers feel ill-equipped to teach music in terms of training, musical skill and musical knowledge. Furthermore, many attest to feelings of low confidence or low musical self-esteem.

I examine now the relevant literature that informed both the justification for, and the design of my own research study. This literature is drawn from fields including those of: music education, education, music psychology, musicology including ethnomusicology[14], neuroscience, early childhood development, business (in the case of the issue of partnership) and to some extent, sociology. My attempt to 'unravel' these intertwining yet wide-ranging fields and the pertinent issues within them has proved challenging, given that the enquiry that I have undertaken deals with complex, often opaque and intangible personal feelings about what it means to be 'musical'. In order to make the relevance of the literature and of the issues it raises as clear to the reader as possible, I have separated this chapter into sub-headed sections. This

[14] As will be discussed in Chapter Three my chosen methodology was informed by the field of ethnomusicology. In that chapter I will further explore the ways in which ethnographic approaches can aid classroom based research, offering insights as it does into social behaviours and meaning, along with the opportunity to develop the very relationships between myself and the teachers under investigation *through* the research. (Fife, 2005)

enables the key issues to be distinct, but also allows for comparison and interconnection where resonances and similarities occur.

The key themes that serve to provide a contextual background for this study can be categorized as follows:

Part One: On being and not being ‘musical’

- The nature of musical ability
- Musical development in childhood
- Musical confidence and the primary school teacher.

Part Two: The nature of partnerships

The combination of literature discussed in these two parts provides the foundation for my later examination of the development of the musical identities of the three teachers participating in my research study. Furthermore, this literature provides insight into the ways in which those identities were supported and facilitated through the relationships established during the course of the study.

To explore the pivotal question of primary teachers’ self-perceived musicality, we need first to look at general issues related to the nature of musical ability per se, including pervasive contemporary attitudes towards this (and towards ‘talent’). Secondly, to understand teachers’ musical experience as adults, we need to understand processes of music learning during childhood, and issues associated with these in our society. Throughout this chapter therefore, there exists a symbiosis within the literature examined, namely between a focus upon *teachers’* musicality and that of the children whom they teach.

2.2 Part One - On being and not being 'musical'

2.2.1 The nature of musical ability

Of the several facets to this discussion of musical ability, the first concerns the nature of 'talent'.

Talent, is it gifted or gained? : The view of 'talent' in contemporary culture

The beliefs held by the teachers in the Music Potential project described in Chapter One, and by the teachers canvassed in Holden and Button's (2006) study about what it means to be 'musical', stem from beyond the fields of music, education or music education. Beliefs in musical talent, innate giftedness and music as exclusively meant for those who understand and appreciate it, pervade Western culture and attitudes. While these beliefs arguably originate within the context of Western high art music, more commonly referred to as 'classical' music, they apply to other musical genres and art forms across Western culture. Strong evidence of the power and ingrained nature of such beliefs and attitudes within contemporary culture can be seen in every television broadcast of 'X-factor', 'The Voice' or 'American Idol' and beyond music (specifically singing in these three cases) in shows such as 'Britain's Got Talent' and 'You Can Dance'. In these shows, competitors from of all ages audition in front of a panel and an arena-sized audience. Those whose act is deemed to be 'good' are publicly féted as 'talented' and 'gifted' and are often reported to have overcome personal challenges in order to pursue their 'dream'. The audience is encouraged to admire their fortitude and effort but the overriding assumption is that none of that would be possible had they not been *born* possessing their particular 'gift'.

The most telling element of how our culture views talent and the 'talented' however does not lie in these television show 'success' stories, but rather in the cases of those individuals who audition and are *not* successful. In the initial audition stages of these competitions (which take up a significant proportion of the series) the shining examples of 'talent' are juxtaposed with people who are not very proficient in the skill that they choose to showcase. They are subsequently rejected by the panel of judges but not before being subjected to ridicule by the panel and, or the audience. Lest we forget, this audience is often comprised of thousands of people, their

laughter, jeering and booing evoking a Roman amphitheatre baying for the blood of the defenseless, or a Victorian 'freak-show' in which it is socially acceptable to gaze in wonder at the unusual, unfortunate 'other'. Once these episodes are broadcast, the millions of people who tune in each weekend, the tabloid newspapers, and the celebrity magazines go on to further discuss and laugh at these 'failures'

This thesis is not a diatribe on the social rights and wrongs of the modern day television talent show. I include the above examples because I have seen their increasingly strong influence in the primary classrooms in which I work in the attitudes of both children and teachers towards music and what it means to be 'good' at music. The shows described relay a persuasive message to those who watch them: if you have 'talent' you will be rich, successful and popular. If you don't, you may be a figure of public ridicule. Given that singing is the most popular skill that features in these auditions and that many of the shows are *purely* about singing, this message resonates with even the very youngest of children, suggesting it is possible to be a 'bad' singer. If this happens to be you, singing publicly will expose you to the risk of being laughed at by others. Furthermore, these attitudes suggest to children that it is acceptable to laugh at the musical efforts of others. They see their siblings, family and friends doing so every week while watching television, along with the famous judges on the screen. The endemic effect of television shows such as these is also cited by Henriksson-Macaulay (2014) as significant in terms of shaping the popular view of what talent means.

> Possibly the biggest myth that hinders people of all ages from making music is the belief in a special kind of innate talent, a belief which claims that only *some* people are naturally musical. Popular talent shows such as the X Factor have made it easy for people to claim that unsuccessful performers have no musical talent, are tone-deaf or have got no rhythm. It's even more tragic when you hear parents saying that they'd like their child to take up music but their child lacks musicality. Nothing could be further from the truth. Just as our brains are wired to crave for music, they also possess the ability to create it. Musicality is something encoded deep into all of our brains. Most music educators have long held this opinion, but the recent findings of brain research should dispense the musicality myth once and for all. (Henriksson-Macaulay, 2014: 100)

In both the original Music Potential project (as could be seen clearly in Sally's recollections of the first training session) and my own field study, the fear of being labeled a 'bad' singer and shamed as such was shared and articulated by almost all of

the teachers involved, as was a reluctance to sing in front of adult colleagues despite feeling happy or at least prepared to sing with the children. As will be discussed in later chapters, this fear was often mitigated by the teachers' use of self-deprecation, making fun of themselves and their 'poor' singing voices or 'tone-deafness' before anyone else could do it *to* them.

Given that the notion of talent is so prevalent within both popular culture and our education system and is, in my own experience, often perpetuated through both policy and practices within music education itself, I proceed now to examine in detail the existing literature on musical ability and how one comes to possess it, beginning with a sample of the emerging brain research alluded to in the above citation by Henriksson-Macaulay.

Neuroscientific and positivist psychological studies of how musical ability is gained and developed

As Henriksson-Macaulay reports, in recent years there has been a considerable amount of research carried out in relation to music and the brain. This research includes a number of specific studies exploring potential links between early childhood cognitive development and musical ability. Several of these studies aimed to empirically ascertain if the 'musical' brain is fully formed at birth or if it is developed over time. Put simply, they sought to find out if musicians are born musical or become so as a result of musical experience and training. Research of this kind adds to the debate within the field of music education as to whether musical ability is an exclusive 'gift' or rather, if musicality is a universal human trait which can be developed in *all* children and adults where the opportunities for music making are accessible.

Research into brain plasticity conducted by Robertson (1999) and earlier, Gardner (1993) suggests that the human brain is susceptible to environmental factors and moulds itself as it develops in response to environmental factors and experiences. This suggests that the brains of children who have regular opportunities to experience and react to musical stimuli will develop musical skills as a result. Adding weight to these claims that the human brain is highly capable of plasticity or adapting as a result of musical training are two related studies examining the brains of adult violinists and

pianists (Bangert, Nair and Schlaug, 2005; Amunts, Schlaug, Jancke, 1997). Both studies suggested that extensive violin and piano training could be linked with cerebral structural difference in the areas of the brain responsible for controlling fine motor skills when compared to the brain structures of non-violinists and non-pianists. The violinists studied showed this cerebral difference in relation to the left hand only, while the pianists showed evidence of structural difference in the areas of the brain associated with fine motor skills in *both* hands. (Bangert, Nair and Schlaug, 2005; Amunts, Schlaug, Jancke, 1997)

Other studies have found that the brains of adult musicians display cerebral structural enlargements (Keenan, Thangaraj, Halpern and Schlaug, 2001; Schlaug, Jancke, Huang, Staiger, and Steinmetz, 1995) specifically, as explained by Norton et al (2005) the anterior corpus callosum, the medial portion of Heschl's gyrus, the inferior frontal gyrus, the cerebellum and the intrasulcal length of the precentral gyrus.

Taken together, these studies strongly suggest that the brains of those who receive musical training over a sustained period of time are indeed structurally different to the brains of 'non-musicians'. Studies of this kind have been interpreted to give credence to the argument that some individuals are born musically superior with a pre-existing 'gift' and brain pre-disposed for musicianship as claimed in the much earlier work of Seashore (Seashore, [1938] 1967). However, as the work investigating brain plasticity shows (Robertson, 1999, Gardner, 1993), the brain 'builds' these structural differences *after* birth in response to environment and experience, suggesting that all human brains begin with the *potential* to develop musically given an adequate amount of musical experience or training. Furthermore, using cognitive research of the type mentioned above (Keenan et al, 2001; Amunts et al, 1997; Schlaug et al, 1995) to strengthen claims that the brains of musicians are naturally 'different' would be misleading, given that, without exception, these studies pertain to highly skilled and trained musicians situated solely within the Western classical tradition. They therefore ignore the exploration of the brains of amateur adult musicians and those situated within non-classical and non-Western genres.

Building on the earlier work of Keenan et al (2001) and Shlaug et al (1995), Norton et al (2005) set out to further determine whether the brains of adult musicians present

anomalies prior to musical training or, if these anomalies are a result of such training by studying young children learning instrumental skills. This study was carried out in the United States and compared 39 children aged 5 to 7 years embarking on their first string or piano lessons and a control group of 31 children not taking up an instrument. 18 of the control group children were still to access one half hour weekly session of singing while 13 of the control group children accessed music classes in school, which included singing and experimentation with hand-held percussion. The children were: 'recruited from public elementary schools and community music schools in the greater Boston area.' (2005: 126). Over the course of 3 to 4 weeks the children were individually tested 2 to 3 times. This testing took place in both school settings and in laboratories. The children in both groups underwent magnetic resonance imaging as part of this testing. No detailed discussion of the ethics of testing children in a laboratory setting is given in the article.

Consolidating my earlier argument against assumptions that musicians are born 'different', the results of this study stated:

> No pre-existing differences of any kind could be found in our group of young children (Norton et al, 2005: 129)

This study therefore suggests that the atypical structures of adult musicians' brains are *not* pre-existent but are rather a result of their training and brain plasticity. However, Norton et al are reluctant to cite this as fact, pending the results of a further longitudinal study.

The work of Norton et al can be seen to support the argument that musical ability can be acquired through opportunity and music training rather than that of non-universal musical talent. However, as with the cognitive studies discussed previously, this *particular* study, although distinct in the fact that it focused on child musicians rather than adult musicians, still looks predominantly at the cognitive effects of *Western classical* music making. Therefore, it tells us nothing about the potential cognitive effects on children of a wide range of music making activities drawn from a range of musical genres and traditions. Troublingly, Norton et al also appear to subscribe to the notion of talent as a pre-determined state, claiming that if they:

> [Look] retrospectively at the brains of those children who stick with their musical training over time and emerge showing exceptional talent and achievement, we will be able to test (to our knowledge for the first time) whether the brains of musicians look different prior to training, and/or respond differently to training compared to those of children taking music lessons but showing only average talent or interest in music. (Norton et al, 2005: 130)

Other studies of cognitive and psychological development in relation to music have found that music training can have 'transfer effects' (Lonie, 2010: 6), beneficial effects on the development of very young children's personal and social skills. For example, music training is suggested to support the development of children's verbal skills (Ho, Cheung and Chan, 2003). Music making is claimed to assist children to develop phonological processing (Anvari, Trainor, Woodside and Levy, 2002) an essential skill for the development of early reading skills, while the work of Gruhn (2002) makes the case for the importance of musical input in the earliest years in order to enhance children's movement, coordination and vocalization skills.

Universal musicality and the rejection of the exclusive notion of 'talent'

There exists an array of studies that challenge the notion of musical talent as pre-destined. Not neuroscientific or positivist in nature as in the case of those discussed in the previous section, these studies tend to consider musicality from a global perspective as opposed to simply viewing it through the lens of Western classical high art music. For example, John Blacking's study of the music making of South Africa's Venda peoples (Blacking, 1974) introduced the idea of a *universal* human musicality, which can be either nurtured or ignored depending on culture, class and environment. Blacking strongly repudiates the idea of innate talent in the few and warns of the dangers of making assumptions in relation to individual children's musical abilities. He also makes the salient point that Western children from poorer backgrounds are most likely to be overlooked for opportunities to develop musical skills and learning:

> Latent ability is rarely recognized or nurtured, unless its bearer belongs to the right social class or happens to show evidence of what people have learned to regard as talent. Thus children are judged to be musical or unmusical on the basis of their ability to perform music. (Blacking, 1974: 7)

Blacking's work has formed the basis for the work of subsequent musicologists and music educators who also reject the idea of talent within a chosen few in favour of musical opportunity for the many. In their explorations of the early childhoods of young musicians, Howe and Sloboda (1991) and later Howe, Davidson, Moore and Sloboda (1995) found that the majority of the musicians studied had been sung to daily by their parents as young children and had been encouraged to participate in musical games. This suggests that environment and opportunities to make music from an early age are an important factor in determining musical interest and ability. In a subsequent study of the contributing factors that result in 'expert' performance, Ericsson and Charness (1994), like Blacking, explore the evidence and arguments for and against the existence of innate talent. They also conclude that it is environment and experiences in early childhood that lead to excellence in particular skills and ability:

> The role of early instruction and maximal parental support appears to be much more important than innate talent […] Exceptional abilities are acquired often under optimal environmental conditions. (Ericsson and Charness, 1994: 729)

However, Ericsson and Charness do not rule out the possibility that the preferred activity level and temperament of the individual expert performer are contributing factors in acquiring expertise and they argue that these may be genetic attributes and therefore, an affinity or aptitude for music not possessed by everyone.

In response to the idea that environment and regular access to musicking opportunities are key factors in the development of musical ability, Gruhn's study of very young children's musical behaviours offered 'as much musical stimulation as necessary in order to develop the potential of music learning' (Gruhn, 2002: 53). Thus Gruhn's study, like the work of Blacking, of Ericsson and Charness, and later, of Howe, Davidson and Sloboda, also recognizes the importance of creating an environment in which children may be permitted to develop musically and realize their musical potential, rather than one in which the identification of talent is sought.

These studies support the need to ensure *all* children are enabled to access regular musical activities from the earliest possible age based on the assumption that *each child* has the ability to develop musically given the optimum environment. If this

optimum environment does not exist within every home then it must surely be created within the school through the curriculum in a way that encourages children's interest. This is a view shared by Paynter:

> Music may have a role in school life socially but, if it is to be a valuable curriculum subject, what is done in the classroom must reach out to every pupil; that is to say, it must exploit natural human musicality. (Paynter, 2002: 219)

In Paynter's use of the term 'human musicality' we again see support for the arguments of Blacking[15]. Indeed, Paynter cites Blacking in his article on music's place in the curriculum to support his promotion of the idea of 'musical understanding' belonging to us all (Paynter, 2002: 219)

Resonances with the work of Paynter and Blacking can also be seen in the work of Christopher Small. Small echoes Blacking's idea of universal human musicality by asserting:

> Every normally-endowed human being is born with the gift of music no less than the gift of speech […] We know that human beings do not come into the world with the ability fully formed to take part in speech acts. We have the potential to do so, but that potential has to be developed. (Small, 2006: 5-9)

Small argues that just as all new-born children have the capacity to develop speech and language, they also possess musical ability that will not develop sufficiently unless an environment exists for the child to access musical activities. Small is thus asserting that musical ability *is* in fact innate in *all* human beings and that it is musical opportunity and access that are the determining factors for the musical success that we commonly see classed as 'talent'.

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[15] Blacking and Paynter were contemporaries, writing their seminal works on the nature of musicality at approximately the same time, although Blacking's field was ethnomusicology, while Paynter's work focussed on music education. During the same decade, Christopher Small was writing his critique and vision for music's place within both society and education (1977), the ideas contained within the above citation being derived from his earlier work. These writers were therefore simultaneously challenging the status quo of music and music education's place within society some 40 years ago. Small repeated these ideas in his subsequent work until his death in 2011, demonstrating that, despite the challenges that these three authors presented to the way in which music, musicality and musical opportunity are commonly conceived of and valued within society and policy, the situation remains problematic. We may conclude therefore, that despite a very strong recent historical divergence from the view that only the few are musical, the ideas of talent and giftedness still prevail.

As seen in the examples of the literature discussed above, whether musical propensity is an innate human quality, able to be nurtured and developed given the optimum opportunity and environment, or something a ‘musical’, ‘talented’ few are ‘gifted’ with is a complex debate. Hallam (2006) concedes that determining the reality of the issue is a challenging prospect but suggests a contingency plan for music educators, generalist teachers and parents:

> It may be that we shall never be able to establish, beyond doubt, to what extent individual musical ability is learnt or inherited. If that is the case, we should provide all children with opportunities from the earliest age to develop their musical skills. (Hallam, 2006: 54)

While I would disagree with Hallam’s assertion that we may never establish beyond doubt the origins of musical ability as innate or universally attainable as part of the human condition, feeling that the studies and literature discussed above strongly suggest the latter to be the case, I applaud her call for inclusive opportunities for all children to develop their individual musicality. What needs to be in place to support such an inclusive approach however, is a widespread rejection of the notion of talent within the fields of music, education and beyond into contemporary culture, and this is manifestly not the case. The prevalence of socially constructed ideas of giftedness lies at the very root of the issue of low teacher musical self-perception and is, in essence, the very ‘problem’ that my research study attempted to explore and rectify.

I continue at this point with the second theme within this part of the review, looking first at the literature concerned with how musical skills are learned and developed in early childhood and into the primary school years.

2.2.2 Musical development in childhood

Children’s early musical development: How is music learned?

Trevarthen’s work on pre-natal musical experience (1999) suggests that human beings begin their musical development in the womb, absorbing external sounds that may affect the development of the auditory system nervous pathways (cited in Hallam, 2006). Once born, babies are able to recognize music heard in the womb shortly before and directly after birth (Hykin et al, 1999) and are more engaged by maternal

singing than maternal speaking (Nakata and Trehub, 2004).

In order to map and, in some cases, to predict the musical development of children, developmental models have been devised. These vary in their structure and also in their flexibility with regards to learning stages in relation to age. Earlier models of assessing development can be seen in the work of Wing (1948) Seashore (1960) and Bentley (1966), which measure distinct musical skills separately in order to determine the musical aptitude and ability of individuals.

Many of the existing models of musical development are founded on developmental psychology theories such as Piaget's theory of stages of cognitive development (Wood, 1998) and Vygotsky's 'Zone of Proximal Development' in which the child is metaphorically perceived as a building under construction and is 'scaffolded' in their learning and development by their social environment (Berk and Winsler, 2002: 26). One such developmental theory is The Swanwick/Tillman model of musical development (1986). This model takes the form of a spiral consisting of four turns, each marking four levels of age related development. Within these four levels, there are eight developmental modes that encompass various musical skills or concepts to be acquired at the corresponding level. The developmental levels can be seen on the left hand side of the spiral below in Figure 1, while the eight developmental modes are situated within each turn of the spiral:

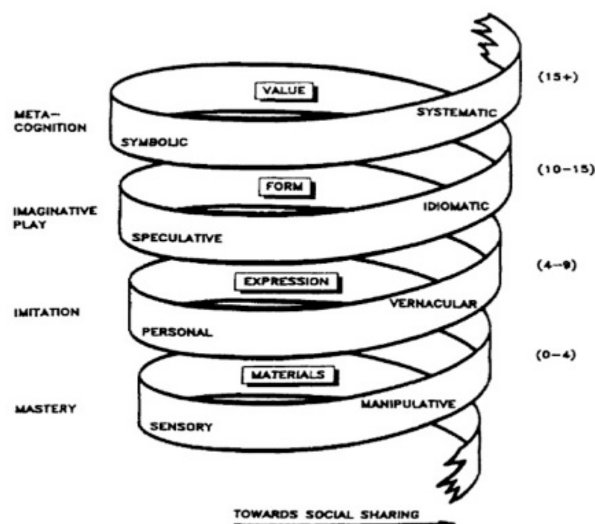

Figure 1: 'The Swanwick/Tillman model of musical development' (Swanwick and Tillman, 1986: 331).

The eight modes encompass musical skills and discoveries in the following way (in developmental order); sound exploration, timbre, dynamics, unpredictable music making, pulse, repetition, phrasing, spontaneous music making, melodic patterns, rhythmic patterns and musical 'surprises'. (Swanwick and Tillman, 1986: 331). This spiral has yet to be replaced by another more apparently persuasive model for mapping children's musical development. However, it was created on the basis of the findings of only one longitudinal study which has caused criticism of its validity and of the use of it as a measure of musical development. An extensive critique of the spiral model is offered by Mills who expresses concern that the model suggests to teachers, and to children themselves, that there is a 'normal' pattern of development in the acquisition of musical skills and learning. She suggests that:

> Few individuals follow any so-called normal patterns of development literally for more than the briefest period. There are many curriculum activities in which we accept this. Although we discern general patterns of development in children's writing or painting, we learn to respond to the expressive and technical aspects of work that seem to be out of sequence […] The idea of a sequential model of children's musical development may be attractive, but we cannot expect it to answer all our questions about response to children's music making. (Mills, 1996: 113)

However, she does suggest ways of thinking about the spiral in order to utilize it positively, testing the accuracy of the spiral when working with children in music rather than referring to it as a frame of reference and avoiding what she refers to as 'spiral-shaped blinkers' (Mills, 1996: 116).

Prior to Mills' critique of the spiral model, Swanwick clarified that he considers the spiral as flexible regarding age and that the four levels of development are cumulative (Swanwick, 1988). In later further work on development of musical skills, Runfola and Swanwick (2002) concluded that models of musical development are most useful when they follow a broad developmental sequence building on cumulative layers of learning. This is a view echoed by Gruhn (2002) who asserts that children do acquire musical skills and knowledge in a sequential order but that this acquisition does not necessarily occur at specific ages. In a study of the teaching of music by generalist teachers in an Australian primary school, de Vries (2015) found that participating teachers believed that successful music education needed to be 'sequential and developmental' and aimed to ensure that their music teaching would be 'building on a

range of music experiences and building up skills to play, listen and create music' (2015: 216), thus suggesting the deep-rooted belief within primary education that musical skill is developed sequentially.

In *Exploring the Musical Mind,* Sloboda (2005) critiques developmental assessment and the term 'musical ability' stating:

> Such a term suggests that there is some common factor, or set of factors, underlying all accomplishments in the sphere of music. How does this square with the fact that there are singers who cannot read music, pianists who cannot sing in tune, performers who cannot compose, and music critics who can neither play an instrument nor compose? (Sloboda, 2005: 265)

Although arguably a more egalitarian term than that of 'talent', as Sloboda points out, 'musical ability' is no less problematic a term or concept. It still denotes a specific set of technical skills and knowledge that one must possess in order to be considered musically *able*. Those, like the teachers involved in the Music Potential project, my own research and the studies conducted by McCullough (2005) and Holden and Button (2006), who locate their 'missing' musicality in a lack of ability to read notated music, to sing in tune or to play an instrument might therefore consider themselves, or be considered by others, to be musically 'deficit' given their 'incomplete' set of skills. This resonates with the conflict I myself felt as a result of the experience described in the Prologue. Writing in the mid-twentieth century on this very issue, Blacking commented:

> 'My' society claims that only a limited number of people are musical, and yet it behaves as if all people possessed the basic capacity without which no musical function can exist – the capacity to listen to and distinguish patterns of sound. (Blacking, 1959: 8)

Conventional thinking about what constitutes musical ability contradicts itself in the way that it disregards as musicality the capacity of individuals to choose music, listen to music, attend concerts, appraise or appreciate a musical composition or dance to music. It prohibits such musical behaviours from being considered as valid aspects of musical ability if they are not matched with musical technical skill and knowledge.

In their discussion of learners and musical development, Hallam and Lamont (2001) discuss two distinct categories of research on the subject of how music is learned. The first category includes studies that centre on 'enculturation', meaning developmental processes, shared cultural experiences and the impact of cognitive development. The second category of research focuses on 'generative skills', skills learned by training rather than shared cultural experience and resulting in expertise:

> The paths of musical enculturation are shown to be complex and diverse, and the nature of engagement with music seems critical in provoking developmental change. Children are both sophisticated listeners and music-makers from early infancy onwards and the ways that they understand music are constantly evolving. The kinds of music learning subsumed under enculturation are best studied by using techniques and methods that do not require technical expertise, such as listening, rather than more specialised activities such as composing or performing. So far, research has focused on explaining those aspects of normative enculturative development that result from age-related or experience-related changes and has largely ignored more individual characteristics of learners. (Hallam and Lamont, 2001: 7-8)

In the literature on musical development discussed so far, evidence of both of these research categories can be seen. Just as Mills was concerned that the prescription of developmental stages for children's musical development does not take into account the differences between individual learners, Hallam and Lamont highlight the lack of research that takes individual learners' characteristics into account in terms of methods and findings. Presumably, such research would be useful in ensuring equality of access for all to develop themselves musically as called for by Small (2006) and others as discussed in the previous section.

Musical development and the idea of the critical window for musical learning

Another area of debate within research relating to musical development is whether there exists a critical or sensitive period for musical development. That is to say, should musical learning occur in childhood or youth or can these skills be learned at any stage? As previously discussed, current models of music education in schools are heavily influenced in their design by developmental theories of how children learn, such as Piaget's cognitive theory. Wood (1998) describes Piaget's theory as:

> A detailed and specific account of universal *stages* in human development which provide a possible explanation as to when and how a child is ready to learn or develop

> specific focus of knowledge and understanding. Attempts to teach the products of a 'later' stage before previous stages have been passed through cannot facilitate development, nor can it further understanding. So, Piaget's theory offered a 'ready made' explanation for critical periods in the development of human intelligence. (Wood, 1998: 6)

The prevalence within our education system and current educational policy of such theories cast doubt on the idea that musical learning can occur at any age or stage of life, beyond childhood. As Wood describes, the emphasis of Piaget's theory on 'stage' related development, the learning of 'schemas' (Piaget, 1952) units of knowledge within those stages and the idea that the learning of one schema leads to the next, suggest that if a schema is 'missed' or not attained in the learning of a subject or skill such as music, it cannot be regained or rectified. This contradicts the neuroscientific findings of studies discussed earlier in this chapter on brain plasticity, which show the human brain's capacity for adapting itself to new learning, musical and otherwise, beyond childhood and into adulthood. Such a contradiction adds weight to Sloboda's comment that musical ability should not be regarded as one complete set of skills, but rather, a range of possible musical skills and understanding, pertinent to the individual. However, the prevalence of stage related developmental theories within education and our society, especially in relation to music education explains the assumption that I made as a teenage schoolgirl, that I must have missed the musical schema on notation and sight-reading, later described in Chapter Six and my disbelief that I could ever make up that 'lost' ground.

This is of key significance to my study, focused as it is on adult teachers who did not describe themselves as 'musical' when the study commenced[16]. In subsequent chapters, the belief of some of these teachers that they could not be 'musical' because they did not learn enough about music or acquire technical musical skill in their own childhoods will be discussed at length.

Blacking (1974), Paynter (2002), Small ([1987] 1998a, 2006), Malloch and Trevarthen (2009), and by implication, Tillman and Swanwick (1986), all propose that human beings are born 'musical' with basic musical skills and understandings

[16] See Chapter Five for discussion of the teacher's beliefs about 'missing' musical knowledge and feelings of loss for 'missed' critical periods of musical learning.

that are an essential aspect of the human 'condition'. Subject specific musical learning such as technical mastery of an instrument, or an understanding of notation, are the elements of musical learning that require study, practice and support in and beyond the earliest years; but on a basic level, these authors believe musicality lies in everyone regardless of age or circumstance. However, even where one accepts the assertions of these authors on universal musicality, if these innate musical skills and learning are not developed over time, many assume (as was the case with the teachers in my study) that they are 'lost' once adulthood is reached and therefore unattainable in later life. Bannan (2000) examines the experiences and musical development of adult non-singers and critiques the idea that it is possible to 'miss out' on music and that it is a subject or set of skills best learned early in life. In his study of older music learners, he discovered that 'individuals can make extraordinary progress even at advanced ages' (Bannan, 2000: 297). As a result of his findings, he calls for the discarding of age-specific 'Piagetian' developmental learning models such as those discussed previously, believing them to be potentially harmful and limiting to the possibilities of individual learners and their musical development. In his article, Bannan emphasizes the importance of supportive cultures for learners, the optimal environments in which to develop musical ability discussed previously[17].

Trainor furthers this argument for the enduring adult capacity to retain, regain or develop musical ability in her 2005 study on the subject of the optimum life stage, or 'critical period' to learn music. Trainor defines a critical period as:

> An age window during which a particular type of experience has a much more pronounced effect on the development of a behaviour or ability than the same experience at other times. (Trainor 2005: 262)

While some of Trainor's findings suggested that there are certain critical periods for music learning in the *early years*, Trainor herself nevertheless concedes that adult brains retain plasticity, the ability to adapt to accommodate and acquire new skills as

[17] This is also the view of Burland and Davidson who, in their article *Training the Talented* (2002) state that whilst practice is an important factor in musical development, equally important are that learners feel that they have positive experiences of learning within institutions. From the title of this article it can clearly be seen that Burland and Davidson subscribe to the idea of talent. However, it is not clear whether their use of the term relates to innate talent possessed by those being trained or rather, is used to denote musical skills and expertise acquired by environment, opportunity and training.

discussed in the section of this chapter concerning neuroscientific research. Trainor states that although it is uncommon for adults to acquire musical expertise in later life, it is not impossible by concluding:

> Critical periods for higher levels of musical expertise are probably quite fluid, and it is clear that there are multiple pathways to achieving musical expertise.
> (Trainor, 2005: 274)

The work of both Bannan and Trainor provide an important foundation for my research study. If the critical periods for learning music are fluid as they suggest, then the teachers participating in my study had a strong chance of learning and extending their musical capabilities and subsequently, bolstering their own musical identities. I was conscious in both the design and implementation of the study to create the 'optimal environment' described by Bannan (2000) for adult music learning by ensuring that the study activity and culture was as 'supportive' as possible for the teachers. In doing so, I sought to support the teachers' development of increased confidence in music teaching, that which Mills terms 'musical self-esteem' (1994: 6), and their musical identity or belief in themselves as 'musical'. In order to create such a culture and environment, a sound understanding of the issues relating to musical self-perception and confidence was required and so I turn now to discuss the existing literature on primary teacher musical confidence and the perceptions and views of musical ability held by primary class teachers.

2.2.3 Musical confidence and the primary school teacher

Music became a statutory subject within the primary National Curriculum as a result of the Education Reform Act passed in 1988. Primary class teachers have since been expected either to teach music to their classes or to relinquish responsibility for music teaching by handing over to a music 'specialist'. Within a year of the implementation of the Education Reform Act, a study of students training to be primary teachers at Exeter University found that music was the class subject which caused the students questioned the most concern (Mills, 1989). Mills found this to be as a result of students' low confidence in their own musical abilities and skills.

The work of Mills brought to light the importance of confidence within a specific subject in order to feel able to teach that subject effectively. A subjective and

intangible feeling, confidence is well described by Holroyd and Harlen as:

> A feeling of self-assurance, a feeling that some task can be properly completed with the knowledge and skills one possesses and without having to call on others for rescue. (Holroyd and Harlen, 1996: 326)

Consultation of the literature on teacher musical confidence spanning the decades since Mills' 1989 study brings into stark relief the fact that primary teacher confidence, in terms of music teaching skills, has not improved, strongly suggesting that music teaching training continues to be lacking within primary teacher training institutions in the United Kingdom and beyond. This can be seen in later work by Mills (1994) who aims to tackle the issue by promoting music consultancy between 'specialists' (denoting more confident and trained music teachers or visiting musicians), and also promoting musical self-esteem in primary teachers, to break a vicious cycle of perception of musical talent or innate musical ability:

> Through music consultancy, rather than specialist music teaching, a more positive cycle of musical confidence can be generated. Children become the teachers of tomorrow. The musical self-esteem of teachers will, progressively rise. (Mills, 1994: 6)

Subsequent enquiries into primary music teaching in the United Kingdom by Hennessey (2000), Conway and Finney (2003), Glover and Ward (2004), Holden and Button (2006), and Welch and Henley (2014) have all echoed Mills, citing a continued lack of teacher confidence in music indicating that the positive cycle of musical confidence she envisaged in 1994 has not yet begun to function. A number of these subsequent studies have also provided an insight into teacher perceptions of human musicality. For example, Hennessey (2000) found that many teachers believed that musical ability was a result of possessing an innate 'gift' or talent requiring nurture and development from an early age. In a study of primary teacher thinking about music undertaken in the North East of England, McCullough (2005) discovered that many of the teachers questioned aligned musical ability with the technical expertise and skills required to be able to play an instrument. In a later survey of music teaching in twelve primary schools, also carried out in the North East of England, Holden and Button (2006) found that music was the subject teachers felt least confident in teaching with a particular fear prevailing in relation to singing. Like Hennessey and McCullough, they discovered that:

> Comments made at interview indicate that music is still perceived as a specialist subject requiring expertise and performing ability. (Holden and Button, 2006: 35)

Analysis of the literature from outside the United Kingdom suggests that it is not only in this country that a majority of teachers feel daunted by statutory music teaching and believe themselves to be ‘unmusical’. The work of Gifford (1993), Jeanneret (1997) and Russell-Bowie (2009, 2010) indicates that the same issues are prevalent in Australia while the work of Ruismaki and Teraska (2006) demonstrates a similar situation in Finland. It seems therefore that low musical self-esteem amongst generalist primary teachers may be a universal challenge in those countries that expect the teaching of music to be facilitated by class teachers. The ubiquity of the problematic issue of primary teacher musical confidence is confirmed by Wiggins and Wiggins (2008). In their report on primary music teaching ‘in the absence of specialists’ (2008: 1) the country in which the study was enacted is not identified. The authors state:

> This country was chosen only because classroom teachers almost always are responsible for teaching music at the primary level in this system […] Thus, our reason for not identifying the country is to avoid focusing the article on the practices and policies of one system and thereby causing the reader to assume that this situation is unique. By maintaining anonymity, our intention is to place the emphasis on the universal issue of who should teach music rather than implying that our findings are contextually bound. (Wiggins and Wiggins, 2008: 5)

The majority of teachers involved in this study ‘articulated quite openly that they did not feel qualified to teach music’ (idem: 18), aligning the findings of this study with the others mentioned above.

The prevalence of this issue has led academics researching primary music teaching to suggest ways to raise levels of teacher musical confidence. Mills advocated a positive dialogue and process of mentoring between music specialist and generalist teachers (1994) which was later reinforced by Holden and Button (2006) who, in addition to endorsing partnership between music specialists and non-specialists (idem: 10) suggest that teacher music teaching confidence could be improved through:

> Effective long-term training and support to increase their musical skills, subject knowledge and confidence, to enable them to make a more marked difference to

children's musical education. (Holden and Button, 2006: 1)

Much of the related literature agrees with Holden and Button that more effective training offers a potential solution to overcoming low teacher confidence in music, but the content and rigour of the suggested training programmes differs greatly. Lawson, Plummeridge and Swanwick (1994) and Rainbow (1996) state that 'generalist' teachers require a sound knowledge of musical experience and expertise such as singing and aural perception skills in addition to teaching expertise in order to teach music successfully. Jeanneret (1997) argues for teachers to have access to 'music fundamentals courses', which she has found to increase confidence. Seddon and Biasutti (2008) offered such a course focusing on prepared blues activities via an e-learning system and found, in accordance with Jeanneret, that participant teachers felt that such a course developed their musical skills, thus making them better equipped to teach music to children. In the same year Dogani (2008) found that increased practical opportunities for student teachers to make music, develop their own musical skills and then practice leading music sessions in a classroom environment enabled them to think more reflectively about their music teaching practice and how best to approach music teaching in the classroom environment.

In a paper describing the implementation of a music course for students training to become primary teachers, Welch and Henley (2014) also found that linking music to other curriculum subjects in which participants felt more confident enabled the growth of students' confidence in relation to feeling competent to teach music. In addition, they report that participants also found the course to be beneficial in terms of their development in relation to creative teaching across the curriculum (Welch and Henley, 2014: 15)

Conway and Finney (2003) agree that increased training offers the optimum opportunities for increasing musical confidence in teachers, and that 'the time available for training is best used by providing genuine musical experience' (idem: 122) (as later also found by Dogani, and Welch and Henley). However, they offer a contrast to the training models focusing on the development of specific, technical musical expertise promoted by Lawson et al (1994) and Rainbow (1996), and contradicting the previously discussed preconceptions that teachers have been found

to hold about what musical ability is:

> Through engagement in musical activity, teachers in training can be shown that music lessons don't have to be theoretical or technical to be successful and that well-tutored instrumental skills are unnecessary. Any course that unduly emphasises the acquisition of musical skills is unlikely to succeed [...] it is quite sufficient for the teacher to come to realise the quality of their responsiveness to music through movement, listening and their personal and often private singing. (Conway and Finney, 2003: 122-123)

Conway and Finney also offer a 'reconceptualization' of music teaching and training, calling for the implementation and recognition of the importance of:

> Innovative and more creative models of training where inspired musical encounters change perceptions and furnish ongoing appetites. The possibility of rethinking what music is, coupled with those well-developed generic skills of the teacher can lead to highly effective teaching. Good classroom teachers know how to utilise young children's fascination with the world and their desire to explore and discover. They are good at building trust and confidence and can take learning further. They are good at using their knowledge of children in their planning and teaching and at observing and adapting to children's responses with a degree of spontaneity. They are good at supporting each other and learning from each other. They know how to create a climate in which children play, experiment and take risks. These are the attributes of a good music teacher. (Conway and Finney, 2003: 123)

I suggest that this reconceptualization in itself is an effective tool with which to boost the musical self-perception of the under-confident primary teacher. As will be seen in subsequent chapters, I made use of many aspects of the suggestions for models of working with primary teachers as a 'specialist' in order to improve and increase their musical self-perceptions and confidence. In particular, I took heed of the suggestions made by Conway and Finney in terms of honouring the teachers' 'well developed generic skills', that is, their knowledge of the children, the curriculum and of effective methods of teaching and classroom management. I also sought to facilitate as many 'inspired musical encounters' for the teachers (Conway and Finney 2003, Dogani, 2008, Welch and Henley, 2014) providing 'genuine musical experiences' such as a teacher ukulele group and supportive sessions on how to sing effectively, both of which encompassed learning about basic music fundamentals (Jeanneret, 1997, Seddon and Biasutti, 2008). My study also relied heavily on the collegial support of the teachers and made use of the idea of consultation promoted by Mills (1994) and Holden and Button (2006). I also bore in mind the importance of the study in addressing the vicious cycle mentioned by Mills (1994) regarding the 'message' sent to children when music is not taught to them by their class teacher but rather, a

visiting 'specialist', the message that music is for some but not for all, thus perpetuating the myth of talent for future generations of teachers.

By considering the aforementioned studies and suggestions about how to improve teachers' musical self-esteem, I hoped to identify ways of addressing the issue that might ultimately solve it. So far, it seemed that the methods described above had not done so, given that the problem has persisted now for the at least twenty year span of these studies. It seemed to me that the way to challenge the deeply held inhibitions that teachers hold in relation to music was to consult the teachers directly and to attempt to create as equal and reciprocal a relationship as possible through collaborative teaching and partnership in the classroom itself. To do this however, it was necessary to have a sound understanding of what partnership actually meant, what it 'looked like'; and how to go about establishing a relationship that might provide an effective means of changing the way the participating teachers felt about and conceived of music, their own musical identities, and music teaching in their classrooms.

2.3 Part Two – Partnership

> Partnering is another of those vanilla-flavored ideas to which we commonly nod our heads in unthinking approval. But good partnering –as in a good marriage– is hard work. Ideally, each partner has something the other lacks or needs and a willingness to contribute to the other's needs. In other words, there is a potentially powerful positive symbiosis. (Goodlad, 2004: 37-38.)

The term 'partnership' is by no means new in the fields of education, music education and arts education. Most primary schools in England have had experience of working with outside agencies as part of the initiative 'Creative Partnerships' since its inception in 2002[18]. During this time partnership has arguably become a fashionable concept, a model of working and somewhat of a 'buzz-word' in the field of education. In response to this, music educators and researchers have increasingly begun to examine and discuss the potential importance and possible pitfalls of partnership over the past five to ten years. With the establishment of the Conservative – Liberal Democrat coalition government in 2010, at the same time as I began my field

[18] Creative Partnerships (2002-2011) was a government-funded initiative, aiming to link primary schools with local artists and cultural organizations to improve cultural learning for pupils.

research, the future of music education within the UK looked likely to rely heavily on the idea of partnership between schools, both secondary and primary, with outside agencies as part of music 'hubs' as recommended in the specially commissioned *Henley Review of Music Education* (Henley, 2011[19]). Indeed, the idea of music hubs dates back to the previous Labour Government's *Music Manifesto* (Rogers, 2006). Advocates of the implementation of music hubs are Coll and Deane (2008) who describe the need for them, and the partnerships that exist within them, as follows:

> Young people make music in schools. But also in youth clubs, rehearsal venues, recording studios, performance venues, faith settings, theatres and concert halls, garages, bedrooms, drop-in centres and many more places besides – where they are often encouraged to do so by non-statutory bodies from the youth, health, social services and the arts sectors among others as well as the education sector. Think of the power of music development that could be harnessed if all the providers in all those places worked together to help young people do it better […] music education "hubs" would enable all those partners to work out what was needed locally, agree on what resources were collaboratively available, and only then decide who was going to do which bit of the work. A hub as described there would be the most powerful of partnerships. (Coll and Deane, 2008: 01)

However, a report by Ofsted (2013) indicates that the partnerships established through the implementation of music education hubs are not functioning effectively and in the way envisaged by Coll and Deane (2008). Following an inspection of a sample of 31 schools, Ofsted found that although hubs 'brought new energy, collaborative approaches and vitality to working musically with young people' the work 'reaches only a minority of pupils' (Ofsted: 2013: 4).

The Musicians' Union responded to this critique in a report (2014) that blamed government funding cuts in education, local authorities and music services which, it claims, hampered the early setting up of hubs. It also defends the position of hubs in terms of the small sample covered in Ofsted's report and the relatively small amount of time that hubs existed before Ofsted conducted its study. However, one citation from the Musicians' Union report suggests that hubs were suffering in their implementation because the essential partnerships within them between schools and

[19] The Henley Review made recommendation for the formation of regional music hubs, to enhance the existing provision of local authority run music services. Henley claimed: 'The Music Education world is fragmented and uncoordinated. There are too many organizations that have overlapping areas of interest. These organizations need to join together to create one single body.' (Henley, 2011: 30), giving rise to the idea of music education hubs. These regional hubs can comprise a consortium of schools themselves (from primary to further education institutions), music or arts organizations and local authority music services.

other organizations were inherently unequal in their nature. The Musicians' Union reports that:

> It is difficult for them [hubs] to have 'challenging conversations' with schools because Hubs do not have the authority to dictate to Heads how music is taught in their schools and in fact could antagonize relationships with schools if they did. (2014: 2-3)

From this we see that not all music partnership projects are necessarily 'equal', and that in fact the term 'partnership' is highly problematic. From the citation by Goodlad (2004) with which I opened this section, it can be seen that partnerships are often thought of as being 'virtuous', well meant or 'vanilla'. Indeed, as we have seen, they are a common feature of educational policy rhetoric, particularly in the arts. However, while the term 'partnership' may be used, what is happening 'on the ground' might not necessarily represent partnership in its 'truest', *implicit* sense. I turn now to the literature related to partnership and to the development of relationships in music education and beyond, bearing in mind the question posed by Pugh and De'Ath: 'Does partnership really exist or is it simply empty rhetoric?' (1989: 1).

Trying to ascertain one clear definition of the meaning of partnership proves challenging upon examination of the literature, as attested by Elizabeth Todd (2000):

> Part of the difficulty in achieving partnership has been the assumption that its definition is understood and agreed by those involved. Most moves towards partnership either fail to define it, or fail to think through the implications of its own definition. (Todd, 2000: 48)

Todd's thesis (2000) and her later book on partnership in education (2007) is part of a substantial body of existing literature relating to generalist educators working in partnership with parents in early years and primary education, for example, Shaeffer (1992), Pugh and De'Ath (1989) and Pugh (2001). Literature on the subject of partnership is also in abundance in the fields of business and management, from which, for example, research by Mohr and Spekman (1994) has informed the smaller but steadily growing study of partnership within music education.

In turn, much of this emergent literature originates from the United States and refers particularly to partnerships between pre-service, student, or trainee teachers, or their institutions, and more experienced, qualified music specialist teachers in the field.

Examples include research into the development and impact of supportive professional relationships in the training of pre-service music teachers within 'Professional Development Schools' (Wharton-Conkling, 2004) and a study of 'cooperating' music teachers' perspectives of what comprises a successful relationship between themselves and the student teachers they support and mentor (Draves, 2008), both of which I will examine in more detail in due course.

Here in the United Kingdom the literature on partnerships in the teaching of music takes into account wider themes and various different aspects of 'partnership working'[20]. While it does include the study of partnerships within initial teacher training, it also extends its focus to encompass formal and informal music education, and the purpose and impact of partnerships on 'generalist' and 'specialist' teachers, student teachers, musicians and the recipients of music education themselves, children, young people and other participants in music learning. An example of this wide ranging view of partnership music education is a collection of articles entitled *Music and the Power of Partnerships* edited by Coll and Deane (2008) who confirm Todd's earlier observation about the lack of consensus on the definition of partnership:

> "Partnership" means different things to different people. A partnership can be as loose as two people working together on the same goal (like you and the bus driver who took you to work this morning). For others, it's about structural ways of working. Or an artistic collaboration. (Coll and Deane, 2008: 01)

Pugh and De'Ath (1989), in their report on a three-year national study on parental partnerships with pre-school settings, discuss the differences between 'participation' and 'partnership', terms which they argue are often wrongly assumed as being synonymous. To illustrate the distinction between the two terms, they borrow three models of relationship between pre-school educators and parents from Cunningham and Davis (1985). Within the first two models, the 'expert' and the 'transplant', the educational practitioner retains control and maintains the dependency of parents, which Pugh and De'Ath claim represents parental *participation* rather than partnership. They argue that it is only the third 'consumer' model in which an equality

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[20] This term has become very common in the contexts of education, arts and culture. Its frequent use implies the reality of partnership, a misconception I will examine throughout the course of this thesis.

of relationship and control is shared between professional and parent, thus representing true partnership.

Like Coll and Deane, Pugh and De'Ath define a true partnership as two parties (in their case parents and professionals, but the same 'consumer' model can be applied to 'generalist' teachers and 'specialist' musicians to which Coll and Deane refer) working toward a shared purpose but with the addition of respect, flexibility and shared responsibilities:

> A working relationship that is characterised by a shared sense of purpose, mutual respect and the willingness to negotiate. This implies a sharing of information, responsibility, skills, decision-making and accountability. (Pugh and De'Ath, 1989: 33)

Cunningham and Davis's (1985) 'consumer' model of partnership, where control, information and agency are equally shared amongst partners appears to be the ideal. As such, various authors within music education refer to successful partnerships within this model, some with specific reference to the 'consumer' model and some by implication, their models containing close similarities to it.

One such model is given by Draves (2008) in her study of cooperating music teachers' perspectives on their relationships with student teachers. Draves presented the participating cooperating teachers, which in this case denotes an established, practising, qualified music teacher who is mentoring student teachers in the music classroom, with a diagram depicting a 'Power Sharing Continuum of Cooperating Music Teachers' (Draves, 2008: 10). This diagram is replicated below in Figure 2. The cooperating teachers were asked to identify where on the continuum they would place the relationships developed with a number of student teachers that they had mentored over the course of their careers.

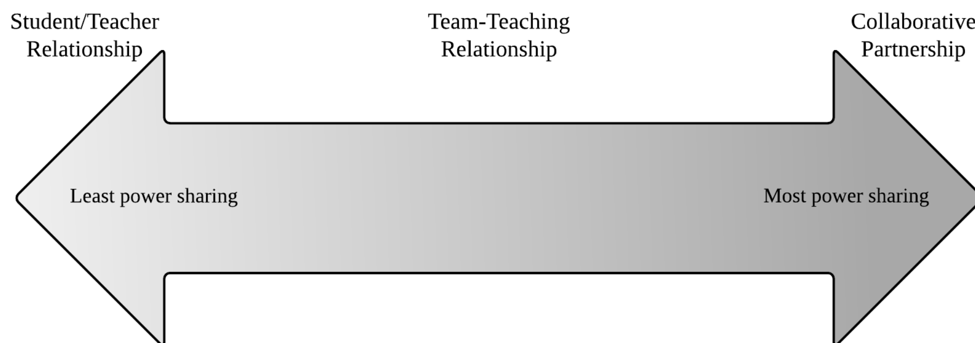

Figure 2: 'Power Sharing Continuum of Cooperating Music Teachers' (Draves, 2008: 10)

In correlation with the work of Pugh and De'Ath, and Cunningham and Davis, Draves's continuum presents three models of working relationship. At the left hand side is the 'Student/Teacher relationship' in which the student teacher has limited responsibility within the classroom and is closer to an aide than a partner in teaching (2008: 10). Draves argues that this relationship offers the least power sharing dynamic of the three possible relationships. The second, at the centre of the continuum and of power sharing is the 'Team-Teaching relationship' where the student teacher takes some, but not all, of responsibility for class teaching. The final possibility at the far right of the continuum, where most power is shared is the 'Collaborative Partnership', in which the student teacher and cooperating teacher 'shared instructional and professional responsibilities equitably' (2008: 10).

It is important to note that Draves uses the word partnership only in relation to this final model. For the previous two, she has used the term 'relationship' implying that it is only when the 'collaborative' model has been achieved that the dynamic between teacher and student teacher can be described as *true* partnership. According to Draves, the emergent theme of her research on this subject has been that of power and its impact within relationships. Most of the cooperating teachers within her study (which she concedes is small in scope) identify the 'collaborative partnership' as the ideal and most desirable due to the shared balance of power it offers (Draves, 2008: 6).

In support of Draves's findings that equality provides satisfaction for participants in music education partnerships, Mark Burke (2008) identifies the following components

as ‘essential’ in order for the optimum successful outcomes (such as the attainment and sustainability of best practice of music teaching) to be possible:

> True common purpose, shared operational standards, understanding and empathising with partners’ risk, senior management ‘buy in’, forum for conflict resolution, trust, respect. (Burke, 2008: 105)

It is quite clear that the ‘collaborative’ and the ‘consumer’ models of partnership are similar although their origins are from within different contexts. This suggests that the dynamics of a successful or ‘ideal’ partnership and the conditions in which it might develop are consistent regardless of the field or context in which such partnerships are being developed, enacted and used.

Pugh and De’Ath’s, Draves’s, and Burke’s definitions of partnership require complete equality of partners, with shared control and responsibility over information and decisions. These definitions, Draves’s findings and comparison of the desirable ‘consumer’ and ‘collaborative’ models with their less balanced alternative relationships, make it clear that partnerships may be fraught with issues of hierarchy and power which must be negotiated and transparent in order for any partnership to be valid.

This issue of hierarchy within partner relationships is central to my research and here we begin to explore the potential pitfalls, well documented and much discussed within the literature on partnership. As previously discussed, research strongly indicates that a majority of primary teachers perceive themselves as ‘deficit’ when comparing their music teaching skills with those of visiting music ‘specialists’ in school. Wherever this is the case, a hierarchy of experience and skill is instantly in play and the relationship is unequal. However, Keeler makes the case for the plausibility of equal partnerships within the music classroom by proposing a positive rethinking of the partner relationship:

> It is thought provoking to be reminded that none of the synonyms for partnership imply any sort of hierarchy in the relationship. Definitions include words such as ‘companion’, ‘associate’, ‘colleague’ and ‘accomplice’ and all these suggest equality, mutual support even friendship. (Keeler, 2008: 55)

While I find Keeler's point heartening and her definition important to bear in mind when working towards defining a successful model of teacher/musician partnership, I would argue that most teacher/musician partnerships are unable to operate without hierarchy and on terms of equality, due to the issues of confidence and musical self-perception discussed earlier in this review, and the resulting dismay at the confirmation of deficiency arising from the perception of the far superior technical skills of the music professional. Todd supports this by asserting that many definitions or examples of partnership cannot take into account the complexity of specific and unique relationships, their underlying foundations, and inherent, but perhaps not transparent, hierarchies:

> Many writings in education in which there is a mention of parent partnership do so without any definition, and with an assumption that it is both an accepted and an unproblematic relationship […] However, all such definitions bring challenge to the embodiment of the professional as expert. Taking these definitions further into educational practice has proved problematic. Part of this has been the difficulty in delineating the characteristics of each partner in order to assess what each brings to the situation. (Todd, 2000: 48-49)

As Todd suggests, putting partnerships into practice within the field of education and beyond may still prove challenging even if a definition and workable model can be settled and agreed upon between all parties concerned.

2.3.1 An initial 'Smallian' perspective

The pursuit of an 'ideal' partnership relationship that operates without hierarchy can be viewed in terms of Christopher Small's extended thesis of what constitutes the meaning of musical activity, in which the notion of 'relationship' is pivotal. Small's theories as expressed in his various writings provided initial direct inspiration for my research, and have subsequently become central to it. As discussed earlier in this chapter, my ontological stance has been influenced by Small's (and others') writings on the concept of universal musicality, as opposed to socially constructed notions of inherent talent. A core framework in which I will situate my findings is Small's theory of 'musicking', which asserts that the meaning of music is to be found in the

physical act of *making* of music, as opposed to the music 'object' such as the Western classical canon of musical works.[21]

However, of particular importance to my exploration of the concept of partnerships, is Small's placing of *relationships* between people, as well as between the music's sonic aspects, as central in this concept of 'musicking'. Small proposes that:

> The act of musicking establishes in the place where it is happening a set of relationships, and it is in those relationships that the meaning of the act lies. They are to be found not only between those organized sounds which are conventionally thought of as being the stuff of musical meaning but also between the people who are taking part, in whatever capacity, in the performance; and they mode, or stand as metaphor for, ideal relationships as the participants in the performance imagine them to be: relationships between person and person, between individual and society, between humanity and the natural world and even perhaps the supernatural world. (Small, 1998b: 13)

Through the act of musicking and the attached exploration of 'ideal relationships', identities can be constructed, altered and affirmed and individuals can be empowered in terms of how they situate and perceive themselves in the world. Small himself clarifies what he means by 'ideal' relationships by saying:

> A musical performance brings into existence relationships that are thought desirable by those taking part, and in doing so it not only reflects those ideal relationships but also shapes them […] In articulating those values it empowers those taking part to say… 'these are our values, our concepts of how the relationships of the world ought to be', and consequently, since how we relate is who we are, to say 'this is who we are'. (Small, 2011: xi)

Thus, Small's argument might be brought to bear upon the development of a model of '*real*', 'even' partnership between teacher and musician *through* classroom musicking, as I attempted to do through my research study. Having come to see relationships as central to the way in which the previous Music Potential project 'worked', I intend in later chapters to apply Small's theories to my examination of the events and insights arising from my extended research study on the topic of partnership in music education.

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[21] Small's theory of 'musicking' ([1987] 1998a, 1998b) and his vision for an improved approach to music education ([1977] 1996) will be explained and discussed in greater detail in Chapter Six.

In seeking to identify an equitable partnership model, I sought to ensure that equal credence would be given to the contributions and knowledge of all, teachers, musicians and children alike. Similarly, a study of young children's musicking by Kellet (2000) repositioned the children involved as 'experts' within music lessons and found that children's musical self-esteem, listening skills and verbal responses were noticeably increased, with the greatest increases in musical progress and confidence occurring among the least musically able and least confident children. If, as in Kellet's study, giving children 'expert' status and inviting them to have authority and agency over their musicking can have such a positive, transformative effect on their self-esteem, both in musical and general terms, it was my hope that the same would occur for the teachers within my study once they were repositioned as experts on an equal footing with me. As Small argued, all too often, we allow 'experts' to do our thinking and our feeling for us:

> Music is too important to be left to the musicians, and in recognizing this fact we strike a blow at the experts' domination, not only of music but also of our very lives. If it is possible to control our own musical destiny, provide our own music rather than leaving it to someone else to provide, then perhaps some of the other outside expertise that controls our lives can be brought under control also. ([1977] 1996: 214)

2.4 Conclusion

It is clear from the literature and themes discussed throughout this chapter that there are issues of power, hierarchy and control, which are highly relevant to my research. These themes encompass the idea of talent, who possesses it and who does not, how music is learned and musical skill acquired, along with the effect of conventional thinking about what it means to be musical on the attitudes and beliefs of teachers and the children that they teach. Taken together, these issues and prevalent beliefs directly affect the way in which music education is planned for in terms of policy making and also, how it is carried out in schools, the result of which is the vicious cycle pointed out by Mills (1994) of perpetuated beliefs and practices that open up musical opportunities for some, but not for all.

My experience of *being* researched in the Music Potential study (which is discussed in the next chapter) brought all of these issues to the fore, in terms of the destructive effect on musical self-confidence that can be wrought by imbalanced power

relationships. As I will now discuss in the next chapter, my thinking about *why* and *how* I would conduct my own research was greatly informed by these issues of hierarchy and expertise and I will draw on further relevant literature concerning these subjects during my later analysis of my findings.

Chapter Three: Methodology and Methods

3.1 Introduction

My field research took the form of a qualitative study, with features of ethnography, within three primary classrooms, looking at the earlier Music Potential study as 'before' (or, as a base-line), and examining what happened subsequently within this expanded enquiry.

I began this research with the loose hypothesis, derived from the preceding research discussed in Chapter One, that primary teachers' musical confidence could be raised through the development of a dialogic, equitable partnership with a visiting musician. In considering methodological approaches to my research, I decided that the research questions, the educational setting of the study, and the research participants (teachers and children) would not be best served through the adoption of a positivist approach seeking to prove a 'truth' through the controlled testing of my loose hypothesis. Rather, the qualitative research approach of the initial Music Potential study seemed best suited to my proposed 'real-life' context and epistemological stance towards knowledge and understanding as 'made', or constructed, and then to be interpreted, in this case by me and my co-researchers (as I conceived the participants to be). As Bresler explains:

> The aim of qualitative research is not to discover reality, but to explore different interpretations of that reality by constructing a clearer experiential memory which helps us obtain a more sophisticated account of things. Rather than seeking causality and predictions, the researcher aims at interpretive understanding (verstehen). The process of verstehen involves the ability to empathise, to recreate the experience of others within oneself. (Bresler, 1996: 6)

It could be argued that to approach my research from within the positivist paradigm would likely actively *prevent* the findings in which I was most interested, by limiting my ability to gain the interpretive and empathic understanding proposed by Bresler and also by positioning me, the researcher, firmly as an outsider; the possible resultant perceptions of inequitable power distribution and hierarchy among the other research participants might well prohibit the development of reciprocal, collegial relationships between myself, and all others participating in the study.

The second consideration in choosing the methodological approach and specific methods employed was that, given that my own subsequent research was conceived as a continuation of the Music Potential study, a similar (although in the event a somewhat modified) methodological stance seemed appropriate in order to ensure that the two studies remained usefully interrelated.

However, while there were many similarities in terms of methods employed within both studies, my own work nevertheless revised the methodology of the first study: now, I was applying my learning from the methodological errors and failings I perceived during my own involvement in that first study. While describing the methodology of my own study within this chapter, I will thus also discuss and explain the alterations that I made in relation to the application of those methods.

I provide here a brief discussion of the nature of qualitative research, justifying my selection of a qualitative methodology.

3.1.1 Qualitative research

Drawing upon the established practice within ethnography and the social sciences of the study in the field, qualitative research enables the researcher to observe and interpret the behaviours, culture and phenomena of a particular group through non-numerical and non-measurement based approaches. Methods such as interviews, and participant and non-participant observation have been commonly used within educational research since the latter part of the twentieth century and have been adopted within music education research as the field has developed, most notably in the last twenty years (Bresler, 1996: 5).

Eisner (1997) describes the term ‘qualitative’, and the approaches that the term denotes, as appropriate in the context of educational arts based research for three reasons:

> First, *qualitative* is sufficiently general to encompass not only teaching and other forms of human activity, but also objects such as buildings and books. Qualitative considerations are taken into account in composing sonnets, songs and scenarios. They are employed in teaching, in leading armies, and in constructing theories.

> Qualitative considerations are used in telling a story and in making love, in sustaining a friendship and in selling a car. In short, qualitative thought is ubiquitous in human affairs. It is not some exotic form of doing or making, but a pervasive aspect of daily life. For that reason and for others it is useful. Second, the term *qualitative* has established a firm foothold in the educational research community. It participates in a general universe of discourse in education. […] A third reason for using the term qualitative is related to the arts. The arts are paradigm cases of qualitative intelligence in action. Qualitative considerations must be employed in composing the qualities that constitute works of art. Since I believe that the qualities composed in art inform, and since I want to convey the potential of the arts as vehicles for revealing the social world, *qualitative inquiry* seems to me to have the appropriate ring. (Eisner, 1997: 5-6)

Eisner goes on to propose that qualitative enquiry can be recognized by particular characteristics that feature, to varying extents, within any given study taking this approach. He states that qualitative research tends to be broadly 'field focused' (that is to say, carried out in a real-life contexts, observing phenomena, culture and behaviour) with meaning derived through interpretation by the researcher who acts as 'instrument', interpreting tacit and overt meaning from what they observe in the field. Furthermore, according to Eisner, qualitative research incorporates the use of 'expressive language and the presence of the [researcher's own] voice in text' with 'an attention to particulars' (1997: 36-38); and he makes the case for the trustworthiness of a qualitative approach as a result of its 'coherence, insight and instrumental utility' (1997: 39). These characteristics all feature strongly in my study, particular points of resonance with Eisner's description being the use of 'expressive language', and my own voice emerging explicitly throughout the text as a result of my use of narrative enquiry as a research method, and also as a tool with which to present the account of the study which follows in the subsequent chapters.

Stake (1995) suggests three distinct differences between qualitative and quantitative research. The qualitative approach is concerned with understanding or interpreting phenomena, as opposed to seeking empirical proof, and the qualitative researcher has a personal investment and role within the research instead of a detached and 'clinical' interest. This was certainly the case in my study in which I was fully immersed as both researcher and research participant, with a personal investment as someone actively working in the field of music education with teachers and young children, in terms of my deep interest in primary teacher music teaching confidence and a desire to better understand that phenomenon.

In addition, Stake states that qualitative research seeks to *construct* knowledge as opposed to 'discovering' or 'proving' it. My research was situated within the constructivist paradigm, allowing for the creation and co-construction of the knowledge by all the research participants, teacher, researcher, musician and pupils alike, as a result of our interactions and the development of relationships over time. Given that the study overall was an enquiry into the potential benefits of the development of professional partnerships in primary music teaching, it was my clear intention from the outset that the research participants, myself included, would be investigative *partners*, co-constructing the findings and knowledge throughout.

> The impact that the presence of researchers has on the setting is related to the status and visibility of the field-workers. The 'lone wolf' often requires no funding, gains easy access, and melts away into the field. The 'hired hand', in contrast, may come with a team of people, be highly visible, be tied to contractual obligations, and be expected to deliver the goods within a specified period of time. (Wycoff and Kelling, 1978, cited in Denzin and Lincoln, 1998: 164)

In contrast to the 'hired hand' researcher model which was employed in the initial pilot study, I began my own enquiry in the tradition of the 'lone wolf' described above, 'melting into the field' when necessary but additionally interacting, contributing and 'lurking positively' throughout (Laurence's phrase for such activity, Laurence 2007, personal communication). My intention was to gain a hermeneutic understanding or *Verstehen*- an insider-, lived experience (Weber, 1962), rather than a superficial, removed explanation of what was observed. Thus I hoped to gain an emic (insider) perspective both of what factors might affect generalist teacher confidence in teaching music, and of how best to support the development of supportive professional partnerships.

My approach was also informed by ethical considerations, in that my methods seemed best suited to the naturalistic setting of the classroom, and to allow the best possibility of enabling the voices of the teachers, musicians and whenever possible, the children, to be heard alongside my own. The 'multi-method' nature of a qualitative approach (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994: 2) allowed for the adoption of different methods when required in response to the daily realities of vibrant classrooms, the individual and often changing needs of the research participants, and the findings as they began to

emerge. My methods included participant observation, semi-structured interviews, informal conversations, field-note taking, keeping a reflective diary, and narrative inquiry. This 'bricolage' approach (Lévi-Strauss, 1966) allowed me great flexibility, an advantage in the busy classroom setting where time is allocated to various subjects, duties and pursuits which any additional activity must be able to fit in and around.

3.2 Part One - The research

The focus of the enquiry was to explore issues of partnership in education and to determine a potential model of partnership that might promote the music teaching confidence of three teachers using ethnographic methods. The underlying framework upon which the study was forged was based upon a conception of action research as given in MacIntyre's view:

> Action research is an investigation, where, as a result of rigorous self-appraisal of current practice, the researcher focuses on a 'problem' […] and on the basis of information (about the up-to-date state of the art, about the people who will be involved and about the context), plans, implements, then evaluates action, then draws conclusions on the basis of the findings. (MacIntyre, 2000: 1)

Within this framework, I initially designed the research as a case study in three classrooms, taking the form of a programme of regular musicking with the pupils who were aged 5 to 6 years of age, their class teachers and teaching assistants. Throughout, I sought to observe and evaluate the effect of my relationships with each teacher upon their self-perceived levels of confidence to teach music.

I will now outline the design and methods of the study, with particular discussion of the role of the qualitative researcher, and of the concept of case study.

3.2.1 Brief outline of the study

The field study commenced in January 2010 within an infant school situated on a local authority housing estate in the north east of England and continued for seven months. The fieldwork comprised twenty half days (approximately 80 hours) spread across two academic terms. A description of the school from a contemporary Ofsted report is given in Chapter Four along with a detailed description of the study and its setting.

Shortly before the beginning of the study, I met informally with the three teachers in order to negotiate and clarify its aims, and the most appropriate way to conduct it so as not to adversely affect school routines and other areas of teaching and learning. A description of this meeting and the agreements reached within it can be found in the next chapter.

Alongside the previously stated methods, I collected audio recordings of each music session. I also sought permission to make video recordings, but this was denied for reasons of child protection and school policy, along with personal concerns raised by the three teachers when I consulted them on the matter. They were unnerved at the prospect of having their music teaching filmed and felt this would increase their existing anxieties about singing in front of other adults. Though their honesty in sharing these concerns with me indicated a good foundation for partnership, I was another adult. Presumably then, I was included in the group whose judgment of the video footage they feared. This signaled the scale of challenge faced in terms of repositioning the teachers' views of their place within the music teaching partnership. In the interests of creating trust, I accepted the feelings of the teachers in this matter. Nevertheless, being unable to film musicking was not ideal, as visual recordings offer excellent material from which to derive further interpretations in ethnography. However, I had to concede that this was not possible and consider alternative ways of accurately recording what happened during my visits. I settled on the use of reflective diaries, keeping a detailed one of my own and asking the teachers to reflect, in writing, upon each encounter when possible and to share any reflections or observations with me verbally or via email as often as possible so that I could record them. This approach enabled each of us participating in the study, teacher or musician, an equal opportunity to contribute our observations, ideas and reflections. This was a first step towards establishing a co-construction of knowledge approach and towards creating a sense of equality in our partnership.

The audio recordings were only permitted on condition that they were solely for my own use. Using them, I was able to revisit each session to ensure that my written notes concurred with the audio and the observations of the teachers. It was valuable also to use the recordings in order to compare and contrast my notes and reflections with

those of the teachers when we had interpreted or viewed something differently. In this way, the audio provided a useful tool for triangulation of evidence long after the field study had ended and also helped remind me of incidents and events that I may not have noted, or whose potential significance became clear only after multiple listenings. Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) make the case for the importance of obtaining adequate data in forms that can be later revisited, such as notes and recordings:

> As the fieldwork progresses, however, the researcher becomes inescapably familiar with the setting, and the accumulated fieldnotes and transcripts represent physical record of that familiarity. Before embarking on any major, writing up, therefore, one has to undertake a further task of estrangement. If one does not distance oneself from them, then there is danger of being unable to dismantle the data, select from them and re-order the material. One is left in the position of someone who, when asked to comment on and criticize film or novel, can do no more than rehearse the plot. The ethnographer who fails to achieve distance will easily fall into the trap of recounting 'what happened' without imposing a coherent thematic or analytic framework. (Hammersley and Atkinson 1983: 212-13)

I progress now to explore the role and qualities of the qualitative researcher or ethnographer, examining relevant literature on the subject along with an explanation of how I myself enacted this role within the field study.

3.2.2 The qualitative researcher

Denzin and Lincoln define the approach of the qualitative researcher in the following way:

> Qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena and the meanings people bring to them. (1998: 3)

The natural setting in this study was the classroom and, as previously discussed, in order to make sense of and to interpret what I was observing and experiencing I made use of multiple methods in order to attempt to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomena under investigation. This meant that I was able to 'sculpt' data collection approaches using the established qualitative practice of 'bricolage' to suit the research on the many occasions where the enquiry began to illuminate a new question or area for deeper investigation and thought. In this way, I became a true 'bricoleur' in the definition given by Levi-Strauss, 'a Jack of all trades or a kind of professional do-it-yourself person' (Levi-Strauss, 1966: 17).

The bricoleur is able to craft the emic, insider perspective that I hoped to gain through ownership and the ability to personally manage the study, regardless of the challenges or changes of direction that the enquiry might present or require. As bricoleur, I was able to take *care* of the study and the research participants in every sense that the term denotes, by reflecting upon findings at every stage and responding accordingly. This resonates with a point made by McCullough (2005) with reference to Levi-Strauss's definition of the bricoleur - that rather than suggesting an oxymoron in his juxtaposition of the 'professional' with the 'do-it-yourself' person, Levi-Strauss intentionally highlights the *best qualities of both.* McCullough argues that the 'do-it-yourselfer', rather than being an amateur who achieves poor results, most likely has a better understanding of the job at hand and takes more care of their own construction than any outside professional might (McCullough, 2005: 138).

In addition to the concept of researcher as bricoleur, the idea of the researcher as instrument is also well established within qualitative research. This concept elucidates the effect of the researcher's subjective knowledge, experience and the interpretations made as they are brought to bear upon a research study and the resultant findings. As Eisner states:

> Investigators who study schools or classrooms and who engage in that craft called field work will do things in ways that make sense to them, given the problem in which they are interested, the aptitude they possess, and the context in which they work. (Eisner, 1997: 169)

And as Barrett comments:

> Data analysis and interpretation are often intertwined and rely upon the researcher's logic, artistry, imagination, clarity, and knowledge of the field under study. (Barrett, 2007: 418)

The researcher thus becomes a unique 'primary research tool' (Ball, 1990: 157), another device in the bricolage 'tool-belt' to enable identification, collection and interpretation of data.

The effective qualitative researcher must also be constantly aware, honest and reflexive in relation to the effect that they, their knowledge, bias, experience,

approach and the methodological choices and interpretations they make have upon the study, its participants and findings. The qualitative researcher is thus intrinsically part of the study and of the data found (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1992). This awareness of and attentiveness to the effect of the researcher's self upon the research is identified as important by numerous other writers, but rather than being viewed as a flaw or threat to the validity of qualitative research as might be argued from a positivist standpoint, the researcher's 'self' is arguably an asset, as Yin (1994) explains, when accompanied by her/his commitment to maintaining an open-minded and unbiased approach throughout the study and in any resultant writings.

3.2.3 Case Study

There exists much debate and difference of opinion as to whether case study should be considered a *method* or an overarching *approach* to research. There is also a frequent overlapping of the concepts of case study and of qualitative research resulting in a common perception that the two are synonymous, despite case study's common application within quantitative, positivist contexts, including clinical and corporate use. Some aspects of case study appear regularly within the literature and reflect agreement that case study can enable the researcher to achieve the following:

- Investigation of contemporary phenomena ethnographically in naturalistic or real-life contexts through the use of multiple methods
- Commencing an enquiry without an a priori theory and constructing knowledge through analysis of data and using a hermeneutic or grounded approach (Glaser and Strauss, 1967)
- Focusing attention on *process* rather than outcome
- Designing the study to enable flexibility and adaptation of both approach and methods as the study progresses
- The potential development of human relationships and close working partnerships with research participants as a result of the in-depth nature of case study research

However, there remain significant conceptual differences. Gillham argues that case study should be conceived of as a method in its own right, interchangeable with

participant observation and to be used in conjunction with other distinct methods such as participant observation and interviews (Gillham, 2000: 13). Others believe it to be an approach to research within which qualitative methods can be used, including Yin, who suggests that case study is:

> An empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident and in which multiple sources of evidence are used. (Yin, 1989: 23)

Merriam subsequently offers this account:

> A qualitative case study is an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a bounded phenomenon such as a program, an institution, a person, a process, or a social unit. (Merriam, 1998: xiii)

Both definitions, though distinctly different, hold to the idea of case study as an approach. Yin's perspective pertains to a positivist view within which the researcher experiments in order to derive meaning, while Merriam's use of the term 'holistic' suggests a more naturalistic, in-depth, personal approach to exploring the 'bounded phenomenon', be it institution or individual.

Golby (1994) argues that case study allows for implementation of both qualitative and quantitative methods in order to achieve the best possible results, finding Yin's definition useful in that it allows for flexibility not just in terms of the range of research methods which may be employed, in the style of bricolage, but also in terms of the research questions in any given study. It was these flexible, bricolage-compatible constructivist aspects of case study research that interested me:

> Case study is appropriate where it is not yet clear what are the right questions to ask. There needs to be a sense of perplexity, problems to be addressed, and a sense of the researcher's interests in those problems. (Golby, 1994: 11)

As is evident, Golby and Merriam elucidate case study as an opportunity to prioritize process within research, and this in turn connects with Stake's view on case study research as an 'art' (Stake, 2000) which is interpretive and constructivist. The idea that process is crucial and privileged over outcome also echoes Small's philosophy of 'musicking' (Small, 1998b), with the meaning of music residing in the human act of

doing it, rather than within the music object – this concept underpinning my purpose in carrying out the research in the first instance[22].

Stake categorises case study as 'intrinsic' or 'instrumental' (1995). The intrinsic case study attends to one specific case and affords the researcher the opportunity to focus in detail upon the case and those within it, when this is the main focus of the study – to understand that particular case (classroom, programme, group of people) for its own sake and as deeply as possible. Instrumental case study is undertaken in order to apply findings and understandings from the case beyond it. Initially, I regarded my research as an example of instrumental case study, intending to find ways of applying the findings to other situations in the wider music educational context; but as the field research progressed, the case and those individuals encompassed within it, required more detailed consideration, becoming centrally significant and of, at the very least, equal importance to my enquiry as the general issues I began the study by investigating. Therefore, my study applied aspects of both instrumental and intrinsic case study in order to elicit findings, yet another example of the flexibility of a bricolage approach.

Expanding upon the instrumental and intrinsic models, Stake offers a further option for the case study researcher, namely collective case study, in which the study can be widened to enable numerous cases to be examined. I also made use of this idea, and expanded the first Music Potential study using the collective model in order to yield further data and provide opportunities for triangulation of the findings from that initial study and my own field study. My own intrinsic study of three classrooms and teachers over the course of one academic year may yet give rise to future instrumental case studies within primary classrooms in order to further test the model of partnership developed.

A particular advantage of case study argued by Gillham is its ability to help foster in-depth relationships, and to allow for participant agency and ownership of research (Gillham 2000: 11). Through the use of case study, with its emphasis on the research process, as opposed to being led by a defined hypothesis and the need to 'prove' it

[22] For an account of Small's work and its application to the study, see Chapter Six - Part One.

with outcomes, I saw that I could enable research participant agency and voice. This I hoped might minimize hierarchy among the research participants, myself included, and furthermore, consolidate a methodology of partnership that would have the potential to support the eventual outcomes, whatever they might be. In short, I recognized the value of this form of case study as an egalitarian approach to research.

The collection of detailed 'rich' data within this methodological approach brings challenges for the researcher in terms not only of the entailed time, but also of analyzing and editing vast amounts of audio and visual data, interview transcripts, field notes and making use of 'thick' description (Geertz, 1973).[23] A challenge also exists in ensuring that findings are triangulated if possible so that the research can be considered to be valid and rigourous. These aspects will be discussed shortly, but preceding them is the question of ethics in research, and how this affects not only doing research but the experience of being researched, which constituted a central aspect of my own enquiry throughout.

3.3 Part Two - Ethics, validity and generalizability

3.3.1 Ethics – a reflective preamble

Throughout the 'story' of the methodology, there are underlying themes of research ethics. Implicitly held up for examination is the proper role of the non-participant observer, which must preclude any kind of interference in the research situation, however inclined we might feel in that role to try to 'help' or steer the study as it unfolds. Even when research is ethically well considered and the aims are well meant, researchers may forget the importance of the equality of status and agency between researcher and researched. It happened that in the Music Potential study, there arose in quite acute ways, questions of ethical, and non-ethical, researcher conduct, which raised issues of inequality and hierarchy, somewhat uncomfortably. To develop the concern with the ethical dimension of my research, I turn here to a discussion of this aspect of the Music Potential study, where the concept of partnership was, as it remained in my subsequent enquiry, both *topic* of the research, and the underpinning methodology (see above). However, in the initial Music Potential study, and

[23] Geertz's concept of 'thick description' is discussed in Chapter Four.

notwithstanding its final fruitful findings, there occurred a *disruption* of the pursuit of partnership within the research process itself. What follows here is an account of my experience of this disruption, and its lessons for my own subsequent research practice.

3.3.2 Being researched

Although I had been invited to participate as a co-researcher in the Music Potential project, I found myself instead to be the 'researched' – as a research subject – in the course of an evaluative report carried out by two external researchers (neither being the original research designer), within the first four months of the study. I find the term research 'subject' to be negative as a result of its clinical and inegalitarian connotations, yet I use it here purposely to describe my own experience, which indeed supported the impression of these negative connotations.

The involvement of the external researchers raised issues of power, hierarchy, gender and the rather obvious academic ivory tower – (the 'elephant in the room'). Both were hired by the project organizers as non-participant observers and to write an evaluative report based on their observations of our musicking and on interviews of the participating teachers and musicians.

While they appeared friendly and genuinely interested in my work and the children's responses to it, I found their presence immediately unnerving. Initially this was perhaps because I knew I was being observed by unfamiliar people. However, subsequently I came to suspect that my music teaching practice was being negatively judged.

The presence in the classroom of these researchers, combined with their conspicuous note taking, resulted in an 'observer effect' that caused musicians and teachers involved in the research to alter what might 'naturally' do. This happened particularly on my own part in response to their note taking at specific moments. I would see them writing down what I had just said or done when musicking with children and would consciously alter my actions under the assumption that I had perhaps done something 'wrong'. This might seem to allude to a disproportionate lack of self-confidence in my own work and skill; however, the sense of a 'right or wrong' approach and the feeling of being undermined by the researchers was created and exacerbated from the very

outset by a blurring of the lines between these researchers' roles as both *observers as participant* and *participant observers*.

It was understood that the researchers were to observe but that they would not participate in the classroom musicking, and would interview us at later times. However, from their first visit they *did* comment on what occurred, both during and directly afterward, making suggestions for different approaches and even specific activities such as songs. While they duly asked probing but legitimate questions for clarification and to glean insight into the teachers' and musicians' views on what had taken place following their observations, they made suggestions as to how, in their opinion, we might improve the musicking. For instance, they suggested that the musicians were inept at asking the children questions and that we should alter the way we asked children for their ideas. Also, they informed us that we placed too much importance on the pitching of songs as – in their opinion – children can sing lower than we had assumed. This gives a strong example of the dilemma I was experiencing, because the question of children's optimal pitch is quite robustly contested with strong evidence supporting my own established practice of encouraging children to sing at 'higher' pitches and tessitura than some others in the field might use (Laurence, 2000).

This increasingly clear message that somehow our way of conducting the music making was ill-judged began detrimentally to affect my *own* confidence: as lead musician within that study I was responsible for raising the musical self-confidence of the teachers and also the less experienced musician with whom I was working. Having my own practice continually criticized left my own musical and educational confidence damaged, and my ability to support the other research participants was affected. The observational practices of the 'outside' researchers disempowered me and took away the control I felt I had over my own 'musical destiny' (Nettl, 2005: 151). Nettl warns that the practices of the 'outsider researcher' can often cause problems of this nature within ethnographic research, remarking that the outsider represents:

> […] a kind of musical colonialism, manipulating the societies they visit, keeping them from controlling their own musical destiny. They encourage the retention of old material or segments of a repertory, and they take away music – at the same time leaving it behind, to be sure, but perhaps polluted by having been removed, recorded,

> its secrecy violated – for their own benefit and that of their society […] Walking with heavy tread, they leave footprints after their departure. (Nettl, 2005: 151)

I was interviewed twice by the researchers. The first interview took place after one month, and the second, four months into the research. The interviews were conducted at my place of work, by the male researcher, some thirty years my senior, in the presence of his associate, a female researcher, around twenty years my senior. They were well established in their research field of primary education and their demeanour and the tone in which they spoke to me and others involved in the study clearly reflected their awareness of their elevated status.

One might assume that familiarity with the interviewers should put a respondent at ease and that a sense of trust and combined effort might have been established. In this case however, my prior encounters with these researchers did not put me at ease; conversely, it negatively affected my responses. By the time of the first interview, as described above, the researchers had observed me at work numerous times.

Thus, by the time I entered the first interview, I was well aware that their views about the project design were not wholly positive. In addition, I felt that they thought my musical and pedagogical skills were lacking. Naturally, this affected my answers in the interviews. My limited experience, younger age, perceived lower status in the research project hierarchy in relation to the interviewers, and my desire to please – all came into play as I tried to get my responses 'correct' – and this, of course, affected the data presented in their final report.

The most salient example of this is my response to the initial question in the first interview. I was asked 'How would you describe yourself as a musician?' Although just moments before, the researcher had stated in a preamble that there were no right or wrong answers to the questions, I was unprepared for this first question and was confused and taken aback by it. I felt strongly that as a result of the observations in the field and the comments given afterward that the interviewer thought my musicianship weak. All of my own long held insecurities came bubbling to the surface and I gave an answer that I thought would concur with his view of me:

> That's a difficult one because I wouldn't necessarily always describe myself as a musician … and I wanted to train to be a musician. I wanted to go to music college but I wasn't sure I was going to be good enough … But it's been sort of a journey to get to the point of actually feeling comfortable to say, 'I am a musician'. But sometimes I still feel a bit fraudulent. I'm not sure whether I can comfortably claim to be that. (Excerpt from interview transcript)[24]

This response clearly shows the conflict I felt at that moment. The contradictory nature of the response and lack of clarity demonstrates that this answer might not represent the truth of my view of myself as musician. I received the transcripts of the interviews around the same time that the final report was completed, almost too late to withdraw responses I felt were not truly representative of my views. This is a deeply troubling ethical problem in itself; the agreement had been that I would see all interview transcripts long before the report was written, and although these were repeatedly requested by Dr Rose as leader of the study, they were not forthcoming. Eventually, it was possible for me to retract – at the last hour – elements of the interview that I felt did not fairly represent my real position. This sort of situation raises crucial considerations, as implied by Maurice Punch:

> A harmonious relationship can come unstuck at the moment of writing an impending publication where the researcher's material appears in cold print. The subjects of the research suddenly see themselves summarized and interpreted in ways that may not match up with their own partial perspectives on the natural setting … severe differences of opinion may arise. (Punch, 1998: 166)

I was horrified when I read my own views of my musicianship. I held a position of responsibility as a teaching musician where I worked, and I was shocked that I had misrepresented myself in this way. Interestingly, the other musician involved in the project, an able violinist, also had an unsure response to the same question and felt that she too had undermined herself and her musical skills.

These experiences of being observed and interviewed were certainly uncomfortable. However, there were also positive outcomes in terms of informing me as to how I would ideally like to design and conduct my own research study. One such outcome was the realization that I could apply what I had learned from these difficult experiences to help me in re-thinking the status and impact of the researcher within my

[24] A fuller account of my experience of being interviewed is given in *MasterClass in Music Education*. (Finney and Laurence, eds. 2013).

own study, and in constructing a firm ethical basis to underpin these – in order to conduct ethically-sound research for all concerned. In addition, I felt I had a better understanding upon commencing my research as to how primary teachers might feel in terms of being musically disempowered by outside 'experts', and this became integral to the way in which I designed and enacted my study.

3.3.3 Becoming a researcher

In designing my own study, there were many further ethical and practical issues to consider, particularly as the research involved children not able to give informed consent. Permissions were required from 'gatekeepers' such as head teachers. I was also concerned with ensuring that the participants were not negatively affected or disadvantaged by my research. This included considering personal, emotional and social reasons why adults involved might possess low musical self-confidence and taking care not to further discourage the teachers from feeling able to teach music effectively, given my own recent experience of the negative effect that being a *subject* of research can have on one's confidence. I was also conscious of the need to avoid at all costs the assessment of children's musical ability in such a way that promoted individuals as being 'musical' or 'non-musical', thereby perpetuating the notion of innate talent that I sought to dispel. Such an outcome could negate the research by means of perpetuating the cycle of low self-esteem, both personal and musical, for the teachers and children involved. I was also keenly aware, as a result of my earlier experiences, of issues of power and hierarchy that may often be present in and potentially detrimental to the research process.

Eisner advises that upon completion of any study the qualitative researcher has a duty to withdraw from the setting with due consideration and with no damage either physical or emotional having been caused to anyone or anything. The ethical reasons for this are clear, but Eisner argues that this care must be taken also to ensure the future and continuation of qualitative research, which relies heavily on the consent and participation of settings such as schools:

> The affective state with which a researcher leaves a field site – the feeling of well-being and satisfaction the participants experience – can have a large influence on whether they will allow others to work there. Practically, one must attend to the matter of human relations, especially, but not only, during the closing periods of the

> research. Researchers must keep promises, provide feedback, clear up their own paperwork, tie up loose ends, express thanks, and take general care for the way they depart. Guests in our home who leave their sleeping quarters and the bathroom in a state of disarray are not likely to be welcomed back. (Eisner, 1997: 175)

Taking this advice into account, the anonymity of participants, adult and child alike, and the setting in which this research and the Music Potential study took place must be protected to ensure compliance with child protection guidelines and to avoid directly identifying adults and educational settings in the writing of this thesis. I have therefore adopted alternative names for participants and been non-specific about the study location. I have also avoided directly referencing any written evaluations, research diaries and interview transcripts from the Music Potential study and where this was unavoidable, I have taken care to anonymize the sources.

During my study, I was working closely with teachers. As the relationships developed and we became more comfortable with one another, personal thoughts, views and ideas about the issues under investigation and the context within which we were working were increasingly shared. As Gundmundsdottir observes:

> Awareness of ethical issues is an integral part of all narrative research craftsmanship, especially in those cases where researchers are fluent in the language of practice. In those contexts, teachers (as informants) tend to be more personal than they otherwise would have been…narrative research on school practice is essentially a moral enterprise rather than a technical one, where researchers and informants see themselves as moral agents in search of a better practice. (Gudmundsdottir, 2001: 237)

I therefore had a moral responsibility to give due ethical consideration not only to research participants' anonymity but also to the issue of participant *agency*, ensuring that ongoing opportunities for teachers' and childrens' ideas and thoughts were incorporated into the research process. In addition, it was incumbent upon me to ensure that those voices are accurately represented in the presentation of the findings.

Feminist researcher Gallagher has written about her experiences of enacting qualitative research in arts education that seeks to work collaboratively with students, teachers and co-researchers alike. On the issue of providing equal space for the viewpoints, interpretation or voice of all, she notes that dialogic approaches to

research can actively help to address and reduce issues of power that may ultimately affect or skew data. She advises:

> The principle of polyvocality challenges the primacy of any one researcher's interpretation, resists the 'closed' interpretation, and undoubtedly guides the design of the methodology. (Gallagher, 2008: 71)

I conclude this section now with a discussion of questions of validity within a qualitative approach, and what may and may not legitimately be conceived as being generalizable beyond the findings arising from this approach.

3.3.4 Validity and generalizability

There has been an 'extensive unpicking' of the ideas of validity and generalizability (the latter being synonymous with external validity or replicability) within qualitative and ethnographic research (Laurence, 2005: 130). These notions are now widely assumed to be more appropriately linked to positivist research which can support a priori hypotheses and result in quantifiable 'hard' data, as opposed to the less tangible, 'messier' results yielded from qualitative research in a 'real-life', human and social context.

The traditional positivist view of what constitutes internally valid or objective research corresponds to the accuracy of the selected methods in seeking out results and depicting the phenomena under enquiry – that is, to the ability of the methods to provide proof that supports the hypothesis as either correct or incorrect. This view of validity is plainly problematic within the constructivist paradigm of my study, where meaning is derived from process and in which there can be no definitively 'correct' or 'incorrect' findings, nor absolute proof. It is as a result of the poor fit of the positivist view of validity with the nature of qualitative research that the qualitative research community has sought alternative ways of conceptualizing and ensuring both internal and external validity.

Historically, some qualitative researchers have dismissed the concept of validity as unrelated and therefore not useful to qualitative endeavour, even going so far as to claim any pursuit and preoccupation with validity within qualitative research as nonsensical (Wolcott, 1994). Others have acknowledged its necessity in order to

ensure rigour within qualitative work and therefore to ensure that such work and its findings are seriously considered and valued by the research community as a whole and beyond (Yin, 1994). However, many who agree that validity is important in both the execution and reputation of qualitative research also agree that a reconceptualization is useful in extricating qualitative research from the bounds of traditional, positivist notions of validity while still supporting and ensuring rigour within qualitative research studies. These reconceptualizations include supplementing new terms and criteria including 'plausibility', 'credibility, 'coherence', 'intention' and 'authenticity' (Hammersley, 1992 and Guba and Lincoln, 1998). Guba and Lincoln also suggest terms such as 'confirmability', 'dependability' and 'transferability' (1985) all of which I found fitting in relation to the development of supportive partner relationships in my own research, along with the term, 'trustworthiness' (Guba and Lincoln, 1998).

By adopting a constructivist approach, I was able to approach my study more empathically, putting to positive use the negative experience of being researched that I had previously endured. Denzin and Lincoln propose that 'verisimilitude, emotionality, personal responsibility, an ethic of caring, political praxis, multivoiced texts, and dialogues with subjects' can provide the qualitative researcher with suitable substitutes for the positivist notion of hard and fast validity (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998: 10). These alternatives allow for the taking into account issues of power, related to who stands to gain or to lose by research, whose voices are heard or ignored and whose interests are being served by the research.

Given my less-than-positive experience of being researched, I approached my own research with the importance of internal validity at the forefront of my mind. As I had now learned, continually questioning my approaches, the effect that I as researcher might be having upon the feelings, actions and responses of those participating in the study and the way in which I was interpreting the research findings was of paramount importance if the study was to be reliable in terms of its findings.

Gallagher points to the concept of internal validity or objectivity as a 'pretense' and a form of 'male bias', pervading theory and research and something that can never really be fully achieved. She proposes that by acknowledging this and abandoning the

pretence of objectivity, feminist researchers can begin to 'break down power differentials in the research process' (Gallagher 2008: 68).

Another way of maintaining internal validity was offered to me through the bricolage or multimethod approach earlier described. This enabled numerous perspectives of what was unfolding within the study and provided scope for the triangulation of data. In order to maintain internal validity I kept thorough, detailed research notes and formulated questions to ask the teachers on a weekly basis about their views of the study as we worked together, to ensure that their perceptions of what was unfolding either matched, or did not differ considerably from my own. In this way I sought to prioritise the 'polyvocality' of Gallagher's methodological approach previously cited (Gallagher 2008: 71).

My ongoing commitment to ensuring that my research findings were reliable was not only in response to some of the weaknesses in terms of validity that I noted within the Music Potential study, but also a consequence of a strong interest in being able ultimately to generalize outward from the case study research findings.

Threats to validity

Guba and Lincoln (1998) suggest that threats to the internal validity of qualitative study include reactivity, researcher biases and respondent biases. Reactivity pertains to the ways in which research participants may modify their behaviour and actions in the presence of a researcher and while being observed. If one is to uphold the ethical ideal, discussed in the previous section, of being honest and clear with research participants about what will be observed and when, then reactivity is likely to occur naturally, albeit subconsciously, and this must be taken into account and acknowledged if research is to be trustworthy. The teachers and children participating in my research study were well aware of my presence and interest at all times and as a result, may well have succumbed to what Gillham refers to as 'the observer effect[25]' (Gillham 2000: 47). I was acutely aware of the observer effect as a result of personal experience of modifying my own behaviour and ways of working in the presence of the field researchers during the Music Potential study (see above). This strengthened

[25] Coined by Gillham (2000) 'the observer effect' denotes the effect that the presence of any observer will likely have on the behaviours of those under observation. (Gillham, 2000: 47)

my own awareness and recognition of reactivity when it occurred, and this recognition in turn has served subsequently in consolidating the findings and the maintaining the trustworthiness of the study as a whole.

On the subject of researcher bias and the 'observer effect' Gillham echoes Gallagher's point that there is no way around the subject of researcher bias and the limitations of one's own objectivity other than to acknowledge them as problematic and bear the issues in mind. He advises:

> In real-world research as we have mentioned before, the researcher is the research instrument, and any instrument used makes some contribution. You have to make a consistent effort to observe yourself and the effects you might be having. You can also ask members of the group or institution if they think that what happens when you *are* there is characteristic. A conscious attempt at rigour can usually lead to a reasonable judgment: we can expect no more. (Gillham, 2000: 47)

The issue of researcher bias is highly pertinent in terms of this study as a result of my extensive professional familiarity with the phenomena under investigation, my involvement and contribution to the earlier Music Potential study, and the unavoidable effects of my own personal philosophical and ethical beliefs in relation to the field as declared throughout this chapter and thesis. Taking these factors into account, I cannot reasonably claim to be unbiased in relation to the research, and inevitably entered it with preconceptions about primary music teaching. However, by maintaining an on-going and rigorous self-awareness alongside a reflexive approach (Ahern, 1999: 408), I have sought to minimize the effects of my existing and potential biases on the research project.

Another area requiring continued awareness in relation to trustworthiness was *respondent* bias. Integral to the study were the relationships that I was building with the teachers and the children, and I was well aware that with a friendly relationship comes a duty to be supportive and positive. This sort of relationship also requires honesty, but that honesty often proves difficult to adhere to, should the truth be something the other party may not want to hear. Many find it much easier in such a situation to act the part of the 'good bunny' (Robson, 2002) rather than disappoint a friend or colleague. Reflecting upon this, I have been aware of the possibility that the positive responses I received during the course of the study might have been affected

by respondent bias. I could have reduced the risk of this by asking an additional researcher to conduct some of the observations and interviews, but arguably this would not have been conducive to the development of the relationships between the co-researchers and might have adversely affected my ability to gain the emic perspective so central to my methodology.

Generalization or external validity

My hope on embarking upon the project was that it might be used in order to enact wider change within the teaching of music within primary schools. While this may at first appear grandiose, Ward Schofield points out that qualitative researchers within the field of education often intend their work to be more widely assimilated in order to affect educational and social change:

> This desire to have one's work be broadly useful is no doubt often stimulated by concern over the state of education in our country today. (Ward Schofield, 1996: 204)

Eisner (1997) concurs that broad usefulness of a specific research study for the purpose of wider improvement is a common intention held by researchers. He says of his own educational research:

> My aim is to expand the ways in which we think about inquiry in education, and to broaden our views about what it means to 'know'. But my ultimate aim goes beyond these: it is to contribute to the improvement of education. For me, the ultimate test of a set of educational ideas is the degree to which it illuminates and positively influences the educational experience of those who live and work in our schools. (Eisner, 1997: 2)

This citation reflects my own feelings and describes the impetus that compelled me to undertake my research. However, I am aware of the potential limitations of one single study, bounded as it was within one educational setting, to have wider influence and impact on affecting change in terms of teacher attitudes toward music teaching and within the field of primary music education more widely. Yin (1994) addresses criticism aimed at single or small-scale case study such as my own by arguing that contrasting case study with survey research, as in his view many critics are implicitly doing, is futile. He states:

> The external validity problem has been a major barrier in doing case studies. Critics typically state that single cases offer a poor basis for generalizing. However, such critics are implicitly contrasting the situation to survey research, in which a sample (if selected correctly) readily generalizes to a larger universe. This analogy to samples and universes is incorrect when dealing with case studies. Survey research relies on statistical generalization, whereas case studies (as with experiments) rely on analytical generalization. In analytical generalization, the investigator is striving to generalize a particular set of results to some broader theory. (Yin, [1994] 2003: 37)

Guba and Lincoln, however, point to the difficulty of generalization within qualitative research, imposed by its integral, contextual elements:

> It is virtually impossible to imagine any human behaviour that is not heavily mediated by the context in which it occurs. One can easily conclude that generalizations that are intended to be context free will have little that is useful to say about human behaviour. (Guba and Lincoln 1981: 62)

They advise qualitative researchers instead to replace the concept of generalization with the idea of 'fittingness', judging the 'match' of existing studies to other areas of research in which they might be interested. As Ward Schofield puts it:

> Much of the attention given to the issue of generalizability in recent years on the part of qualitative researchers has focused on redefining the concept in a way that is useful and meaningful for those engaged in qualitative work. A consensus appears to be emerging that in qualitative research, generalizability is best thought of as a matter of the 'fit' between the situation studied and others to which one might be interested in applying the concepts and conclusions of that study. (Ward Schofield, 1996: 221)

This idea of 'fit' corresponds with Michael Bassey's concept of 'fuzzy generalisation' or 'best estimate of trustworthiness' (Bassey, 2001) through which predictive statements may be made from the analysis of qualitative data, drawing on the findings combined with the researcher's own 'professional tacit and explicit knowledge', their 'experience and reading' of the phenomena or subject under investigation (Bassey, 2001: 1).

Ward-Schofield also argues that a better and more attainable approach to generalizability in qualitative research would be to consider 'what is, what may be, and what could be' (in Hammersley, 1996: 221), echoing Yin's notion of a 'broader theory' in place of generalization (1994) and Bassey's 'fuzzy generalization' (2001). The potential generalizability of my study will be further discussed in Chapter Seven.

The next section of this chapter considers the methods of this study, designated above and now examines more closely the two central methods.

3.4 Part Three - The methods

My chosen specific methods were observation, semi-structured interviews, detailed research field notes, research diaries and audio recordings; and, in a sense encompassing these as arguably a ‘meta-method’, narrative inquiry. Narrative inquiry occupies a somewhat similar ground to case study in that it is argued both as method and as approach; in the final discussion of this chapter, I will provide a fuller explanation of narrative inquiry in order to elucidate the ways in which it became an overarching methodological framework of my study.

At this point however, I turn to the two central methods used in my study: observation and interview.

3.4.1 Observation

Throughout the study, participant observation was my main research method and was used in every encounter in the field with teachers and children. Along with semi-structured interviews, it was the most fruitful method employed in terms of data yielded during the study and seemed to me to be the most suitable method to employ within the naturalistic setting of the classroom without disrupting or affecting the usual flow of activity and behaviour. May states that participant observation is a common and effective method within case study research (May, 2001: 147) and I found this to be the case in that observations allowed me to get a sense of the ‘real-life’ of the classroom sites in which the study took place, and of the realities of the music teaching and levels of teacher musical self-esteem within those classrooms. Through this use of observation, I was able to find out what the teachers actually *did* and were capable of doing in musical terms, as opposed to what they *said* they did or intended to do, thus increasing the validity of the research (Gillham, 2000: 46).

Lofland and Lofland describe participant observation as:

> The process in which an investigator establishes a many-sided and relatively long-term relationship with a human association in its natural setting, for the purposes of

> developing a scientific understanding of that association. (Lofland and Lofland, 1984:12)

Clearly, this emphasis on the naturalistic, 'many-sided, 'long-term' 'human', 'relationship' was in keeping with my research design, ethical stance and the purpose and topic under study. Gold designates this observer persona as participant-as-observer; he also usefully categorizes three other roles (Gold, 1969). These are: the 'complete participant' whose presence is covert or incognito, infiltrating the group studied from within; the 'observer-as-participant' whose purpose and interest is overtly communicated but whose contact with the people and phenomena under investigation is limited, formal and somewhat removed; and finally the 'non-participant', 'complete' observer who takes no part – possibly observing through a one-way mirror (Gold, 1969: 36) – this last role clearly irrelevant to my research. I rejected the approach of the complete participant on ethical grounds, in order to avoid withholding information from the research participants and conducting research *on* rather than *with* them. To take a disguised or hidden approach would not have allowed for co-research and would have been in any case incredibly difficult in a primary school context in which the children are naturally curious as to who any 'outsider' might be and why there are there.

I also rejected the notion of observer-as-participant on the grounds that it would not allow sufficiently in-depth observation, and would not enable the sharing and demonstration of ideas, musicals and pedagogical skills and techniques as the study unfolded. Significant in my choice not to use the non-participant observer approach was my experience of its use by the field researchers in the Music Potential study, as described in the discussion of ethics above. As explained, their approach resulted in the 'observer effect' discussed above, they were drawn to participate in ways that had not been agreed upon, blurring the agreed research boundaries in the field and, it can be argued, adversely affecting the validity of that study.

I hoped that by engaging as participant observer throughout my own study, I would, over time, become an accepted member of the participating classes and teaching body, and that this might serve to reduce potential respondent bias by fostering the trust that would underpin the emic understanding so central to the research project design.

Taking May's advice, I chose to 'immerse' myself in the daily life of the classrooms, actively participating not only in the musicking but also in other activities, saving my note writing until activities had ended to avoid giving the impression to teachers or children that everything they were doing or saying was being recorded and assessed. May advises:

> Researchers must become part of that environment for only then can they understand the actions of people who occupy and produce cultures (May, 2001: 149)

However, May warns against the tendency to assume that participant observation is in any way easy:

> Participant observation is the most personally demanding and analytically difficult method of social research to undertake. Depending on the aims of the study and the previous relationship of researchers to those with whom they work, it requires them to spend a great deal of time in surroundings with which they may not be familiar; to secure and maintain relationships with people with whom they may have little personal affinity; to take copious notes on what would normally appear to be everyday mundane happenings…if that is not enough, to spend months of analysis after the fieldwork. From this point of view, it is worth bearing in mind that when the fieldwork stops, the work itself does not! (May, 2001: 153- 154)

I can attest to May's intensive list of participant observation's demands upon the researcher but I would argue that the work required was indeed worthwhile and that this method, its overt honesty and the lengthy period of time spent using it, were instrumental in enabling the development of the relationships in which I was interested.

In addition, participant observation supported the emphasis on process as opposed to outcome, in that the method enabled the active production of data by the co-researchers rather than the removed, passive and impersonal collection of data as if they were 'naturally occurring rather than being mediated' (May, 2001: 152) – as might have occurred with alternative methods of observation. Theory could then be proposed from data, the study throughout maintaining its approach of being hermeneutic, constructing knowledge from the 'ground up' (Glaser and Strauss, 1967).

3.4.2 Interviews

Despite my previous experiences of being interviewed, I used semi-structured interview as a primary method, which, properly carried out, would be advantageous in the interests of establishing honesty and reciprocity between the participating teachers and myself. Drever (1997) proposes that by its very nature, the act of interviewing is a formal one in which the interviewer initiates the encounter and the respondent agrees and 'the result is not a conversation with people taking turns on an equal footing'; however, the semi-structured interview 'encourages people to talk at some length and in their own way' (Drever, 1997: 10). Furthermore, the semi-structured interview allows for both closed and open questions which enable the interviewer to prompt the interviewee, guiding the interview but not curtailing the respondent's freedom to answer in terms of the content and the length of their answer (idem: 13). Semi-structuring the interviews also seemed, as Drever puts it, a 'natural' method for gathering an impression of the teachers' thoughts and opinions:

> In the teaching profession, when you want to get information, canvass opinion, or exchange ideas, the natural thing to do is talk to people. (Drever, 1997:1)

With the factors that had so adversely affected my own semi-structured interview responses in mind, I found planning the interviews to be a 'demanding craft' (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998: 159) warranting careful consideration of elements that might affect responses gathered, in particular real and perceived issues of power and hierarchy. As Denzin and Lincoln remark:

> The *bricoleur* understands that research is an interactive process shaped by his or her personal history, biography, gender, social class, race, and ethnicity, and those of the people in the setting. The *bricoleur* knows that science is power, for all research findings have political implications. (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998: 4)

My interview questions were therefore carefully conceived with the aim of replicating the informal, equal relationship we – the teachers and I – had already built up in the classroom context. I scheduled the interviews to take place in each teacher's own classroom, a space where at all other times we worked collaboratively, and thus an

environment in which I hoped that the teachers involved would feel safe and able to respond openly[26].

Significantly, I chose to wait until six months into the study before I conducted the interviews, to allow relationships to develop between the adults and children involved. By this point, the teachers had worked with me for many hours and I hoped that they would now trust me not to judge them or to make them feel uncomfortable in any way.

We were a group of five women who, over the course of six months, had grown to enjoy each other's company and camaraderie despite our differing ages, professional roles and levels of experience in music and generalist teaching. We had a genuine rapport in advance of the interviews. This was counter to my experience of being interviewed by a male researcher, many years older, with a far higher status both professionally and in the hierarchy of the research study itself. My own sense of 'disengagement' in that experience stands in contrast to the evident engagement or 'rapport' (May, 2001: 135) of the teachers in my own study, apparent in the interview responses presented in later chapters.

During the interviews I strove to maintain a balance of equality by offering the opportunity for questions to be redirected or asked of me, in order that we might co-construct a picture of the development of the teachers' own musical confidence alongside determining the current landscape of teacher confidence in primary music teaching more generally. I was careful to keep interviews to a reasonable duration of thirty minutes, paying due respect to the teachers' busy schedules, of which I by now had first-hand experience. I also took care to pose transparent questions, explaining the purpose of specific questions when necessary to ensure that respondents understood why these were being asked. I wanted to guard against the possibility of respondents feeling 'lured' into giving a particular response as I had felt had happened to me. Throughout the interview process it was imperative to me that the positive relationships developed between us over time were not harmed by the interview

[26] The teachers' interview responses are cited and discussed in Chapters Five and Six.

process but might indeed offer a further strengthening of mutual trust and goodwill. As Davies reflects:

> We are entering a relationship with the respondent, not acting as a natural conduit for truths to emerge. In order for this relationship to happen, we may need to reveal quite a lot of ourselves. Traditionally, then, the respondent disclosed and the researcher reflected. Now the respondent may help in the reflection and the researcher initiate the self-disclosure. (Davies, 1999: 5)

Ultimately, my less-than-desirable experience of being interviewed in the Music Potential study afforded me a unique insight into optimal, empathic and ethical ways to approach the interviewing process within educational research. In this context, the semi-structured interview, as a primary method used in a study concerned with the building of positive professional partnerships became its own methodology for *creating* those very same partnerships.

3.5 Part Four - Narrative inquiry

Narrative inquiry[27] is a form of qualitative research that I implemented both as a primary method during the study and as a 'meta-method' or overall methodological approach for the purposes of analysing and presenting the data afterwards. According to Barrett and Stauffer (2009), the process of narrative inquiry requires the narrative researcher to 'live and work alongside research participants in order to understand the ways in which individuals and communities story a life and live their stories' (Barrett and Stauffer, 2009: 2). My selection of narrative inquiry arose as a result of my commitment to accurately representing the 'real-life' ethnographic context of the three classrooms in which I was working.

Barrett and Stauffer describe narrative inquiry as being:

> […] more than the collecting and re-telling or re-presenting of stories; it requires the careful analysis of narrative data against a series of frames including those of the research participant, the researcher, and the larger cultural narratives in which those individuals are situated. (Barrett and Stauffer, 2009: 11)

[27] I use the spelling of 'inquiry' as it is the most commonly accepted spelling within the fields of qualitative research and music education.

Furthermore, they speak to the relevance of narrative inquiry in the context of my study in terms of its focus on relationships and on challenging educational hierarchies in relation to both research and music education practices:

> For us, narrative inquiry projects are deeply relational and committed to the pursuit of questions of educational significance – questions that challenge taken-for-granted notions of the nature of life and learning in and through music. (Barrett and Stauffer, 2009: 16)

In addition to its suitability for application to a study concerned with relationships between teachers and musicians, narrative inquiry offered me a way in which to acknowledge and address my own position in relation to the study. Firstly, as the 'outsider' described previously by Nettl (2005), and secondly, as empathic researcher concerned with the wellbeing of the participants and with shared experience with the teachers of feelings of musical and hierarchical deficiency. Clandinin and Connelly (2000: 70) speak to the centrality of the researcher's own autobiographical experience in conducting narrative research and Clandinin later extends this by saying:

> Narrative inquirers cannot bracket themselves out of the inquiry but rather need to find ways to inquire into the participants' experiences, their own experiences, as well as the co-constructed experiences developed through the relational inquiry process. This makes clear that as narrative inquirers, inquirers too are part of the metaphoric parade…they too live on the landscape and are complicit in the world they study. (Clandinin, 2006: 47)

By supplying my own lived experiences in the prologue to Chapter One of this thesis, and later in Chapter Six, my autobiography acts as foundation for the co-constructed narratives that follow in Chapters Four, Five and Six. In this way, narrative inquiry ensures the 'polyvocality' of the research findings, according to Gallagher's (2008) definition given earlier, enabling me to present the 'frames' suggested by Barrett and Stauffer of both my own interpretative 'story' of my musical history, the field study and those of the teachers, before drawing them together for analysis in the discussion chapter of this thesis[28], in which the pertinent issues of socially constructed notions of musicality and how these commonly accepted notions are perpetuated within the primary school music curriculum and practices are interrogated.

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[28] My own 'story' is presented in Chapter Four, the teachers' in Chapter Five and the discussion of those joint narratives in Chapter Six.

Furthermore, Pinnegar and Daynes suggest that, 'narrative inquiry embraces narrative as both method and the phenomena of study' (Pinnegar and Daynes, 2007: 5). This being so, beyond being utilized for data collection, narrative inquiry forms an integral tenet of the dialogic methodology of partnership that I sought to develop.

Pinnegar and Daynes also allude to narrative inquiry's potential to 're-shape' the relationship between those conducting research and those being researched (Pinnegar and Daynes 2007: 7). As already discussed, I was fundamentally concerned with this very idea of approaching this relationship differently as a result of my own negative experience of being 'researched' within the Music Potential study and so the use of narrative inquiry neatly intersected with my striving to approach the research empathically and to reconsider my role as researcher in relation to the research and the other research participants.

Being, as it is, concerned with life experiences, what narrative inquiry does not provide is statistical data or empirical 'truth'. It is an interpretative method and is, therefore, potentially open to critique as to the validity and generalizability of the findings derived through it. However, Pinnegar and Daynes (2007) argue that narrative inquiry is indeed a valid way of 'knowing' the world. In explication of this they describe four 'turns' made by the researcher as they move toward narrative research:

> How fully the researcher embraces narrative inquiry is indicated by how far he or she turns in his or her thinking and action across what we call here the four turns toward narrative. The four include the following: (1) a change in the relationship between the person conducting the research and the person participating as the subject (the relationship between the researcher and the researched), (2) a move from the use of number toward the use of words as data, (3) a change from a focus on the general and universal toward the local and specific, and finally (4) a widening in acceptance of alternative epistemologies or ways of knowing. (Pinnegar and Daynes, in Clandinin ed. 2007: 7)

Eisner further supports a move away from clinical detachment by researchers in relation to the presentation of their research in favour of a more personal, 'lived' understanding and presentation. He argues for:

> […] *the use of expressive language* and the presence of voice in text. The kind of detachment that some journals prize – the neutralization of voice, the aversion to

> metaphor and to adjectives, the absence of the first person singular – is seldom a feature of qualitative studies. We display our signatures. Our signature makes it clear that a person, not a machine, was behind the words. The rhetorical devices that are used in some social science journals in order to mask the fact that a person did the work reported is ironic; the need for objectivity leads to camouflage. "I" becomes "we" or "the researcher". How such magic occurs is not clear, but what is clear is that such locutions are deceptive. The presence of the voice and the use of expressive language are also important in furthering human understanding. German psychologists call it *Einfühlung*. In English, it is called "empathy". Empathy is the ability to don the shoes of another human being. (Eisner, 1997: 36-37)

In presenting my study within this thesis, I have made use of the expressive language lauded by Eisner in an effort to give the reader as close an understanding of all that happened within the classrooms during the study between the teachers and myself. Concerned as my study was with the issue of human relationships, I have heavily utilized Geertz's concept of 'thick description' (1973) in the following chapter, spurred on by Finney's recent observation that much music education research does not offer close descriptions that are 'rich enough for the reader to feel they are there, smelling the carpet, sensing the ebb and flow of relationships and interactions.' (Finney, 2015: blog post 30/04/15). He argues that contextualizing classroom-based research in this way enables 'meta-analysis and the discerning of principles' through 'analytical comment and interpretation' (ibid.). It is this very approach that I have adopted in the following chapters, thickly describing the study from my own perspective, analyzing the teachers' 'stories' and perspectives of the study as shared in interview and finally, conducting the meta-analysis and interpretation of those co-constructed narratives in order to discern the principles of a model of dialogic partnership for a new approach to teacher led primary music education.

3.6 Conclusive points

3.6.1 The role of the bricoleur: paving the way for an emergent, dialogic methodology

The multi-method, or bricolage approach to my research described throughout this chapter depicts the researcher simultaneously as ethnographer, action researcher, case maker and storyteller. This, combined with my contention that a bricolage approach can and did (within the field study) yield to the emergent concept of what I term a 'dialogic methodology' is complex in conception and so, for reasons of clarity, I

provide here a fuller written summative representation of these ideas, along with a visual depiction in Figure 3.

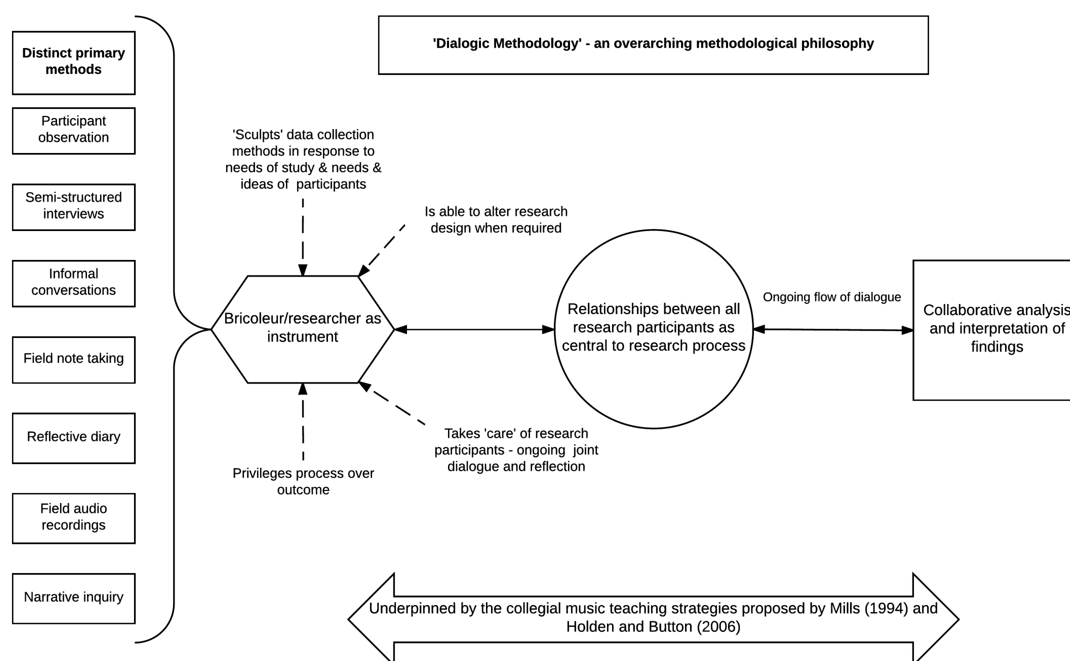

Figure 3: 'A dialogic methodology using a bricolage approach'

As discussed in Chapter Two, there have been a number of studies on the issue of primary teachers' levels of confidence in relation to teaching music (Mills, 1994, McCullough, 2005, Holden and Button, 2006, Welch and Henley, 2014). My research differs from these aforementioned studies in that I applied the collegial strategy for improvement suggested both by Mills, and by Holden and Button[29], as a *method*, in which the collaborative musicking, ideas and meaning making of teachers and musicians underpinned the entire methodological approach of the study. This method was also woven throughout the study through the selection and use of all distinct methods, thus creating what I initially termed a 'methodology of partnership', and came in time to reconceive as a 'dialogic methodology'. By this, I mean an *overarching* methodological philosophy and approach to the study within which dialogue between the research participants, teachers, musicians and wherever possible, the children, became a means of constructing knowledge in answer to the research questions. In this way, as Ball (1990) describes, the relationships developed

[29] See Chapter Two.

within the research process were an integral part both of the methodology and *also* of the resultant meaning and knowledge derived from the study:

> Data are a product of the skills and imagination of the researcher and of the interface between the researcher and the researched. The choice, omissions, problems, and successes of the fieldwork will shape the process of the research in particular ways […] Indeed, what counts as data, what is seen and noticed, what is and is not recorded, will depend on the interests, questions and relationships that are brought to bear in a particular scene. The research process will generate meaning as part of the social life it aims to describe and to analyse. (Ball, 1990: 169-170)

Throughout this chapter I have made reference to the catalyst for carrying out this research, my commitment to the view that music is for everyone and that all human beings are musical. I have also made it clear that my primary research aim was to make that philosophy explicit to the teachers and children by supporting them to raise their musical confidence. With that in mind, I wanted to ensure that the research process would be accessible and participatory for all whose active involvement in co-constructing the knowledge through the establishment and practice of collegial music teaching, would act to further encourage and bolster musical self-esteem by enabling the teachers to become agents of change for the future. Bresler has noted that:

> Teachers who have daily access, extensive expertise, and a clear stake in improving classroom practice have no formal way to make their knowledge of classroom teaching and learning part of the scholarly literature on teaching. (Bresler, 1994: 11)

I adopted the position of the bricoleur to be able to flexibly select specific methods in response to the views, observations and suggestions of the teachers and children, in order to give them the agency and voice that Bresler states that they lack in contributing within the research process and later, to the research outcomes such as the model of dialogic relationship presented and discussed in Chapter Six[30]. The methodological approach also sought to enable the consistent thread of collegial partnership to exist and flourish within each method and throughout the study as a whole. Kincheloe supports the idea that the bricolage approach enables commonly undervalued voices and perspectives to emerge as valuable to the research process and findings by stating:

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[30] See Chapter Six and Figure 5.

> Utilizing these multiple perspectives, the bricolage offers an alternate path in regressive times. Such an alternative path opens up new forms of knowledge production and researcher positionality that are grounded upon more egalitarian relationships with individuals being researched. Bricoleurs in their valuing of diverse forms of knowledge, especially those knowledges that have been subjugated, come to value the attitudes and insights of those who they research. (Kincheloe, 2008: 130)

Therefore, the adoption of a bricolage research approach in this context can be argued to have actively facilitated the relationships under investigation by placing them as central within the research process and ultimately, contributing to the research findings as presented in the chapters that follow.

I will now discuss how the data collected using this methodological approach was analysed and interpreted during and following the study.

3.6.2 Analysis of data

In Chapter Two, I discussed the relevant literature relating to my study and my chosen research questions[31] using the following theme headings:

a) The nature of musical ability and socially constructed notions of talent
b) Teachers' perceptions of musical ability - their own and children's
c) The musical confidence of primary school teachers
d) The nature of partnership

The eventual findings and resultant theories derived from the study are presented in Chapter Six under four *new* theme headings:

e) Roles and titles
f) Relationships
g) Teachers as artists
h) Dialogic interaction

In what follows, I will describe the process of analysis and interpretation of the data collected during the study via the bricolage approach described in the previous

[31] For research questions, see Chapter One, 1.3.

section, along with an explanation of how the four new themes listed above were identified and justified for subsequent discussion and theory making.

Just as my overall methodology in terms of collecting data was designed to be flexible in order to incorporate the ideas and voices of the teachers and children (whom I considered to be co-researchers, based on my earlier experience of having felt negatively subjected to *being* researched), my approach to interpreting the data was intentionally flexible for the same reasons. In order to ensure that the findings that I ultimately present within this thesis can be considered reliable, I needed to ensure that my own interpretations of what had happened in terms of the development of teachers' musical confidence and of more equal relationships between teachers and musicians during the study, matched the perceptions of all participating adults.

In this endeavour, I sought to extend the privileging of participant voice, or the 'polyvocality' suggested by Gallagher (2008), along with the ongoing facilitation of relationships between teachers and musicians *through* the research, beyond the process of data collection in the field and into the data analysis stage of the study. It was my intention in doing so to further attempt to diminish hierarchy within the teacher-musician/researcher-researched relationship and to challenge the primacy of the researcher. To have consulted with the teachers so closely throughout the field study as it happened and then to withdraw in order to make assumptions about the meaning of our interactions alone, and without their continued input, would have undermined the entire research process and our developing relationships up until that point by recasting me once more as the more powerful 'expert'.

The flexible bricolage approach to data collection described earlier, combined with the dialogic, inclusive and hermeneutic approach taken to data analysis thus served to facilitate and preserve the relationships I was developing with the teachers.

Hermeneutic phenomenology

My research broadly represents an ethnographic study that owes to ethnomusicology. In-keeping with such research, I adopted a hermeneutic phenomenological analytical approach to interpret the findings of the study. A hermeneutic approach invites

reflection upon meaning arising from lived, human experience (van Manen, 2014: 27). Van Manen elaborates:

> Hermeneutic phenomenology is a method of abstemious reflection on the basic structures of the lived experience of human existence […] Hermeneutic means that reflecting on experience must aim for discursive language and sensitive interpretative devices that make phenomenological analysis, explication, and description possible and intelligible. (2014: 26)

In addition, Gobel and Yin Yin (2014) describe hermeneutic phenomenology as a methodology 'best learned by doing it' and state that as an approach it comprises the following tasks, 'formulating phenomenological questions, identifying and collecting experiential material and reflecting on concrete experiences.' (Gobel and Yin Yin, 2014, blog post 16/10/14).

First stage of data analysis

In order to reflect upon the 'concrete experiences' of the field study I made use of aspects of interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) in the following initial analyses of the data:

- Repeated close listening to audio recordings of classroom musicking
- Repeated readings of my field notes and reflective research journal
- Repeated close listening to audio of teacher interviews
- Making note of tone of voice and pauses which might give further insight into interviewee's views, along with recurring words or terms, such as 'teacher', 'musician', 'role', 'job', 'musical'
- Line by line reading of each written teacher interview transcript
- Cross referencing the three teacher interviews for recurring use of key words/terms (see above) and for other resonances (such as reflection upon previous musicking 'partnerships'[32]
- Cross referencing the three teacher interviews for contrasts or dissonances
- Making note of resonance, contrasts and irregularities arising across the whole body of data

[32] See Chapter Four and the 'story' of Mrs. Piano

- Making note of areas in which the data was either confirming or conflicting with the literature and themes identified prior to the commencement of the study and discussed in Chapter Two
- Continuously checking my interpretations of meaning with the teachers to ensure accuracy

I did not extend the initial use of IPA methodology into formal coding of the data using qualitative software as is now fairly common practice. This decision was based on the small-scale of the study itself, focused as it was on the relationships developed through musicking between five participants, two musicians and three teachers. What the small scale of the study *did* allow for was a closer and more in-depth means of analysis making further use of the dialogic relationships developed within the research as an interpretative tool through which the teachers' perceptions, narratives and voices made as substantial a contribution to meaning making as my own. Kincheloe confirms that a hermeneutic approach enables the drawing together of data gathered via multiple or bricolage means in order to arrive at meaningful interpretations by stating:

> With the benefit of hermeneutics, bricoleurs are empowered to synthesize data collected via multiple methods. In the hermeneutic process, this ability to synthesize diverse information moves the bricoleur to a more sophisticated level of meaning making. (Kincheloe, 2001: 691)

The methods of analysis listed above were utilized over a period of many months, during which time removed myself from the data for short periods of time before returning to it as and when new insights occurred to me. This is in alignment with van Manen's assertion that:

> Phenomenology is more a method of questioning than answering, realizing that insights come to us in that mode of musing, reflective questioning, and being obsessed with sources and meanings of lived meaning. (van Manen, 2014: 27)

Considering and reflecting on the data over time and in dialogue with the teachers and others involved in the study, allowed the hermeneutic construction of a composite picture of what had occurred and its meanings to emerge.

Second stage of data analysis: composing and analysing narrative

Following the initial interrogation of the data and having checked the accuracy at this point of my own interpretations of the data with the teachers, I began the task of writing up the field study (Chapter Four) and three teacher case studies (Chapter Five) in narrative form, using the now analysed and annotated field notes and journal entries derived from my participant observations, along with the content of the teacher interview transcripts.

The composition of these written narratives allowed for a further textual analysis of the data, rooted as these 'stories' are in the real-life experiences of the participating teachers and musicians. Making use of 'discursive' language as advised by van Manen (2014: 26), the narratives contained in Chapters Four and Five of this thesis are indeed lengthy and detailed, using much 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973). This is a necessity in order to delve as deeply as possible into the data gathered and to portray as accurate a picture as can be of the lived experiences of the teachers, musicians and children involved.

Through the use of narrative inquiry in order to analyse and present the data, the reader is able to get a direct connection to the voices and perceptions of the teachers themselves. Their stories are held up as equal to that of mine, the researcher. In this way, the meaning derived from the data as presented in Chapter Six has been arrived at collaboratively, contains 'multiple perspectives' (Kincheloe, 2001: 687) and has been 'checked' for reliability by and between all research participants.

Third stage of analysis: Interpretative devices for the identification of themes and for theory making

As discussed in section 3.5 of this current chapter, I used narrative inquiry as meta-method in that I employed it to collect data, to construct the narratives presented in subsequent chapters and then later, in the analysis stages as an interpretative device.

Becker asserts that this kind of approach to the construction and interpretation of narrative involves 'a continuous redefinition of what the theory is explaining' (Becker, 1998: 58) and indeed, through interpretative, textual analysis of these narratives, I began to locate further resonances in the form of points of shared

experience with the teachers within my own, personal narrative of my musical 'history'. The significance of these points of shared experience only became apparent at this point of the data analysis. However, as will be discussed in Chapter Six, this turned out to be pivotal in terms of the development of the theory and model of dialogic relationship presented later in this thesis. These 'auto-narratives' are woven throughout the thesis to illuminate recurrent themes and to prepare the reader for the themes, findings and new theory presented within Chapter Six.

In addition to narrative inquiry as an interpretative device, at this point I also began to apply new literature to the data being analysed, most notably in the form of the entire body of work of Christopher Small[33]. As discussed in Chapter Two, Small's work on the theory of universal musicality[34] (1998a, 2006) provided direct inspiration for the undertaking of this study and wider reading of his work confirms many thematic resonances with the field study data.

In illustration, much of Small's theory is concerned with the relationships explored and realized through collaborative musicking. Applying thematic resonances such as this within the writings of Small to the emergent findings of the study as an additional tool for analysis and interpretation led to the construction of the four new themes listed above (see 3.7). These new themes provided the basis for the discussion of findings and theory making, that is, my contribution to new knowledge, contained in Chapter Six and expands the study and its findings *beyond* the literature and themes identified prior to the study[35], already well-documented in the field in connection with the issue of teacher-musician 'partnership' in primary music teaching.

[33] See Figure 4 for a visual depiction of the trajectory of Small's work and theory over the course of his career.
[34] In Chapter Two (2.2.2) I describe the concept of universal, or human musicality as embraced by Small (1998a, 2006), Blacking (1976) and Paynter (2002).

[35] Introduced in Chapter Two.

3.6.3 Conclusion

In summary, the methodology and methods chosen were intended to both elicit findings and to support the development of the overall model of partnership under investigation.

Thus, my study overall can be conceived of a narrative-based inquiry into a case study in which the concept of partnership in music education is closely explored within an *overarching* methodology of partnership between researcher and participants. It takes a characteristically qualitative research approach, incorporating an action research framework, and underpinned by a commitment to the perspective of universal musicality. The earlier Music Potential study has served as a pilot and baseline model, providing now the basis for both methodology and further exploration and improvement of the collaborative ways of working with teachers that it identified.

As an early career researcher, interested in the concept of action research, I initially found it challenging, in both the design and application of my field study, to move away from a more positivist paradigm of educational research in which I would be intervening in order to change what happened in the classrooms *for* the teachers, and towards the narrative research paradigm in which shared 'stories' could come to light and enable co-construction of knowledge *with* the teachers. This will be further discussed in the next chapter and subsequent chapters.

Chapter Four: The Field Study

4. 1 Introduction

This field study was carried out in the spring and summer terms of 2010 with the addition of some preparatory observations in the latter half of the previous autumn term, to serve as a baseline study. In addition, some follow-up visits were conducted in 2014. In this chapter, and the next, I describe in detail how I put the methods described in the previous chapter into practice and what happened as a result, making use of the concept of 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973, see below). These findings will be further discussed and analysed in subsequent chapters.

I begin with a description of the teachers and teaching assistants who participated in this field research and to whom I refer while giving this account of the study. All individuals including children and the school itself have been given pseudonyms in order to retain their anonymity and protect their privacy in accordance with the ethical considerations already discussed.

4.1.1 Dramatis Personae

The Teachers

Mrs Collingwood (Enid) – head teacher and principle 'gatekeeper'[36] for this study.

Ruth – Teacher of Year One 'Red' class with over ten years' teaching experience, all within this school. Directly involved in the study as one of the partner teachers.

Patricia – Teacher of Year One 'Green' class with almost thirty years of teaching experience and directly involved in the study as a partner teacher.

Leanne – Teacher of Year One 'Yellow' class. This was Leanne's second year of teaching and she was directly involved in the study as a partner teacher.

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[36] 'Gatekeeper' denotes Mrs Collingwood as Head Teacher able to give consent on behalf of the school, teachers and children.

Karen – Teaching assistant in 'Red' class.

Louise – Teaching assistant in 'Green' class.

Betty – Teaching assistant in 'Yellow' class.

Francesca – Reception class teacher and self-taught guitarist. A member of the staff ukulele group.

The visiting musicians

Myself – Professional singer and music educator with, at the time of the study, six years experience of early years and primary music education and training for educational and musical professionals.

Kirsten – Professional singer and music educator with five years of experience of music teaching for children. Kirsten also had experience as the conductor of a number of community choirs and ukulele groups for adults of mixed musical ability levels. She became involved in the study as leader of the teacher ukulele group, as will be described presently.

4.1.2 The study setting – 'Morningside' Infant School

Morningside is a local authority-run infant school serving between 200 and 250 children aged 3-7 years within the community of a medium-sized local authority housing estate. The school was assessed by Ofsted during the time of the study and was described in that report as being:

> Average in size. The very large majority of pupils are White British. The proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above average, as is the number of pupils entitled to free school meals. Early Years Foundation Stage provision consists of one Nursery and two Reception classes. The school has a designated children's centre and the governing body manages a number of extended services, including a breakfast club and after-school club.[37]

That inspection deemed the school to be 'good' and there is evidence from the most recent inspection carried out in the summer of 2013 that the school has further

[37] Reference not supplied, for reasons of anonymity.

improved by obtaining a rating of 'good with outstanding features'. Unfortunately, but perhaps not surprisingly given the emphasis placed by government and their inspectorate on the subjects of primary literacy and numeracy, no mention is made of the music provision at Morningside within either of these two Ofsted reports or those carried out prior to my study, although both the 2010 and 2013 reports acknowledge the commitment of the school to enhancing and enabling children's cultural learning.

4.2 Presentation of the study and the use of 'thick description'

In order to convey the clearest possible narrative of how I enacted the study I have chosen to present much of this chapter using 'thick description', a term and tool commonly used in qualitative research generally associated with, and often attributed to, ethnographer Clifford Geertz (1973).[38]

Thick description requires the researcher to present their observations as a richly detailed written narrative, providing the reader with a full sense of the context under study, including the situation in the field at the time of observation, along with the behaviours of participants as observed by the researcher. The narrative of a thick description aims to offer the reader a sense of 'verisimilitude' or truth, a feeling of familiarity with or having had personal experience of the kind of situation being described (Denzin, 1989: 83-84).

According to Geertz, thick description enhances the qualitative study, requiring far more of the qualitative researcher than merely selecting a range of appropriate methods and utilizing them in the field to gather data (1973: 6). The most important 'intellectual effort' (ibid) of any ethnographic study, in Geertz's view, lies within the researchers' own interpretation of the culture under observation. Therefore, in order to ensure that the description is truly 'thick', the researcher must further develop their description through close analysis, considering and investigating, through reflective thought, possible tacit meanings in what may have been transpiring, in order to arrive at an in-depth interpretation of the phenomena. The researcher is then able to assign

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[38] Whilst Geertz first introduced 'thick description' into common parlance within the social sciences, the concept originated within the work of Ryle (1971) as a philosophical term related to interpretations of phenomena that result from the reflective thought of ethnographers. (Ponterotto, 2006)

meaning to the intentions and purpose of action of individuals and groups participating in the study. As Denzin explains, a truly thick description:

> […] goes beyond mere fact and surface appearances. It presents detail, context, emotion, and the webs of social relationships that join persons to one another. Thick description evokes emotionality and self-feelings. It inserts history into experience. It establishes the significance of an experience, or the sequence of events, for the person or persons in question. In thick description, the voices, feelings, actions, and meanings of interacting individuals are heard. (Denzin, 1989: 83)

This is echoed further by Ponterotto:

> The use of thick description enables the more complex and intangible elements of human interaction, such as thoughts, emotions and relationships to rise to the surface and be recognized by both researcher and reader. Thick description leads to "thick interpretation" (Denzin, 1989) and this in turn, results in thick meaning of the research findings for the researchers and participants themselves, and for the report's intended readership. (Ponterotto, 2006: 542).

It is clear from this brief outline that thick description is well suited as a research tool within an enquiry that is focused on the act of musicking and human relationships, enabling me to attempt to answer the question posed by Small when he considered the act of musicking, 'What is really going on here?' (Small 1998b: 183).

I recorded the fieldwork as it developed using methods such as a reflective research diary and audio recording in order that I could subsequently write it up using thick description. As Ponterotto suggests, and as I intend, the thick descriptions following here will give my reader a detailed picture of the study, thus enabling them to interpret for themselves the findings subsequently described and analysed, and to compare them with their own experience. Importantly in a study such as this, the inclusion of direct quotes from participants forms a crucial part of this picture, allowing the research participants a constant direct voice which can 'heard' *before* its analysis and interpretation, and so that the reader may come to 'know' the research participants and study setting, potentially leading to the required sense of verisimilitude and thus a deeper understanding of the relationships, dynamics and realities at play within the study.

4.3 Selection of the study school

I was wary of enacting the study in schools with whom I had previous connections because while they might allow access and the assurance that the staff understood the purpose of the study, I could not be sure that my existing knowledge of familiar staff and theirs of my working practices would not adversely affect the study.

I considered the potential of working again with Sally from the Music Potential project in her new school to see how much further we might take the partnership model we had developed together in the first research project. However, I rejected this idea because Sally at that time was conducting her own further research on music teaching within her school and I was aware that two simultaneous and not dissimilar studies would most likely become intertwined, thus potentially complicating both enquiries[39].

Furthermore, although as argued in previous chapters, the first research project had several flaws that inhibited its validity, the primary purpose of my own study was to further test, extend and elucidate the findings of that research project that were sound and valuable. With this in mind, I needed to ensure that my study had several key features that mirrored the Music Potential project design. These features included: a need to start from the 'ground' in the sense of involving teachers to whom my model of partnership was a new experience, to enable a co-constructive research approach using partnership as a *method* as well as the subject of enquiry; working with three teachers of various musical competencies and experience; and working within Key Stage One to ensure the similarity of context between the 2007 project and my own study.

A colleague mentioned a conversation she had recently had with Enid, the Head Teacher at Morningside about her desire to increase the profile of music within the school. Via an initial phone conversation, Enid, made explicit her feeling that the early education of children formed the foundation for their futures and this matched my own belief. In addition, her personal enthusiasm for music and clear desire to

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[39] Although a further research enquiry with Sally was not appropriate for this particular study, this would be valuable in the future, enabling longitudinal investigation into the legacy and future potential of our research to date.

enrich the music learning of staff and children in her school complemented the purposes of my study and ensured a fair exchange between us, in the form of my providing on-going professional development in music for staff, and the school's providing an 'open door' for my observations and enquiry. The fact that Enid was particularly keen to secure some musical support for staff teaching Morningside's three Year One classes and my sense of wanting to replicate the three classroom teacher design of the earlier Music Potential project was the final element to confirm that Morningside Infant School was a suitable 'fit' for this study.

Enid agreed to meet me the following week and also arranged a meeting for me with the three Year One teachers we hoped would consent to working with me as part of the study. That meeting is described below as part of the baseline study.

4.4 The baseline study

A brief baseline study was conducted in the latter part of the autumn term of 2009. The primary aim was to establish the existing landscape of music teaching and the attitudes towards music among teachers and children within this particular school.

This baseline took the form of an informal introductory meeting with the three teachers, followed by my brief observations of their music teaching and general teaching practices with their children. I describe this baseline in the form of a series of reflective descriptions taken from my own field diary.

4.4.1 Initial meeting with the Year One teachers

Field note reflections - 02/12/09 - 3:30pm

Enid shows me into a small room, adjacent to the modern entrance foyer. She introduces me to the three Year One teachers, Ruth and Patricia who are seated together on a large, squashy looking beige sofa and Leanne, who is on a matching sofa at right angles to the other. Between the two settees is a brightly decorated Christmas tree, complete with multi-coloured lights that give the room a cosy feel as the outside winter light coming though the small window dissipates. The three women all smile warmly and we shake hands. The atmosphere is friendly but there are hints of nerves betrayed by tightly clasped hands on laps.

I feel nervous as I introduce myself and tell the three women about my work, the 2007 project and my current research. I want them to want to work with me, to really understand what it is I hope to do and I feel some pressure about conveying all of this without discouraging them in any way. I ask if they have a clear understanding of what it is I hope to do. They tell me that Enid has already told them all about it. From their responses it is clear that Enid has grasped my ideas perfectly and explained them well. I feel both surprise and relief at this.

There is a knock on the door and Enid enters bearing a tray of tea and chocolate biscuits. She is greeted with a chorus of our appreciative sounds and expressions of thanks. She says: 'Well we can't have you all running on empty at the end of the day when you've important things like music to discuss, can we?' and leaves. I comment that it's not common in every school for the head to bring her staff refreshments and Ruth tells me that Enid is always doing things like that for them.

The arrival of the refreshments creates a more informal atmosphere than existed in the first ten minutes of the meeting and we are all more relaxed as we drink our tea and help ourselves to biscuits.

Comment:

The fact that Enid had so clearly explained the purpose of the field study to the teachers told me that information is shared freely within this school and that there is good communication between the head teacher and staff. In my experience, this is unusual. Often staff are aware that someone is coming to provide musical activity for the children but that is the extent of the information that has been passed on or that teachers have managed to grasp given busy schedules.

The relaxing effect of the refreshments that I observed resonates with the similar experience at the inception of the Music Potential project. In that first meeting between the teachers and musicians described in Chapter One, Dr Rose also provided chocolate biscuits, cake and tea. As with Sally's 'story' depicted in Chapter One,

feelings of collective vulnerability[40], nervousness and possible musical and professional inadequacies being exposed were recorded throughout the early part of the Music Potential study, surfacing also in the interviews. Within this first meeting, Dr Rose discussed the research methodology and methods with relevant academic texts and theory explained, alongside initial explanations of classroom singing pedagogy. Such a meeting agenda might have served to further daunt the already musically unsure research participants (as indeed it did in Sally's case), but the addition of the chocolate-laden afternoon tea arguably lessened those potentially alienating factors. Instead of a potentially intimidating environment, Dr Rose established the sense of a pleasurable social gathering, during which the teachers and musicians felt free to get to know each other. The seemingly trivial social convention of supplying refreshments was utilized to great effect here as a tactic to begin the project, with assumptions of professional hierarchy minimized, and with feelings of camaraderie linked to the experience of conversation and chocolate among the research participants. In the initial meeting for *my* research project, I was a guest in the school and therefore not at liberty to initiate the offer of refreshments on this first visit. However, by offering us refreshment, Enid unknowingly aided the project immeasurably by replicating the events and subsequent effects described above.

Field note reflections continued: *I ask the teachers to tell me about themselves and how they feel about teaching music to their classes.*

Ruth *begins by telling me about the children who attend the school. She confirms that the majority of children who enter the nursery at 3 years old are below the expected national average in terms of their speech, language and communication, adding that this presents challenges in the teaching of Year One as the children have much to 'catch up' on. She tells me that having been the nursery teacher in a previous year she has first-hand knowledge of this delay and has found that regularly singing nursery rhymes with the children from nursery, Reception and into Year One[41] has*

[40] The concept of collective vulnerability is discussed in Chapter Six.
[41] Nursery, or Foundation Stage education is funded part-time by the state in the United Kingdom for children over three and up to five years of age. Foundation Stage education spans both compulsory and non-compulsory education and can be provided by registered playgroups, nursery schools, children's centres, daycare settings and within primary schools as is the case at Morningside Infant School. Reception is the final, compulsory stage of the Foundation Stage and the first year of primary school in

been useful. She says she loves singing and does lots of it with the children, especially just before home time. However, she doesn't think she's very good at it but says; 'They don't care how good you are, they just like to sing, don't they?' She ends by telling me she was excited when Enid first asked her if she'd like to participate in the study as she is keen to learn 'new songs and ideas'.[42]

***Patricia** speaks about her belief that is her duty as a teacher to afford children as many opportunities as possible as their home experiences can be quite limited. She tells me that she 'loves music of all kinds' and attends concerts regularly, most of them classical. Although she tries to incorporate music regularly into her classroom she struggles, feeling that she is 'not a strong singer' and isn't 'very musical'. She also tells me that she had very little initial training in music as a student teacher and since that time, has had few opportunities to access music training, tending to rely on colleagues to share ideas from resources they may have accessed. She is concerned that the children lose focus when she leads music and then chaotic behaviour may result. Nevertheless, she tries to do a 'structured' music activity of some form with the children once a week. She makes use of schemes such as 'Music Express'*[43] *to support her teaching and has used the 'Sing Up'*[44] *online song-bank occasionally. She hopes to gain new ideas for music activities using instruments and new repertoire as a result of taking part in the study.*

***Leanne** tells me that as this is only her second year of teaching, she is still finding her way with regard to teaching the whole curriculum, not just music. She sings nursery rhymes together with the children at the end of the day. She admits that she feels very nervous about having her music teaching observed. I ask her why and she responds:*

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the United Kingdom for children aged between four and five years. Year One is the subsequent year for children aged five to six years and forms the first of two years in which children are within Key Stage One (5-7 years).

[42] In order to closely convey the tone of these conversations and my diary entries, the vernacular style of language used is intentionally replicated.

[43] *Music Express* is a package of CD/CD ROM based resources and songbooks available for schools to purchase on a license holder basis. It claims to require no prior music knowledge on the teacher's part in order to be implemented in the classroom. Conversations I have had with multiple teachers along with my own study of the scheme strongly suggest that this is not the case for all of the content, some of which can be difficult to teach without a basic understanding of musical concepts.

[44] Implemented in 2007 by a Labour government, Sing Up's online song bank, magazine and training opportunities were made available without cost to primary schools across the UK in order to raise the profile of singing. Since 2012 and the withdrawal of funding, Sing Up's resources are available to schools who pay an annual fee.

'because I'm not a musician'. Although Leanne enjoys listening to music and attending music events and festivals in her spare time, she feels her lack of knowledge with regard to music theory and her belief that she is not a confident singer prevent her from being a 'good music teacher'. However, she tells me that she is looking forward to taking part in the study as she thinks it will help her increase her musical knowledge and confidence. I ask what I can do to allay her nerves and she replies it would help if she could see me work with the children a few times before I observe her music teaching.

We agree that I will visit the school again the following week to meet the children and observe Ruth and Patricia leading short singing activities as they normally would within their classrooms. I assure Leanne that it's fine for her to opt out of this given her concerns about being observed initially.

Comment:
What the teachers said in this conversation strongly supports the findings of Holden and Button (2006), discussed previously, that in the main, primary teachers do not feel adequately equipped to teach music. Their feelings towards teaching music to their classes evokes the themes earlier discussed of low musical confidence on the part of primary teachers, teachers' assumptions about what it means to be 'musical', and the preference of teachers towards collegial music teaching strategies that are all evident both within Holden and Button's study, and also in the work of Janet Mills (1994). Hennessey (2000) illuminates the subscription of primary teachers to the idea of talent, and Patricia and Leanne's admissions in this first encounter that they do not see themselves as 'musical' reflects again the notion of being musical as something an individual is, or is not, and that this pervades attitudes towards the acquisition of musical skill and the effective teaching of music.

Similar preconceptions were noted on the part of the teachers participating in the earlier Music Potential study at this same stage, indicating that my field study was beginning with the teachers at a starting point, in terms of confidence and perceived level of technical music teaching skill that I understood. In addition, what I experienced myself during that first project, (as previously, described) of musical self-doubt in response to being observed by those whom I perceived as being more

'expert' and higher up in the musical, academic and project hierarchy than I, gave me an empathic understanding to some extent of what these three teachers might be inwardly experiencing at this point. This past experience motivated and, I hope, enabled me to plan sensitively for my own ensuing field study design, one that sought to minimize tacit and overt assumptions or structures that might reinforce professional hierarchies. It was imperative to me throughout, that the enquiry would not in any way serve to further diminish the musical self-perceptions of these teachers or promote their current 'deficit' assessments of their own musicality.

4.4.2 Baseline observations

The following accounts are drawn from my field diary notes recorded immediately following each observation:

Ruth's 'Red' class 08/12/09 1:30pm

All three Year One classrooms are clustered together around an open plan space used by the children for quiet reading within the farthest corner of the school from the main entrance. Through its red door, I enter the low-ceilinged classroom in which colourful displays of children's artwork adorn the walls. Small red plastic chairs and low tables have been pushed to the side in order to make a space on the serviceable, synthetic, grey carpet. On this carpet, seated in a circle, are the class of twenty-one children. Ruth is sat with them and they are having a discussion. As I enter, the majority of the children look curiously at me and some begin to chatter. Ruth lifts her voice to tell the children that I am the visitor they have been expecting. One little girl called Sophie shuffles over to make a space for me and calls out, 'you can sit here', with a wide smile. Other children then begin to do the same so I swiftly accept the first offer and sit cross-legged beside Sophie to avoid further raising the already heightened volume of the children's voices. I don't want to be the cause of any unnecessary disruption, especially as this is my first visit.

I introduce myself, explaining that I love to sing and that Ruth has told me that they all enjoy it too. This is met with various called out comments to affirm this. A little girl then tells me her name is Anna and that she is wearing new shoes today. I say hello to Anna and admire her shoes. Immediately four or five other children,

including Sophie next to me, begin to shout out their names and offer their shoes for my approval. Ruth laughs and tells the children it is time for listening, not talking just at the moment. The children settle down, although the sense of excited anticipation remains obvious through some wriggling and whispering. I ask the children if I can listen to them sing and Ruth agrees on their behalf, presumably to avoid any more tangents, shoe-related or otherwise. She asks the children what song they would like to begin with. Sophie puts up her hand and simultaneously shouts 'Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star'. Ruth gently reminds her not to shout out but accepts the suggestion. Sophie looks pleased and sits up straight. Ruth begins to sing the song along with an enthusiastic Sophie and with two thirds of the class joining in. The group does not sing together at first and there is some hesitation on Ruth's part, which the children pick up on. The key she has begun in is a little low for the children[45] *but she sings with more confidence after the first line and they begin to copy her. She stays in tune throughout the song.*

Most of the children are singing or prioritizing the actions, as opposed to doing both simultaneously. This is what I would expect from children of this age. However, I note a huddled group of three boys sitting opposite me in the circle. They are disengaged, playing with their shoelaces or the carpet. Karen, the teaching assistant sits behind them and sees this. Patting one boy on his shoulder she verbally encourages them to join in. They do so half-heartedly but disengage again one by one soon afterward. Anna gets up and walks away from the circle, picking something up from Ruth's table as she goes. Karen goes to her but does not physically guide her back to the circle or chastise her. She tries to engage Anna's attention by sitting next to her and with gentle verbal attempts to recapture her attention.

The song ends and Ruth praises the children, as do I, and they begin to excitedly chatter again. Ruth asks what song they would like next and various nursery rhymes are called out. Ruth selects Lewis who has his hand up and is sitting quietly and he asks for 'Humpty Dumpty'. Having sung the song, again with a fragmented beginning and only half the children singing along, Ruth suggests that they sing the song they

[45] Current thinking about the vocal tessitura of this age group suggests a lower limit of D (above middle C) and up to B in the same octave, although for several decades there has been, and continues, much debate on the subject (Laurence, 2000: 14). Ruth began the song with a starting note of A below middle C which made the lower notes of the tune challenging for the young, higher pitched voices.

learned for their harvest festival assembly. This suggestion is met with more enthusiasm that the previous two songs had been. One of the previously disengaged boys lets out an audible 'yessss!' and sits up. Anna, still standing outside of the circle turns her attention back to the others, although she is still playing with the object she picked up earlier. Ruth pitches the song, 'Cauliflowers Fluffy'[46]*, in a key in which the children are able to reach the notes at both ends of the song's vocal range, although again, they do not start altogether. This song has no actions and contains many words but they have obviously learned the song thoroughly and enjoy singing it, especially the ending where they whisper and make 'jazz hand' gestures 'the broad beans are sleeping in their blankety bed. Yeah!' The song ends and I applaud loudly, Ruth makes a gesture of relief by swiping the back of her hand across her forehead and the children look pleased. Sophie is glowing with pride and asks repeatedly to sing the song again. The sound levels in the class increase and there is much fidgeting. Ruth praises the children and makes it clear that we have come to the end of singing time by asking them to move to their chairs and tables. The singing has lasted just over ten minutes.*

Comment:

Ruth is a very encouraging teacher and it is clear that she and Karen manage children who need extra support effectively. This is not an easy group to engage, with many children struggling to concentrate for more than a few minutes. There is a sense of their need to exert energy through movement, and some overall difficulties in listening.

Ruth sings in tune and has a clear, audible singing voice. However, I observe that she is hesitant, suggesting that it is confidence, rather than skill in singing that she lacks. I can see that there are basic elements of her singing practice that can be altered to improve how she sings with the children, such as strategies to begin the song together by counting or singing the children in to ensure that they begin altogether.

Ruth has demonstrated that she values the children's agency by asking them to choose two out of the three songs sung during the observation and by praising their ideas.

[46] Sourced by Ruth from the Sing Up website and commercially written for children of primary school age.

I find a surprising contrast between the children's reactions to and quality of singing of the nursery rhymes in comparison to the more challenging cauliflower song. I wonder if because the group are quite young and struggle to focus and listen, Ruth has continued to use nursery rhymes as the primary repertoire for the singing she leads with the children. These are songs the children know well, having learned them in nursery and practised them in Reception, but the difference in their attitudes (as indicated by the children's positive verbal responses to the suggestion of this particular song) towards the nursery rhymes and the more complex song suggests that they are tired of the well known songs and enjoy more challenging material. The disengagement of the group of boys during the nursery rhymes and their change of attitude in response to the cauliflower song links to issues of gender in relation to singing discussed by Welch (2006) who in a longitudinal study of singing and vocal development of children and young people through their school years found:

> Overall singing competency appeared to be closely related to the nature of the task, with many boys negatively affected in the task of singing a "school song". (2006: 318)

Perhaps even for these very young boys, the nursery rhymes represented 'school songs' and conversely, the more challenging, jazz style cauliflower song, something different.

Patricia's 'Green' class 08/12/09 2pm

Patricia's classroom is next to Ruth's and is identical in shape and size but the door is painted green. The room is busy as the children, gathered around small tables in their respective learning groups, are engaged in finishing off their science work. Patricia appears flustered and apologizes that they are running behind schedule. I tell her not to worry, this gives me an opportunity to observe the children and the general atmosphere of the classroom. As with Ruth's class, there is lots of chatter from the children but it is clear that they are, on the whole, engaged in their work.

Some children greet me with smiles, looks of curiosity and the occasional 'what's your name?' as I put my bags down to one side and try to remain as unobtrusive as possible.

After a few minutes, most children have finished and Patricia instructs them to sit on the carpet. She is softly spoken and kind, yet her voice contains authority. Teaching assistant Louise begins shifting bookcases, tables and chairs to the sides of the room to create a space on the carpet big enough for twenty-five children and three adults to sit in a circle. Another few minutes pass and after a little shuffling about to make space for everyone and some strategic moving of particular children to separate them or ensure they are next to either Patricia or Louise, we are ready and I introduce myself in the same manner as I did to the previous class. Patricia tells me that they have prepared a song especially for my visit and asks the children if anyone can remember the name of the person the song is about. Approximately twenty hands fly up and lots of 'ooh, ooh, ooh' and 'me, me, me' sounds emanate from bodies that are bouncing up and down within their cross-legged positions. Patricia chooses Callum who confidently tells me that the song is about Bobby Shaftoe. Patricia asks the class what Bobby Shaftoe's job was and selects Emma who says he was a sailor. Jay sitting close to me calls out that he was also a member of parliament and Patricia confirms they are both correct. She asks the children where Bobby Shaftoe lived and Daniel is selected to answer, telling us he was from Durham. Most of the children are engaged with the discussion and seem eager to share their knowledge.

Patricia is a little flushed, and I suspect she is nervous. She starts the song by counting to three, then hesitates and does not initially sing. Neither does Louise and the children accordingly begin on various starting notes. Quickly a consensus is reached by the majority matching the pitch of the loudest voices of five boys on one side of the circle. The resulting pitch is low and many children drop out of the 'silver buttons on his knee' line as a result. However, the children's enjoyment is evident from their smiles and they know the numerous verses by heart. It is difficult to hear Patricia as she is singing quietly but by listening closely, I hear that she is not singing in tune. The tempo of the song fluctuates and gets faster as they near the end and culminates in an exuberant exclamation of the final 'Bonny Bobby Shaftoe!' I applaud enthusiastically. Patricia tells me this is the sort of thing they do, learn a song and then 'polish it' by singing it regularly and then perhaps performing it in assemblies for other classes to hear. The bell rings and the children line up as instructed for playtime.

Comment:

Patricia has a kindly command of her class. This has resulted in a sense of cooperation in the form of putting up hands to give answers without much shouting out. Many children were observed to be engaged but quiet, giving way to the confident few who were often chosen to answer questions. The class as a whole seems even younger than their five years, evidenced in the lack of physical coordination that they collectively demonstrated in their inability to respond to Patricia's request that they swiftly arrange themselves into a circle on the carpet.

Patricia demonstrated a good sense of her own style of music teaching although her nerves were suggested by her body language, avoiding eye contact with me and hunching over slightly, in conjunction with her hesitation when beginning the song. The fact that she had prepared so thoroughly for my visit, even though I thought we had agreed that this wasn't necessary, also suggested that Patricia might have felt a certain amount of pressure to impress me. I also interpreted her flustered appearance as I entered the classroom as a possible sign of nervousness about my impending observation, although this may well have been a result of time pressures. It is also possible that she was always hesitant when beginning to sing with the children and that she avoided eye contact with unfamiliar people. However, as the study progressed, I found her to be far more relaxed in my presence and she did then engage in direct eye contact with me.

My experience of working in primary schools has shown me the pressures teachers experience in terms of fulfilling the required teaching, learning and assessment of the National Curriculum. Given that it was science, a core subject, that was underway as I entered the classroom, along with Patricia's self-labeling of herself as 'not musical', later corroborated in interview, a combination of professional pressure and nerves about being observed seems a likely explanation for Patricia's initial disconcerted appearance.

It seemed to me at this point that, as with Ruth, Patricia's confidence could be quickly improved by the introduction of simple strategies such as counting the song in by measuring a count of four as opposed to three when the song is in 4/4 time to ensure a solid beginning that everyone can join in with.

It was evident from the display of additional information the children had learned in relation to the song that Patricia had extended the learning to ensure the children knew about the historical context of the song. The children's eagerness to share this knowledge suggested that this kind of learning had captured their interest.

Leanne's 'Yellow' class 08/12/09 – 2:30pm

I step into Leanne's classroom to say hello and ask if I might observe the class at their usual activities for a few minutes. Leanne is welcoming and agrees readily. The class of twenty children are putting away books and making ready for story time. Leanne asks them to sit on the carpet and gradually they sit in a muddled group on the floor in front of the chair on which Leanne is seated. I sit to one side on a small chair and again, receive questioning looks from some of the children. Leanne begins by introducing me, telling the children that I will be visiting them next term too so that we can all sing together. I wave and smile and a little boy named Karl with speech and language needs[47] *asks Leanne if we are going to sing now. Leanne smiles, shrugs her shoulders and looks at me. I tell Karl that I'd be happy to sing with them and ask him what song he would like to sing. Karl thinks for a second and someone else shouts out 'Scooby Doo'. Karl is thrown by this but then decides that he wants to sing 'Twinkle Twinkle'. I agree and start us off with a 'ready, steady, off we go' sung on the start note of D above middle C. We sing the song twice with most of the children joining in. One or two are only making small lip movements, their gazes cast to the carpet but the majority seem to have full attention on the activity. Most know all of the words and can sing them audibly. I tell the children that they are good singers and indeed, they have sung well, joining in with audible volume and remaining in tune throughout. Leanne looks pleased and thanks me. She tells the children it is time for their story and picks up a large book from beside her chair. The children settle down. They are captivated by Leanne's animated storytelling. When the story is finished, she asks the children a series of questions about what they have heard. There is some shouting out but she kindly reminds them that she will ask only those who remember to put their hands up. From this point, the shouting out stops and the question and answer session continues with Leanne praising individual children liberally for their*

[47] Karl's speech was very unclear and clearly below the expected attainment level for his age.

responses. The school bell rings and Leanne instructs the children in small groups to fetch their coats and bags and line up at the door. She helps some children with coats and once they have all assembled, leads them out to meet their parents in the playground. Many children turn to wave at me as they leave. After a few moments, Leanne returns and apologizes for not having prepared some music for my visit and asks me if what I have observed was 'all right'. I tell her what I saw was lovely and very useful and she laughs and says her class is 'full of personality'. I tell her I'm looking forward to working with them all. We chat for a few minutes about individual children and then say our goodbyes.

Comment:

Of the three classes, I observed that Leanne's has a sense of calm not present in the other two rooms. Despite being the least experienced of the three participating teachers, Leanne is clearly an effective teacher who commands the children's attention in a positive manner. During the impromptu singing requested by Karl, she sang along and although her voice was quiet, I could hear that her voice is tuneful and her assessment of herself as 'not musical' in our first meeting is certainly inaccurate. This is further supported by her ability to use her voice expressively at a variety of pitches to animate the characters in the story.

Karl's confidence to ask to sing despite having severely limited speech is evidence of Leanne having created an environment where children feel confident in their agency to contribute to class discussion. Leanne took time at the end of my first observation to inform me of particular children's special needs and this included Karl's speech difficulties. At the time, she was explicit that she was doing so in order that I might model musical activities in the months to come that might support the learning of these children. This inclusive approach matched my own; and it also showed that Leanne believed music to be useful for a range of learning purposes despite her admitted lack of confidence in the subject.

Another interesting reflection on reviewing my diary entry for this particular observation was the way in which Leanne deferred to me in terms of decision-making twice during this short interaction. The first example of this was the shrugging of her shoulders when Karl asked if we could sing together. I was a guest in Leanne's

classroom and therefore, she had the ultimate decision in how we were to proceed. There are several possible ways to interpret this shrug. One explanation might be politeness. Leanne may have wanted to avoid making me feel uncomfortable by putting me under pressure to sing with the children without prior planning or consent, yet to refuse would be counter to her pedagogical tendency towards accepting and acting upon children's suggestions. Of course, this being my job, I would not have felt any discomfort but Leanne may have been projecting her own feelings about being in that position onto me. However, given her knowledge of my role and the purpose of my visit that day, I think this explanation unlikely. Far more likely, given her own assessment of her knowledge of and ability in music, the shrug signaled that she did not feel empowered in the presence of a visiting musician to make the decision about whether we should sing together. To do so without deferring to me might have meant that she herself would have had to lead the singing, something she had already admitted that she did not feel comfortable doing at this early stage in our relationship.

Possible further consolidation of Leanne's deference to my judgment in matters musical came at the end of the afternoon when she helpfully shared information about individual children's special needs. She asked that I model activities to support those children, presumably so that she could copy them in my absence. This action on Leanne's part can be interpreted in two ways. The first is that rather than recognizing the valuable contribution she could make to co-construct with me such activities, given her in-depth knowledge of the individual children, Leanne was deferring to me as 'expert' by asking me to bring repertoire and approaches suitable for her class. Another interpretation however, is that Leanne may have been asserting herself and using her 'voice' within this first encounter, as I had encouraged the teachers to do in our first meeting, by directing me in terms of what input she would most value. These conflicting interpretations demonstrate the complexity of feelings, matters of relationship and hierarchy in classroom-based research, particularly in the case of music.

4.4.3 Baseline study conclusions:

A study spanning just a few hours over two afternoons can provide merely a 'snapshot' of the field, of the level of practical music teaching and the overall teaching styles of the three participating teachers.

Despite this, and helped by the intricacy of my notes where I tried to recall everything –providing a thick description in Finney's terms through which the reader is 'smelling the carpet' (Finney, 2015: blog post 30/04/15)– the baseline study provided an understanding of the music activities already occurring, the teacher's 'real', rather than their own perceived levels of their musical knowledge and skill, and the children's responses to the current musicking. My observations confirmed the status quo of primary teachers striving to teach music yet feeling consistently ill equipped in terms of confidence, skill and resource. That this was still some four years after Holden and Button's (2006) study further confirmed the timeliness and potential worth of my own research enquiry. Furthermore, the insights gleaned from and recorded in the commentaries above were extremely useful in terms of informing the design of the field study when it commenced in the following term.

The baseline observations supported Enid's initial claims that the school was first and foremost concerned with the positive role education and the school itself should play in enriching the children's lives. In each classroom there was a clear commitment to ensuring that children felt safe and happy in the school environment, echoing the work of Noddings:

> The best homes and schools are happy places. The adults in these happy places recognise that one aim of education (and of life itself) is happiness. They also recognise that happiness serves as both means and end. Happy children, growing in their understanding of what happiness is, will seize their educational opportunities with delight, and they will contribute to the happiness of others. Clearly, if children are to be happy in schools, their teachers should also be happy. Too often we forget this obvious connection. (Noddings, 2003: 261)

Enid's attitude towards the teaching staff was nurturing and, as Nodding's suggests will happen, this subsequently cascaded to the children via the teachers' encouraging and kind classroom management styles.

The initial conversation with Enid and the first meeting with the teachers confirmed a prevailing belief among them of the importance of music as an integral element of children's educational experience.

The singing I observed supported Patricia's assertion that a lack of confidence probably resulted from a lack of training and knowledge about how to confidently lead singing. This meant that they were unable to direct the children in terms of how to best use and develop their singing voices. This was an issue of primary concern for me at this stage. The seriousness of the impact of teachers being unable to provide suitable guidance and activity on the development of children's singing potential is touched upon by Welch:

> At any age, development can be supported or hindered by a number of factors, such as the appropriateness of a given singing task set by an adult in relation to current singing capabilities, the expectations of peers and/or on the value placed on singing (and certain types of singing behaviour) within the immediate culture. (Welch, 2006: 325)

Nevertheless, while the baseline study showed Welch's first factor to be an issue in this case, the value placed on singing within the immediate culture of the school was not an area for concern. In the main, the attitudes towards singing of the children themselves through their engagement with it as a class activity were observed to be positive and as these were very young children, the effect of the expectations of peers was assumed to be low with the possible exception of the effect of gender on attitudes towards singing discussed in relation to the work of Welch in the commentary on the observation in Ruth's class.

Despite their self-proclaimed lack of musical knowledge, Ruth and Patricia demonstrated that they were able to identify, select and teach more complex songs in order to develop the children's repertoire beyond simple nursery rhymes. Their reasons for doing so were not explained to me at this point but it is possible that this was in response to National Curriculum guidelines for this age group, in place at the time of the study and to date, which state that:

> Pupils should be taught to: use their voices expressively and creatively by singing songs and speaking chants and rhymes. (Excerpt from DFE website, 2013[48])

[48] Reference: DFE-00175-2013

These more complex songs also provided scope for cross-curricular learning such as the cauliflower song's link to harvest festival, which may be an alternative or additional reason for their selection and use.

It was evident that all three teachers were indeed under-confident about teaching music in their classrooms, and in line with the findings of Hennessey (2000), shared a belief that to be 'musical', or to be a musician as an adult, required the technical skill of being able to play an instrument. However, there was simultaneous agreement among them that all *children* were musical regardless of technical skill.

In terms of the children, the baseline observations showed that what I was told in the first meeting about the high levels of speech, language and communication needs was indeed the case and this is also borne out in the aforementioned, contemporary Ofsted report. These high levels of special educational need presented a variety of challenges for both teaching and learning noted during my observations to include; only very short periods of whole class attention and engagement, some withdrawn and unconfident children, some very dominant children and in the main, boys being more confident to contribute ideas than girls. The children's engagement with singing appeared to be high and enthusiasm increased when more challenging repertoire was offered and when they were invited to contribute ideas and have some agency over activity.

4.4.4 Concluding reflections

On further reflection, initiated by the observations of Leanne's possibly deferential responses in our first encounter in her classroom, the serious challenge of dispelling and overcoming tacit, deeply held assumptions and behaviours relating to hierarchy of position between musician and teacher loomed large. The baseline study pointed towards a sense of the teachers feeling exposed in relation to what they perceived to be a weak area of their professional practice. Although there was resonance here with the wider research literature and though Morningside asserted itself as an appropriate school for the purpose of the study, I was acutely aware of the teachers' view of me as 'expert' and the resultant inequality that existed between us within our new and delicate acquaintance.

It was imperative as the study progressed into its next stage, that I remain aware of this sense of inequality seeking to minimize and even eradicate it through my own words and deeds. Perhaps the negative feelings of self-doubt and inadequacy that I had experienced during parts of the earlier Music Potential project could now be potentially useful through these experiences. I had gained some understanding of how and what the teachers might feel. I could, therefore, usefully draw upon that knowledge in the enterprise of nurturing the partnership relationships that my study sought to examine.

4.5 The Field Study

The field study proper commenced in January 2010 and continued for seven months. During this period, I conducted fifty-four participant observations in which I led singing and other whole class musicking[49] with support from, and eventually partially co-leading with, the three teachers.

I will describe the observations in three sections, pulling out the salient features and critical moments as the study progressed. The first section contains selected descriptions from the first four weeks of the study; the second takes the latter half of the spring term; and third section describes the study during the summer term, which included a culminating concert. More specific details about the effects of the project on individual teachers and also its effect on me and my teaching and research practice will be discussed in the case studies contained within the subsequent chapter and in the discussion of findings in Chapter Six.

4.5.1 Stage one - the first four weeks *12/01/10 – 02/02/10*

The findings of the earlier Music Potential study, combined with my personal experience of that study, suggested that the building of positive and supportive relationships within a collaborative music teaching project were best established through weekly interactions over a four week period. It was within this timeframe and with this frequency of contact that the first signs of teachers and musicians

[49] Such as playing with un-tuned percussion and using materials such as scarves, Lycra and feathers to support vocal exploration alongside dancing.

repositioning themselves within the partnership relationship began to emerge in the Music Potential project. With the agreement of the teachers at Morningside, a month of weekly visits within the first half term was scheduled and I expected that this initial 'immersion' approach would provide momentum for the development of our new partnership as it had in the earlier project.

As a direct result of the first conversation with the teachers, it was agreed at their suggestion, that I would spend the entirety of the first visit and most of the following three weeks demonstrating musicking with children for around twenty minutes, followed by ten minutes of observing general classroom activity.[50] This would enable the teachers to become acquainted with my pedagogy, reflect upon what they observed and select activities to try and lead themselves. In return, I could get a better sense of the personalities of teachers and children by observing other activity beyond our musicking for the final few minutes in each classroom. And, in the first crucial differentiating aspect from what might 'normally' happen when a visiting musician had been and gone, this opportunity in this first stage for teachers to observe my practice, just as I would observe theirs, also allowed them to critique it and compare it with their own practice. I encouraged them to do both, either verbally or within the reflective diaries that I had asked them to keep. Moreover, I constantly asked for their advice throughout this first month and beyond in relation to supporting particular children and seeking out their advice about my teaching in general. I was careful regularly to stress that this was a knowledge and skills *exchange*; while I was there in my capacity as music 'expert' I was not a qualified teacher as they were, nor was I familiar to, or with, these children. I therefore had much to learn from them; the task now was to find the best ways of promoting a reconceptualization of the equal importance of the differing expertise we commonly held between us. Although I was certain this was possible as a result of my previous experiences, the challenge now was to support this reconceptualization, without steering or leading it. To try and actively effect the change would have not only been artificial but would have positioned me further within the relationship as 'leader' and therefore, hierarchically more powerful than the others.

[50] The tacit meanings of this arrangement and its effect on assumptions of power, hierarchy and expertise will be analysed in Chapter Six.

It is important to note that, although I did break some aspects of specific activities down to enable their acquisition developmentally, layer upon layer, over time by the teachers, I was careful to avoid any over simplification of my teaching approach or repertoire, remaining ever aware of the potential for patronizing the teachers and further promoting underlying assumptions of hierarchies relating to musical expertise. However, counter to this, I had to remain vigilant that the inclusion within my work of technical, musical terms and concepts must be presented as accessible and unthreatening for the teachers without undermining their confidence in any way. The initial meeting had made transparent the fear the teachers held in relation to being judged and deemed 'unmusical' by others. I was aware that if I was not sensitive to the insecurities of the teachers in this first month, any aspect of my practice could result in damage to their currently fragile musical identities.

With this in mind, I made particular use of Laurence's *Birds, Balloons and Shining Stars: a teacher's guide to singing with children* (2000)[51] as a manual to inform both the pedagogical approach and the content of singing sessions. In the Music Potential project, this manual had been introduced as a guide to vocal pedagogy and to provide teachers and musicians with ideas and activities for use in developing the children's singing. I knew that it contained an effective approach, conducive to encouraging children and teacher's singing confidence and in potentially disrupting the usual power relationships at play between visiting musician and primary teacher, having been originally written as an empowering guide for teachers. This particular text has deeply informed my practice and I make regular reference to it in the current chapter as I describe the content of my field study, using it as a literary 'framework' upon which the activity depicted in the following detailed descriptions could be constructed.

4.5.2 Justification of selection and presentation of session depictions

It would be impossible for me to describe every encounter in the three classrooms over the course of the entire study. With this in mind, I have selected what I consider to be the 'key' encounters in which I noted as salient to the aims of the study and those sessions in which I observed what I deemed to be evidence of emerging

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[51] Laurence is an internationally recognized authority on children's singing, and the author of the sole chapter on children's singing in the Cambridge Companion to Singing, (Potter, 2000).

partnership. The first session is described in order to 'set the scene' and to provide a starting point from which the subsequent sessions that I describe can be compared and contrasted. Descriptions of the sessions as they happened are written in the present tense in order to provide the reader with the sense of 'verisimilitude' discussed earlier. The inclusion of particular songs or descriptions of specific musicking activity are included in order to illustrate the content of the study as fully as possible and so that this study may potentially go some way towards acting as a guide for future related enquiry if the reader so desires.

Descriptions of musicking sessions are deliberately presented in italics so that they are distinguishable from the analytical comment that follows. Such presentation allows for the depiction of dual narratives, the description of the field study activity as it actually happened and my reflective diary comments. Thus, the two viewpoints are enabled to resonate with one another and at times provide a counter narrative to my diary accounts from the baseline observations described in the previous section.

12/01/10 The First Sessions

On the first visit I arrive at the one-storey brown brick school during the children's lunch hour. As I pull into the car park, I receive a greeting fit for a celebrity from children peering at me through the green playground railings. Shouts and waving hands come from all nearby children, regardless of whether I have met them before or not. They are excited by the arrival of a new visitor, especially one like me who carries many bags, some of which jingle noisily, being, as they are, filled with musical instruments.

I enter the school through the bright glass entrance which links the older school building with the new Children's Centre and community run cafe. Inside the welcome from Sue, the friendly school receptionist is warm. I sign the visitor's register and Sue duly labels me as a visitor with a colourful sticker. She presses a button to unlock the internal door and I enter the small corridor that leads into the school. On the right hand side of the corridor is Enid's office and then, the staff room. Passing a large photocopy machine on my left hand side, I then reach the end of the corridor and enter at one corner of the rectangular main school hall through double doors. The classrooms are clustered together and accessed from each of the three remaining

corners of the hall and so I walk diagonally across the parquet floor (negotiating a slalom course of plastic traffic cones and small piles of food debris that are part of the post-lunch clear-up operation currently in progress) to the farthest corner and once again enter the open, red carpeted central learning space from which I can access each Year One classroom.

I begin the introductory sessions by spending thirty minutes in each of the three classes across the afternoon and repeat the same selection of songs and activities in each. I music with the children and teachers for around twenty-five minutes in each class and spend a few minutes within each classroom chatting to the children and staff when appropriate in order to get to know them better and vice versa. The passing of the afternoon and the musicking feel very relaxed.

As before, each class sits in a circle on the carpeted floor of their classrooms. This is customary for them in whole class activity and it is an effective way for me to ensure I can see all of the children and teachers and they me, thus potentially maximizing engagement while also including every individual equally, which is hindered by row style seating. The teachers and teaching assistants seat themselves within the circle, ensuring we can see one another and communicate easily if cause arises.

In each class I re-introduce myself and initiate a game to engage the children and teachers with the feeling of their own voices and the connection between posture, facial expression and use of the facial, stomach and diaphragm muscles to their 'headtone' singing voices[52]*. I am purposefully not explicit about these technical elements of the game with the teachers or the children as I am aware this might invoke a sense of seriousness and of needing prior technical knowledge of the voice, thus potentially inhibiting the teacher's and perhaps the children's responses to it. By*

[52] Headtone or the 'head voice' are terms used to describe the sensation or act of producing a vocal sound that is placed physically high, emanating from the centre of one's head and using the vibrations that occur within the resonant spaces within the face to produce a clearer, higher sound than can be achieved by singing from either the throat or chest. My aim of 'connecting' the children and teachers with their 'headtone' singing voices is based on Laurence's assertion that: 'it is from headtone that we can best hear the sound we are making, and it is in headtone that I believe most children have their best possibility for making and having control over a beautiful and expressive sound. In other words, with headtone, they can hear best and do it best.' (Laurence, 2000: 16)

framing and introducing it as a game, the exercise becomes playful thus dispelling any notion of prerequisite skill.

In the game, based on an idea proposed by Laurence (2000: 11) I model a slouched sitting posture and grumpy face while simultaneously singing a scale. Then, I contrast this with a straight posture and smiling face while singing the same scale. I ask the children to choose which example they like the sound of best. Connecting the children and teachers with their voices as instruments, this exercise also invites them to reflect on the issue of quality, based on Laurence's premise that in addition to possessing innate musicality, children and therefore, all human beings, also possess an 'innate understanding' of musical quality. Laurence asserts:

> I believe that alongside their inborn sense of music, children have also an innate understanding of quality. This tends to be denied in a system which still seems to regard children more as passive recipients than as active co-constructors of their own world, but in fact the will to do something well – to achieve quality – manifests itself even from earliest childhood […] In my work with singing, I try always to respond to what I believe to be the children's right to achieve and experience quality, on the basis of the sense of quality that is already there […] So, what is this quality? Well, it has to do with a sense of commitment, and of care; with integrity of intention; with the feeling of what is good, and why, and of what is better. We may (and do) see quality where others don't, and of course I do not mean that we all have to agree on what is good, but we should be able to recognise *why* we perceive something to be good. (Laurence, 2000: 9-10).

I use this exercise to convey to the teachers and the children that I believe them to be capable of judging quality, on equal terms with me. In all three classes, the children say they prefer the second example in terms of sound despite finding the first example far more comical (evidenced in mirthful laughter). This suggests that they could appreciate the more supported, focused quality of the second scale. Next, I invite the children to show me their grumpiest faces and sing in their grumpiest voices, resulting in further hilarity but with full participation, even from the least engaged boys that I noted in Ruth's class in December. I then ask them to sit up straight and show them how to 'turn on their singing faces' by grasping my earlobes and singing 'Ka-ching!' the first syllable sung an octave below the second and my mouth turning upwards into a smile on the second syllable and highest note. This proves a popular activity, especially in Ruth's class where Sophie claps her hands over her mouth and

giggles wildly every time she tries it, making everyone laugh and request to do it repeatedly in order to encourage Sophie's amusing response.

Building upon this playful introduction to singing posture, support and placing of the voice, I conduct a short vocal warm-up, the aim of which is to ready the children's voices and bodies for singing, encourage focus of attention and also to introduce the children and teachers to more basic vocal technique. This warm-up includes vocal play such as; exaggerated yawning to free up the breath and throat; and drawing figures of eight in the air with our fingers whilst mirroring with buzzing or humming voices to encourage children to explore, locate and use their higher and lower registers. Laurence advises that beginning each musicking session in this way promotes collective awareness among even a very young class of children that we are making music ***together****:*

> From the very beginning, is the awareness that we are making music – we are *acting musically together,* and are interested in beauty and quality of sound from the first moment. Thus the work is far from being cold and merely technical, even though it becomes immediately clear that technique is fundamental to development and being able to use the voice creatively and expressively. The very act of developing technique should be a musical, creative and exploratory act. (Laurence, 2000: 31)

Having seen the children's enthusiasm for suggesting songs to sing during my baseline observations, I conclude the first sessions by asking the children if there are any songs that they would like us to sing together. In each of the three classes I note that all requests are for nursery rhymes. These I accommodate, and having established the starting notes using a chromatic pitch pipe, use as an opportunity to model a spoken introductory count in four/four time of 'ready, steady, off we go'. Usually, I would sing this count in at pitch on the starting note but recognize that this is a skill best built up gradually, as the task of simultaneously establishing tempo, preparing to sing and encouraging the group of children to prepare to sing is already a complex one that takes practise to develop. My goal here is to introduce and model this technique to the teachers and to the children in an accessible manner and to make the teachers feel that they can easily replicate what I am doing. It is important to note that I am not intending to simplify these activities on any assumption that the teachers could not do them in their more complex forms or with their technical aspects made explicit. Nothing I am doing in these sessions is particularly musically complex in any case. I am taking care to introduce the activities in as unthreatening a

way possible, attempting to banish the spectre of technical musical skill and expertise by showing the teachers the children's enjoyment of the games and ideally making them feel they could do some or all of what I am doing to similar effect in terms of the children's engagement.

After school that afternoon I have an opportunity to reflect and chat informally with the three teachers about the musicking and to record their observations and reactions in my diary.

Excerpt from my reflective diary:
Ruth is pleased with how long her children have engaged and comments on the simplicity of what I have done and yet the effectiveness of the session in retaining the children's attention. Leanne seems more positive about the sessions with me now that she has seen the children's enjoyment. She thinks there are activities I have shown her today that she could try herself, especially the (direct quote) 'playing and making sounds with voices'. Patricia liked the warm-up games and is surprised that her class managed to do them for close to fifteen minutes.

Comment:
The strategy of presenting the technical activities in a playful way appeared from the teacher's comments at the end of the day to have been successful, both in terms of making them and the children more aware of and connected to various aspects of their own singing voices as instruments and also in that they have not felt threatened by the activities. Ruth's description of what I have done as 'simple' indicates that the way I have presented the activities made them appear logical and accessible to the teachers. The teachers' recognition of the possibility of being able to lead these activities themselves suggests a swift, initial repositioning in terms of their musical self-appraisal.

19/01/10 – 26/01/10
As I enter the Year One learning area a group of four girls run up to me, hugging my legs and saying 'Ka-ching' with big 'Cheshire cat' smiles showing that there has

either been good recall of that element of the session on the part of these girls or that the teachers have repeated the exercise in the intervening week.

For the purposes of consolidating the learning and building vocal technique, over the next two weeks I repeat the warm up section in each class almost verbatim from the first week on Laurence's advice:

> A warm-up helps the children to recapitulate what they learnt last time and to re-establish concentration. (Laurence, 2000: 31)

This repetition is met by a good overall focus and response from the children. In week two within Leanne's class there is evidence of one child having extended the idea of vocal play for himself:

Excerpt from my reflective diary:
Toby wants to make 'motorbike noises' so I ask him to show how he would make that sound. Confidently, he shows us by blowing a stream of air through his mouth and making his lips vibrate. The rest of the class begins to try this too. Some have more success than others but Toby remains the 'expert' and so I ask him to 'ride' his motorbike and we'll copy him. He grasps the opportunity by riding his vocal motorbike complete with handlebar gestures fast, slow, around bends and screeching to a final halt. We all copy and applaud him vigorously. Leanne looked at me with an expression of incredulity.

Comment:
Through the example of Toby, we can see the success of the playful vocal exercises proposed by Laurence (2000). Toby's engagement with the 'game' and his understanding of how to use his voice and breath to produce different sounds also alludes to Laurence's point, briefly mentioned earlier, about the empowering effect that acknowledgement of children's inborn understanding of quality can have in relation to their engagement with the musical activity and their creative response to it:

> Where the child's innate sense of quality is first acknowledged and then educated […] When given the chance, 'ordinary' children will show the most remarkable capacity for intensive work and interest in achieving high standards; wherever

> quality, depth and effort is expected of them, and whenever their work is being *taken seriously,* ordinary children will produce extraordinary ideas. (Laurence, 2000: 12)

In week two, I add a 'hello' song to the tune of 'Skip to my Lou' in order to learn the children's names with the teachers' assistance by inserting them into the song:

> *Hello (insert name) how are you?*
> *Hello (insert name) how are you?*
> *Hello (insert name) how are you?*
> *How are you today?*

I accompany this song on my ukulele, thinking that the addition of the accompaniment will help in keeping the song up-tempo, and add an additional point of interest for the children. I have hesitated in my decision to use the ukulele however on the grounds that this is not a skill that the teachers themselves have and its use in this particular song might deter them from trying to lead it themselves. However, the ukulele and novelty of hearing their own names in a song and singing their friend's names, helps to secure the children's interest for the duration of the song and into the next activity. In addition, because I am busy accompanying the song, I ask the teachers to assist me by keeping the singing and accompanying Makaton[53] *sign language actions going, thus providing me with the first opportunity to engage the teachers in practical co-leadership of musicking with me.*

The incorporation of Makaton signs is deliberate on my part on reflection upon the last visit. I decide to incorporate as much gesture and movement into the subsequent sessions as possible in an attempt to retain the children's focus by channeling the restlessness I have encountered before. I know that the teachers sometimes use Makaton in order to support the communication of children with speech and language needs and so it is a useful route for me to encourage the beginnings of our co-leadership using this already familiar aspect. As part of my strategy to positively channel the children's physical exuberance, I next teach a song called 'Kangaroos Like to Hop'[54]*, which provides scope not just for physical movement but also for children's agency and creativity.*

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[53] Makaton is a sign language in common use in the UK among early years professionals to support the development of speech and language skills of children from birth and to support older children both with and without special educational needs.
[54] By Leon Rosselson.

Kangaroos like to hop. Hop, hop, hop
And zebras like to run, run, run, run
And horses like to trot, trot, trot, trot
But I like to lie in the sun. Aaaaah!

I sing the song in full to each class twice and then break it down line by line for them to copy. This call and response not only helps them to learn the song but also serves as practise of their close listening skills and pitch matching. In all classes, in the space of approximately five minutes, most children are singing along in tune. At this point I suggest that we stand up and hop, run and trot at the appropriate lines in the song. The children greet this with enthusiasm but the teachers seem amusedly skeptical. In Leanne's class all goes well with dramatic but controlled portrayals of the animals. In Ruth's class the running zebra causes a group of boys to run out of the convened circle and around the classroom at great speed causing disruption that is gently stopped by Ruth and Karen, who ask the boys to rejoin the circle and run 'on the spot'. In Patricia's class, a similar situation occurs, but the hopping, running and trotting descends into screeching and crowding of bodies in the centre of the carpet with many children falling over and a sense of chaos prevailing. I pause for a moment and find that Patricia and Louise do not intervene and so I sing an instruction for the children to stop and to sit down to the tune of 'Frere Jacques' which swiftly calms them down.

Once seated, I ask the children what other animals we might put into the song and what actions they might do. Various animals are suggested including a very convincing 'wriggly worm' from an otherwise silent Jackson in Leanne's class. This time in Ruth and Patricia's classes, we sing the song with their words and actions from a seated position.

Comment:

The skepticism that I read on the teachers faces at my suggestion that we physically enact the animal movements was confirmed in discussion with them after the sessions. All three shared with me that they thought the movement would get 'out of hand', that the children would be side-tracked from the singing by the movement. All three groups *were* challenging to keep engaged, showing that the teachers were

justified in their skepticism. However, I managed to disrupt this by keeping all three groups engaged by asking frequently for children's ideas for animals, movements and sounds to add to the song. This encouraged the children to remain focused despite this being an unusual activity. Patricia and Louise's passive response to the children's escalating rowdiness was surprising and indicated that they viewed me in that activity as the 'leader' and in charge, rather than as jointly responsible with them. This suggests that at that moment, they did not yet see themselves in partnership with me and were therefore unable to, or did not feel responsible for intervening and supporting me. It might also suggest that they viewed me as competent and trusted in my ability to manage the children without their support.

During this afternoon's activity, the fact that *I* suggested the addition of the Makaton sign language for the 'hello song' indicates that at this point, I was taking charge of the session content. Collectively, the teachers' expertise in Makaton exceeded my own by far and yet the onus was on me to suggest each activity that we tried together in the classrooms. At this early stage, I was certainly still in the role of 'expert' coming in to do things for them, as opposed to an equal partner.

Excerpt from my reflective diary:

The teachers haven't been keeping their own diaries as I had hoped. They are apologetic but all struggle to find time to do it. They obviously feel bad about it so I have told them to forget about it entirely and played down its importance, as I don't want to discourage or inconvenience them in any way. As long as I can keep chatting to them after every afternoon and note down their reflections, that should work. They've agreed to be interviewed towards the end of the study to make sure I get the information I need from them.

Comment:

After the initial four-week period, it seems that the teachers and I have begun to feel comfortable and familiar with each other. Leanne has visibly relaxed when I am in the classroom and shares with me over a cup of tea in the staffroom on the final week of this first stage that she really looks forward to Tuesday afternoons and making music now. Ruth wonders if we could look at repertoire that helps to develop children's fine motor skills as she has a number of children in her class who might benefit from this.

Patricia asks if I can help her class with more movement and activities to try and positively manage the excited energy of her class in the following half term. I am surprised by this given what happened with the kangaroo related chaos but this might suggest that she and her colleagues have begun to trust me.

The suggestions made by the teachers about specific activities and aspects they want to focus on next term show a change in the relationship between us. They are no longer deferring to my judgment or expecting me to decide on 'appropriate' activities alone as 'expert' as was the case a few weeks earlier. They have recognized areas of developmental need for the children and for themselves, requesting my support and input thus repositioning themselves, and their knowledge of the children's needs as equally important to my knowledge of music activity. One possible explanation for this increase in ideas and confidence to offer them to me may lie in Dogani's (2008) findings that increased practical music making can enable teachers to reflect more on their own music teaching, leading to an increase in their thinking about how to use music in their own classrooms to support the overall learning of their specific group of children.

By contrasting these requests on the part of the teachers with their passivity a few weeks earlier when I had to suggest the use of Makaton signs, manage the teacher's skepticism about the animal movement activity and prompt them for practical support, it becomes apparent that a gradually more equal relationship is beginning to develop.

Furthermore, the teachers' increased enthusiasm with regard to suggesting ideas for use in the study has triggered a shift in the way that I myself conceive of the purpose of the study and my role within it. Despite having set out with the intention of co-constructing knowledge with the teachers, their initial passivity and my desire to impress them and garner their interest in the study resulted in my approaching the first weeks of the study more as an intervention than an open-ended research enquiry. By agreeing to spend the first weeks modeling approaches to teaching music, I unwittingly cast myself in the role of someone doing things *for* the teachers as opposed to *with* them. My consent to this arrangement was borne out of a need to 'please' and to suit the expectations of the teachers. I was reluctant to suggest alternatives for fear that the study, and their involvement in it, might be jeopardized.

Given that the primary aim of the study was to disrupt this traditional approach of visiting music 'expert' in primary classrooms, this immediate return to the status quo seems surprising, but it demonstrates how easy it is to revert to 'traditional' expectations and attitudes - and indeed how profoundly difficult it is to shift away from or to transform these - when one is in pursuit of the good favour of study participants. This tension between managing the expectations and comfort of the teachers and trying to enact an enquiry that was based on equality of participants without seeking to pompously intervene will be analysed in greater detail in Chapter Six.

These shifting attitudes and behaviours mark the beginning of a reorganization of role and hierarchy among the teachers and musicians involved in my study, to which I will also return for further discussion in Chapter Six; while in the next chapter, I will be referring to the Morningside teachers' *own* accounts of the evolution of our relationships, in order that their views can be triangulated with my own account and the evidence derived from the earlier Music Potential project.

Despite the indications of a repositioning within the relationships between me and the teachers, apparently tending towards an increasingly equal dynamic, I am conscious that despite my insistence at the beginning of the study that the teachers feel free to critique my practice should they have cause, this has not happened at all thus far. It may be that they see no reason for constructive criticism up to this point; however, as much as I may wish to believe that there is no room for improvement within my own practice, I am aware that the evaluation of other professionals can always yield useful insights and support one's professional development. Therefore, I assume that despite knowing me much better, feeling more comfortable with me and able to offer suggestions about the content of musicking activities, the teachers were still conceiving of me as 'expert' and consequently, could not feel able to critique my work. Conversely, I recognize that I have not critiqued the teachers' practice either, partly because I have not seen any need to in general terms and partly because I feel that to mention the areas for improvement in music teaching that I have noted might undermine their emerging musical confidence and our developing relationship.

Although the relationship between us is beginning to develop to become more equal, we are still viewing the 'other' as more expert in their field.

4.5.3 Stage two – second half of spring term *23/02/10 – 23/03/10*

In the previous term, all three teachers involved in the study and two of their teaching assistants had expressed an interest in learning to play the ukulele to accompany their classes' singing after observing me using the ukulele to enhance the 'hello song'. Enid was extremely supportive of this idea and expressed her own interest in joining such a group. Although I could play the ukulele to a very basic standard and well enough to accompany some of the repertoire I was using within the study, I had never taught anyone else to play and did not feel adequately equipped to do so. At this point, I experienced some anxiety about being asked to teach something to others when I did not feel secure in my own skills. This afforded me an opportunity for empathy and better understanding of how the teachers themselves had admitted to feeling in relation to classroom music teaching during the baseline study. Consenting to the establishment of such a group would mean that I would be altering my original research design and entering professional territory in which I did not feel secure, just as I was asking the teachers to do by participating in the study.

Regardless of my feelings of mild panic about teaching the ukulele to others, based on the evidence of the baseline study that the teachers aligned musicality with the ability to play an instrument, I recognized the potential of group instrumental learning for increasing the teachers' confidence in their perceptions of their own musicality and their practical musical skills. I also viewed the teachers' request to learn the ukulele as a critical development in the study in that they were now taking direct ownership over how they wanted to develop their *own* musical skills and knowledge. This being so, I suggested my colleague Kirsten to Enid. Having worked closely with Kirsten for a number of years, I knew that she had the experience of adult ukulele tuition that I lacked, while I had more experience of working with young children. Kirsten was keen to develop her existing primary and early years music teaching skills and Enid was so supportive of the ukulele group idea, she offered to pay Kirsten to come weekly and lead it. Given that an hour after school would not be an optimum use of Kirsten's time each Tuesday afternoon, we agreed that she would voluntarily join the

classroom musicking each week as a professional development opportunity before leading the ukulele group once the children had gone home.

Although this was a fortuitous arrangement in which we all stood to gain in terms of professional development, I did have some deep concerns about introducing Kirsten, a new and unfamiliar adult 'visitor' into the study, no matter how similar her pedagogical approach to mine. The introduction of an unfamiliar adult might have posed a risk to the relationships established at this point and I did not know at the time what the result might be. However, Enid and the three teachers were *insistent* that they wanted to learn the ukulele and were completely positive about Kirsten joining the study in order to make this possible. In response to their wishes and in recognition that this course of events reflected the teachers' growing sense of agency over what and how they learned within the study, I put aside my concerns. Knowing Kirsten well, I was fairly sure it would not take long for all of the study participants, myself included, to adjust to her inclusion. In addition to suggesting the teachers' increasing sense of agency over the study and their own learning within it, their willingness to welcome Kirsten, another musical 'expert' and an unfamiliar one at that, into the study 'team' signaled the establishment at this point of trust in me and my judgment of Kirsten as an appropriate professional to include. This also suggested that either they trusted me not to invite someone who might act in a way that would undermine any aspect of the study and the relationships being developed within it or that by this point, the teachers' confidence had increased in so much that they did not mind so much about their musical skills and class music teaching being observed and evaluated by another unfamiliar adult as they had at the time of the commencement of the baseline study.

Towards the latter weeks of the study, Kirsten's presence in the classroom musicking sessions had an unexpected benefit. Kirsten was occasionally able to 'stand-in' as co-leader of musicking with the teachers, which enabled me to carry out a small number of non-participant observations of musicking activity in the classroom, hitherto an impossible task.

I return now to describing the activity as the study progressed into its second stage. Including the development of the children's 'appetite' for musicking, their response to Kirsten when she first joined the study and the first teacher ukulele group meeting.

23/02/10

The children recall the songs of the last half term well and Leanne's class tell me that they sang with Leanne every day for the rest of the week since my last visit and up until the holidays. After introducing Kirsten to the children, I teach all three classes and teachers a new tune to sing for the hello song, deliberately keeping the words the same as before to enable both adults and children to concentrate on learning the new melody. The children respond enthusiastically to this familiar activity which signals the start of our singing sessions while the modification of tune serves to revitalize this, by now, well rehearsed activity. We revisit warm up activity and then in response to Patricia's request for movement and Ruth's for fine motor work, I introduce a simple game of sung instructions with simple melodies that correspond with actions based on the principles of Dalcroze Eurthymics[55]*. For example, a rising octave with the sung instruction to 'stand up' and the same octave descending to indicate 'sit down' and slightly more complicated actions such as 'wiggle your fingers' (so, so, mi, so, mi)*[56] *or 'stre-etch up high' (doh, mi, so, doh) up the octave and the reverse for 'bend down low'. Occasionally, I sing the same instruction twice in a row to 'catch them out' and encourage focus and close listening while the game also expends excess energy and encourages fine finger movements of wiggling and stretching.*

In the first minutes of each session, the children are curious about Kirsten but once introduced, the children accept her presence easily and she joins in without leading at this stage. I facilitate the content of these first sessions, leading the songs but enlisting the help of the teachers to elicit the children's ideas and requests in order to create a sense of increased co-leadership between us.

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[55] Developed by Swiss composer Emile Jacques Dalcroze, Dalcroze Eurhythmics is a method of musical learning through rhythmic physical movement.

[56] Reportedly invented by Sarah Ann Glover (1785-1867) to teach teachers to sing and then championed by Zoltan Kodaly (1882 – 1976) as a means to support children's singing, Solfa or Solfege is a pedagogical system for the teaching of singing, sight singing and interval training in which each note of the scale is given a name (doh, re, mi, fa, so, la, ti).

23/02/10 – The first teacher ukulele group lesson

This visit culminates with the first meeting of the staff ukulele group led by Kirsten. All three teachers participating in the study attend, along with head teacher Enid, teaching assistants, Karen and Louise, Reception teacher and able guitarist Francesca and three members of staff from Nursery, Sandra, Yvette and Eileen. The meeting is after school in Leanne's classroom and lasts for 45 minutes.

We sit in a circle of red, plastic children's chairs. The atmosphere is informal with the teachers arriving a few minutes apart depending on how quickly they were able to see off their children. Kirsten welcomes the group and begins by reassuring us that as we are all beginners, the pace will be steady.

Patricia, Louise, Karen, Sandra, Yvette and Eileen haven't access to their own ukuleles so I furnish them each with a brightly coloured instrument that Kirsten and I have borrowed. So keen are Ruth and Enid to learn the ukulele, they have already bought their own. Enid's is a good quality expensive looking instrument and we all admire it. Ruth proudly shows off her bright yellow 'SpongeBob Squarepants' ukulele and we all laugh at her whimsical choice, which will no doubt be very popular with the children. Leanne has borrowed a rather battered looking ukulele from her boyfriend which she tells us has 'just been lying around the house' while Francesca has brought her own pink ukulele that she has had 'for a while but never really learned how to play properly'.

There is a sense of excitement as Kirsten introduces us to the basic features of the instrument, the strings, frets and tuning pegs. Sandra and Eileen laugh self-consciously as Eileen attempts to strum her ukulele and declares her fingers 'too fat'. We learn how to hold the ukulele and the pitches to which the strings should be tuned. Kirsten teaches us a melody to assist in tuning using the words 'my dog has fleas' and offers to tune the new ukuleles this first time for those who need help. I tune Ruth's while Kirsten swiftly tunes Enid's and then Leanne's. Meanwhile, I notice Francesca has independently tuned her ukulele using a clip-on digital tuner. Eileen and Yvette comment on Francesca being a 'professional' and Francesca laughs.

Once tuned up, we all learn the one-finger chord of C and practise strumming that chord with our thumbs while Kirsten counts a steady beat. Once mastered, she goes on to show us the slightly more complex two-finger chord of F and we practise this in the same way. The group is quiet as everyone concentrates on the task. Kirsten praises us and says 'it's time for a challenge', we are going to try to move from one chord to the other in slow eight beat phrases. Eileen and Sandra groan comically, they 'already found F quite challenging'. We begin as Kirsten slowly counts and the group members experience varying success. Enid and Francesca change chord adeptly, Karen seems to manage it well too, while the rest of the group agrees with Eileen, that moving between the chords is tricky. 'You need more than two hands and one brain!' exclaims Ruth and we all laugh. We practise the chord change again for a few minutes more with Kirsten providing one to one support and encouragement to Eileen and then she teaches us to play 'Row Your Boat' on the single chord of C, which everyone finds much easier to return to. The 'reward' of learning to play and sing a song simultaneously is met with enthusiasm and the lesson ends with positive exclamations of thanks from the group to Kirsten.

Comment:

The first ukulele session was successful, with a balance of learning and relaxed fun. The content of the session was basic but the teachers felt that they had quickly advanced their skills and this was evidenced in their enthusiasm with regard to playing a song at the end. Although among the group there were varying levels of competency, beginning at this basic starting point allowed everyone, myself included, to feel secure. I was aware that Eileen and others were nervous about learning the instrument as was evident by their self-deprecating humour but the group members supported each other and the laughter provided an enjoyable environment and sense of camaraderie. We were aligned as learners and this was of particular importance in relation to the study and my relationships with the teachers directly involved in the field study as Kirsten taking the lead and my basic, self-taught skill on the ukulele meant that I was on an equal footing with the teachers in terms of skill in this context as opposed to being 'expert' as I may have been perceived by others in the classroom musicking context. I was also experiencing first hand how it might feel for the teachers to be learning a new musical skill, alongside developing my own professional understanding and skill in terms of teaching the ukulele to others.

16/03/10

In the third week of this stage Peter, an until now observant but quiet little boy in Ruth's class, puts his hand up to tell me that he likes to listen to his Dad's 'Jackson Five' CD. Keen to accommodate all requests in order to make clear to the children that I value their ideas, I suggest 'Rockin' Robin'. Peter is very happy with this and I sing a rather made up version of the four-line verse and the chorus to the children and note engagement from most of the children. I sing each line slowly for the children to copy:

> *He sits in the treetops all day long*
> *Hoppin' and a-boppin' and a singing this song*
> *All the little birdies on Jay Bird Street*
> *Love to hear the robin go tweet, tweet, tweet*
>
> *Rockin' robin, (tweet, twiddly deep)*
> *Rockin' robin, (tweet, twiddly deep)*
> *Ooh rockin' robin goes a-tweet, tweet, twi-ddly deep!*

After practising the verse again using call and response, I split the circle into two, ensuring that Ruth and Karen are each singing with one half. I allocate the 'rockin' robin' part of the chorus to Karen's 'team' and the 'tweet, twiddly deep' line to Ruth's half. I conduct from the centre of the circle and once we have sung the song in this way a couple of times, we swap parts. This was Ruth, Karen and the children's first experience of part-singing and their response is extremely positive. I leave the room feeling moved at the sense of pride among them.

23/03/10

In the final week of the spring term, Kirsten leads more of the classroom-based activity, partly as a result of her increasing confidence in working with the children and partly to enable me to observe the musicking and the responses of the children and teachers to it more closely.

In Patricia's class Kirsten and I teach a new song that introduces the ideas of sequential actions. This is a direct result of Patricia requesting such a song a week or so earlier to tie in with the children's science learning about sequences and recipes. The song is about making a banana milkshake:

(Chanted) Bananas of the world unite! (clap)
(Sung) Shake banana, shake, shake banana x2
Peel banana, peel, peel banana x2
Chop banana, chop, chop banana x2
Mash banana, mash, mash banana x2
Blend banana, blend, blend banana x2
Drink banana, drink, drink banana x2
Go bananas, go, go bananas!
Go bananas, go, go bananas!
(Chanted) Bananas of the world unite! (clap)

Accompanied by various peeling, chopping and mixing actions and culminating in the invitation to 'go bananas', this song is immensely well received and we have to repeat it several times before the children have had enough.

Later, Patricia tells us she's 'delighted' with the song and will use it again during the week if we write the words down for her. I ask her if she wants me to record it so she can remember the tune and she says 'no, that's all right. The children will remember it and keep me right if I sing it wrong'. She asks if I can give her my session plans for past sessions so that she can try to repeat some of the content with the children adding 'we've learned so many songs now, I need a list so that we don't forget to practise them all'.

Comment:

I gave Patricia copies of my session plans, along with audio recordings of songs she found difficult to remember. Her request for these resources is significant for two reasons. Firstly, the request indicated an intention on Patricia's part to continue to use these activities with these children and her future classes. Secondly, such documents represent one's intellectual property and so to be willing to ask for copies and for that request to be granted, shows a close relationship in which there exists a significant level of trust that they will be used as intended and not 'passed off' as the recipient's own work. I was more than happy to share my work with Patricia in the interests of ensuring the legacy of the study and felt comfortable enough in my relationship with her to do so at this point.

23/03/10 (continued)

Arriving in Leanne's classroom, we discover that Leanne is off ill. The supply teacher is clearly relieved we have arrived and hands the class over to us. She sits apart from the group and busies herself with paperwork, leaving Kirsten and me in charge of the class. We begin with the 'hello song' practised last week and most of the children join in well, although some are clearly tired and flushed. The children are fractious for the remainder of the session, reluctant to sit still and to contribute ideas. Even the dances we try fall flat with a few children giving up and sitting down. The time goes very slowly and Kirsten and I are both relieved when it is time to stop.

Excerpt from my reflective diary

I was disappointed by what happened with Leanne's class today. Normally they seem to love the singing but something was clearly amiss this afternoon. I think it was because Leanne wasn't there and the supply teacher wasn't that engaged. I would have liked to ask her to join in and to support us but I don't know her and felt uncomfortable asking for her help. It didn't help that she immediately went and sat elsewhere. I think she must have assumed we usually take the class for Leanne. It's a shame because the children practically missed out on singing today. She didn't even introduce herself to us!

Comment:

In this part of the study there is increasing evidence of the teachers' agency over ideas for content of sessions, along with a subtle growth of musical confidence among them. For instance, Ruth and Karen's willingness to 'experiment' with the spontaneous two part singing of 'Rockin' Robin' and Ruth's more audible singing along in general. In addition, Patricia's request for a specific type of song to support wider class learning about sequences and her request for lesson plans show that she was beginning to feel capable of replicating and perhaps extending the singing activities independently.

Leanne's absence and what ensued showed the vital importance of the teacher in terms of successful partnership. Without Leanne, the musicking simply couldn't happen in the optimum way that it usually did. Given her fragile relationship with

music and her long-standing view of herself as musically ‘deficit’, the discovery of the key role that she played in supporting the children’s ability to music together was of great significance within the study for us both.

At this stage, the teachers were independently leading more musicking and this was evident in the progress that the children were making in terms of their confidence in singing, their engagement, intonation and eagerness to develop activities for themselves. However, despite this evident increase in teacher confidence and singing activity during the remainder of the week, the teachers were still not leading musicking independently in my presence apart from supporting Kirsten and me when requested. I did not ask them to demonstrate independent leadership of any songs and they did not offer to do so. I was reluctant to ask this of them in case this damaged their confidence in any way, or, in case they refused which might be detrimental to the trust built up thus far within our burgeoning relationships. These ongoing tensions will be further examined in Chapter Six.

4.5.4 Stage three – summer term *27/04/10 – 13/07/10*

By this point, a familiar routine had been established and the content of the musicking sessions became increasingly free, subject to requests made by the teachers and most often, because of the ideas the children were having about the kind of songs they wanted to sing.

The overall learning topic for the term was related to gardens and so Kirsten and I introduced a number of songs and dances on that theme and the ever-popular ‘Cauliflowers Fluffy’ song made a regular reappearance too. The children wanted to return to some of the nursery rhymes that we had recently abandoned in favour of newer material and Kirsten and I honoured these requests. However, we agreed with the teachers to use the rhymes to introduce musical concepts such as dynamics, tempo and pitch in order to avoid simply demonstrating leadership of activity that the teachers were very capable of leading independently. The joint decision making in this phase of the study signaled the equal relationship between us all in terms of agency over what direction the sessions took. The teachers were reporting how they were trying songs out for themselves and beginning to identify what musical

knowledge they felt they still needed to learn. This is significant in terms of both the effect of the project on increasing the teacher's musical skill, knowledge and confidence, but also in the shift of their sense of equality with Kirsten and me. They now had increased agency, steering what they learned from and with us through sessions, ensuring it was tailored to *their* needs and interests, as well as the children's.

The ukulele group continued to meet after school with the exception of Patricia who often gave her apologies due to heavy workload. Over the course of the two terms, the group learned a number of major and minor chords, strumming patterns/rhythms and a considerable repertoire of songs, including those for use in the classroom such as the 'hello song' along with songs they could play for their own pleasure. The majority of the group became adept at singing and playing simultaneously by the end of the summer term. Enid, Karen, Ruth and Leanne all became quite confident at this and in the case of the latter three, this developing skill became evident in the classroom in that they were all singing more audibly and confidently.

In the summer term Enid, Karen and Leanne instigated a self-led Thursday lunchtime ukulele meeting so that they could support colleagues who were struggling or had missed out on Kirsten's sessions, while simultaneously developing and practising their own ukulele skills. This initiative evidences the spread of the collegial partnership relationship beyond the research study into the musical life of the wider school.

In the final half term, Enid suggested that the teachers and musicians work together to produce an end of year concert for the children's families to attend. The emphasis in this term on working towards a performance captured the interest of both the children and the teachers and gave renewed direction to the content of the musicking.

06/07/10
During our visit to the school in the week before the concert, the teachers request that we move away from our usual timeslots in each class and the afternoon working with the entire year group in order to practise for the concert.

The hall in is use so we arrange the sixty children in the communal Year One space. There isn't enough room for a circle and so the children amass on the carpet with Kirsten and me at the front, the teachers and teaching assistants strategically placed with particular children who need support during this unfamiliar arrangement.

The teachers look expectantly at Kirsten and me to begin and it is clear that they intend for us to lead the rehearsal in its entirety, although we know, as usual, that we can ask for their advice support and to answer any queries we have at any time.

The teachers have chosen the songs from the selection learned together over the past few months[57] *and the theme of the concert is going to be 'Summer'. The rehearsal of the six chosen songs takes forty-five minutes, after which time the children are tired and so they are ushered outside to play, while the three teachers, Kirsten and me meet to review the session.*

The teachers feel the rehearsal went well and they are pleased with the children's focus. I ask them if they will practise again in the intervening week and they emphatically state that they will. Ruth suggests that later in the week, they all gather together again in addition to practising in their separate classes and this is agreed. I ask who will lead this 'full' rehearsal and there is some uncertainty. I take the opportunity to suggest that it would be ideal for the teachers to take the lead during the performance itself and again, there is hesitation. Ruth agrees that this would be better and suggests that they could share the songs between them. Patricia agrees but is worried that without our leadership they might 'get the notes wrong for starting the songs'. Kirsten suggests that we sit among the children on the day and sing along to support them. I suggest that we supply the starting notes if the teachers feel under confident about that. It is decided that this would work and also that Kirsten and I will accompany the songs on our ukuleles to assist with establishment of the key and

[57] I asked them to do this so that I wouldn't be dictating the programme. They selected the songs in consultation with their classes. In this way, the children's agency and preferences were also taken into account. The chosen songs were: the 'Hello Song', 'The Ladybird Song' with three verses created by each class about mini-beasts, 'Hello Mr. Sun', two Sea Shanties 'Donkey Riding' and 'Roll the Old Chariot' and 'Adios Mama' a Spanish folk song about a party.

the overall tuning, with the exception of 'Hello Mr. Sun' and 'Adios Mama', the former being an acapella song and the latter, to be accompanied by children playing percussion. Leanne volunteers to welcome the parents and lead the first song and this is agreed. Ruth and Patricia offer to take responsibility for two songs each. I suggest that if any of them would like to play their ukuleles when they are not leading, they could do so but this is met with nervous laughter and statements such as 'better not push our luck' and 'we've got enough to think about without worrying about the chords too'. We all laugh and the meeting concludes.

Comment:
At this advanced point in the study, the relationships between the teachers and musicians are well established, as is a sense of trust. I have arrived at a point where I feel able to press the teachers beyond where they might have felt musically comfortable in the past. By suggesting that they themselves lead both the next joint rehearsal and the concert itself, we have collectively overcome the previous situation in which the musicians were still doing the music *for* the teachers, albeit with their support, but without equal responsibility.

In Chapter Six, I will describe the development of this model of partnership, utilizing the work and ideas of Christopher Small in relation to this reconceptualization of teachers' and musicians' roles and shifts in power dynamics, in order to present and foreground the findings and new knowledge discovered as a result of this study. For now however, I return to a narrative description of the final concert.

13/07/10 – the final concert
The children line up at the doors of their respective classrooms. They are eager to see their families who are seated in the hall. The teachers all confessed their nerves to me earlier but are now professionally setting about arranging the children into neat rows. Patricia's class are first to go through the double glass doors to the main school hall and the other two classes follow them quietly, Kirsten and I bring up the rear clutching our ukuleles.

The teachers and children have decorated the hall. At the front is a small stage of moveable platforms, at the back of which hangs a colourful backcloth, painted with a large sun and depicting a beach. Around the remaining three sides of the room, children's artwork on seaside and garden themes festoons the walls and crepe paper seaweed and flowers hang from strings suspended from the ceiling. The effect is very festive.

At the far end of the hall, opposite the stage, around forty adults and numerous small children are seated on rows of brown plastic chairs. Behind them, another ten to fifteen adults are standing, many with digital cameras and mobile phones poised to capture the ensuing scenes. On the polished, parquet floor, in front of the adults, tiny children from Francesca's Reception class and the afternoon nursery children are seated, cross-legged. There is a general 'hum' of chatter from the audience.

Patricia's class is seated below the stage on long benches, the kind commonly used in P.E. classes. They are stage right and the benches are set at a forty-five degree angle to the stage. Across the other side of the area below the stage, Ruth's class mirrors Patricia's, while Leanne's class form two rows on benches in between. Directly behind Leanne's class, a small set of three steps allows stage access. Kirsten and I seat ourselves behind Ruth's class and I spot Enid entering the hall from the opposite end to watch the 'show'. She beams at us and gives us all two 'thumbs-up'.

Ruth and Patricia sit with their classes while Leanne steps forward and the audience becomes quiet. After welcoming everyone in a clear voice, she explains that today is the culmination of seven months of musical work and how pleased she is that so many of them have been able to join us to celebrate the children's work. She then introduces the 'Hello Song' and kneels on the floor in front of the children so as not to obscure the audiences' view. Betty assists a group of about ten children up the steps and onto the stage. Leanne, mimics my customary 'smiling' gesture of sweeping two outstretched thumbs from my mouth and up across my cheeks and says in a stage whisper to the children 'Ka-ching'. They copy her and many smile broadly. Kirsten and I play a four beat introduction including a sung 'Ready steady and off we go' starting note and the children begin to sing and perform the Makaton signs. Their singing is clearly audible and the children on the stage are really 'going for it' having

been chosen for their confidence and ability to do the signs well. Leanne sings along, smiling with her hands on her lap, occasionally beating the pulse with one hand. The song ends to considerable applause from the audience. Leanne looks at me and I smile at her. I feel pride for my friend for having led the first song with such confidence.

We continue with Ruth leading the next song as Leanne had done previously, kneeling and encouraging the children to sing along by clearly mouthing the upcoming words to them in between verses and singing along audibly. Once or twice I notice her bringing the children in to the new verses by showing them the downbeat with a clear downward strike of her hand.

Patricia leads 'Hello Mr. Sun' also kneeling in front of the children but looks to me beseechingly for a start note which I 'la' to her. She pulls a face of anxiety by twisting one side of her mouth and so I sing 'Ready, steady and off we go' on a D above middle C and also sing the first line loudly too, this being one of the acapella songs. Patricia moves her focus from me to the children and despite a shaky start in their singing, their voices come together and the song proceeds smoothly along with the respective actions.

In each song for the remainder of the concert, small groups of children take to the stage to show the dance routines and actions learned. The teachers have ensured that every child is featured in this way. Each teacher leads one more song and great hilarity ensues in the rendition of 'Donkey Riding' led by Ruth as four boys dressed in grey velour donkey 'onesies', presumably usually used in the Christmas nativity, clamber onto the stage, drop onto all fours and are sat on (gently) by four small classmates who proceed to lasso with great vigour as the song is performed.

At the end, the audience gives a standing ovation, settling back into their seats as Enid steps forward to praise the children and staff. She asks them all to stand to the audience's applause and cheers. Leanne blushes profusely, Patricia fiddles with her glasses and Ruth beams proudly. Enid then thanks Kirsten and me, telling the audience of our work and of the ukulele group in particular. We stand and two small

'donkeys' present us with large bouquets and huge handmade cards signed by each child. We hug them, thank everyone and Enid gives us both a big hug. I am very moved and can see Kirsten is too as we retake our seats.

Reception and nursery file out of the hall under the supervision of their teachers and Ruth announces over the 'hub-bub' that parents can come and collect their children and take them back to their classroom to collect coats and bags before leaving for the day. Much time is then spent being hugged around the waist by children as they say goodbye to us. One mother remarks on the donkey song that at last she knows where the repeated phrase 'Hey ho and away we go!' that her child has been singing for weeks has come from.

After school, the teachers all express combinations of relief that the event is over and pleasure at how well it went. I compliment them all on their leadership and thank them for the beautiful flowers. Kirsten echoes this, we all laugh about funny moments in the concert and hug one another in celebration. There's no ukulele meeting this afternoon. We're all too exhausted and it's a sad moment when we realize that this is the end of our time together. I will see the teachers again as I continue to follow up the study, but feel emotional to have come to the end. We wish each other good summer holidays and stop on our way out for a quick goodbye and one more hug, along with reciprocal thanks with Enid in her office.

4.6 Conclusion

From the above description of the study content, 'key' moments can be discerned in which the relationship between musicians and teachers altered and developed, resulting in clear increases in the teacher's musical confidence. These moments include; the willingness of the teachers to suggest ideas for activities to support particular children's learning needs in the period immediately after the initial four weeks of the study; the point at which I realized I had been unknowingly replicating the traditional model of visiting musician doing the music teaching for the teachers as opposed to alongside them as I had intended; the point at which I became aware that any approach that suggested the study to be an intervention would serve only to reinforce ideas of the visiting musician as 'expert' and classroom teachers as impotent

in terms of their ability to affect change for themselves; the insistence of the teachers that they wanted to learn the ukulele which signified their agency over what and how they learned; my unease at leading the ukulele group which gave me a closer understanding of how participating in the study may have felt for the teachers initially; the collaborative approach the teachers took to preparing for and leading the final concert, resituating themselves into the role of leaders.

Taken together, these key moments do not illustrate a neat, linear progression towards equal hierarchical balance between those involved in the study. However, neither do they depict a benign intervention that reinforced traditional hierarchies associated with the way in which music education is traditionally approached in primary education 'partnerships'. Rather they indicate the problematic *complexity* of the issue of power balance in professional relationships. The teachers were not all in equal balance with me or with Kirsten at all times throughout the study; some of the moments described above *do* represent a period of equality, and yet at other times, the musicians were clearly still deferred to as experts. In the culminating concert, it could be argued that Kirsten and myself were completely recast into the teachers' previous supporting roles, as opposed to equal leaders with the teachers.

Thus we begin to see that although these moments can all be pinpointed upon Draves's continuum of partnership (2008) as described in Chapter Two (See Fig. 2). There was not a logical move from 'a', the 'Student/Teacher relationship', through to 'b' the 'Team-Teaching relationship', and finally to 'c', the 'Collaborative Partnership' (Draves, 2008: 10). Instead, we visited all three points on the continuum at various times throughout the study, moving backwards and forwards between the points at different stages during the study. This will be further examined in Chapters Five and Six.

The detailed accounts contained in this chapter represent my own narrative, my perspective and my subjective interpretations of the study. The use of thick description as the primary approach to presenting the field study data here ensures that nuanced detail of the study, based as it is within the tenets of narrative enquiry, is not lost and that it can be foregrounded for ongoing and later discussion. Such close detail also informs the following chapter in which the case studies of the three

teachers, along with their interview responses, enable *their* ‘voices’ and perspectives on what unfolded to be compared with my own interpretations. Through these teacher accounts I will be further developing the various and also interrelated themes at play within this study and highlighted in the above account, namely: hierarchy, power, relationships, musical identity, and role for analysis and discussion in the final two chapters.

Chapter Five: Teacher Case Studies

5.1 Introduction

A detailed depiction of my own experience of the field study – my own 'story' - is presented in Chapter Four. The current chapter seeks to portray and investigate the stories of the three teachers participating in the study in order that their experiences are attributed equal prominence and consideration to my own and that their narratives may provide scope for triangulation of the data during the later discussion of the study findings.

As discussed in Chapter Three, I applied the tenets of both 'instrumental' and 'intrinsic' case study (Stake, 1995) to the research project design. I focus now on each individual teacher in order to attempt an in-depth understanding of each particular *intrinsic* case. Having presented and discussed each case for its own interest, I intend, from the insights which arise, to take the three cases collectively as an *instrumental* case study which will then assist the exploration in Chapter Six of the overarching problem explored in this study, the question of partnership.

Having already described the background of each of the three teachers I continue now to follow closely the progression of their music teaching and development of their musical identities throughout the field study. The case studies will draw from my reflective diary entries, audio field recordings and crucially now, the teachers' responses during interview[58] to elucidate as close a reading as possible of what was 'really going on' (Small 1998b). In order that the teachers' perspectives of the study are made clear and in order to develop insights for further discussion, I cite directly from the interview transcripts in what follows.

Furthermore, I link the teachers' own narratives to literature reviewed in Chapter Two, in order to develop the key themes already delineated and to ascertain what, if any, further themes arise. I also seek to develop an increased understanding of the

[58] Semi-structured interviews were conducted with each teacher in the summer term toward the end of the study. Each interview lasted between 25-40 minutes. Further information about the design and implementation of interviews is contained in Chapter Three.

potential impact of *this* study on: the teachers' musicking with children in their own classrooms; what was possibly happening in terms of the development of the teachers' own musical identities; their perceptions of themselves as musically confident and capable; my role within the study and how it altered as we worked together, and finally, the overall processes of musicking, as introduced in the preceding chapter, for the purposes of developing partnership relationships between visiting musicians and primary teachers.

5.2 Case Study One: Leanne

5.2.1 Pedagogical style

As the least experienced of the three teachers involved in the study, Leanne often deferred to me and to her colleagues during discussions relating to music pedagogy, planning for specific musicking activity and the musicking project in general. Her general manner toward me during the baseline study and beyond into the first stage of the study, while very friendly, often suggested that my presence made her nervous and this was perceptible from her downward gaze[59].

Towards the children in her class however, she was far more relaxed, maintaining their attention with a caring demeanor. It was clear while observing activity in her classroom that the children loved her. During the seven-month study, I never heard Leanne raise her voice in order to control her class. Quiet and seemingly shy Leanne displayed authority as a teacher without ever needing to be authoritarian.

5.2.2 Leanne's musical self-perception prior to, and during the study

At the time of the initial meeting, Leanne's description of her own musical identity was that she was 'not a musician' and this therefore, precluded her from being a 'good music teacher'. These statements align with the findings of Hennessey (2000) which, as already discussed (See 2.2.3), found students training to become primary classroom teachers commonly believed music to be best taught by professional 'experts' possessing technical musical skill and the ability to play an instrument. Glover and Ward (1993), Gifford (1993), Jeanneret (1993), Davies (1994), Mills (1994), Holden

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[59] Leanne's initial tendency to display deferential behaviour in my presence is discussed in Chapter Four.

and Button (2006), Ruismaki and Teraska (2006), Wiggins and Wiggins (2008), Russell-Bowie (2009), Stunell (2010) and Welch and Henley (2014) all support the additional established trend of the primary teacher regarding themself as musically 'deficient' as discussed in the earlier review of literature.

Leanne's deference to more experienced colleagues and to me may be attributed to her feelings of – as she described it – 'finding her way' as a new teacher in terms of teaching across the curriculum. At the time of the initial meeting and as the study progressed, I did not interpret this as an attempt at modesty on Leanne's part, and I took hers as a truthful assessment of her own perception of her skills. However, the more time I spent working together with her and the more opportunities I had to watch her teach, the more it transpired that Leanne's assessment of her own professional and musical capabilities, however truthful, was inaccurate.

Learning more about Leanne's past experiences of music learning and teaching enabled me to better understand where her ingrained belief in herself as 'not a musician' might have originated. In interview I asked her about her own music education, in answer to which, she cited the fact that she had 'never played an instrument' or had 'much interest in music' as being the basis for her belief that she was 'not very musical'.

Even at this point six months into the study, despite co-leading musicking with me, and leading an increasing amount of singing with her class independently, Leanne still held firm to her notion of musicality as being connected to not having learned an instrument in her youth. We can clearly see the prevalence of 'Piagetian'[60] thinking here in relation to age specific developmental learning with the field of education. The emphasis on age-related learning attainment contained within the National Curriculum is undoubtedly in order to assist the assessment of classes of children of the same age using generic, 'one size fits all', rather than individual means. Despite her recognition that the children in her class were all individuals who developed and made progress at differing rates (as demonstrated in the stories we will presently

[60] See Chapter Two, 2.2.2.

encounter of Amelia and Mimi), Leanne did not appear to ascribe the same flexibility to her own musical learning as an adult and, perhaps more significantly, as a teacher.

As we have seen in the earlier discussion (see Chapter Two) of the work of Nicholas Bannan (2000), subscribing to sequential, age related theories of developmental learning might be potentially damaging to adults' perceptions of themselves as learners, threatening the ability of individuals to pursue learning if they believe they have 'missed' a stage or an opportunity in their youth. Leanne appeared to have been strongly inculcated into the belief that her chance at music had passed her by and therefore, my insistence throughout the study that she *was* musical was deeply pivotal in her case. I will return to this as a significant topic of my discussion in the following chapter, along with Leanne's resistance to identifying herself as 'musical', examining where such resistance might stem from.

While studying for her degree, Leanne, like most students training to teach at primary level, received a very limited amount of music training.[61] The content of initial teacher education courses is weighted to match the current emphases within education on 'core'[62] subjects. Music is not classed as a core subject, and the amount of time spent on training primary teachers to teach music may be negligible; yet it remains a statutory subject, and individual teachers and schools are held publicly accountable to teach it. Leanne's anxiety about being observed teaching music, and the conflict she felt between on the one hand feeling musically deficit, and on the other wanting to do her job well, arose from this imbalance between the lack of subject specific training and the requirements of the National Curriculum.

When asked to identify her strengths in relation to music at the beginning of the study Leanne swiftly replied that she did not have any. When asked about her weaknesses, she said:

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[61] A study of Key Stage One teacher training in music reports a disparity of initial teacher education (ITE) in music, varying between one and twenty day's music teaching training (Hallam, Creech, Varvarigou, 2011)

[62] 'Core' subjects within the Key Stage One curriculum are defined at the time of writing as 'English, Mathematics and Science' (DfE, 2013).

> Leanne: Confidence. I don't think my singing voice is too bad. But I would never have had the confidence to sing anyway. I never had the confidence of *how* to use it really so that the children would enjoy it and not see it as a slog.

Leanne recognizes here that it is a lack of confidence in her musical abilities, caused by a lack of subject specific knowledge, particularly vocal technique, that is the barrier to her feeling that she might possess musical strengths. Unlike many other primary teachers, Leanne did not claim that she could not sing or that she was 'tone deaf', as commonly reported in the literature about teachers' self assessments of their own singing voices (Hennessey, 2000, Paterson and Bentley, 2003). Rather, she made a reasonable assessment of her voice as adequate but it is unclear from her responses at this point whether she felt that improvements were possible or attainable for her at this stage in her life and career.

5.2.3 Classroom musicking prior to the study

Before the study, Leanne would occasionally sing nursery rhymes with her class, and tried to do half an hour of music per week, but this was predicated on the availability of spare time if other tasks had been completed. Music was thus not an activity that took precedence over core subjects in Leanne's classroom, and indeed featured very little even, for example, as a way of supporting core subjects. But by the end of the study, Leanne was visibly using musicking, particularly singing, that encompassed the children's ideas and language, on a daily basis. Musicking became a 'tool' with which Leanne supported children's cross-curricular learning. Sometimes she used singing directly to impart new vocabulary or subject specific facts, and other times she used it as a way of 'breaking up' the day, to reengage children when their interest or energy was dwindling.

In the academic year before the study commenced, Leanne's weekly half hour of musicking took the form of a visiting musician accompanying on the piano while the class sang songs from a book. This was provided through the local authority music service. The class teachers were required to choose the songs and to lead while the pianist accompanied, but Leanne told me that this vocal leadership amounted to encouraging the children to keep singing for the full half hour, as their engagement with the passive sing-a-long was often short-lived.

5.2.4 The development of our relationship through classroom musicking

Of the three teachers involved in the study, Leanne was the slowest to begin to co-lead musicking activity with Kirsten and me. As previously described, she did not want me to observe her music teaching during the baseline study and was highly deferential during that first encounter and throughout the first weeks of the study. I was careful to accept her request to observe me lead for the first stage, in order both to demonstrate that I respected her wishes, and also to avoid causing any damage to her already low musical self-perception (as had happened in her work with the pianist, to be further discussed in Chapter Six). To have insisted or forced Leanne to lead before she was ready, when she had been honest about her wish to observe first, would have been counterproductive in terms of creating an equal partnership between us. It was imperative therefore that Leanne felt able to have agency over how she participated with me within the study.

Using Draves's continuum of partnership (Draves, 2008, see Fig. 2) as a lens to assess the development of my partnership with Leanne, we began with the relationship of 'student' and 'teacher' (Draves, 2008: 10), Leanne being the former with limited responsibility and I, the latter and the leader. For the reasons already discussed, this was the most appropriate way to commence our work together in order to ensure preservation of Leanne's frail sense of her musical self and to establish trust. However, as Draves points out, the 'Student/Teacher' relationship holds within it inherent power imbalances. Therefore, I viewed this as a temporary 'means to an end', seeking to move our relationship along the continuum during the course of the study toward a more equal power relationship.

Within four weeks of the study commencing, Leanne had perceptibly relaxed around me. Her deferential treatment gave way to a flourishing friendship and trust between us, in which she made suggestions for topics and even specific songs that she would like to include in the musicking sessions. Throughout the study, I visited Leanne's classroom last during each afternoon and it was in her room after the children had gone home that the ukulele group began to meet in the second stage of the study (see Chapter Four, 4.5.3) This practical aspect meant that Leanne and I often had five to ten minutes each week after school that I did not have with the other teachers in which we could discuss and reflect upon the afternoon's musicking and plan for the

following week. As a result, a positive relationship developed quickly in comparison with the development of my relationship and familiarity with the other teachers. It was at this point that we entered the beginning of the more balanced 'Team-Teaching relationship' (Draves, 2008: 10), sharing ideas and agency.

Although, at Leanne's request, I led almost all of the musicking for the first month of the study, the content of the music sessions was informed by her to a much greater extent than was the case in the other two classes. This meant that of the three teachers, Leanne had greatest agency over the *content* of the musicking and she came to realize over time that she was not lacking in ideas, only in confidence and competence to put them into practice.

As described in Chapter Four, Leanne was once absent and a supply teacher was taking her class. It was then, four months into the study that I came to fully appreciate Leanne's role in our musicking partnership. By this point the children were very familiar with me and Kirsten, yet the atmosphere in the classroom on this particular afternoon bore no resemblance to the calm, happy order to which we had become accustomed. Instead the children were fractious, the end of the school day drawing near. They struggled to sit in our usually harmonious circle and we could not engage them successfully in singing even their favourite songs for more than a minute or two. Dancing led to them running around the classroom with more shrieking than singing along. I tried gathering their ideas for songs we might sing only to be met with request after request to go to the toilet from disengaged children. The supply teacher did not intervene as Leanne certainly would have done.

It was reflecting upon this most challenging of afternoons that I began to understand and value Leanne's role in our work together. I felt myself to be a fairly experienced educator of young children, able to manage most behaviours as they arose, but I was not 'the decisive element in the classroom' (Ginott, 1972: 15) and *my* mood did not 'make the weather' (ibid). That power belonged to Leanne and her absence made the children unsure of their boundaries within the musicking session that day. It became clear to me at this point that Leanne's expert knowledge of and her relationship with the children represented an equal match to my level of music education expertise. My reflection on this experience caused me to acknowledge a shift in power within the

partner relationship with Leanne, moving it into the third and most equal power balance within Draves's continuum of partnership – that is, the 'Collaborative Partnership' (2008: 10).

In the ukulele group, Leanne was a regular attendee, other staff members occasionally missing the sessions due to planning tasks or forgotten ukuleles. She was the first to procure a ukulele and upgraded shortly after the group began to a better quality instrument, demonstrating her commitment to learning to play. This is highly significant in terms of Leanne taking agency over the transformation of her own musical identity. She reported her belief that to be a 'musician', she would need the technical skill of playing an instrument. By participating so enthusiastically and with the highest levels of commitment, Leanne swiftly began to master the instrument, bypassing the other teachers in terms of her technical skill and musical knowledge and beginning to support less confident colleagues. Her confidence in her own musical ability appeared to increase slightly, and concurrently, a repositioning of Leanne occurred within the study participant group. The other teachers began to ask her for advice about how to play particular chords and to 'catch them up' on songs they had missed. She remained modest about and perhaps even unaware of her new found musical 'status' within the school and the study 'order' but Kirsten, Enid and I all noted it.

As the summer term began, Leanne began to lead more actively. One afternoon, Kirsten and I entered the classroom and (respectively) set up the audio recording equipment and greeted the class. Leanne then announced that they had been working on a song to share with us. It was a song they had chosen and learned together and not one that they had learned from us. She then readied the children to sing, brought them in and sang the entire song with them as a performance for us. This was a turning point for Leanne, at which her confidence had clearly grown in her own voice, her singing leadership, her ability to choose repertoire for and with the children, and her having overcome her misgivings about being observed whilst musicking with the children. In the remaining three months of the study, Leanne increasingly co-led part singing with Kirsten and me each week, up to and including the summer concert, in which she confidently led all three classes singing in front of all of her colleagues.

During the interview I sought to gain a sense Leanne's thoughts about what aspects of our working relationship *made* it feel like a partnership for her. Leanne's responses suggested that the establishment and continued success of our relationship was rooted in dialogue, in the forms of conversation and ongoing negotiation between us about the content of the musicking session. Rather than coming in to her classroom and teaching the children repertoire I had chosen as music 'expert', I had consulted with Leanne as to what the learning topics would be in each half term period and together we chose and tailored repertoire to ensure the singing could have added cross-curricular benefit and use. Leanne saw this as both practically useful and as a leveling act through which her expertise as teacher was acknowledged. In stark contrast to the previous experience of the musicking with the visiting pianist where Leanne felt exposed by her lack of musical knowledge, this consultation process allowed us equal agency to contribute ideas, while Leanne felt supported in terms of choosing appropriate repertoire based on her topic suggestions:

> Julia: Have you actually felt like a partner in this project?
>
> Leanne: Yes, yes, because you come to us and ask us what topic we're doing and things like that, it's not just you coming in with your material and just teaching what you've got to teach; it's linked to our topics so the children understand the relevance of it and how everything links in so I would definitely say yes.

These responses indicate in her view, Leanne and I were working collaboratively *with* one another rather than me working *for* her or in the case of her previous experience, actually *against* her.

5.2.5 Impact of the study on Leanne's classroom music teaching

From Leanne's responses and my own follow-up observations in her classroom, there was evidence that the study positively affected her classroom music teaching. She described her own feelings toward the field study musicking sessions as:

> Leanne: Completely different, I know the kids enjoy Tuesday afternoons, but also, when *I* come in on a Tuesday I think: 'Oh, we've got singing this afternoon!' and I look forward to it. Completely different to the last experience because I used to dread Tuesday, funnily enough Tuesday afternoons, I used to dread Tuesday afternoons with her [visiting pianist] but it's just a totally different…feel to it. I'm not leading it, but I'm not keeping out of it, yet you know, it's songs that the children enjoy and it's at their level and I mean they used to go into the hall last year and they used to be like… 'Ugh!' You'd never ever get that reaction now.

Her own enjoyment and the children's engagement with singing increased during the study and she told me that this in itself provided her with the motivation to facilitate daily musicking, which in turn supported the development of Leanne's confidence in herself as a singing leader. By February half term Leanne and her class were singing together at least once a day, a vast increase from once a week. Leanne described this change in frequency as:

> Leanne: Loads more singing. At least some kind of singing in the class once a day. If not more than that. If we find ourselves with ten minutes before dinner and you know, we've finished early, instead of, we still do get stories and play other games but now I can think: 'Oh we'll just do some singing' and we just do some singing because we've both got that repertoire of songs now. But then sometimes we do have time where I'll say: 'Oh we're going to do a bit of singing now' and we'll sit and we'll do a bit of singing just planned into the timetable.
>
> Julia: And would you have done that before this project?
>
> Leanne: No. Definitely not.

An increased knowledge of repertoire and how to create new songs with her class supported Leanne's confidence and in addition, she cited the practical strategies for leading singing that she had observed me and Kirsten modeling, as having contributed to her emerging feelings of competence. Speaking about what she felt she had learned during the study, she told me:

> Leanne: Introducing songs to the children in the 'right' way. We sing the songs that we sing with you a lot but we also go on 'Sing Up' and sing songs off there and even just knowing for me to sing a line and them to sing it back to me, I would never have done that before and it's such a simple thing and that just helps them to learn it and I would say that my confidence has now grown, I would say that I am quite confident singing with them.

Here, Leanne's use of 'the right way' in relation to teaching singing indicates that she felt she had acquired some level of technical music teaching skill and had begun to reconceptualize her own music teaching.

In her interview Leanne told me of the number of parents commenting to her on their child singing new songs and singing more often at home. This supported her belief that the increased amount of classroom musicking during the study had increased

children's confidence to sing and even their direct relationship with her and others in class. She described an example of this:

> Leanne: Amelia came to me yesterday and we were writing out some kind of thank you and I couldn't understand her writing and I said: 'Oh what does it say?' and she started singing 'Black Socks' and she sang it all the way through and I said: 'Aw that was lovely!' and she would *never* have sat and sung a song to me in the beginning! You can just see the confidence in them. In the hall, one of the nursery teachers, who had them last year commented on their confidence. You can just see it a mile away.
>
> And you know some of them bring in lyrics, they've been writing down the song lyrics. Mimi yesterday during our 'child initiated' made a songbook, which I'm sure she'll show you this afternoon, she's written out the 'ladybird song' and she's written it all out and she's really concentrated on it and then she sang it to everyone and it's just, it's great their confidence is fantastic!

While the stories of Amelia (a customarily withdrawn child) and Mimi suggest increased confidence in relation to singing and contributing verbally in front of Leanne and the rest of the class, they also point to the content of the study supporting children's development and learning beyond music, specifically literacy in the above anecdotes.

5.2.6 Impact of the study on Leanne's musical self-perception

The investigation of musical confidence contained thus far within this thesis has supported the notion of its being bound up tightly with subjective musical identity, and of course, in the case of Leanne, we have seen the clearly detrimental effect the *lack* of musical confidence can have upon musical identity.

The study led to an increased amount of musicking undertaken by Leanne in her classroom. While her musical confidence grew over the course of the study, the development of Leanne's own musical identity showed itself to be a highly complex matter, laden with personal feelings of doubt and conflict.

At the very beginning of the study Leanne did not want to be observed singing with the children. Although she became more at ease with working alongside Kirsten and me and occasionally did allow us to watch her musicking with the children, her aversion to being observed by her other colleagues persisted for the duration of the study. In interview, Leanne admitted to remaining self-conscious about singing in

front of her peers, despite her growth in musical confidence, knowledge and repertoire. This arose presumably from a fear of being judged negatively and possibly to avoid the resurfacing of the negative feelings experienced in the hall with the visiting pianist. She confided:

> Leanne: Sometimes when there's another adult in the class I'm still a bit: 'Uhh, can you go and do that outside while I sing with them?' Why, I don't know, I don't know. I guess you just feel a bit silly in front of them, and you shouldn't really but you do.

As previously established, Leanne held assumptions pertaining to the need to play an instrument with technical skill in order to be a musician. By the end of the study she had learned to play the ukulele to a high enough standard to accompany her class as they sang. One might assume therefore, based on her earlier assertions that to be a musician she would need to know how to play an instrument, that Leanne would now class herself as such. However, her perception of her musical self remained ambivalent and problematic:

> Julia: So do you still think of yourself as *not* a musician? You play the ukulele now.
>
> Leanne: Well…yeeeah… In a *way* I am but because I'm not… I don't know. I think of musical people as like they're really *good* at music. Whereas I play the ukulele but I'm not really good at it but, but I don't know whether I'd call myself…maybe. Maybe a *little bit* of a musical person now. I always remember you saying to the children on the first session – 'Can anyone see an instrument?' And then you spoke about how everyone's got a voice so we are all musicians. So in that case I suppose I would be!

We see here Leanne's sense of being on a trajectory towards becoming a musician, and her alignment of her musicianship with mine and the children's signifies a shift in her perception of herself as a musician. However, this is contradictory to her earlier responses, showing once again the complexity of the issue of musical identity.

5.3 Case Study Two: Ruth

5.3.1 Pedagogical style

As with her colleagues, Ruth's manner toward the children was consistently kind, fair and positive. She was a confident teacher, and clearly very comfortable in her classroom, where she maintained an easygoing, fun environment.

As described throughout Chapter Four, the children in Ruth's class were collectively lively, talkative, curious and full of physical energy. She herself described the class as 'fizzy' and this was a fitting description, given that none of their behaviour stemmed from negative intent, rather an outpouring of enthusiasm and energy that often 'bubbled' into rowdiness. However, this never felt uncomfortable. Ruth was always clearly in control. The animated atmosphere resulted in her classroom usually being rather loud and although Ruth often raised her voice to be heard she never shouted at the children in reproach in my presence. Any challenging behaviour was kindly dealt with and children with special needs, like Anna, had the support of both Ruth and Karen when required.

Of particular concern to Ruth were the below average levels of speech, language and communication skills among the children attending the school.[63] The children clearly found learning in Ruth's classroom fun and engaging and she asked questions and consulted with them constantly to encourage their creativity and confidence in thinking and speaking.

5.3.2 Ruth's musical self-perception prior to, and during the study

Of the three teachers involved in the study, Ruth was initially the most confident about music teaching and in terms of her own musical skill. She had always taught music to the children herself although she had been offered 'hardly any music training' when she trained to be a teacher.

She found leading class singing 'easy' because she had a self-professed 'love' of it but she had doubts about how 'good' her voice was. Despite these doubts, she made

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[63] The Bercow Report (2008) suggested 1 in 14 children in the UK begin school with speech, language and communication needs.

use of nursery rhymes which were familiar to the children to incorporate daily short singing sessions for speech and language development and to draw the school day to a close. She also often sourced and taught the children new songs herself, such as the 'Cauliflowers Fluffy' song described in the previous chapter. In general, Ruth was confident in leading singing and the music curriculum but felt that she lacked ideas, repertoire and technical skills.

When asked during interview what she felt her musical strengths were at the start of the study Ruth responded:

> Ruth: (Tentatively) I can hold a note (laughs). I'm willing to learn. New experiences, I enjoy. Um, I think I've got a good relationship with the children so that helps as well. And I understand the importance of singing, I know how much *I* love singing and with me only being here two days a week I don't get chance to do as much as obviously, as I would like.

As the above quote suggests, Ruth was extremely receptive to new ideas and new approaches to teaching music. She also had no qualms about singing in front of me during and beyond the baseline study and it was clear from the first observations I made in her classroom that she and Karen were comfortable singing together with the children.

When asked about ways in which she felt she could improve her musical skills at the beginning of the project and beyond Ruth said:

> Ruth: Well I don't play an instrument… I don't always know the correct terminology like pitch and timbre, or whatever it is..is it tim-*bray* or tim-*ber*?

This is significant in terms of telling us about Ruth's self-positioning in relation to music. On the one hand, she is comfortable sharing her lack of knowledge in relation to specific musical terminology such as pitch and timbre. She is unsure what the words mean and therefore, how to approach teaching them. These terms undoubtedly appear in music curriculum documentation and in primary music packages such as *Music Express* (see footnote 37) but without basic training in music, such terms and musical concepts may be as impenetrable as an unfamiliar foreign language. Ruth does not understand the terms and is unsure of the correct pronunciation but she is not afraid to ask me for guidance. She is confident and honest about her lack of

knowledge as opposed (quite rightly) to feeling any sort of embarrassment at admitting gaps in her knowledge.

On the other hand however, Ruth identifies learning to play an instrument as an area for personal musical improvement suggesting that like Leanne, she too subscribes to the belief that such a skill is a necessary qualification of the 'good' music teacher. In contrast with Leanne though, she was not preoccupied with the terms 'musical' or 'musician', disregarding them entirely in her responses about her own music teaching.

5.3.3 Classroom musicking prior to the study

Ruth had taught music independently to her classes for the entirety of her ten years as a teacher, with the exception of the visiting pianist from the music service in the year prior to our study.

> Ruth: We used to have a piano teacher that would come in on a Tuesday afternoon and she would just play any music that we provided and the children would sing along. Didn't work very well.

Unlike Leanne, Ruth *did* know the name of this visiting pianist[64] but this seems to have been the extent of sharing between visitor and teacher. Like Leanne, Ruth also felt that this music project experience was not successful or meaningful either for her as teacher or for the children. Of the leadership of these lessons Ruth told me:

> Ruth: *I* led it but she would play the piano and I would say: 'Right could you play that again Mrs Piano?' or: 'Could we play it more slowly this time?' or: 'How about if we did this?' or: 'How about if we get some instruments?' She was just there to facilitate just the music.

This is a valuable insight into Ruth's self-perception of herself and her own skills in relation to music teaching. She led these singing sessions and lists the directions she gave to Mrs Piano, all of them musically relevant and similar to ways in which I myself might work. Her list included changing tempo and adding in percussion instruments while Mrs Piano, the 'qualified' music service professional merely accompanied. It was Ruth who facilitated the musicking and yet she clearly deferred to the visiting musician by asking her permission to extend the sing-along in more musically interesting ways for the children. Her statement that it was Mrs Piano who

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[64] For the purposes of anonymity, I will refer to the visiting pianist as 'Mrs Piano'.

facilitated the music despite all of Ruth's own musical ideas and suggestions, shows Ruth's lack of appreciation for her considerable musical knowledge and skill, much of which can be assumed to be instinctive and self-taught given the lack of music training Ruth had been offered up to that point in time.

I invited Ruth to reflect further upon the leadership arrangement of the musicking with Mrs Piano by asking:

> Julia: So it was <u>you</u> as the teacher taking the lead and the musician fitting in around that and you didn't feel that that worked very well?
>
> Ruth: No because I didn't feel confident enough to feel I could lead it, I mean I tried and obviously I'm not a professional singer and I don't play an instrument in any way, well I do, I play a little bit of ukulele now! But no I just didn't feel… I wasn't inspired by it, it just felt very dull and samey.

Even confident, able Ruth unknowingly positions herself beneath and defers to the 'professional' musician, regardless of how little they bring to the music 'partnership', demonstrating how dangerously undermining such experiences can be to the musical engagement, confidence and development of both teachers and children.

5.3.4 The development of our relationship through classroom musicking

When asked what she thought about our relationship, Ruth told me that she really valued being able to 'stick her two penneth in' when she felt the need within the study, indicating that she felt she had agency in terms of contributing to the musicking, both passively and actively according to her own choosing. Applying Draves's continuum of partnership (2008), Ruth and I began within the 'Team-Teaching' model of partnership, sharing ideas and with some equity of power but with me (or sometimes Kirsten) taking the majority of the active music leadership. Ruth therefore commenced the study further along that partnership continuum than her two colleagues.

When describing the experience of working with Mrs Piano, Ruth had a feeling of missed opportunities for the learning and development of the children and herself owing to a lack of dialogue between teacher and musician. She also expressed a feeling of having no choice but to lead the activity alone without feeling much enjoyment in doing so.

For Ruth, freedom to negotiate leadership roles between the partners, as was the case within the field study, was preferable. Before the study, she could already lead musicking activity independently and had enough knowledge to do this in addition to assessing individual children's musical development. In terms of our partnership, what Ruth required was not to be *forced* to lead, regardless of how confident she may have been. Equally, she did not want to passively observe me teaching. Rather, she wanted a balance of both of these roles along with the opportunity to co-lead with Kirsten and me in order to further develop her skills, knowledge and repertoire:

> Julia: So, of these experiences [musicking with Mrs Piano and in the study with me], which would you class as the most useful for you?
>
> Ruth: If I can work *with*. Being led, but able to contribute.
>
> Julia: As we do in this current project?
>
> Ruth: Yes.

Other 'partnerships' had come and gone within the school prior to the study and in the main, Ruth's expectations of working 'with' went unfulfilled. For her, a feeling of collaboration was key to a successful partnership. She recognized that the feelings of isolation she had felt when having to decide on repertoire alone for Mrs Piano to play was not the best use of time and resources and as a result, the experience was, in Ruth's own words, 'dull and samey' for all involved. Effective communication and dialogue between us and the ability to contact one another outside of the weekly visits were also important for Ruth in terms of making her feel like we had a relationship from the earliest stages of the study.

> Julia: Have you felt like my partner as this project has progressed?
>
> Ruth: Yes. Yes. Yes!
>
> Julia: So when did you first feel that that was the case?
>
> Ruth: I think a couple of weeks in when, you know you obviously, you left us things to try with the children and you know, that we felt we could contact you if we ever needed to, we had your number, your email so you know, it was just nice and we've got a nice relationship which I really enjoy. It's a good laugh. With the children and with you, we get on really well. Yeah, and, and because I was part of it and I was joining in and I felt, I didn't feel silly joining in, I felt comfortable joining in because

> you were all joining in and the children were joining in and we were all being silly and singing so, you know…

Perhaps owing to her own personality, humour and fun were also features of our partnership that Ruth valued. She enjoyed the opportunity to 'play' with the songs within our music sessions and to be 'silly'. A feeling of togetherness dispelled any feelings of self-consciousness and made for an enjoyable learning environment.

Within our relationship, Ruth often made suggestions to me for ways of working that she felt would best benefit the needs of the children, Karen and herself. Even during the final interview she felt able to give feedback on ways in which we might have improved where and how we carried out the musicking content of the study. As with Leanne, by the end of the study we were operating often within the most equal 'Collaborative Partnership' relationship on Draves's continuum (2008), sharing practical leadership, ideas and agency but occasionally reverting back along the continuum to 'Team-Teaching' when Ruth wanted to learn or hone particular repertoire or musical skills by observing Kirsten or me.

5.3.5 Impact of the study on Ruth's classroom music teaching

In interview, Ruth told me that, for her, the most significant impact of our collaborative musicking had been upon her musical confidence and the music teaching confidence of her colleagues:

> Ruth: Confidence of teaching staff. Yes. That's the main thing for me. [Tone of voice lowered and emotional] That's, it's helped me and that'll help me help the children.

She also reported changes in the children's attitudes toward singing:

> Ruth: And I think to see some of the children that weren't so bothered about singing joining in, for example… Right, Leo who doesn't always join in and can struggle at times and has support to help him, he, to join in, in the middle [of the circle], to actually take part and sing in the middle on his own that was an achievement for him and to see people like Sophie that just blossom and sing and hold the notes and just love it and just perform, perform…fab!

Ruth felt that the children had responded positively to the musicking because they felt equally valued in the study along with the adults. Of this she remarked:

> Ruth: You were very positive with the children and made them feel like whatever they did was very important.
>
> Julia: And they've been positive with us.
>
> Ruth: Yeah they have. Yeah, they love you.

Ruth thought that our partnership had laid foundations upon which she could continue to extend musicking within her classroom in future years. She believed that singing was now taken more seriously within the school and given greater consideration by the staff, even those not directly involved in the study. Colleagues were noticing the increase in confidence of children and staff participating in the study and were beginning to ask her, Leanne and Patricia for repertoire and advice on how to sing with their own classes.

It was in Ruth's class that I first introduced part-singing, unplanned at the request of Peter who wanted to sing a *Jackson Five* song. Facilitating part-singing, however simplistic the two parts, was new to Ruth who had not attempted this prior to the study. This kind of extended musical learning, ways in which to enable children to progress a song once learned and to develop the aural ability to sing in parts was one of the most important aspects of the study for Ruth. Whereas Leanne had remarked upon the musicking supporting other areas of the curriculum such as literacy and writing, Ruth felt the study had possibly influenced other areas of the children's learning and development but that this was of secondary importance to their learning of the repertoire and musical skills. She commented:

> Ruth: [The musicking has impacted] cross-curricular learning to a certain extent, not *hugely*, but that, that wasn't the be all and end all was it? That was a nice by-product, as it *should* be. It shouldn't be a case of: (mock stern voice) 'You are learning about this today through singing.' It's just by the by isn't it?

By the end of the study, Ruth and her class were not musicking more often than they had previously (which was usually daily) but they did know more songs and activities and Ruth was more confident in her understanding of music and therefore more able to extend the children's musical learning.

5.3.6 Impact of the study on Ruth's musical self-perception

Ruth began the study already feeling confident and capable in relation to music teaching. Anything she didn't know or understand, she felt able to ask without embarrassment. From the study, she wanted new musical ideas, to extend her knowledge of music theory and terminology and had identified not playing an instrument as a 'gap' in her music teaching skill base.

When the study began, like her colleagues, Ruth felt most comfortable with the title of 'teacher' and felt that it most accurately described her role, skills and qualifications. When asked if the experience of participating in the study had changed her self-perception to the extent that she might feel comfortable describing herself as a musician, she responded:

> Ruth: Well I know after you'd talked to us, next to the Christmas tree [at our first meeting in December 2009] you did say that anybody can be a musician so I wouldn't rule myself out, but I wouldn't hold my hands up and say: 'Yes I am a musician' but I would maybe say now that maybe I am a *little* bit of a musician.

Leanne claimed to be 'a little bit of a musical person now' and 'On my way to being a musician' which, when compared to Ruth's response, suggests that both teachers now feel musicianship and the right to call oneself a 'musician' to be a spectrum as opposed to a fixed state or destination.

Also significant was a shift in thinking on Ruth's part over the course of the study about the necessity of playing an instrument to be a 'musician':

> Ruth: It's changed yeah, my opinion on you don't have to play an instrument to be a musician.
>
> Julia: That's interesting because when I asked you what your musical weaknesses were at the beginning of the project you said that you felt that because you didn't play an instrument that was a weakness, well you do [play ukulele] now, but you don't have to?
>
> Ruth: I know, I know! I do! But I realise that that's not the be all and end all.

By examining the case of Ruth, it is possible to see how the model of partnership, collegial music teaching and training in the primary classroom can extend the music teaching capability and confidence of the *already* competent teacher of music. In

addition, by looking closely at Ruth's 'story' we can see the power of partnership teaching when the relationship is at its most dialogic and reciprocal. In working with Ruth, the study had further impact that I expected and could have hoped for in terms of my own learning about children's development, innovative ways of working within the classroom space and 'good' educational practice.

5.4 Case Study Three: Patricia

5.4.1 Pedagogical style

Patricia was extremely kind to the children in her class. She was confident in her own abilities as a teacher but often seemed harassed and flustered, especially in the first stages of the study. This was presumably related to workload and, or my being present. It was possibly also a result of the children's lively behaviour of which Patricia often did not seem fully in control.

In our first meeting, Patricia shared similar concerns to Ruth in relation to the below average levels of speech among the children and the subsequent negative effect this might have on their academic attainment and personal development.

5.4.2 Patricia's musical self-perception prior to, and during the study

Patricia attended classical concerts regularly and was comfortable in her knowledge and understanding of Western classical music as an audience member. However, at the beginning of the study Patricia didn't feel able to describe herself as 'particularly musical'. Of her own musicality she said:

> Patricia: Ummmmm… I don't think that I'm particularly musical in a technical… well I'm not. I'm not musical in a technical way. I don't think that my voice is…but I've such a strong belief that regardless of what I sound like, it's good for the children (laughs heartily at herself) so I feel so strongly that the children should be just enjoying singing and experiencing singing that I don't *really* mind that I get it wrong with the children.

This is an interesting insight into Patricia's musical self-positioning. In a concert situation she views the performers and composers of Western classical music as innately musical evidenced by their active participation or 'musicking'. As an audience member, Patricia's part in the music 'act' is passive and therefore, in her

view, discounted as being ‘musical’ despite the integral role the audience play within any given concert (Small, 1998b). Within the hierarchy of the Western classical concert and the musical world beyond it, Patricia’s designation of herself as ‘not technically musical’ situates her well beneath or even outside of those active participants on the concert platform and dismisses her knowledge and appreciation of music entirely.

The above quote also gives insight into Patricia’s personal belief in music and enjoyment in musical learning as ‘good’ for the children. She also held a personal belief in the innate musicality of children as babies as a result of her own childhood experiences:

> Patricia: I think that there is something innately musical about a baby. I’ve always thought for a long time that music is an innate part of you. I do think it is this English thing as well that you know, it’s this reserve. I think it’s a cultural thing. I think it’s a historical thing. I know it sounds like: ‘Ooh the good old days’ but I do think that people sang with babies *far* more often. And you know I’ve got a thing about rocking babies. One of my first, well not one of my first memories, but a really sort of strong memory of my parents was, I’m showing my age now but my Mam and Dad had three boys and then they had me, and it was round about the time *Thank Heaven for Little Girls* came and I actually *remember* and I don’t know how old I was, and it could’ve gone on until I was six or anything, I don’t know but I *remember* the sitting room and my Mam and Dad singing this and passing me over: ‘Give her to me. Give her to me’. I remember the sway. I remember the rocking and I remember that really good feeling of being special… I’ve got such a strong memory of that sort of bond maybe that’s why I feel so strongly about babies being rocked.

Patricia’s nostalgic recollection of being sung to as a child and the positive associations she held with that memory had informed her belief in music as ‘good’ for children. Her belief that parents singing to their babies was not as common practice as it once had been can be seen as influential of her earlier statement of feeling ‘so strongly that the children should be just enjoying singing and experiencing singing’, along with her desire to improve her music teaching through participation in the study. Accordingly, she made an effort to ensure that the children she taught could music regularly in order to benefit from these positive experiences. However, her suggestion that she got it ‘wrong’ shows that she assumed there to be a ‘right’ and a ‘wrong’ way of classroom musicking.

Like her colleagues, Patricia felt she had not had adequate training in music to support the teaching of it and this contributed to her sense of herself as not being musical. While she told me she 'loved to sing with the children' she lacked confidence in her ability to sing, feeling that her singing voice was poor.

One area in which Patricia did identify herself as proficient was in linking music activity with other areas of the curriculum. As described in Chapter Four, she had taught the children 'Bobby Shaftoe' in connection with local history. She was passionate about using singing as a support for children's language and literacy, and she told me that she took an interest in academic studies relating to musicking and child development:

> Patricia: I do enjoy linking literacy research from teaching and how, I mean well years ago I learned that the greatest predictor of good readers are children who can rhyme and I feel *so* strongly that you know, if we just get the children to rhyme, rhyme, rhyme all of the time then they'll be able to read when they get further up the school. So I think that perhaps a strength of mine is the way that I link rhythm and rhyme and musicality when I'm reading with the children and I just try to bring as much of the sort of the musicality of reading and phonics and sounds through everything that we do.

In this reflection of Patricia's we can see not only her passion for improving children's life skills and educational attainment, but also a glimpse of someone who does have a good grasp of how to teach and use music within the primary classroom. In her description of how she links rhythm and rhyme with phonics, Patricia undermined her earlier assessment of herself as unmusical. It becomes apparent that her ability to recognize and outwardly promote her musical skills was hindered by the subject label of 'music'. When talking about the subject of phonics or literacy she was able to unconsciously celebrate and affirm her own musicality.

5.4.3 Classroom musicking prior to the study

Prior to the study, Patricia allocated time once a week to music. This would include some singing of familiar nursery rhymes and songs sourced from books and websites. In addition to singing, Patricia would sometimes work with small, un-tuned percussion focusing on musical concepts such as tempo and dynamics. These activities were sourced from music manuals or 'packages' and were designed to

develop children’s musical skills and knowledge in a sequential, but arguably, not very engaging way.

While she dutifully fulfilled her role and the statutory teaching requirements within it by teaching music in accordance to the curriculum, Patricia often felt she struggled to do so in a way that sustained children’s concentration. Her attempts to use the CD based ‘package’ resources to assist the children’s learning were further hindered by her lack of confidence in the accuracy and strength of her own singing voice.

Before the study, her music lessons were entirely teacher led with only limited opportunities for the children to make suggestions or contribute ideas. Those ideas that were contributed were often in answer to a question posed by Patricia with a right or wrong answer as in the case of the discussion about Bobby Shaftoe described in Chapter Four. This was not intentional on Patricia’s part, in other aspects of her teaching I observed Patricia often asking for children’s ideas and engaging them in dialogue. However, in the area of music, Patricia confessed that she found the children challenging to engage for sustained periods of time.

Unlike the other two teachers participating in the study, Patricia had been teaching in nursery the previous year and had not worked with the visiting pianist. A drumming group from Zimbabwe had once visited her at Morningside and another year, her class had joined a samba project at a local arts venue. However, Patricia felt she had very little experience of working in partnership where music was concerned. Of any visiting music providers she said:

> Patricia: It’s always been a one-off. I’ve never had any projects like this. It’s always been a one off group. It’s nice to have one off specialists coming in but then that’s it and it’s always up to the teacher to carry that on.

In fact, beyond music, Patricia told me that her experience of partnership in the schools in which she had worked was also very limited. Any contact with visiting external artists or providers was brief or even non-existent:

> Patricia: We don't really get a chance to work in partnership with other professionals. We just have contact and have letters and children are withdrawn and shows are put on and we have a one-off storyteller or something like that.

This summary demonstrates that while the political, educational rhetoric of the time promoted partnerships with visiting artists, the withdrawal of children from their classrooms for one off shows and events left Patricia feeling disconnected from the visiting professionals. These events may well have been highlights of children's school experiences but they were brief, nor were they always meaningful to busy teachers.

5.4.4 The development of our relationship through classroom musicking

If we consider the three teachers taking part in the partnership study as being on a spectrum of musical confidence and music teaching skill, when compared to Leanne and Ruth, Patricia would be at the mid-point of the spectrum. She was more experienced and confident in relation to music teaching than Leanne, but less so than Ruth. Although always very pleasant and welcoming, Patricia, unlike her colleagues, was less amenable to risk taking in terms of altering her current teaching practices and trying new ways of teaching music.

Despite this, when the study commenced Patricia recalled feeling optimistic about her involvement:

> Patricia: I was looking forward to it because in my last job [the children's centre] I had more of an insight into working in partnership with other professionals and I really enjoyed that. In schools teachers are very sort of insular, people come and do stuff for us, you know, other people, other professionals. A speech therapist will come in and take a child out, a music specialist will lead something and I was really looking forward to actually working in partnership and that's what struck me. It's more interesting for me to work with people who are working in schools and are teaching children but they have a different specialism. So I was really looking forward to that.

When asked which model of working she preferred, either, 'people coming in to do stuff' for her, or working together as we were doing in the field study she replied:

> Patricia: Oh well this, most definitely, because of the relationship and the rapport and I think anticipation is such a big thing with children. But when the children are

> anticipating somebody to come in and sing it just becomes part of their world day-to-day and weekly because it's Julia and Kirsten that are coming in to sing. It's not just about the singing it's about the people. So yes, definitely, definitely I think it's the anticipation part of it and the progression as well and *we* look forward to seeing you.

This response indicates that Patricia herself felt that we had a rapport and that our relationship amounted to a successful partnership. This is significant in that I often took Patricia's flustered demeanour, body language and sporadic attendance at the ukulele group sessions to mean that she was preoccupied with her work and therefore, less committed to the study and the pursuit of partnership with me than her colleagues. However, I never asked her direct questions about this until the interview, during which I discovered that her view of our partnership was quite different from the unsubstantiated assumptions I had made by interpreting her behaviour. This indicates the importance of continuous dialogue within a successful partnership.

My interest piqued during the interview, I asked Patricia if she felt that we had worked in partnership together and if so, how:

> Patricia: Yes. I do. I mean you know, showing us how to play the ukulele and when we're singing on the carpet and then you'll say: 'Would you like to pick [a child's idea or song] now?' It's very similar to working within the classroom with Louise or Leanne [in-school colleagues]. It's very sort of natural.

Patricia compares working with me and with Kirsten to working with any of her peers among the school staff. This suggests that by this point, she saw us not as visitors to her classroom, but as part of the school community. The scene she describes in the above quote depicts the 'Team-Teaching' relationship, or the mid-point of partnership on Draves's continuum (see Fig. 2) When asked to describe our relationship, Patricia replied:

> Patricia: It sounds clichéd, but it is harmonious isn't it? Natural. Accepting of our children. It's sort of fluid you know, you come in and we sort of go with the flow.
>
> J: And what was it that made it feel like that for you?
>
> P: Knowing that I could actually say to you: 'Oh we're doing instruction writing. Can we do that?'. The way that you manage the children through song, it's not sort of…it's very relaxed, it's very enjoyable and very *accepting* of the children. When our children come into school, they have problems speaking in sentences and one of the difficult balances that we have to face is we *have* to encourage our children to speak, but they don't always have the social skills about interruptions and things like

> that and sometimes when we get visitors in school, it's sort of, it can be, you know if we get supply teachers: 'Ooh they were a little bit chatty, they were interrupting' but we've got to strike that balance of, you know, this is where they're from and we're trying to get some of those children to speak in sentences.
>
> Julia: And when did you start to feel that we were partners?
>
> Patricia: It was round about when I said: 'Ooh can we do sequences?' You know, the milkshakes? Maybe before that.

For Patricia, as with Ruth, a salient feature of our relationship that made it feel like partnership was having her ideas and suggestions heard. She felt able to ask me, or Kirsten for songs on a specific topic and to have agency over the content of musicking activity, in order to ensure that the musicking matched her needs and the needs of the children.

As indicated above, the ways in which we influenced one another within our work meant that our relationship bore aspects of Draves's 'Collaborative partnership' in so much as Patricia often drove the content of musicking sessions. However, for Patricia, the partnership was not fully established until the end of the second stage, almost four months in to the study, much later than Ruth who identified first feeling like a partner within a few weeks and Leanne who relaxed into working with me by the end of the first four weeks. This slower emergence of partnership identified by Patricia corresponds with my feeling that the partnership here was not as easily established. Nonetheless, as we can see from Patricia's reflections above, it was eventually achieved and found to be successful.

5.4.5 Impact of the study on Patricia's classroom music teaching

When asked if her participation in the study had affected her music teaching Patricia reflected:

> Patricia: I don't think that, well I know, that I didn't think as much about pitch as I do now since working with you [...] I do try and make an effort to *sing*. I feel like I can hear my own voice a bit better. I don't know what the notes are but I feel as if I try and make an effort when I'm singing with the children to try and be a little bit more tuneful and that I don't really need to know the names and labels of it. I just need to know that when I'm singing with them I need to be an example. I feel as if I can model a bit better now.

In order to ascertain how often Patricia instigated musicking when we were not present I asked her if, and how often, she and her class made music beyond our shared Tuesday afternoons, to which she replied:

> Patricia: Yes. We do. I do try. It's always never enough. Do you know what I mean? The *children*, you know, little Tommy, who's, I mean he hasn't got special needs but he is low ability, but he is very musical. He's sort of DJ on a Wednesday afternoon, they get the planks out and they make a little DJ thing and on a Friday we have a glitter ball whizzing round and that's our music day. And last week I said to him, because he plays the *Lazy Town* song, you know? [makes head banging and lasso gesture]: 'Oh Tommy, could you put some swing on?' and he *found some*! He said: 'Do you want *In the Night Garden*?' so he'd remembered! And I said: 'Oh that's lovely because you know, that *Lazy Town*'s good and I know children like it but I'm old and it's a bit too loud for me'.
>
> Julia: And when the children request it, are you able to facilitate their song requests?
>
> Patricia: Most of the time because if I get stuck on the words the children do it.

Patricia's descriptions here demonstrate that the amount of musicking taking place within her classroom had increased from the weekly music session that she led prior to the study. Interestingly, this increased musicking as described in the quote above was not all teacher led, as had been the case before the study. During and following the study, Patricia had established a physical space in her classroom, complete with glitter ball, ipod, speakers and pretend DJ 'decks' to support the children to play and listen to music independently. This suggests that Patricia was more comfortable following the study activity to allow the children to music freely and without adult oversight. The scene she describes above is in stark contrast to the teacher instructed, package based, formal music lessons that Patricia provided prior to the study. She indicated that she could rely on the children's knowledge of song words and the range of repertoire should she forget, pointing towards a repositioning in Patricia's practice and view of the children as equal agents in terms of classroom musicking.

Other effects of the study on the children according to Patricia included positive effects on individual children's literacy, writing and creative thinking skills. She explained:

> Patricia: I must say as well, Joey, who's really, really struggled, ***really*** struggled with his writing this year, of course we did the 'Banana Milkshake' song in assembly and the children sang the song on the stage and at the same time other children were

> making it and chopping it and the children were singing it away and Joey, I've actually put it in his report, he said the other week: 'Can we make *strawberry* milkshake?' From that song we did instruction writing, we made milkshakes and at the end of it, this little boy [Joey] actually wrote a song!

Patricia also felt singing to be of benefit in supporting her children's ability in learning to read:

> Patricia: If we're trying to encourage them to read, if they can *sing* it, they'll remember it.

5.4.6 Impact of the study on Patricia's musical self-perception

The responses Patricia gave during interview in relation to the increase of musicking in the daily life of her classroom and to her own ability to 'hear' her own voice and to 'model a bit better' as a result of the study, point towards an increase in her confidence in her own music teaching skill and her own capacity to consider herself 'musical'. However, when asked if she would now consider herself a musician, her reply was problematic and conflicted, mirroring the reluctance of her two colleagues to answer the same question affirmatively. Like Leanne and Ruth, she cited not being 'trained as a musician' and not playing an instrument as barriers to being able to conceive of herself as a musician. Her exact response to this question will be discussed in detail in the following chapter.

I pointed out to Patricia that she had now begun to learn the ukulele, and that this, along with her new-found awareness of her own singing voice, might provide an opportunity for her to reposition her own perception of herself as musical, to which she replied:

> Patricia: Yes! Because of something that you said yourself, about that we don't think of the human voice as a musical instrument, which of course it is. It is! It is a lovely thought… Of course, yes, I did start to play the ukulele and there's been all sorts of disruptions and other commitments but I still pick it up and I do intend to pick it up. Also again linking it back to class teaching because I was learning a new instrument I would say when the children are doing their guided reading with me I'll say: 'Remember when I'm learning to play the ukulele the first time when I'm strumming I'm slow but then when I do it again I get faster and it's the same with your reading putting your sounds together' so I do draw it back to music and I model how as an adult *I'm* learning.'

Here Patricia brings to the fore once again her interest in singing, rhythm and rhyme to develop children's literacy and speech. After working with me for six months,

Patricia felt confident and able to use music to support other aspects of the children's learning. In that sense, she felt secure in her own musicality and music teaching ability. Where Patricia did not feel so confident was in terms of her technical and theoretical knowledge of music and it was this area of her learning that she wanted to extend and deepen. Therefore, Patricia's view of what it might be possible for her to learn in music and her desire to broaden her knowledge and skills went far beyond those of her two colleagues. This is interesting given my previous assumptions about which relationships with the three teachers I felt had been most successful in terms of extending musical confidence and horizons.

5.5 Conclusions

Taken together, the narratives presented within the teacher case studies represent further evidence of the issues discussed in the literature review pertaining to predominantly low-levels of teacher confidence in primary school music education, to their perceptions of their own and the children's musicality, to socially constructed notions of musical talent, and to the problematic nature of achieving real partnership in the music classroom. Leanne, Ruth and Patricia's accounts also corroborate the widespread belief that to be considered a 'musician', one must play an instrument. As such, these themes, identified in Chapter Two, are clearly pertinent to the three teachers' experiences of the field study and in terms of their ensuing relationship with me.

Furthermore, the complexity of the concepts of being 'musical', and becoming a 'musician' is threaded throughout the stories contained in this chapter and in earlier chapters. This gives rise to a number of new themes for examination and discussion in the next chapter, all of them crucial to my understanding of an alternative to the notion of partnership. I now outline these four new themes in preparation for what follows in Chapter Six.

Roles and titles

The recurrent preoccupation with professional title and resultant designated role that appears in the teachers' interview responses, the earlier account of Sally of the Music

Potential study, and even my own account of being interviewed in that earlier study, suggests further investigation into the theme of ***'roles and titles'*** is warranted.

Relationships

According to Christopher Small's theory of musicking and 'ideal' relationships (Small, 1998b) the facilitation and realization of the relationships between the teachers and musicians through musicking is clearly significant here. A discussion of this aspect of Small's enquiry into the nature of musical meaning, and also of other facets of his overall thesis that I will argue as profoundly relevant to my own analysis, follows in the next chapter, followed by further interrogation of the theme of ***'relationships'*** within the field study.

Teachers as artists

The third theme delineated from the teacher case studies and from my own autobiographical accounts contained in earlier chapters, is the concept of ***'teachers as artists'***. Interwoven with issues of agency, freedom and the ability to create knowledge and art for oneself, I will reapply Small's concept of 'children as artists' ([1977] 1996) to teachers with reference to current predominant policy and practice in primary music education.

Dialogic interaction

Finally, using the narratives of the teachers, aspects of Sally's Music Potential narrative and my own account, I will explore the concept of ***'dialogic interaction'***. I will examine the dialogic features of my relationships with the teachers within the study and finally, discuss the potential for dialogic interaction in practice to be utilized as foundation for a model of egalitarian, dialogic relationship.

Chapter Six: Discussion of Findings

6.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to draw together and further explore the evidence presented in the previous two chapters, informed by the literature already examined, and by additional relevant texts. Through close examination of my own account and the accounts of the teachers, I will foreground recurrent or prominent themes arising from the data, some of which will affirm the salience of those issues introduced in the review of literature contained within Chapter Two and some of which have emerged during this study and which may represent further issues within the field of primary music education.

Encompassed within the research questions (Chapter One, 1.3) are the following key themes that informed the selection of literature reviewed in Chapter Two:

a) The nature of musical ability and socially constructed notions of talent
b) Teachers' perceptions of musical ability - their own and children's
c) The musical confidence of primary school teachers
d) The nature of partnership

Through my field study I set out to interrogate the nature of the ubiquitous primary school teacher/musician 'partnership'. As the pilot study suggested, partnerships in this context are often inadequate. I sought to identify *another* kind of partnership, one that would disrupt accepted notions of who 'can' and 'should' teach music and that would enable teachers to become musicians in their own classrooms. Now, at this point, having conducted in-depth study over time in terms of carrying the field study and analysing the extensive interview and observation data, I have identified four core themes. These are:

Roles and titles
Relationships
Teachers as artists
Dialogic interaction

In addition, there are subsidiary themes which will be identified and incorporated into the discussions of these major themes that follow in Part Two. The basis of my analysis will be built upon the work of Christopher Small, and thus it is now, in Part One of this discussion, that I present an exploration of Small's collective works in order to construct a multifaceted theoretical lens for application to my later discussion of all that unfolded between the three teachers and myself during the study. I intend to draw upon Small's theory of what it means to 'music', using that theory to underpin an overall concept of partnership, which I term 'dialogic relationship', to develop a proposed framework or model of reciprocal working between teachers and musicians in answer to the underlying problem of low levels of teacher confidence in music currently affecting the quality and consistency of music education at primary school level in the United Kingdom.

6.2 Part One - Theoretical and philosophical underpinning of my study: Smallian perspectives reconsidered

Informed and inspired by the work of Christopher Small, the overall purpose of my own field study was to challenge the status quo of a system of music education that remains heavily informed by and situated within the Western classical tradition (Green, 2008, Finney, 2011, Spruce and Matthews, 2012, Wright, 2010).

The main body of Small's work consists of his three books, *Music, Society, Education* ([1977] 1996), *Music of the Common Tongue* ([1987] 1998a) and *Musicking* (1998b), along with numerous chapters and articles in music education volumes, journals and online publications. The trajectory of Small's philosophies contained in these works, namely, those of: conceiving children as artists rather than as consumers; universal musicality; the meanings of music itself; and the culminating theory that gained him the most notoriety, his theory of 'musicking,' is shown in the diagram in Figure 4.

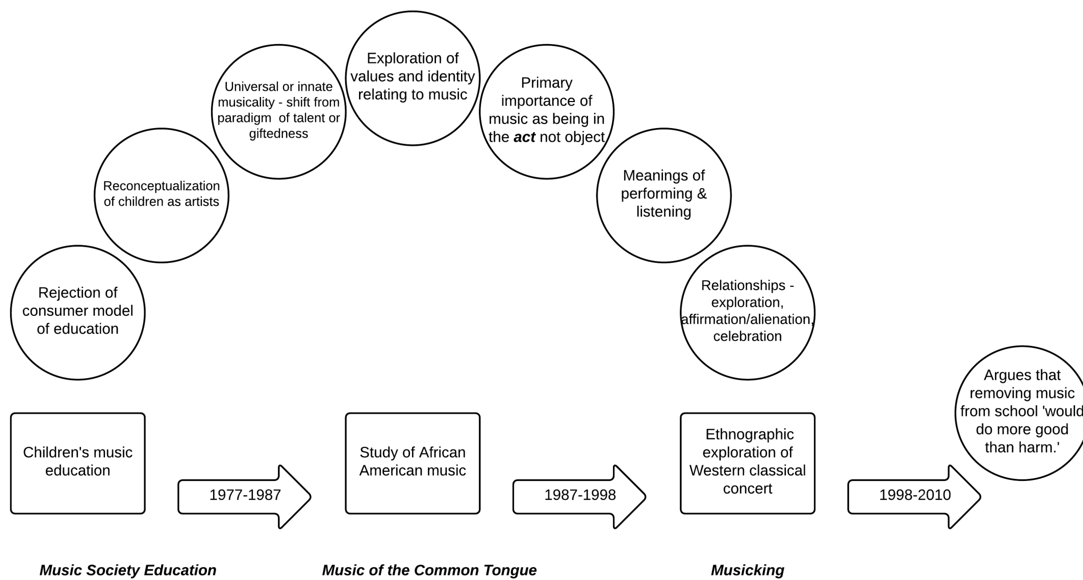

Figure 4: 'Trajectory of main points of Smallian thought 1977-2010'.

A search of relevant literature shows that the use of all three of Small's books, each seminal in its own way, and of the theories expounded within them taken together, is unusual. In fact, *Music of the Common Tongue* appears to be often overlooked in favour of both its predecessor and its antecedent. Small himself identified this second text as his own personal favourite of his 'three children'[65], but the message of the work was misrepresented by editorial errors in its first publication. In the preface to the second edition, published in 1998, Small himself wrote of the first edition:

> It went out into the world in 1987 defaced by any number of editorial and typographical slip ups, with whatever virtues it possessed concealed by unsuitable cover designs and without the slightest ripple of publicity to help it on its way. Yet it has survived. (Small 1998a: ix)

This may go some way towards explaining why this second book is often overlooked in scholarly discussion of his theories, 'defaced' by errors that confused its message, unpublicised and later eclipsed by *Musicking* with which it competed on release of both in 1998, and with which it shares commonalities in terms of theoretical propositions. In fact, the 'bones' of Small's concept of musicking as essentially a human act as opposed to a reified canon of works, an object or 'thing', are plain

[65] Stated in the opening of the preface to the 1998, second edition.

within *Music of the Common Tongue*. Although Small's primary topic here is the genesis and influence of African-American music, there are numerous allusions to music as an *act* and indeed his first use of the definition of that act as 'musicking'. He explains:

> My first assumption is that *music is not primarily a thing or a collection of things, but an activity in which we engage*. One might say that it is not properly a noun at all, but a verb; the absence of a verb in English, as in most European languages, to express this activity is significant, and may point towards the European attitude to the making of music […] I intend using, in this book, from now on, the verb 'to *music*' (after all, one can say 'to dance' so why not?) and especially its present participle, '*musicking*', to express the act of taking part in a musical performance. (Small, 1998a: 50)

Thus we see already Small's pivotal reconceptualization of the nature of music as essentially an activity, and moreover one that is centred around musical *performance*, a conception far more widely associated with its later presentation within *Musicking* (1998b). This idea of music as act over object permeates Small's work. He describes his explication of the concept in *Music of the Common Tongue* as a 'necessary ground-clearing operation' (1998a: 78) and provides early justification for the repeated reiterations of the concept contained in much of his later work by stating:

> It is, then, the act of musicking that is central to the whole art of music the world over. In most of the world's musical cultures this is taken for granted without even having to think about it; it is only the dominance of the classical tradition in the west that obliges us to state it so bluntly. (Small, 1998a: 51)

However, the neologism of 'musicking' in scholarly literature is often discussed without recognition of the fact that it does not denote inherent virtue – that musicking is not by any means a necessarily 'good thing' to do. Also unclear in much discussion of Small's ideas is what is understood by his use of the term 'musical performance'. By bringing all three of Small's books into overall consideration in this chapter, I will attempt to address complexities and common misunderstandings in relation to his theories.

My work thus offers an alternative view of the trajectory of Smallian thought, which in turn informs my proposition that teachers can and should be conceived of as 'artists' and my subsequent theoretical model, based on that proposition, for a dialogic teacher/musician partner relationship in the primary music classroom.

While the theory of musicking – Small's idea that 'The fundamental nature and meaning of music lie not in objects, not in musical works at all, but in action, in what people do.' (Small 1998b: 8) – constitutes a main lens for approaching the findings of this study, of additional key relevance to my study are two chapters contained within Small's first, seminal volume, *Music, Society, Education* which first appeared in 1977 (Small, [1977] 1996),[66] in which he calls for a reconceptualization of the purpose of education more generally, and of music education within it. His vision for a different approach to education is one in which children's agency, creativity and their stature as 'artists' able to generate knowledge for themselves should be privileged instead of packaged 'one size fits all' models of learning in which children are considered 'consumers' and eventual 'products' of their education (Small, 1996: 182).

This vision is situated within the paradigm of a child-centred education, and remains relevant, yet elusive forty years later. During the twentieth century in the United Kingdom and beyond, presiding educational approaches have moved towards, and then away from, placing the child at the centre of his or her own education, considering the impact of education on the individual and giving credence to the child's ideas and creativity, along with their ability to be an informed agent of their own learning. John Finney (2011) documents this tradition in great detail, depicting the growth of the child-centred movement beginning in the period following the Second World War and its rise and fall in each successive decade, influenced by changing governments and their policies.

Resonating with Small and demonstrating the continued relevance of his views in the present day, Finney points out that the monopolistic control governments have on education prohibit true choice and agency on the part of young learners:

> Beyond justifying the study as offering a fresh perspective on music education of the recent past, there is a pressing case for understanding this in the context of the present, where the place of the child in making a music education is framed by a contradictory rhetoric. No longer is a 'child-centred' education promoted. The idea is

[66] I note my use of the second edition of *Music, Society, Education* here to make distinct that the issues discussed within it remain current areas of debate within music education and education more widely, demonstrating the persistence of a particular educational rhetoric and policy over the course of forty years.

> both *passé* and politically inept. Instead there is talk of an education that is 'learner-centred', and where there is 'personalized learning' addressing the needs of the child as a consumer and producer of education […] Children are expected to be not just enterprising but to become members of an enterprise culture, and to ensure that they are not only employable but marketable too. Neo-liberalism assumes that people are driven by private interest, that they are best served by market competition, that seeking equality of opportunity is misguided, doomed to failure and that greed is a source of social progress. (Finney 2011: 2)

As discussed in Chapter Two, my work has also been heavily influenced by Small's writings on the concept of universal musicality (Small, 1998a, 2006)[67] and its attendant relevance to the equality of opportunity that Finney mentions. Small acknowledges John Blacking's seminal work (Blacking, 1976) in 'pioneering' the argument for universal musicality, which in turn offers an opposing view to the socially constructed conceptions of talent that influence our notions of who is 'musical' or not, as the case may be. The notion of musicality as *universally* innate is woven throughout *Music of the Common Tongue*, concerned as it is with the cultural significance of historically marginalised Black musics. Small states:

> As a musician and teacher of entirely European descent, trained in the most academic tradition of European music, I have nonetheless believed ever since I started giving thought to such matters that the gift of music was for everyone, as natural and universal a part of human endowment as the gift of speech, and I have sought for ways to make this belief an actuality. (Small, 1998a: 1-2)

I myself have found, when discussing the concept of universal musicality with others, a certain resistance (perhaps most notably among those who would class themselves as 'musicians' and music students) to the idea. Small answers the question of how to account for the skill and efforts of those who excel musically within a paradigm that affords musical ability to all by explaining:

> The assumption of universal ability to create does not have to mean that everyone is equally gifted, either in speech or in music; we accept without difficulty the idea that some are more gifted with words than others so we have poets, orators, writers and bards, and in the same way it is not difficult to imagine that some are more gifted musically than others while still acknowledging a bedrock creativity in all. (1998a: 53-4)

This idea of 'bedrock creativity' is key to both my research and my pedagogical approach. However, as will be discussed presently, while the teachers participating in

[67] In Chapter Two (2.2.2) I describe the concept of universal, or human musicality as embraced by Small (1998a, 2006), Blacking (1976) and Paynter (2002).

the study were able to recognise this universal ability to create within the children they taught, they were less able or willing to ascribe it to themselves. For this issue Small also provides an explanation:

> For this assumption of universal musicality is at odds with an unspoken assumption that is fostered in schools and other formal education institutions, and encouraged by the official arbiters of the arts in our society, of a kind of pyramid of musical ability. (1998a: 54)

Furthermore, Small invites his reader 'to bring the evidence of his or her own experience' in relation to his critique of 'commonly held assumptions concerning the nature and function of the art of music', such as the pyramid of musical ability, proposing that this 'can in itself be a first step towards reclaiming the musicality and the power of musical judgement that belong to all of us' (idem: 49).

These citations illuminate the relevance of Small's work to my study, that sought to disrupt the power of dominant socio-cultural ideologies and practices that replicate the exclusive ideas of 'talent' and 'giftedness' that I suggest provide the foundation for the systemic issue of low teacher musical confidence within primary schools.

I proceed now to explore each of these facets of Small's work in greater detail before turning to examine the central themes arising from my research study in conjunction with these Smallian ideas that are so central to the impetus and design of my study.

6.2.1 Children as consumers versus children as artists

In his chapter *Children as Consumers* (1996: 182), Small critiques the contemporary education system as one in which children are expected to consume knowledge that has been portioned up for them in standardised, sequential courses or 'packages', the content of each most commonly known as the 'syllabus' or, as is the case presently in the United Kingdom, the National Curriculum. Evoking the arguments discussed earlier in this thesis against Piagetian, sequential modes of learning[68], Small describes the generic educational offering in highly critical terms, saying:

> One does not need to go to school to become educated, and conversely, going to school does not necessarily give one an education, as thousands of frustrated pupils

[68] See Chapter Two, 2.2.2.

> and ex-pupils can testify […] not only is schooling essentially a commodity which a community buys on behalf of its younger members (and even the richest societies are beginning to find the price higher than they can afford), but also the purveyors of the commodity find themselves in a monopoly situation; its recipients have no choice but to accept what is offered. Just as any other monopolistic purveyor will try to disguise the lack of real choice of product by offering a number of different-sounding brand names, so the western system of schooling offers different brands which are in essentials the same product […] but what is offered is always the same: packaged knowledge which the pupil is expected to consume but which it is not expected he can create for himself. Each package is called a course, and each has a catalogue of contents known as the syllabus, and, like parcels labelled 'Not to be opened till Christmas day', the packages may be opened only in classrooms in the presence of a teacher, and then only when the pupil has first shown that he has consumed the contents of other, simpler, packages. (Small, 1996: 182).

Examining epistemological questions as to who controls and decides *what* children and young people should learn and know, and on what basis, Small points out that within this homogenised system, it is not assumed that children and young people could possibly be the agents or creators of knowledge for themselves. He critiques the immersion of music education in the traditions of Western classical music, a white, Western, patriarchal musical genre, along with the prioritisation of learning *about* music, about deceased classical composers (themselves white, Western, patriarchal figures), the authors of 'great' works within a revered canon, as opposed to learning which engages young learners[69] in actively *doing* and *making* music that has relevance to their own lives and experiences. Small proposes that such an approach, located alongside contemporary culture, would enable children and young people to act as arbiters of both choice and taste as well as composers or 'artists', constructors of art and knowledge, in their own right. He points out that Western classical music is a known and understood quantity and is, therefore, convenient for the purposes of assessment and standardisation:

> For if we are required to *know* about music before we can *do* it, and if knowledge is a matter of certainties that exist outside us, then we are in the nature of things confined to learning about that music upon which it is possible to speak with anything like certainty: the music of the past, upon which the verdict of posterity has been delivered, and which can hold no surprises […] It is only the procedures and

[69] I consciously use the terms 'young learners', 'children' and 'young people' here in place of 'pupil' or 'student' on the advice of Finney (2011) who points out that the three former terms suggest a person, 'beyond the school and potentially free from tutelage', while the latter two fix them firmly within the school with no consideration given beyond that scenario. I affix 'young' before 'learner' as Finney points out that in contemporary educational vernacular this label ('learner') can mean a person either young, or adult (Finney, 2011: Preface viii). This is of particular salience to my study in which tacit features of hierarchy in education are examined.

> conventions of the past that can be transmitted with any degree of objectivity and any possibility of reliable evaluation. Thus it is that educational conventions and current musical tastes work to reinforce each other, keeping pupils effectively isolated from the world of music. (Small, 1996: 203)

He goes on to propose that this 'isolation of pupils from the world of music' and the reification of 'conventions of the past' work to reinforce the power and social status of dominant classes. Rather than enabling ambition, self-motivated or agentic learning and social mobility, the very design of such an education system serves to keep people in their 'place':

> The relation of this organization to society is clear: it exists to serve society's needs (one could go further and say the interests of the dominant sectors of society, since it obviously serves large sections, even perhaps the majority, extremely ill) and is therefore kept on a very tight rein. (Small, 1996: 206)

Educational rhetoric might have us believe that young people's interests and choice are paramount, that they can be agents and producers of knowledge in their own right, that education seeks to provide equal opportunities for disadvantaged and affluent children alike. However, Small offers another view, namely that recurrent educational policies and practices that privilege consumption of *packaged* knowledge over the creative abilities to *create* knowledge for one's self, serve to make learners and teachers akin to 'workers on the production line' (idem: 188) and therefore, more malleable to 'fit' within the dominant ideologies and structures of contemporaneous society.

The reverence and supremacy given to Western classical music within the education system that Small first described in 1977 is still prevalent in the present day educational context. In his foreword to the 1996 edition of *Music, Society, Education* Walser makes the case for the reprint of this (then) twenty-year old book by stating, 'Small's views are still news' (Walser in Small, 1996: ix). Another twenty years has passed since then and we find that these issues remain pertinent. Laurence (2010) corroborates this in her own comment on the ability and power of those who decide on curriculum and educational policy to affect social control:

> In the music classroom as in any other, the state exercises though its curriculum its vision of what constitutes the 'good' citizen, in this case with a concomitant and persistent (if often camouflaged) concept of 'good' music, and the ubiquitous mantra

> that music is 'good for you'/ 'makes friends'/ 'makes you a better person' (we may ask, if only rhetorically, what *kind* of music do they mean?) […] Those who control the curriculum decide *for* children the content, manner and assessment of their musical learning in school, and children are thus compelled to dance to a pipe wielded by people they will never meet, who do not know them, and, for many children, by people who arguably could scarcely imagine, let alone empathize with, the circumstances of their lives, their feelings and what might be meaningful to them. (Laurence, 2010: 246)

The curriculum continues to reflect a particular view on *what* music has value within education, notwithstanding the expansion in recent years of the range of musics introduced into the secondary curriculum, or the changes in pedagogical approach that have mainly been driven by the work of Lucy Green (1988) and the subsequent Musical Futures programme[70].

However, in primary music education, the sequential 'packages' described by Small and informed by Western classical music are still at the forefront of the statutory curriculum. Children at Key Stage One are expected to: 'listen with concentration and understanding to live and recorded music', 'use their voices expressively' to sing songs or speak chants before moving on to play tuned and un-tuned percussion 'musically' and 'experimenting' with sounds using 'the inter-related dimensions of music' (Department for Education Music Curriculum online summary, 2013[71]). The 'inter-related dimensions of music' are noted as tempo, timbre, duration, pitch, dynamics and notation. The document is clear that you need to have learned and understand clearly what those terms mean and how they interrelate before you are able to tackle teaching and/or learning them. Once this selection of musical knowledge has been digested, pupils at Key Stage Two *are* expected to perform and compose but these creative acts are only possible alongside or after obtaining an understanding of musical staff and 'other' notations. Children at Key Stage Two are also expected to 'develop an understanding of the history of music'. No prizes for guessing to whose history and whose music this refers − the earlier references to the

[70] Based on the work of Green (2002) Musical Futures was set up by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation in 2003 to investigate ways in which secondary school music in the UK might adopt approaches to learning used by popular musicians and community practitioners. See Musical Futures website, https://www.musicalfutures.org.

[71] Following a review of the National Curriculum for Key Stages 1-4 in 2014, these key attainment targets remain unchanged.

‘works of great composers and musicians’ and ‘the best of the musical canon’ makes the answer all too clear.

To summarise, children at primary school age are expected by policy makers to *understand* music (that is, primarily with reference to the values of Western classical music) in order to be able to *do* music. Any lack of comprehension might be taken by either child or teacher as an indication of a lack of musicality or ‘talent’ (a term also prominent in the online curriculum summary described above). This explains the preoccupation and belief among teachers within my study, within the earlier Music Potential study on which it is based, and as described in the work of Hennessey (2000), McCullough (2005), Holden and Button (2006), Welch and Henley, 2014) of the necessity of being able to play an instrument, and/or understand music theory, notation and technical musical terms in order to be able to teach music effectively. These teachers themselves are products of this same educational approach to music learning in which learning by doing and experience is deemed as of secondary importance to the acquisition of the technical knowledge and historical comprehension that can be easily assessed. As Small put it:

> The schoolboy definition of music as ‘Music is what musicians do’ sums up the present situation in all but a minority of schools. (Small, 1996: 214)

Small proposes that the ideas that make education conformist pervade our culture and therefore our attitudes and actions, whatever our own, personal ideology or beliefs:

> I must make it clear that I in no way seek to blame teachers of music for this current state of affairs; the situation is one which concerns our entire culture, its concept of knowledge, its attitudes towards art and the consequent nature of its system of education. Teachers, no matter how well-meaning, are as much at the mercy of these assumptions as are their charges – and their employers – and it is not possible to make any radical changes in one element of the culture without making changes in the others. (Small, 1996: 204)

In answer to these persistent trends in educational policy, Small’s vision for a more inclusive and enabling approach to education and music education is laid out in his chapter *Children as Artists* (Small, 1996: 206). Here, Small reverses the focus on education in general terms, adopted in his previous chapter, to examine music education. He offers suggestions as to how society’s approach to music education

might be altered in order to provide a more effective model for education in broader terms:

> We can turn the relative unimportance of the arts in our society and in education, and the fact that we therefore enjoy wider tolerance in innovation, to our advantage, to introduce a joyful learning experience for the pupils *in the present*, thus beginning the subversion of the whole process of schooling, revealing to the pupils the quite simple fact that learning is not a preparation for life but a basic experience of life itself, and giving them confidence in their ability to learn whatever it is they wish to learn. (Small, 1996: 211)

Small proposes that rigid systems of social and educational control might be radically challenged and even perhaps, overthrown by a rethinking of music education, a subject he suggests is seen by many as innocuous and unlikely to effect social change:

> By allowing our pupils to make music in the present tense, we can introduce into the school, through this largely unregarded (because for most people it is not directly related to the needs of earning a living) area of activity, a concept that can overthrow the future-oriented, instrumental ethos of the school, and the preoccupation with producing a product. For if we acknowledge the creative power of children in art, we must also recognize their ability to create other forms of knowledge (since art is a form of knowledge, but knowledge that is directly experienced rather than absorbed in the abstract), and to ask their own questions. (Small, 1996: 216)

6.2.2 An autobiographical narrative view

I pause here in order to present a short autobiographical account that resonates with Small's critique of sequential music curricula and their adherence to Western classical technical traditions. The following narrative illuminates the points made by Small in relation to the long-term personal damage that the way in which music has been and continues to be taught in school can have on young people's musical identity and aspirations and provides insight into a crucial point of shared experience that I had in relation to the teachers within the field study.

In my own experience the leap from primary school music learning into secondary was baffling and discouraging. In my first music lesson at secondary school, it became clear that the teacher assumed that we could all read notation. This may have been the case for my peers from other primary schools that fed into my new school. However, notation had never been introduced to me at primary school at all. We simply listened to BBC music lesson tapes and tapped along on small percussion when instructed to do so. I was devastated to discover that my former favourite

subject would become a dreaded weekly experience in which I would struggle to keep my lack of knowledge from becoming known to others. I was supposed to be 'good' at music and so I felt ashamed that I didn't understand the theoretical aspects of the lesson. I even wondered for years if I had inadvertently 'missed' instruction on notation at primary school through absence or by not paying attention. In hindsight I recognise that the majority of my teachers at primary school did not feel confident teaching music, presumably they themselves did not read notation and therefore, did not teach it. I had not missed the package entitled 'notation', it was never offered to me just as it was probably not offered to my primary class teachers. That I had 'missed out' on that stage of learning was by no means irrevocable, and those aspects of technical musical knowledge could have easily been learned at any point had the system allowed or been flexible enough. However, I was meant to be opening the 'next' package by that point, with regard to notation and everything that came after it, I was on my own to muddle along as best I could.

I slowly learned to read and understand the notes over time, but singing the correct intervals and rhythms remained a continuous struggle. As I progressed to become an accomplished singer and performer, my sight singing always let me down. I managed to pass the audition to the elite National Youth Choir on the proviso that I 'worked on my sight-reading'. As described in the story that opened this thesis, I circumvented that instruction by listening intently to my fellow singers whenever I was unsure of the notes (my aural skills improving tremendously as a result). I passed GCSE and A-Level Music on the strength of my performance skills (making myself physically ill with worry on the day of my A-Level Music Aural Discrimination exam, at which I failed miserably). I even won a choral scholarship to Oxford University by performing well enough to cancel out the dire sight-reading test that I claimed I ruined 'because of nerves'. Had I not been a keen singer with parents who encouraged me to keep singing in and out of school, the non-active elements of my music education, the learning *about* rather than doing, may well have discouraged me for life as they undoubtedly have discouraged countless others, not least the teachers participating in my study.

It never occurred to me until I was well into adulthood and confident in my abilities as a music educator and performer that I might teach *myself* to improve my sight

reading, my knowledge of theory and notation skills. So inculcated was I in the system of which I was a product, that to do so, without (as Small also points out) a teacher present as I 'opened' this package of knowledge, had heretofore been unthinkable. It had never occurred to me as a young person that I could be the agent of my own musical learning and that this might be enjoyable. As Small suggests, I was unable to see learning as 'a basic experience of life itself' (Small, 1996: 211). What I have experienced since is a sense of nostalgia or loss for that wasted time and the opportunities I might have been afforded as a singer had I not had this negative experience in my youth.

This personal musical 'history' resonates with the references Pauline, Leanne and Ruth made in interview about feeling they had 'missed out' on music and the opportunity to be 'musical' at school age, initially discussed in Chapter Five. It also demonstrates that despite my 'expertise' as visiting musician, there existed between myself and the teachers in the study, shared points of discomfort, fear and loss relating to musical knowledge and learning. It was this shared experience and understanding of the potentially deep and uncomfortable personal feeling about one's own musical abilities, or lack thereof, that enabled me to take an empathic approach to the research already discussed in Chapter Three and which I will explore more fully in due course later within this chapter.

Following on from this insight into my relationship with the three teachers in relation to our shared musical 'history' and experiences of school music, I turn now to discuss Small's proposition that the act of musicking enables the exploration of relationships between participants and – (crucially) depending upon the nature of those relationships – can *potentially* resituate those 'isolated from the world of music' (Small, 1996: 203) as artists in their own right. I begin, however, with a brief restatement of Small's theory.

6.2.3 Musicking

In *Musicking* (1998b), Small further extends his critique of music as a potential force for domination beyond the classroom and into the concert-hall, having developed the theory in the context of an ethnographic account of a Western classical concert. He repeats his call for musical process to override musical product, for a rethinking of

what music is and its purpose within human life, encapsulating this in his recurring claim that music is not a thing – indeed, as he puts it several times, that there is ‘no such *thing* as music’ (Small, 1998b: 2, 2006: 1). Small invites us to depart from the privilege and reverence customarily given to composers, performers and the Western classical canon. He proposes instead that:

> To music is to take part, in any capacity, in a musical performance, whether by performing, listening, by rehearsing or practising, by providing material for performance (what is called composing), or by dancing. (Small, 1998b: 9)

Earlier, in *Music of the Common Tongue* he breaks down into three parts ‘what it is that a person taking part in a musical performance is actually doing’ (Small, 1998a: 74) claiming these three actions to be ‘interdependent and equal in importance’ despite enumeration of them which he confirms is ‘arbitrary’. He proposes:

1. He or she is exploring, affirming and celebrating a sense of identity;
2. He or she is taking part in an ideal society which the participants between them have brought into existence for the duration of the performance;
3. He or she is modelling, in the relationships between the sounds he or she is making, listening to or dancing to, the relationships of that ideal society. (Small, 1998a: 74)

The emphasis he places on the act of participation and on making music in the ‘present tense’, as opposed to passive learning *about* music, composers and conventions of the past, offers any individual, adult or child, an opportunity to realise themselves as active creators of both art and knowledge. Small has already told us:

> We are all, at least potentially artists, even if few have aspirations to making it a profession. (Small, 1996: 202)

As examined earlier, Small’s work highlights that a move away from the ‘domination’ of experts within music education towards a culture in which everyone is considered an artist or musician in their own right, might galvanise individual teachers and young learners to take control of their own musicking. This has particular relevance to my study in which the teachers’ gradual willingness to be agentic about the musical content of the study as it progressed, culminating in their consent to lead the final concert themselves[72], shows the potential of our classroom musicking to disrupt the

[72] See Chapter Five for accounts of the teachers’ progress and of the final concert.

'domination' of the traditional music expert. According to Small, once 'ingrained elitist attitudes' (2001: 341) have been challenged, individuals may then challenge and question the systems and doctrines that are applied by others to many aspects of their daily lives. He is uncompromising in this. Here I reiterate his comment cited previously:

> Music is too important to be left to the musicians, and in recognizing this fact we strike a blow at the experts' domination, not only of music but also of our very lives. If it is possible to control our own musical destiny, provide our own music rather than leaving it to someone else to provide, then perhaps some of the other outside expertise that controls our lives can be brought under control also.[73] (Small, 1996: 214)

6.2.4 Musicking, relationship, and 'ideal' relationships

In conjunction with his promotion of the idea of innate musicality, Small's notion of musicking as a human act gives precedence to *people* in relation to music over musical works and knowledge. And it is the attention Small gives to human *relationships* and the potential and in fact, the very *function*, of musicking to 'explore, affirm and celebrate' them (Small, 1998b: 183) that is of such pivotal relevance to my study. This relevance will shortly be further elucidated in the opening paragraphs of Part Two of this chapter.

Small asserts that the meaning of music lies in the responses and relationships of those participating in the music act. Experiences of musicking have both social and individual meanings for those taking part and these meanings can facilitate the development of relationships. Within the musicking, these relationships exist not only between the sounds created but also between those people participating together. Small makes this definitive statement about musicking and relationships:

> The act of musicking establishes in the place where it is happening a set of relationships, and it is in those relationships that the meaning of the act lies. They are to be found not only between those organized sounds which are conventionally thought of as being the stuff of musical meaning but also between the people who are

[73] This resonates with the point made by Janet Mills (1994) discussed in Chapter Two, that a resituating of musical agency from 'expert' to 'generalist teacher' could result in raised teacher musical 'self-esteem', which, in turn, cascading from teachers to children could eventually lead to a wider shift in cultural and educational attitudes towards what it means to be musical and who can teach music (Mills, 1994: 6)

> taking part, in whatever capacity, in the performance; and they mode, or stand as metaphor for, ideal relationships as the participants in the performance imagine them to be: relationships between person and person, between individual and society, between humanity and the natural world and even perhaps the supernatural world. (Small, 1998b: 13)

Small theorises that the participants of musicking can be *anyone* connected with the musical act, not just the performers, or creators of the music. Musicking, and the meanings and relationships it can engender, includes audience members, the piano mover, anyone present to witness the act. Through musicking and the exploration of 'ideal relationships', identities can be constructed, altered and affirmed and participants are enabled to try 'relationships on to see how they fit' (Small, 1998b: 63).

Additionally, as earlier cited, he suggests that through musicking and the relationships explored within it, participants are acting within an 'ideal society' (Small, 1998a: 74) which he later described in an article entitled *Why doesn't the whole world love chamber music?* (2001):

> […] the order we create when we music is an enactment of our ideal social order, an order in which we can feel most completely realized, most developed and fulfilled. Musicking is a means by which we learn to interpret the world and its relationships, what they are and what they should be. (Small, 2001: 346)

Small's use of the word 'ideal' might be interpreted as a suggestion that some relationships explored and established through musicking are inherently 'better' than others. In an article arguing against Small's assertion that 'removing music from the schools' curriculum would do more good than harm to the pupils' experience' (Small in Wright, 2010: 287), Juntunen et al (2014) define the potential relationships engendered through musicking as 'partnership', stating:

> As in all relationships, what counts is the mutual commitment and respect, shared interests and openness towards the view of others – partnership. (Juntunen, Karlsen, Kuoppamäki, Laes and Muhonen, 2014: 262)

This assertion of what 'counts' in an 'ideal' relationship is heavily laden with connotations about what 'good' relationships consist of. Just as I have argued that the term 'partnership' in the educational context is generally assumed to infer virtuous

equality, by synonymising 'relationship' with 'partnership', Juntunen et al suggest that musicking will result in the fruition of equal, positive relationships for all concerned. However, Laurence strongly cautions against assumptions that musicking will lead to any already existing 'Platonic' ideal; discussing Small's theory, she notes that:

> There is no Platonic implication intended, and 'musicking' is therefore by no means meant to be taken as an *inherently* positive or virtuous activity, and is not proffered as the value-laden term we might initially infer from the notion of what constitutes the 'ideal'. We can *music* according to, and making, ideal relationships which promote inclusion and peace, but equally in a way which celebrates relationships of hierarchy, power and alienation. In this way, Small's concept of musicking can be understood as a philosophical construct with which he investigates the meanings of music and musical performance, and which has no elemental implication of the 'good'. (Laurence, 2010: 248)

Laurence makes it plain here that the act of musicking may in truth be reinforcing tacit and explicit hierarchies, social strata or agendas. Juntunen et al do concede that ideal relationships as realised through musicking do not 'automatically' occur, stating:

> It is something that needs to be practised, over and over again, and it is the teacher's responsibility to build up a social environment in which such relationships can be nurtured […] and constitute a backdrop for considering 'who we are' instead of only accepting that 'this is who the constraining systems of schools force us to be' (Juntunen et al, 2014: 248).

Quite how an *equal* partnership/relationship can be realised in the classroom given that they attribute responsibility only to one party within it, the already hierarchically superior teacher, is not clear but makes plain the common miscomprehension of the complexity of Small's concept of ideal relationships. On this matter, Small himself tells us:

> Musicking is not necessarily a unifying force at all: on the contrary, it can articulate and even exacerbate social divisions. (Small, 1998a: 71)

The reason for this potential division lies in the differing ontologies of each participant in the music act, our different views of ourselves within the social order, our values and our tastes. As Small puts it, 'what would be heaven for one might be hell for another' (ibid.). He explains:

> But we don't all interpret the world the same way. Each one of us carries around our own way of making sense of it, our own values, our own concept of what are and what are not right relationships […] Those relationships that we consider to be good, valuable and treasurable in life – as well as those which we consider to be bad or worthless – have for us overriding importance, and we value other people to the extent that they share our values. (Small, 2001: 347)

He explains that the concepts each of us individually holds pertaining to what constitutes our ideal relationships and social order, are 'socially constructed' and can be influenced by dominant cultural ideology in order to maintain a particular cultural status quo, saying:

> Those who do hold social power − those who control the education system and the media of communication, and those who hold the purse strings for what is called cultural activity – are going to use that power in an attempt to impose their own version of ideal relationships throughout the whole society, to make people acknowledge that it is their version of reality, their culture, that is the *real* one. (Small, 2001: 347)

Thus, we see clearly the potential for musicking and the ideal relationships and societies it can promote as both potentially positive and adverse. This is something I will further examine in relation to the ideal relationships through musicking of the teachers at Morningside in Part Two.

In summation of this issue Small says:

> It must be repeated: if musicking is one way by which human beings order their experience, and explore and celebrate their sense of who they are, then what is to be treasured is not created objects, however splendid they may be, but the creative process itself. We can further see that no canons of correctness or quality laid down by members of a dominant or high-status culture are going to be of the slightest use to lower-class people in their task of self-definition; only those whose musicking it is can decide what is of use to them and what is not. (Small, 1998a: 133-4)

6.2.5 The classroom as a musicking space

Central to my field study was the notion of all of the classroom-based musical activity as performance in its own right. As such, the classroom was considered to be a site of 'musicking' or a performance space just as any concert hall or theatre would be. My study is not the first to reallocate the theory of musicking to the classroom. Vestad (2014) refers to the music making of young children both within their kindergarten and home environments as 'musicking', while Laurence (2005), in a study on primary aged children's musicking and empathy, also presents the music classroom as a

legitimate site of musicking. In *Music of the Common Tongue*, Small himself points toward the authenticity of a multitude of locales as performance-centred sites, in his comment that:

> In one musical culture, quality may lie in the accurate and sensitive realization of a difficult score for the benefit of a group of passive listeners; in another it may lie in the extent to which everyone participates, in a church service, a party or patriotic rally […] Each of these kinds of performance involves a different kind of excellence, and each brings into existence a different kind of society, about which one may make two generalizations: the first is that the more actively involved everyone present is in the performance, and the fewer spectators there are of the musical process, then the more unified that society will be; while the second is that the less dependent the participants are on pre-existing material, including written notations, the more directly and intimately they will be able to respond to one another. (Small, 1998a: 68)

On this issue of excellence, Small is explicit in confirming that within the theory of musicking, 'no musical tradition or culture is inherently superior to any other' (1998a: 74). He further confirms the potential of any site as being valid for the enactment of musicking by saying:

> […] the idea of music as objects to be contemplated, disinterestedly or not, bears little relation to music as it is actually practiced throughout the human race. In that real world where people actually make and listen to music, in concert halls and suburban drawing rooms, in bathrooms and at political rallies, in supermarkets and churches, in record stores and temples, in fields and nightclubs, discos and palaces, stadiums and elevators, it is not true that performance that takes place in order to present a musical work. That's the wrong way around. (Small, 2001: 342-3)

Musical performance may thus have many possible definitions and be realised in any number of 'real world' places, including the bathroom. Furthermore, he points out that an audience is not necessary for the performance to be considered valid, suggesting in fact that the absence of spectators might result in a more satisfying and unifying experience for those taking part in the musicking. Hence, we are able to see clearly the potential and the legitimacy of taking the classroom as a site of musical performance. In doing just this, I will examine whether our classroom musicking during the study challenged hierarchies as I had intended, or, reaffirmed them. As Laurence suggests, 'harnessing' Small's theory of musicking to a sociological context such as the classroom will enable me to ascertain '*what* relationships are being explored, affirmed and celebrated here [in the classroom], and *whose* ideal relationships are these?' (Laurence, 2010: 249). Small himself asserts that reading or

talking about relationships cannot compare with the actual musicking that allows us to '*experience* them in all their complexity and variety' (Small, 2010: 283).

In summary, this collective view of Small's work enables themes and ideas that are pertinent to the issue of partnerships between teachers and musicians to emerge for discussion in the next section of this chapter. In what follows, I will discuss how the development of the Smallian concept of 'ideal relationships' through the field study musicking challenged previously accepted roles and titles of 'musician' and 'teacher', allowing for new possibilities of dialogic interaction to emerge. Additionally, I extrapolate Small's proposition of children as artists, rather than consumers of packaged education and apply it to the *teachers* within the study, demonstrating how Small's notion of relationship in and through classroom musicking affected the teachers' sense of their own musical identities, competence and confidence.

I turn now to examine the musicking of the field study, and the issues and themes that arose through and within it, by analysing in further detail the data gathered through observations, my field notes and teacher interviews in relation to a composite Smallian perspective of classroom musicking.

6.3 Part Two - Musicking and a dialogic model of teacher/musician relationship

Christopher Small argues that the act of musicking, complex as it is with human interaction, relationships and ritual, presents a phenomenon too intangible, one 'which won't hold still long enough' (2001: 341) for many scholars to study, as opposed to the more fixed medium of the musical score in which it 'becomes assumed' that 'musical meaning resides' (ibid). In this section, I grasp the complex threads of meaning derived from our classroom musicking and examine them with specific focus on the relationships developed through musicking between the teachers and musicians.

The significance of relationship within Small's theory of musicking presents a prime point of departure here, from the earlier discussion of Small's ideas, towards my own analysis of the field study. My contention is that it was in and through the *relationships* between us (the teachers and musicians in the study) that the teachers' own sense of musicality could be found and realized. Additionally, it was through the development and analysis of these relationships that the essence of our 'partnership' - ontologically speaking – can be identified.

As the study unfolded, the term 'relationship' became far more useful and relevant than 'partnership', the term that I had originally chosen to apply to the enquiry. As previously discussed, 'partnership' suggests equality but in actuality, can be fraught with hierarchical pitfalls. Rethinking partnership as a *relationship* (but I must emphasise, an *equal* relationship, given that the term does not inherently imply a 'good' or egalitarian state of affairs) and developing this relationship through our regular musicking, provided a basis for my attempt to develop a model of musician/teacher cooperation that challenged traditional models of primary music consultancy, along with notions of who was 'expert' or 'novice'.

I introduce here a visual representation of this model, its central tenets and its derivation through musicking, in Figure 5. Following an extended discussion of the pivotal themes which arose from initial analysis of findings, this model will

be elaborated upon and explained later in this chapter. At this point however, an initial diagrammatic view of ways in which the relationship between teacher and visiting musician might be understood, and might vary.

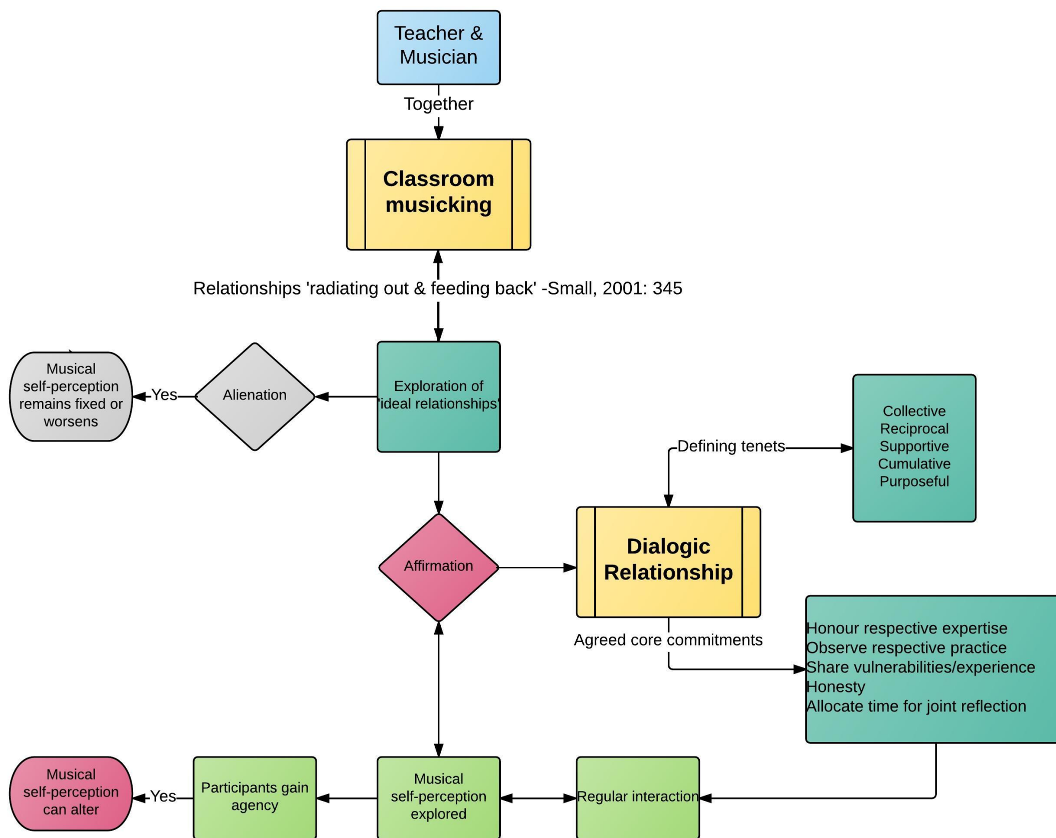

Figure 5: 'A model of teacher/musician dialogic relationship through musicking'.

I will presently explore the relationships between the teachers and musicians in the field study in detail, using the additional four themes, namely, Roles and titles; Relationships; Teachers as artists; Dialogic interaction that emerged as a result of my analysis of the field study to guide the discussion and to highlight key findings. All four themes are interconnected in multiple ways and are deliberately ordered to enable the sequential development of my interpretation of the findings. Within each sub-headed section of these themes, the four key themes[74] which were originally identified as being of relevance to the study and discussed in Chapter Two, will also be drawn

[74] The four *originally* identified themes are: The nature of musical ability and socially constructed notions of talent; Teachers' perceptions of musical ability - their own and children's; Musical confidence of the primary school teacher and; The nature of partnership.

into the argument and their significance further explored in the light of the subsequent findings.

6.3.1 Roles and titles- Deconstructing 'Teachers', 'Musicians' and what it means to be 'musical'

Throughout the field study I discovered that the complexity of issues inherent within the teacher/musician musicking relationship and within the field of education itself, in terms of both unstated and also overt hierarchies, made the development of an equitable relationship between the teachers and myself extremely complex.

The reluctance of the three teachers to describe themselves as 'musical' or as 'musicians' in their own right throughout the study[75], alongside their deference to my musical 'expertise', made departing from the traditional model of visiting musician as being there to work *for* the teachers– as opposed to *with* them– very challenging. Within that traditional model of music education exists tacit expectations about who should perform what role. For example, the musician is there to teach music and the teacher (if present for the musicking at all, rather than taking the time 'out' for administrative tasks) is usually a passive participant. The prime relationship seen as relevant in this context is that between musician and children, rather than between musician and teacher. As argued in Chapters One and Two, such a model potentially reinforces for children *and* teachers the image of music as being about expertise and only to be taught and learned by the 'musical'. As Mills (1994: 6) posits, the perpetuation of this idea negatively affects the attitudes of children who may go on to teach as adults and thus, the cycle is repeated. This is a view supported in Small's writing on socially constructed attitudes towards music and musicality in which he says:

> We receive them without as a rule thinking about them from the moment of birth, from elders and authorities; we may modify them, or find them modified for us as we go through life, and we pass them on to our juniors. (Small, 1998a: 120)

My study aimed to disrupt that cycle by moving towards a relationship in which music teaching was shared between teacher and musician in order that a more reciprocal exchange of skills and knowledge might occur.

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[75] See Chapter Five.

Problematically (but perhaps not surprisingly, given the related literature on teacher perceptions of musicality) throughout the teachers' interview transcripts a preoccupation with titles or labels is evident. For example, when I asked Leanne about which title she felt best described her role within the early stages of the study, she immediately rejected 'musician' and although she agreed she was a 'teacher', she made an effort to make clear that she did not claim that title for the sake of status:

> Julia: How did you see yourself at the beginning of the project? As a musician?
>
> Leanne: [Firmly] No.
>
> Julia: A teacher?
>
> Leanne: Yeah. That's my title. But not in a [assumes a pretend pompous tone] 'I'm A TEACHER!' kind of way.

Within this response, we see Leanne's concern about titles and being seen by others to be 'pretending' to be above her 'station'. She was a qualified teacher with excellent pedagogical skills and could indeed claim that title. Her need to add the disclaimer cited above suggests an acute awareness of social and professional hierarchy and her wish to be seen by colleagues as knowing her place within it.

The issue of social hierarchy and of individuals wanting to 'fit' within the social strata, according to assumptions about where others may have placed them, can also be found within the data collected during the Music Potential study that I took as a pilot for my own study at Morningside (see Chapter One). Especially intriguing in this regard was my own claim that I myself was not comfortable calling myself a 'musician' in my interview with the external field researchers in that project[76]. In that interview I misrepresented myself as a result of assumptions about where I felt the external researchers perceived me within the project hierarchy, and in relation to my music teaching skill which they had, by that point, greatly undermined.

The discomfort both Leanne and I shared in identifying ourselves in relation to professional titles fraught with social hierarchy and notions of power can evoke

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[76] See Chapter Three, 3.3.2.

Small's point as to how educational conventions and cultural norms can 'isolate' and keep people in their place (1996: 203). This can be further explained when considered in conjunction with the work of Marxist philosopher Louis Althusser. Extending Marx's theories on the subjectivity of the worker in relation to their work, Althusser identifies the school as one of many institutions that constitute an 'ideological state apparatus' ([1971] 2001: 127-126). He claims that an ideological state apparatus exerts social control over subjects, not by force, but through their submission in response to fear of social ridicule or castigation. According to Marxist theory, workers develop subjectivity collectively, defining themselves in alignment with their co-workers and shared interests. Marx attributes the term 'false consciousness' to individuals who align themselves with others who do not 'share the same relationship to the means of production' (Cranny-Francis et al, 2003: 47). A convincing explanation for Leanne's reluctance to define herself as 'musician' and her need to clarify also that she wasn't claiming the title of teacher with any intended grandeur, is her desire to make clear to me, in my various roles of interviewer, visiting musician, colleague and eventually, friend, that she was not subject to any 'false consciousness' and knew her 'place' within the social order of the study, classroom and beyond.

I had been explicit with the teachers from the very start of the study about my intention to disrupt the more usual visiting musician model of primary music education. My supposition was that this approach would necessitate and hopefully, *facilitate*, a shift in professional roles between us. However, even after six months of getting to know and like one another well through our classroom musicking, Leanne was so inculcated in the traditional social order of the primary music classroom, that she still felt the need to justify herself to me in this way. That this 'knotty' example mirrors my own earlier experience of struggling to name myself 'musician' shows the deep complexities of musical subjectivity.

Further evidence of this complexity can be found in both Patricia and Ruth's interview responses. When asked if she was a musician, Patricia's answer illuminated a sense of conflict and loss, loss for herself in terms of musical experience, and for the children for whom she wanted to provide drumming activity:

> Patricia: No. Well, it's the age-old thing. I'm not trained as a musician and I think of musicianship as being you know, with a musical instrument. However… [secretive whisper] I did join a samba group, I did do drumming for a while. That was last year for about seven months and again, I would have loved to have gone back, but I think it folded, but I *absolutely loved* it! That's why, do you see those drums down there? [Points to collection of cardboard tubes in the corner] I got it into my head years ago, I remember seeing something on Open University or something and it was saying that every child should have a drum and so those tubes, I've never got round to doing it but I wanted every one of my children to have a drum and *I* wanted to do samba with them but I've never really got round to it in the way that I should because I did really enjoy the samba you know, but my friend couldn't go, I was a bit sort of babyish really and I should've just gone back but it's so physical after a day's work! I'm not exactly musical but I do enjoy it and I did sort of pick up the beat and get lost in it.

Patricia categorically stated here that she was *not* a trained musician and that she still viewed musicians as those who played instruments. However, by sharing her passion for drumming with me (an interest I had known nothing about at this point, six months into the study) she hinted at the possibility of a belief in her own affinity with percussion.

Her problematic subjective relationship with music is clear, in her own disclaimer, that she's 'not exactly musical'. This is in spite of her recollection of 'picking up the beat' and getting 'lost' in it. Had she the confidence to keep attending the drumming class, Patricia might well have developed this aspect of musical affinity and been able to have transferred her skills to drumming with children. The sense of loss in Patricia's story, along with a suggestion in her belief that she has missed her opportunity to develop her skills by dropping out of the now defunct group, is reminiscent of Leanne's feeling of missing her 'chance' at music in her school days discussed in Chapter Five (5.2.2).

Patricia's opening statement: 'it's the age-old thing. I'm not trained as a musician' illuminates the accuracy of Christopher Small's understanding of teachers within the music classroom. Writing his first edition at the time Patricia first qualified as a teacher herself he says:

> How often have I entered a primary classroom run by a devoted and competent teacher, full of that buzz of activity that bespeaks a happy class, full too of paintings, sculptures, puppets, maps, poems, artefacts of all kinds – but no music. Why not? – 'I'm not a trained musician'. The untrained artist has elicited from his pupils art works of all kinds, the untrained writer has them writing poems, projects, assorted writings, but the untrained musician has been convinced (and here teacher training

> institutions must bear much of the blame) that he can do nothing to help his children develop that musicality which is just as powerful as the other artistic impulses he has so generously released in his pupils […] These situations are the result of the domination of music by experts and their insistence on *knowing about* before one is allowed to *do*. (Small, 1996: 213-14)

The picture Small paints here of the teacher confident in all manner of artistic pursuits other than music, matches with the self-perceptions of the three teachers in the study. Just as Small depicted, their classrooms were decorated with children's artwork, poems and numeracy work. The teachers were not concerned with any personal need to be 'artistic' or a professional artist to facilitate art in the classroom. Leanne led the afterschool cookery club, but neither she, nor anyone else would expect her to be a chef in qualification for this role. However, their lack of training and subject specific knowledge in music, combined with cultural discourse on musicality and talent resulted in their reluctance to cast themselves as 'musical' or capable of becoming a 'musician'.

Leanne demonstrated this reluctance to identify as 'musical' when giving an account of her musical history:

> Leanne: I've never *played* an instrument. I've never really had much interest *in* music except sort of just, you know, music that's on the radio. And you know, I haven't had any experiences in drama or singing. I was never, I was quite a shy girl growing up so I never really…none of that appealed to me so that's why I class myself as not very musical (laughs nervously).

Leanne's dismissive view of 'music that's on the radio' in this response reveals her assumption that the popular music she listens to does not 'count' towards qualifying her as being musical or knowing about music. Of popular music in secondary school Green reports:

> Many schools nowadays include popular music in their curricula, but what often happens is that the music then takes on the same conformist characteristics as its classical counterpart, and, in fact, is not even perceived by pupils, as being 'popular music' at all. (Green, 2010: 151-152)

In primary schools at Key Stage One, pop music is not generally taught. The most common repertoires that I have encountered are nursery rhymes and specially written topic linked songs provided within package-based resources. This is despite the fact

that most pre-school children and children aged 4-11 years are, as Susan Young puts it ‘musically multicultural’ (Young: 2003: 12), experiencing pop and a range of musical genres at home and outside of school when listening to music via radio, TV, CDs and ipods, toys, computers and in the general ‘ether’ of background supermarket music. As earlier cited, Small includes interaction with music in multiple locales such as the supermarket or home as valid musicking. Additionally, he challenges Leanne’s assumption that her interactions and interest in popular music do not contribute to her *knowing* about music, or to her own musicality, proposing that vernacular musics are actually conducive to the act of musicking in that they enable inclusion of those who might otherwise be excluded by lack of familiarity with another genre, such as classical music. He says:

> […] we should note that the entire popular music industry is based on this assumption [that everyone is born capable of musicking], at least as far as the ability to understand the music is concerned; no-one is excluded through being unable to comprehend what the musicians are doing, and no-one seems to need formal instruction in order to do so. (Small, 1998a: 53)

Additionally, on the subject of positionality relating to role, title and the pervasive view in Western culture that some musics are hierarchically superior than others, Small argues:

> And it doesn’t matter whether we think of ourselves primarily as teachers or as musicians, we cannot and must not countenance any view of musicking that assumes that any one tradition is intrinsically better than another. (Small, 1995: online article. No page number available)

Evidence of children’s conversance with pop music and the usefulness of this genre for encouraging their creative contributions to the content of musicking were in evidence during the study. For example, in children’s frequent requests to sing pop songs, the example of our musicking using *Rockin’ Robin* (Chapter Four, 4.5.3) and Patricia’s account of the ‘DJ’ musicking of Tommy in her class (Chapter Five, 5.4.5). The teachers accepted these examples of using pop music in the classroom musicking as valid but as the above citation from Leanne shows, the ingrained view of vernacular music as not ‘real’ music, leading to ‘real’ musicianship persisted throughout the study in terms of the teachers’ own musical-self-perception.

The dichotomous terms of 'musical' or 'non-musical' in the primary music education context might well be considered interchangeable with 'musician' and 'teacher', given that the literature tells us there are so few teachers willing to call themselves 'musical' or 'musician'. Furthermore, common discourse on adult musicianship suggests it is a fixed state of something you either have, or do not have, or if you had it as a child and did not have the opportunity to develop it, it is somehow lost forever (Bannan, 2000). Analysis of the three teachers' responses about their musical subjectivity, indicates that the terms 'musician' and 'musical' are being used synonymously, suggesting adherence to this 'have' or 'have not' idea and an underlying assumption about musicality that you have to *be* musical before you can become a 'musician'. Therefore, if the teachers did not perceive themselves as being musical at the study's inception, it follows that they believed they could never be musicians.

This dichotomy is further reinforced within the fields of education and music education, not least within some academic literature. In a study of the musical knowledge bases of teachers Bennett and Turner-Bisset (1993) make reference to participating teachers as 'non-musicians', inviting justified critique by Russell (1996) who argues against such labels:

> It [Bennett and Turner-Bisset's paper] did not refer to them as non-scientists or non-mathematicians. One could be forgiven for interpreting non-musical as a pejorative description. If generalist teachers view themselves as non-musicians, and have the perception that they are viewed by the educational community as non-musicians, it is not surprising that many are reluctant to engage in music making with their students. (Russell, 1996: 248-9)

Tami Draves's article *Firecrackers and Duds* (2008) (from which this thesis draws heavily in terms of her 'Partnership Sharing Continuum'[77]) further illuminates this potentially damaging issue of semantics. Her title is drawn from terms used by experienced music teachers within the study, the former to denote trainees who work in equal partnership with the experienced teacher during their music teaching training and the latter, those who do not. While Draves's title is intentionally used to frame the issue of musical labeling, this example shows the prevalence – in music education literature and in discourses on the nature of musicality – of labeling some as being

[77] See Figure 2.

musically 'worthy' and anyone falling outside of those musical parameters a 'dud'. Therefore, it seems that the demusicalization rued by Small (Small, 1998b: 212) of teachers and pupils stems not only from wider cultural discourses, but from within the field of music education itself.

Furthering Althusser's concept of the school as a vehicle by which dominant ideologies can be diffused and reinforced, MacNaughton (2005) points to the texts, tacit and overt, that perpetuate cultural meanings within classrooms for even the very youngest of children and adults. She tells us that:

> Classrooms are replete with texts and their meanings. From the books and posters used, the classroom routines in place, the daily talk of the classroom, through to the fashion worn by educators and children, meanings fill classroom life. Different forms of text enter classroom life in different ways but as they enter it they each contribute to the equity meanings that are produced, lived and experienced by children and adults in the early childhood classroom. (MacNaughton, 2005: 58)

From this perspective, and resonating with points raised in Chapter One of this thesis, the titles or labels used to distinguish educational professionals from one another, such as 'teacher' or 'musician', perpetuate particular cultural discourses about who *is* - and who *can be* - musical.

Acknowledging the work of poststructuralist theorists, MacNaughton (2005) urges early childhood teachers and researchers to deconstruct divisionary, binary language in order to challenge the associated cultural norms of such language. On the privileging of one term or state of being over another she points out:

> The significance of binary oppositions and their 'other' is that the 'other' is not equal to the main part of the pair […] The pairs are always ranked, so one part of the pair always has higher value in the ranking and is privileged over the 'other'. So, using binary oppositions places some meanings in a secondary, subordinate position and often an aberrant position. (MacNaughton, 2005: 63)

Applying Small's observations about children's 'consumer status' to the teachers in the context of my study, it is possible to see how the dominance of the Western classical tradition, the related discourses on musicality and who is best placed to teach music, in combination with limited teacher training in music, serves to keep teachers demusicalized.

The commonly used terms 'specialist' to denote musicians and 'generalist' for teachers, while seemingly equal and innocuous, carry inherent hierarchy. Though not as starkly contrasted as 'musician' and 'non-musician', the 'specialist' is usually privileged before the 'generalist' and there is an underlying air of importance attached to the 'specialist' (after-all, they are offering something 'special', which of course, is always more enticing than something 'general'!). From this viewpoint, it is possible to see why musicians, or those who 'know' about music themselves, may not wish to challenge the accepted hierarchy, particularly if that hierarchy will, as Small puts it, 'support their values and legitimize their position' (Small, 1998a: 180). The concept of the 'musical' individual cannot exist without implying not only its opposite, the 'non-musical', but also its superiority over this opposite concept, and therefore, for those who know about music, the perpetuation of their status relies on some degree of the subjugating and exclusion of others.

My study however, did seek to challenge and deconstruct this state of affairs. Founder of the concept of deconstruction, Jacques Derrida (1997) proposed:

> The very meaning and mission of deconstruction is to show that things – texts, institutions, traditions, societies, beliefs and practices of whatever size and sort you need – do not have definable meanings and determinable missions […] they exceed the boundaries they currently occupy. What is really going on in things, what is really happening, is always to come. (Derrida, 1997: 31)

The resonances here with Small's theory of musicking are clear. His statement 'there is no such thing as music' (1998b: 2) encourages us to deconstruct accepted views on the purpose of music, while his proposition that it is through musicking that we can ask ourselves 'what is really going on here?' (1998b: 183) with reference to relationships with others, is an invitation to deconstruct for ourselves music's place in situated culture and our place within that culture through the musical act. The rather complex task I found myself undertaking within the study, was to find routes into deconstructing the teacher's dichotomous views of musicality and their views of me as music 'specialist' in order that they might *re-musicalize* themselves. However, Small reassures us that through musicking, it is possible to re-define oneself and reclaim power:

> We begin to see how it is that musicking has always functioned as a powerful means of definition, and especially of self-definition, of who we think we are socially […] The right to perform is inextricably linked to the right of self-definition, and the right to self-definition is the first step on the long road to real political power. (Small, 2001: 348-349)

In the next sections of this chapter, I will demonstrate how the three teachers' musical self-perception altered during the course of the study by looking closely at the development of our relationships through musicking. In addition, I will seek to ascertain any corollary with the progression of their sense of themselves as musically competent with the dialogic partnership model.

6.3.2 Relationships

Based on my experience of participating in the Music Potential study I began my own study with a strong sense that it was the *relationships* between teachers and musicians that held the most interest for further study and the most potential for gaining a clearer understanding of how a dialogic model of partnership in this context might be founded. In interview, Patricia indicated that from her perspective, the strength of the human relationships between teachers and musicians within the study was of crucial importance and a new experience in the context of an in school music education project. She commented:

> Patricia: It's not just about the singing. It's about the *people*.

Of the transformative effect of her experience of musicking in dialogic partnership with me in the Music Potential project, Sally wrote:

> The impact upon me was quite astonishing, and was the catalyst for me to start singing, not only in the classroom, but outside of it too. I am now part of a choir, within which I had the confidence to sing solo during a recent rehearsal. Furthermore, it gave me the confidence to embark on a Masters in Music and Education, during which I have had to sing in front of other adults and peers. As a result, I have put myself forward to be a music coordinator in my teaching role in my new school. (Bremner, 2010: 15)

Sally's growth in musical competence and confidence from the feelings of insecurity described in her earlier account[78] and her initial perception of herself as 'unmusical', as a result of our working together in that first study, represents a complete shift toward remusicalization of teachers from the more traditional model of musicians conveying technique and skills to the teachers that they (the teachers) may or may not feel able to replicate. My later work in Morningside school represents a greatly extended investigation into these issues of teacher musical confidence and *real* partnership. Furthermore, it has confirmed that the development of dialogic relationships, similar to that which exists between Sally and myself to this day, can and does alter teachers' perceptions of their own musicality. In addition, my extended study enabled me to better understand my own role and professional learning through this kind of relationship. However, as is clear from the previous section, the process was not always an easy one, fraught as it was with hierarchy, unspoken tensions and anxiety relating to role, title and the very focus of the study itself, music.

The citations from the teacher interviews already analysed give insight into these tensions and I turn now to further 'unpick' the teachers' interview replies in order to focus on the issue of relationships in the Smallian sense.

In *Musicking* (1998b) Small presents relationships between participants of a musical performance as key to the creation of meaning within the act itself, although this idea is also clearly in play in his earlier work *Music of The Common Tongue* ([1987] 1998a). In a recent article entitled *Misunderstanding and Reunderstanding* (2010) he reiterates this thesis:

> So, what is it that is being done when people come together to music, which is to say, to take part in a musical performance? What meanings are being created? I believe the answer lies in the relationships that are created when the performance takes place. Relations not only between the sounds that are made – that's an important part, but only part – but also between the participants, that is, among the performers, between the performers and the listeners, and among the listeners. These relationships, in turn, model, or act out, ideal or desired relationships as they are imagined to be by those taking part. And since who we are is how we relate, then to take part in an act of musicking is to take part in an act of self definition, an exploration, an affirmation and a celebration of one's identity, of who one is. In an act of musicking those taking part are exploring, affirming and celebrating their sense of who they are – or who

[78] See Chapter One, 1.1.3.

> they think they are, or who they would like to be, or even what they would like to be thought of as being. (Small, 2010: 4)

From this explanation of the role of relationships between performers, it can be argued that musicking has the potential to facilitate individuals' exploration of identities and self-definition. This is of particular relevance to the three teachers, given the earlier discussion of their fragile musical identities. Small elaborates:

> A musical performance brings into existence relationships that are thought desirable by those taking part, and in doing so it not only reflects those ideal relationships but also shapes them. It teaches and inculcates those ideal relationships – we might call them values – and empowers those taking part to try them on, to see how they fit, to experience them without necessarily having to commit themselves to them, at least for more than the duration of the performance. It is thus an instrument of exploration. (idem: 5)

Here we see the reasoning behind my methodology of using dialogic relationship as both method and subject of enquiry. As Small suggests, musicking can both 'reflect' ideal relationships and in turn, 'shape' them as individuals experiment with the elements of the musical performance that are most meaningful to how they identify, or would like to identify, themselves. As previously examined however, there is much misunderstanding in the extant literature on Small's concept of 'ideal' relationships[79]. Small does not mean that all relationships brought about and realised through musicking are inherently and unquestioningly 'good'. As Philpott reminds us, the suggestion some music educators proffer, that 'learning music makes for a better and more rounded human being', is an 'over-sanitized and romantic vision of music' (Philpott, 2012: 49).

In her study of secondary school music teaching and learning, Green (2008) furthers these ideas as to how participants in musicking derive meaning from the musical act. Building on the work of Small by placing 'music-making at the heart of the musical experience' (2008: 60) Green, like Small before her, identifies two primary types of musical meaning. She uses the term 'inter-sonic' meaning (altering her earlier term 'inherent meaning' in 2008 for reasons of clarity (Green, 2008: 87) to denote meaning derived by listeners from the patterns within the musical work. This type of musical meaning is dubbed 'sound-relationships' by Small (Small, 1998b: 139). Green uses

[79] See Chapter Six, 6.2.4.

the term 'delineated' to describe musical meaning that is 'culturally associated' (Green, 2008: 87). In explanation of these concepts Green tells us:

> The main difference between inter-sonic meaning and delineated meaning is that the former involves mentally constructing relationships between one part of musical material and another part of musical material; whereas the latter involves construing relationships between musical material on one hand, and other things existing outside the music on the other hand. In all musical experience, both the inter-sonic and the delineated aspects of meaning must occur, even though listeners may not be aware of them. (Green, 2008: 87-88)

Small speaks to the potential of musicking as an 'instrument' of both 'celebration' and 'affirmation' (Small, 1998b: 183). However, Green points to the potential of musics and musicking that represent little or no meaning to an individual to 'alienate' (Green, 2008: 88). She explains:

> We may have positive or negative responses to either inter-sonic or delineated meanings. Positive responses to the former are likely to occur when we have a high level of familiarity with, and understanding of the musical style. Positive responses to the latter occur when delineations correspond with issues that we feel good about in some way. By contrast, negative experiences of inter-sonic meanings arise when we are unfamiliar with the musical style, to the point that we do not understand what is going on in the music. […] What I refer to as musical 'celebration' is experienced when we are positively inclined towards both inter-sonic and delineated meanings; musical 'alienation' occurs when we feel negative towards both. (Green, 2008: 88)[80]

Small corroborates this potential for alienation by saying:

> The listeners' responses − and, as always, we include that of the performers − and the meanings they make from what they hear depend as much on the values and the experience that they bring to the performance as on the objective sounds. Their concepts of ideal relationships are the parameters within which they respond − or fail to respond − to the sound-relationships of the musical work being played. (Small, 2001: 345)

The teachers found it troubling to assert themselves as 'musical', given that they had little training prior to the field study. They felt uncomfortable about teaching music as a result of this lack of training and comprehension. The potential therefore, for a programme of classroom musicking to further alienate them was always a real possibility and one of which I was acutely aware throughout the study, especially

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[80] Green's own diagram depicting these concepts is supplied as Appendix 1.

given Small's assertion that musicking 'teaches us what we really feel' (1998a: 70), and that through it we are being 'touched in the deepest parts of who we are' (ibid).

The similar accounts given by Ruth and Leanne of their previous experience of musicking with 'Mrs Piano',[81] justified my concern that our musicking could potentially also alienate them and further deter them from exploring musicking that was celebratory of their ideal relationships and musical identities.

Referred to by the teachers as 'the piano lady', Mrs Piano visited school once a week and classes took turns to sing in the hall with her accompaniment. The class teachers were expected to select the songs and lead the children for the duration of half an hour. From Leanne's description of this arrangement, I gathered that there was no dialogue or interaction between this visitor and Leanne, rather, a passive transaction of services. The music curriculum box was duly 'ticked' each week but Leanne's recollection of the experience was not positive. She told me:

> Leanne: There was a lady who came in to teach every Tuesday afternoon on the piano and other than that it's just been myself…trying.

This statement portrays Leanne's sense of being alone in trying to teach music prior to our study. It again alludes to Leanne's struggle with a lack of experience, support and subject specific knowledge while striving to meet the requirements of the curriculum. She expands:

> Leanne: Well basically, what used to happen was that we used to think of some songs out of the songbooks that we've got in school. Say it was Halloween, like seasonal songs and we used to go in and give her the book and she used to play the piano and we used to….lead it. Um and if, when you're a newly qualified teacher and you don't know a lot of songs and a lot of tunes of songs…It wasn't particularly helpful. She would just say, 'I'm here to play the piano and that's it'. So it wasn't a very good experience.
>
> Julia: So *you* were leading the music lesson.
>
> Leanne: Yes, but, well, NOT a good experience. Not just me, everyone, every member of staff in the school dreaded (laughs) Tuesday afternoons. *Dreaded* it. Yep.
>
> Julia: Why?

[81] Pseudonym for visiting pianist whose work is described in the case studies of Leanne and Ruth in Chapter Five.

> Leanne: Me personally, I mean the other teachers who knew the songs I'd imagine it would be different but for me *personally* I hadn't had any experience. I'm not a musical person, I hadn't had any experience teaching music to children or even songs, I didn't know the songs, I didn't know the tunes so it was kind of just like a really cringe-worthy half an hour for me.

It was clear that this experience served to further consolidate Leanne's alienation to music both in school terms and personally. Her description of the cringing and embarrassment that this experience of musicking induced echoes the 'red feeling' described by student primary teachers surveyed within Hennessey's study (2000)[82] and demonstrates the deeply uncomfortable and alienating effect that musical activity can have on the unconfident, unsupported teacher. Mrs Piano's kind of music was not Leanne's music and therefore, Leanne derived little meaning from it, save the severe negative feeling towards this musicking as shown in her above account.

Interestingly, this response contains the only suggestion on Leanne's part that she believes herself to be innately unmusical. In this particular interview response, Leanne says she 'is not a musical *person*' whereas in all other responses she states she is not a *musician*. As previously discussed, Leanne attributed her lack of confidence in music to a lack of professional knowledge and training, rather than to innate aptitude or lack thereof. The difference between 'musician' and 'musical' is crucial in this instance, the former being a designation of a professional and attainable status and the latter, exclusive and unattainable save by 'god given' gift.

This single, (negative) use of the term 'musical person' in the above interview response is problematic in Leanne's case, given my earlier description of her own attributions concerning her musical identity. However, it is interesting that Leanne should assign herself to the non-musical 'scrap heap' *only* in her recollection of this unsuccessful music 'partnership' with Mrs Piano. This suggests that this experience, in which she admits to having struggled with feelings of professional inadequacy, undermined her confidence in her own musicality to such an extent that she attributed her feelings of discomfort, along with the children's lack of enjoyment of those

[82] The title of Hennessey's (2000) paper is *Overcoming the Red Feeling: the development of confidence to teach music in primary school amongst teachers.* This 'red feeling' encompasses the embarrassment, sense of panic and negative emotion that the student teachers interviewed during her study reported when faced with teaching music in the primary school prior to receiving adequate music training and support.

singing sessions in the hall, to her own musical inadequacies, ascribing the failure of the project to herself rather than to her professional pianist colleague.

Leanne's description of the musicking interactions with Mrs Piano suggest that her 'ideal relationship' would have been one in which she could have been supported in learning more in terms of repertoire selection and leadership of the singing by her more musically knowledgeable visitor. However, the lack of dialogue between them prevented Leanne's ideal being realized. Rather than serve as an instrument of celebration, these musical encounters left Leanne 'cringing'.

Ruth's opinion of the same experience was equally negative:

> Ruth: It didn't work very well. We didn't feel inspired by it. It was just playing. I needed someone to guide me and say: 'This is a fab piece of music' or: 'What about looking in here?' And with the time constraints I was just going in the hall and choosing any old book and saying: 'Mrs Piano, can you play this?' and it didn't, you know, it didn't work well. It didn't mean *anything* to the children and it wasn't very well thought out.

Ruth's 'ideal relationship' with Mrs Piano was similar to the one suggested by Leanne. That is, one in which they could converse and be guided as to the songs they would sing together. Again however, the lack of dialogue and equality in the relationship between Mrs Piano and the class teachers meant that Ruth's ideal could not be attained and she did not feel that her musical experience, or that of the children, was considered valid in this instance. Far from being affirming or celebratory, these musical encounters left Ruth feeling frustrated as they did not enable her to explore her own musical identity. Unlike Leanne, Ruth was not embarrassed by the experience, but she did report a feeling of being unsupported in having to choose repertoire and unsure about which songs would work best for the children to sing. Her account also indicates her sense that although she didn't think the musicking was very well received by the children she did not have the agency to change the format or content. The subject of teacher musical agency will be looked at in detail in due course.

We cannot know definitively what *Mrs Piano's* ideal relationships might have been, but we can assume from Leanne and Ruth's descriptions of what Mrs Piano actually

did that Mrs Piano understood her role in the project as that of non-directorial accompanist. Perhaps she did not identify herself as a 'teacher' or felt disempowered when working with class teachers to do anything other than accompany the singing. As Leanne described, Mrs Piano's actions adhered to her own spoken expectation of her role within the musicking. She was just there to 'play the piano, and that's it' and therefore It can be assumed therefore, that Mrs Piano's *own* ideal relationships in this instance *were* affirmed. Her kind of musicking represented the inculcated values of the more traditional music education model of visiting musician, bound up within the Western classical tradition and the inference that the ability to play an instrument is crucial in terms of making classroom musicking possible. The interactions between Mrs Piano, the teachers and the children do of course legitimately constitute Small's 'musicking', bearing in mind that there is no inherently 'good' or 'bad' value judgment attached by Small to the music act; Small himself proposes that the fittingness of the musicking relationship is decided upon by the individual participants and that it is up to them to decide if the performance was 'good' for them. What is absolutely certain about the expectations of the relationship between the pianist and teachers is that these expectations did not resonate. This recalls a further point made by Small, who writes:

> Different listeners at different times and under different circumstances will bring to a performance different concepts of ideal relationships and so they will get different meanings from a performance of the same work. There may come a time when a lack of congruence causes them to get no meanings at all from it, or none that they feel concerns them. (2001: 345)

While the musicking with Mrs Piano may have been congruent for her, it was not so for the teachers, and did not leave them feeling 'themselves' as Small suggests musicking can do:

> In empowering us to explore and affirm our values, taking part in an act of musicking leaves us with a feeling of being more completely ourselves, more in tune with the world and our fellows. When we have taken part in a good and satisfying performance we are able to feel, this is how the world really is, and this is how we relate to it. In short, it leaves the participants feeling good. It is thus an instrument of celebration. (Small, 2006: 8)

In fact, this musicking experience left Leanne feeling worse than ever in relation to music and made the establishment of a positive relationship between us arguably more complex as can be seen in her initial reluctance to lead singing in front of me.

In terms of my own relationship with Leanne, and to some extent, the other teachers, this fragility in terms of musical confidence was obvious to me and had a profound effect on my ability to extricate myself from the traditional role of the musician demonstrating and *doing* the music teaching for the teachers. As mentioned earlier, my efforts to change the hierarchy within the musician/teacher relationship to a more balanced sharing of expertise and therefore, power, were threatened throughout the study by my caution with regard to carefully avoiding anything that might make the teachers feel uncomfortable in the way they had within the musicking relationship with Mrs Piano[83]. This recalls a phenomenon described by John Finney as 'relational dispositions' (2015[84]) in which a teacher makes ethical commitments that include protecting the psychological safety of students.

From the very first meeting with the three teachers as described in Chapter Four (4.4.1) I was acutely aware of the potential of the study to make the teachers feel uncomfortable or musically 'deficit' in the ways described by Sally with regard to the Music Potential project. This concern for the feelings of the teachers and my strong sense that the study must in no way discourage them in terms of music teaching and learning is demonstrated in my own account of the first meeting:

> I feel nervous because I want them to want to work with me, to really understand what it is I hope to do and I feel some pressure about conveying all of this clearly without discouraging them in any way. (Excerpt from my field diary, December 2009)

Looking at the descriptions contained in Chapter Four of what actually took place within the classroom musicking, it is clear that *I* did not always relinquish the role of 'leader' in both the musical sense, and in terms of the study itself. My sense of ethical responsibility for the musical psychological safety of the teachers, all competent

[83] See Chapter Four for accounts of my doing things *for* the teachers

[84] Taken from John Finney's Music Education Now blog. Posted 7th May 2015.

adults, shows my (arguably justified, as an empathic researcher) preoccupation with being responsible for the study and all individuals within it.

Consultation of my field notes and audio field recordings show that though the teachers were all fully participating and supportive during the musicking, the majority of our musicking (with the exception of the final concert) was led by either Kirsten or me, and not the teachers themselves. Although it is clear from the teacher case studies, from their interview responses and in the description of the final concert that the study did positively impact their musical self-perceptions, the classroom musicking sessions, in the main, did not represent the intended rebalancing of power between musician and teacher.

For the purposes of this thesis, I have had to consider very closely why this was the case when such a state of affairs contrasts so starkly with my research aim. I believe the explanation can be found through examination of *my* assumptions of what the teachers' ideal relationship with me might have been. From the study's inception, I felt there was an expectation on the part of the three teachers that I would demonstrate new repertoire and ways of teaching on each visit. This may have been real or perceived; apart from in Leanne's case, it wasn't overtly stated by the other two teachers that they expected this of me. In hindsight however, having heard from Ruth and Leanne about what they wanted ideally from Mrs Piano, I see that this was probably an accurate assumption.

In addition, we were all so inculcated in the usual model of musicians coming in and, as described by Patricia in Chapter Five, 'doing stuff for' the teachers, that we were only able to depart from this to a certain extent. This is clearly problematic behaviour on my part, given that I had experienced the Music Potential study in which I had approached co-leadership of musicking quite differently. Although the teachers at Morningside had agreed to participate in my research study and I thought they had understood the way in which I intended us to work, their immediate reluctance and eventual refusal to be filmed musicking at all, let alone leading the musicking, along with the pressure on their time from other aspects of their work (as demonstrated by their difficulty in keeping journals on our musicking) made me reluctant to 'push' them into any uncomfortable territory in the first months of the study.

It is also important to consider the *children's* ideal relationship with me in explication of why I went about directing the musicking myself. There was an overt, spoken expectation among the children that I would sing favourite songs with them, go over familiar repertoire and perhaps teach them something new at each visit. I was a weekly 'special' visitor and, as such, they wanted to actively sing and interact with *me* and I did not want to disappoint or confuse them in this regard. Of the 'artist' or 'special' visitor Small observes:

> We have been taught to believe that artists are special people, set aside, but nevertheless they are producers of a product, in this case called works of art, to be bought and sold like any other product, while the rest of us are consumers of their art; […] They can produce these art works only if they can find someone to pay them, and that person will pay them only if, as with any other product, they can make a profit from it. (Small, 2006: 3)

With this observation on the nature of artists as purveyors of product, Small illuminates the key reason that I struggled to cast off tenets of traditional visiting classroom musician behaviour. I was aware of a tacit but palpable expectation from Enid (the head), as well as the teachers, that I would 'earn my keep'. It was only fair that I should repay their participation in my study by sharing my skills and knowledge and in order to convince everyone from the beginning that I would do this, I had to 'perform', both in the musical and the professional sense. It wouldn't do to lurk about (however positively![85]) and expect the teachers and children to do all the musicking. I was inextricably bound by my role and the attendant expectations that I would fulfill it. Coming as I did to the school from a prestigious concert hall, I was as Small suggests, 'imprisoned' in and by the traditions and social connotations of the 'luxurious concert hall' and at risk of 'losing out' on the possibilities of working and musicking in new and different ways (Small, 1998a: 11).

Taking the teachers' personal musical 'histories' into account and contrasting them with my own autobiographical vignettes[86], it is possible to see recurrent similarities in the stories of all four adults, the three teachers and myself, plus the fifth 'story' of

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[85] The concept of 'lurking positively' as researcher is attributed to Laurence (Laurence, personal communication, 2007)

[86] See Prologue and Chapter Six, 6.2.2.

Sally. Leanne's feeling of wanting to cringe with embarrassment at the fear of her own musical lack of knowledge and skill being exposed publicly, resonates with my sight-reading shame depicted in the account of the elite choir rehearsal in the Prologue to this thesis and Sally's description of the singing training with Dr Rose[87]. Patricia's feeling of having 'lost out' on her musical opportunity within the samba band resonates with my feeling of having missed my chance to fulfill my musical ambition of going to music college as a result of fear of failure. My experience of defining my role and title within the Music Potential project hierarchy to the external researchers resonates with the teachers' struggle to name and recognize their own musicality in my later study. Additionally, my negative experience of *being* researched[88] undoubtedly contributed to my preoccupation that my own study should not be the cause of any discomfort to the teachers at Morningside. Finally, the feeling of pressure to perform as described in the previous paragraph will surely resonate with the feelings of any primary teacher under the current system of Ofsted inspections and school league tables.

Despite our musical identities, level of musical skill and professional musical experience being quite obviously different, these numerous common, uncomfortable experiences contributed to each of our musical identities. In addition, this represented shared ground upon which to develop our ideal relationships. As Small asserts 'who we are is how we relate' (2010: 4).

The concept of 'collective vulnerability' (Neimeyer and Tschudi, 2003) is useful in this context. In his discussion of using music to effect conflict resolution between participants drawn from two warring states, Jordanger (2015: 128) describes how collaborative musicking, in the form of guided musical imagery, enabled participants to acknowledge, explore and 'transform' complex, shared 'emotional tensions into a flowing "moment" called "collective vulnerability"' (Jordanger, 2015: 129).

While I fully recognize that the awkward feelings the teachers and I shared in relation to fears about our own musical inadequacies do not compare with the seriousness of

[87] Chapter One, 1.1.3

[88] See Chapter Three, 3.3.2 and published in *MasterClass in Music Education* Finney and Laurence Eds. (2013).

the emotional tensions between those who have experienced cultural violence on the scale of the participants described[89] within Jordanger's work, I find relevance in the essence of the concept of collective vulnerability in the contexts of musical self-perception and my study. Jordanger poses pivotal questions:

> Fixed contradictory positions, backed by heavy emotional blocks, typically scupper attempts at genuine dialogue. How to overcome them? What will open the dialogue at a level where locked and entrenched positions might yield to discussion of basic interests and real needs? Can we find keys to create conditions to address the roots of emotions that hinder progress and thereby co-generate a transformative process? (Jordanger, 2015: 128)

One answer to overcoming fixed positions, according to Jordanger, is collaborative musicking. In the context of my study, the fixed positions were related to role and identity such as, 'musician'/ 'teacher' or 'musical' / 'non-musical' and the emotional blocks were the shared feelings of anxiety, shame and fear of public embarrassment relating to our perceived musical inadequacies. My rationale for applying the concept of collective vulnerability to my relationships with the teachers in the study is that these tacitly held fears *did* block our progress in creating an equal and dialogic co-musicking relationship. Once I had heard the teachers' 'histories', their fears and feelings of loss, I understood them as I had experienced those same feelings myself. My conscious effort not to demand too much of them in terms of challenging them to lead musicking in my presence from the start of the study resonates with Burke's description of tenets of successful music education partnerships described in Chapter Two (2.3) in that I empathized with the 'risk' (Burke, 2008: 105) faced in this context by the teachers and that a 'forum for conflict resolution' (ibid) had been created within our relationship. These efforts on my part also indicated that I had a strong and sound sense of these vulnerabilities but I did not fully understand the scale of our collective vulnerability or, to use a term less associated with conflict resolution, shared experience, until after I had conducted the interviews.

On the capacity of musicking to bring collective vulnerabilities into view, Jordanger describes the 'reconfiguration of human relations' (2015: 144) through music. He expands:

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[89] These participants were drawn from the warring regions of the Crimea, and included Chechens, North Ossetians and Russians. (Jordanger, 2015: 129)

> A “now we are all in the same boat” feeling. This state of “collective vulnerability” is the platform that allows for the transformation of negative emotions, particularly unacknowledged shame and anxiety, into positive emotions and a state of flow in the group. (Jordanger, 2015: 139)

In addition, he corroborates Small’s view of musicking as a means to explore identities in enabling us to ‘transcend’ social and cultural divisions, roles and titles. He terms this exploration ‘music journeys’ and describes them thus:

> Music journeys can here be a crucial part of our repertoire in creating conditions for participants to transcend binary verbal thinking and the meaning of formerly frozen social categories and distinctions. (Jordanger, ibid: 143)

A pivotal point of the ‘music journey’ for the teachers, Kirsten and me was the (teacher-initiated) creation of the after-school ukulele group[90]. In interview Ruth described the lengthy duration of the study, the regularity of my weekly visits to school, and the meeting of the ukulele group, as three main aspects integral to her sense of our developing relationship:

> Ruth: Because I just think we’ve got to know each other, because it’s been for so many weeks. Yeah! If it had just been: ‘Oh look we’re coming in for one day a term or blah de blah de blah’ but because you’re here *every* week you’ve got to know the children really well, you’ve got to know us really well and we know you really well!
>
> Julia: Do you think that [getting to know each other well] would have happened if we hadn’t have had the after school ukulele sessions?
>
> Ruth: No! Because…no, no because that’s like a bonding session for us lot isn’t it without the children which is important and it’s a good laugh and we’ve all learned a new skill and we’ve told the children we’ve learned a new skill so they’re learning and we’re learning which is great.

I propose that it was within the ukulele group musicking situation that the musicians and teachers most effectively explored, affirmed and celebrated our ideal relationships with one another and with our musical selves. I move now to further discuss this pivotal feature of the study, looking closely in the next section at how the ukulele musicking challenged each of our self-perceptions in relation to role and the teachers’ to their own musical identities. Furthermore, I will discuss my proposition of applying Small’s vision of ‘children as artists’ and how it became applicable to the teachers through the experience of our collaborative musicking.

[90] Described in Chapter Four, 4.5.3.

6.3.3 Teachers as artists - transcending titles through legitimate peripheral participation

The teacher case studies contained in Chapter Five strongly indicate that the field study was effective in terms of developing the musical self-perception (efficacy) of the three teachers. I propose that this was as a result of the musical agency offered to them within the study design as a key feature of our working relationship. I now take Small's concept of 'children as artists' (1996: 206) in order to pioneer a reapplication of that idea to teachers, conceiving of them as active constructors of art and knowledge, as opposed to passive conduits of the information deemed appropriate for children to be taught in what is construed as their education.

The overall aim of the study can now be reconceived as the resituating of teachers from the non-agentic 'consumers' of standardized curriculum, constrained on the one hand by pedagogical aims and methods imposed within a restrictive, overarching education system, and on the other, by their own perceived lack of musical ability, to producers, artists and musicians in their own classrooms.

However, in actuality, this reconceptualization of teachers as artists proved to be problematic. As already discussed, the teachers themselves were reluctant to apply the terms 'musician' and 'musical' to themselves, although crucially, and in fact rather contradictorily, they did view the *children* as musical and as composers or agents of our musicking. On the issue of musicality Patricia stated:

> Patricia: I think that there is something innately musical about a baby. I've always thought for a long time that music is an innate part of you.

Ruth identified the acts of performance and composition as key to encouraging the children's artistic agency by commenting:

> Ruth: I think it's good for the children to perform together, it's good for the children to take turns to perform and to be able to talk about each other's performance. And I also like the fact that they've been able to change songs and do their own thing. That's getting them thinking […] and they want to sing all the time now.

Patricia's belief in children as innately musical is counter to her reluctance to describe *herself* as musical[91] and Ruth's recognition of the children's stature as artists, but not extending this to herself, give insight into how culturally ingrained are the contradictory beliefs about musicality as something all children possess but only some, save a privileged or 'gifted' few, retain into adulthood.

In an article describing a study on Scandinavian kindergarteners and their subject positions within common discourses on childhood and on music in everyday life, Vestad (2014) discusses this ideological conflict:

> Two contradictory narratives of children's musicality are available simultaneously; the everybody-can narrative and the only-the-talented-can narrative. The subject positions made available by these narratives are challenging because they create a split between enjoying music (a pleasurable natural capacity) and learning to play an instrument (burdensome work). (Vestad, 2014: 248)

Throughout their interview responses, all three teachers evoke this dichotomy as presented by Vestad. They believed that the children enjoyed music, were naturally 'musical' and capable of creating music, the 'everybody-can' narrative. All three stated that as adults, they enjoyed music yet were not able to label themselves as 'musicians', mainly as a result of not being able to play an instrument, the 'only-the-talented-can' narrative. In line with my thoughts on resituating the teachers' musical self-perception through doing music together, or 'musicking', Vestad argues that a third possible narrative could arise through musicking, or as she puts it: 'enjoying music and working to develop a talent' (Vestad 2014: 270). While the emphasis here on developing talent somewhat undermines Vestad's 'third narrative', aligning it too closely, in my view, with the 'only-the-talented-can' ontological stance that my study sought to challenge, the idea of musicking as means to providing a third way of conceiving of musicality is clearly useful here. Of use too is Vestad's proposition that 'enjoying music' in an active sense can legitimately be considered a form of musicality.

In *Music, Society, Education* Small advises that an emphasis on active musicking that is 'a joyful learning experience' for children and is located 'in the present', rather than

[91] See Chapter Five (5.4.6) for an account of Patricia's musical self-perception throughout the study.

focusing on Western classical music history and works of the past, can begin a 'subversion of the whole process of schooling' (Small, 1996: 200). This, in combination with Vestad's call for researchers to seek ways in which to 'bridge' the dichotomies of culturally accepted perceptions of children's musicality, shows the potential of the design and application of the field study to disrupt inherent classroom 'texts', traditional notions of artistry and musicality – specifically here, of *teacher* musicality – through musical activity that was enjoyable for both the children *and* the teachers.

When questioned about whether the teachers perceived any difference in the children's musical enthusiasm, confidence and agency as a result of our musicking, both Leanne and Ruth were able to identify progress in all three areas. Ruth, who in addition to her comment cited previously on performance being key to children's engagement in the musicking, believed that the pedagogical approach taken in which all adult's and children's ideas were honoured within the musicking, supported the children's enthusiasm:

> Ruth: You've listened to us and you've listened and dealt with the children, obviously all children are different, but you've treated them all in a way that has meant they could succeed at their own level, do you know what I mean?

Ruth's earlier point that the children were free within our musicking to 'change songs and do their own thing' supports Small's proposition that creative agency can potentially transform the subjugated, passive learner into an artist. Furthermore, he suggests that creative activity can generate enriched learning as achievement and enjoyment sustain learner's enthusiasm:

> As the creative act is at the centre of all artistic activity, so we place creative activity firmly at the centre of musical education, from which all other, more traditional activities radiate, fed by the work of creation and in turn feeding back into it: compositional skills, notation (as and *if* needed), listening, performing, study of the work of other musicians of many periods, styles and cultures. In so doing, we need to pay less attention to long-term aims, and let each moment be enjoyed for itself, each achievement generate its own enthusiasm, its own confidence, and let the skills develop as they are needed. (Small, 1996: 213)

In consolidation of the idea of agency as generative of artistic enthusiasm and confidence, Leanne remarked upon the value she felt myself and Kirsten had placed

upon the children's ideas as having encouraged children's creative contributions to the content of musicking sessions:

> Leanne: I think it's impacted them in more ways than just music. I think once they know that they're good at something […] they know everything that they say in the singing lessons is going to be taken on board they've got the confidence to just give their ideas.

Furthermore, Ruth's reference to my having listened to the *adults* within the study alongside the children suggests that although she and Leanne may not have recognized it, their agency as participants in the study, *in* and *through* the musicking, also increased. This is corroborated by their reflections on their own musical development six months into the study.

Of the development of her music teaching and musical understanding, Ruth commented:

> Ruth: I feel like I've got another angle on music now and I would concentrate more on the children's bodies and on using everyday physical equipment you know like the balls and the beanbags and using space more. Um, and I realize how important the beat can be you know and it all links in with rhythm and rhyme down in nursery and Reception. I didn't always know what things like that meant. And I didn't always know the best way to *physically* teach music but now I do because of my training with you.

This reflection indicates that near the end of the study, Ruth felt she was able to view music and her own music teaching differently, taking what she has learned alongside me and the other teachers in the study and extending it in ways that suited her very physically active class. This represents a shift from the more 'typical' teacher as consumer of packaged musical knowledge or repertoire, such as *Music Express*[92] or *Charanga*[93], to name the two most commonly used primary music packages, to the ability of teachers to create their own musical schemes of work that are relevant to the specific needs of 'their' children. Thus, we see the emergence of Ruth as musical artist in her own classroom and in her own right.

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[92] See footnote 37, for a description of *Music Express*.

[93] *Charanga* is a digital resource that includes a primary music scheme of work that teachers can follow, alongside interactive online learning for children. Schools pay a subscription to access these resources. See: www.charanga.com/site/

Returning to Wenger's concept of a 'community of practice' (1998)[94] in the Music Potential study described in Chapter One, the domain, community and practice were all related directly to the classroom musicking with children. However, in the Morningside field study, it took longer than I had anticipated to establish a classroom musicking community of practice that mirrored that within the Music Potential project. My explanation for this unexpected differentiation between the two studies is that in the Music Potential study, the teachers and musicians were all co-research participants specifically convened to contribute to the project. Dr Rose had set up particular ways of beginning our work together that embedded certain shared understandings and expectations of the study. These included the singing training session for musicians and teachers[95], and the opportunity in both School Rural and School Urban to observe the teachers teach and to meet the children before any musicking occurred[96].

In my own study at Morningside, I straddled the roles of musician and researcher and this proved to be difficult territory to navigate in hierarchical terms. This was especially pertinent in the case of Leanne whose reluctance to be observed leading singing with her class evoked the 'story' of Sally in the Music Potential project. Of the beginning of the Music Potential study, Sally wrote:

> I was looking forward to having a music specialist coming in to teach singing to my class, but was terrified at the thought of actually having to teach singing in front of them […] This insecurity and apprehension appears to have overridden any sense of learning during this session on my part. (Bremner, 2013: 83-84)

Knowing at this point how Sally had privately felt then, made me decide not to integrate any inaugural, shared singing/repertoire session into my study as Dr Rose had done in the Music Potential project. I hoped to initiate the idea of observing a 'normal' day-in-the-life of each teacher and their classes. However, their emphasis on learning from me 'new songs and ideas' in our first conversation, along with the recollection that this opportunity to observe and gain an emic perspective of each class and each teacher's practice had been suggested by one of the teachers in the

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[94] See Chapter One, 1.4 for Wenger's definition of a community of practice.

[95] See Prologue.

[96] This feature of our working together was suggested by Amanda, the experienced Reception class teacher in School Rural and is indicative of her sense of agency throughout the Music Potential project.

Music Potential study, rather than imposed by the research 'lead', influenced my decision to proceed straight to observing them singing with their classes and then, in turn, me initiating classroom musicking *for* them, as opposed to *with* them. This unintentional adherence on my part to the more 'traditional' role of the visiting musician inhibited our ability to move along Draves's *Power Sharing Continuum of Cooperating Music Teachers* from the passive, consumerist 'Student/Teacher relationship' to the equitable 'Collaborative partnership' (Draves, 2008: 10) as swiftly as I had intended.

Despite this, the co-teaching relationship between each teacher and me *did* progress along Draves's continuum towards collaborative partnership, regardless of the more indirect approach taken. Explication of this phenomenon may be found within the formation and development of the ukulele group community of practice. It was through the *ukulele group* community of practice, learning alongside others, not directly involved in my study and without the children present, that a community of practice was developed in the classroom between the three participating Year One teachers, Kirsten and myself.

Legitimate peripheral participation

Lave and Wenger (1998) theorise that all learning is socially and culturally situated, coining the term 'situated learning'. They propose that 'newcomers' within communities of practice learn and become full members of the community through a process of 'legitimate peripheral participation' (Lave and Wenger, 1998: 29), a term described by Hanks as denoting:

> The particular mode of engagement of a learner who participates in the actual practice of an expert, but only to a limited degree and with limited responsibility for the ultimate product as a whole. (Hanks, in foreword to Lave and Wenger, 1998: 14)

Legitimate peripheral practice is therefore, a means for individual less experienced members of a community of practice to move towards 'full participation in the sociocultural practices of a community' (Lave and Wenger, ibid.). This concept is therefore key to understanding the role of the ukulele community of practice in

facilitating the progression of the classroom musicking, teacher agency and the further development of our interrelationships.

In her reflections on our relationships, Leanne cited the ukulele group as key in terms of fostering positive mutual feeling. She described her relationship with me, Kirsten and the other teachers as:

> Leanne: Fun, honest, being comfortable with each other. I think our personalities have a lot to do with it, our personalities and your personalities. We seem to have a nice atmosphere. You know? With the children and in our ukulele sessions.

Leanne's identification of the after-school teacher ukulele group as a pivotal space in which our relationship developed is compelling as this was a highly enjoyable weekly meeting in which my role within the study was altered. Although the sessions were very informal, Kirsten was the group leader[97] and I was a participant *alongside* the teachers. At that time, I shared with them a very limited skill on the instrument and this resituated us as equal rather than 'teacher' or 'musician', or 'researcher' and 'teacher'. We were colleagues and friends, sharing jokes, supporting one another and suggesting songs to learn. There were no children present, so no need to 'perform' our professional roles. There were no 'official' targets to meet and the resultant atmosphere was, as Leanne suggested, fun and relaxed. In the Smallian sense, this musicking was satisfying, affirming, celebratory and crucially, empowering. Smalls asserts:

> And further, if each performance articulates the values of the members of a social group, then every musical performance is inescapably to some extent a political act. Politics of course is about power, and an important element of power is the power to define oneself rather than be defined, to say, 'This is who I am', or 'This is who we are', as against those who would say, 'That is who you are', or even, 'That is what you are', which is to say, less than fully human. (Small, 2006: 9 original underlining)

In and through the ukulele musicking, we were trying on different relationships and exploring our own identities and through that process, as Small suggests, we were redefining the possibilities of what those relationships and identities might be, free from the constraints of our respective roles that affected us within the classroom musicking. From the above citation, it is clear to see the potential of musicking for the

[97] See Chapter Four, 4.5.3 for a description of the ukulele group and its genesis.

reclamation of power, otherwise referred to in this context as agency[98] – the power to act and make decisions.

Alongside this enjoyable musicking experience, the teachers' musical skill, knowledge, technical ability and confidence were also developing, and we would sometimes discuss how what we learned in the ukulele group could be used in our musicking with children. Taking Wenger's model of social learning, the ukulele group represented the community of practice (Wenger: 2006) I had sought to establish within the classroom-based musicking.

Within the ukulele community of practice, Kirsten possessed the most technical skill and knowledge and each of the other participants began at varying levels of proficiency. We were 'newcomers' and she, the ukulele 'oldtimer' (Lave and Wenger, 1998: 56). As Hanks suggests (In Lave and Wenger, ibid.) roles and responsibilities that existed within school hours were disrupted within this after school group.

The 'domain' (Wenger, 2006) was our mutual engagement in learning to play the ukulele, both for our own enjoyment and to enrich our musicking with children. The 'community' was a mixed group of educational professionals jointly learning and negotiating the techniques, chords and strumming patterns for songs that we collectively identified that we'd like to learn either for our own enjoyment or for specific use in classroom musicking. This democratically derived shared repertoire, much of it derived from the more accessible, according to Small (1998a: 53), popular genre, represented the 'practice' of our community.

I propose that the instigation of this group, significantly, at the suggestion of the *teachers* themselves, was the catalyst for moving our relationships within the classroom-based musicking to a more equal and collaborative basis of power and responsibility. The acquisition of technical instrumental skill, (identified as key to being 'musical' in both the literature on teachers' perception of musicality and within

[98] Laurence (2010) gives the following explanation of the concept of agency: 'The Oxford Dictionary of Sociology suggests that the term 'agency' refers to 'the capacity for willed (voluntary) action'; similarly, Paul Willis in his seminal work about 'motor-bike boys' and 'hippies', gives human agency as 'the ability to act and make decisions autonomously' (Willis 1978: p14). *'* (Laurence, 2010: 253)

the interview responses of Ruth, Leanne and Patricia), in the 'enjoyable' 'present' as envisioned by Small (1996: 200), enabled the teachers to develop their own musical agency and consequently, their self-perception of themselves as musical artists. On the potential of legitimate peripheral participation to empower and resituate individuals' self-perception, Lave and Wenger observe:

> Peripheral participation is about being located in the social world. *Changing* locations and perspectives are part of actors' learning trajectories, developing identities, and forms of membership. Furthermore, legitimate peripherality is a complex notion, implicated in social structures involving relations of power. As a place in which one moves toward more-intensive participation, peripherality is an empowering position. (Lave and Wenger, 1998: 36)

As our practice developed, we each moved towards full participation on increasingly equal terms with one another as our skill and knowledge increased. Wenger highlights the effect of participation within a community of practice on identity, by stating 'The formation of a community of practice is also the negotiation of identities'. (Wenger, 1998: 149) furthering my contention that it was through this group that relationships were 'tried on' (Small, 1998b) and our individual perceptions of role and musical identity were altered.

I move now to further analyse and define these relationships within the concept of dialogic interaction, a concept which, I suggest, provides an alternative way of conceptualising partnership within the music classroom.

6.3.4 Dialogic interaction - The pursuit of real partnership

Through the musicking within the ukulele community of practice, new relationships between the teachers and musicians came into being, along with subjective shifts for each of us in relation to our roles and titles within the study. The teachers, equipped with the technical skill on an instrument that they believed was key to being 'musical', increasingly began to exercise agency over the content of the study in the ways already described. As a result, the power relations of title, role and musical expertise that existed prior to this musicking experience gradually became less obvious, enabling a more egalitarian state of affairs to begin to emerge.

It was here, at the mid-point of the seven-month study that the possibility of a '*real*' partnership between musicians and teachers became evident and potentially achievable. I am still cautious of using the term 'partnership', given my critique of the concept threading throughout this thesis. The term 'relationship' remains most apt, given the relevance of that term in the Smallian sense as realized through musicking. However, the task I had set myself for my doctoral research was to identify a model of equitable partnership within music education between teacher and musician that could enable an increase in teacher musical confidence.

Analysis of the three themes already discussed in this chapter shows that the way in which I have interrogated my field study using the Smallian lens of musicking and relationships, along with the demonstration that the teachers were able to critically question their preconceptions of their own musicality and reconceive of themselves as artists within their own classrooms as a *result* of this approach, constitute a critical pedagogy along the lines of Brazilian theorist Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Freire, [1970] 1996). Freire argues that through critical pedagogy powerful, dominant cultural structures (in the context of my study, ideological state apparatuses such as the National Curriculum for music, cultural discourses, commonly held perceptions on musicality and professional titles) may be transcended. In an article applying the concept of critical pedagogy to music education, Abrahams states that:

> Music education is political. There are issues of power and control inside the music classroom, the school building, and the community. Those in power make decisions about what is taught, how often classes meet, how much money is allocated to each school subject or program, and so forth. Those who use critical pedagogy are able to transcend the constraints that those in power place on them. They do this in their classrooms by acknowledging that children come to class with knowledge from the outside world and, as such, that their knowledge needs to be honoured and valued. (Abrahams, 2007: 229)

What Abrahams describes is the recognition and valuing of pupil knowledge and their ability to use that knowledge to be creators of both knowledge and art. This is, in essence, pupil agency and the foundation for the Smallian concept of 'children as artists'. For Freire himself, the main feature of a critical pedagogy is dialogical relationship between teachers and pupils:

> Every human being, no matter how 'ignorant' or submerged in the 'culture of silence'

> he may be, is capable of looking critically at his world in a dialogical encounter with others. Provided with the proper tools for such an encounter, he can gradually perceive his personal and social reality as well as the contradictions in it, become conscious of his own perception of that reality, and deal critically with it. (Freire, 1996: 14)

In opposition to what he terms the 'banking concept of education' (Freire, 1996), Freire puts forth the idea that an education that liberates is about reconciliation of the semantic and cultural binary positions of the roles of teacher and student:

> Education must begin with the solution of the teacher-student contradiction, by reconciling the poles of the contradiction so that both are simultaneously teachers *and* students. (Freire, 1996: 53)

In the same way that I have extended the Smallian vision of children as artists by reapplying it to teachers, I now propose that Freire's proposition of the potential to transcend cultural constraints through a reconciliatory, dialogic relationship between teacher and pupil, in which the lived experiences of both are privileged, can be repurposed as it was within my study, to create an equal foundation for actual partnership between teacher and musician in the context of my study. In my study it was through a dialogic relationship in which the teachers and musicians shared equally honoured knowledge and agency, and crucially, in which we musicked *together* in the ukulele group and classrooms, new possibilities for teachers' musical self-perception and more broadly, for music education emerged.

In due course I will look further into the examples of our working together and the teacher interviews in order to highlight the features of dialogic interaction within my study and elucidate the partnership model drawn from this experience. Firstly, I will provide a brief overview on the concept of dialogic teaching and learning and its relevance in contemporary educational thought and practice.

Dialogic teaching and learning

Over the past decade, a substantial body of work has emerged on dialogic teaching within education and music education. The work of Alexander ([2004]/2006) encouraged a 'rethinking' of 'classroom talk', which has led to a focus in education on the primacy of 'pupil voice'. Alexander defines dialogic teaching as:

> First, dialogic teaching reflects a view that knowledge and understanding come from testing evidence, analyzing ideas and exploring values, rather than unquestioningly

> accepting somebody else's certainties […] Dialogic teaching harnesses the power of talk to engage children, stimulate and extend their thinking, and advance their learning and understanding. Not all classroom talk secures these outcomes, and some may even discourage them. (Alexander, 2006: 32-38)

The resonances with the critical pedagogy of Freire are clear here. However, the somewhat 'fashionable' nature of dialogic teaching and pupil voice in recent years has arguably endangered the concepts to some extent, in that the terms are often used in educational rhetoric but not always put into practice in classrooms. I would add that Alexander refers to 'dialogic teaching' but makes no mention of 'learning', thus privileging the already powerful teacher and ignoring the student, which is entirely contrary to the entire purported aim of the concept. I suggest - and will now adopt - the term 'dialogic interaction' to denote the equal position of teacher and learner in the relationship. Additionally, one might perhaps wish to avoid the oppressive connotations of the word 'harnessing' in work which is intended to emancipate. Within both of these examples, we can see once again the complexity of enacting work that seeks to break new educational ground, yet is entrenched within constrictive semantic and cultural educational traditions. As John Finney notes:

> The idea of 'pupil voice' emerged at the turn of the century, with roots in democratic schooling, the human rights of children, personalisation and school improvement. It was quickly taken up by school leaders as it became enshrined in law, and became part of whole school policy for better or worse. At best 'pupil voice' was seen as a way of improving social relationships in the school and thus forming a basis for improving the quality of pupils' learning; at worst a stick to beat the teacher with. (Finney, 2013[99])

Phillips cautions against this use of the concept of dialogue as a panacea and in pointing out that it has become a 'buzzword', brings into sharp relief the danger of its being used as a mere synonymous substitute for the also overused and misunderstood term 'partnership'. She asserts:

> In contemporary societies across the world and across different fields of social practice, dialogue has become a buzzword with a taken for granted positive value […] The capacity of dialogue to build bridges across difference lies, it is implied, in the treatment of difference as a dynamic and positive force in social processes of meaning-making rather than as an obstacle to co-existence. (Phillips, 2011: 1)

Phillips cites difference as the generally assumed positive force for engendering meaning-making through dialogue. But as discussed earlier, in my study it was within

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[99] From Finney's blog *Music Education Now.* Posted December 1st 2013.

the shared, *common* experiences and vulnerabilities that the catalyst for meaning-making existed in terms of better understanding and realizing our ideal relationships with one another through the ukulele musicking. The identification of this common 'ground' enabled dialogue that was reciprocal and equal to begin, thus forming our dialogic relationship.

Despite my earlier critique, the tenets of dialogic teaching as defined by Alexander (2006) are clearly useful to my aim of defining the tenets of an effective dialogic relationship for musician and teacher within the primary music classroom. Alexander states that the following terms and descriptors denote the key features of dialogic interaction:

> Dialogic teaching is:
>
> - *Collective*: teachers and children address learning tasks together, whether as a group or as a class;
> - *Reciprocal*: teachers and children listen to each other, share ideas and consider alternative viewpoints;
> - *Supportive*; children articulate their ideas freely, without fear of embarrassment over 'wrong' answers; and they help each other to reach common understandings;
> - *Cumulative*: teachers and children build on their own and each others' ideas and chain them into coherent lines of thinking and enquiry;
> - *Purposeful*: teachers plan and steer classroom talk with specific educational goals in view. (Alexander, 2006: 38)

Examples of these principles exist throughout the narrative description of the study contained in Chapter Four, the teacher case studies in Chapter Five, and the teachers' interview transcripts. I will now take each of these five aspects of dialogic teaching as defined by Alexander in turn and apply them to the interaction between the teachers and musicians within my study by pulling out key features and interview quotations in order to illuminate the dialogic nature of our relationships within the study.

Collective – Our interaction was collective in that we addressed the classroom musicking together. Although the directorship of this musicking tended to fall more often to me (or Kirsten), the teachers were always present and contributing in various ways. This is not a common feature of the traditional visiting musician model in which teachers often excuse themselves to attend to planning, preparation and administration. The teachers' previous experience of musicking with Mrs Piano was also not 'collective' in contrast with their interactions with me.

In interview, Ruth described her initial reaction at the very first meeting to my suggestion that we would attempt to work in partnership as appealing because of the collective, collaborative connotations of the concept. She said:

> Ruth: It sounded interesting and fun, because a partnership, when you hear 'partnership' you instantly think: 'I'm not on my own here. We're working together' and that's nice.

Additionally, the ukulele community of practice was, by its very definition, a collective enterprise (Wenger, 1998: 2) instigated by the teachers themselves.

Reciprocal – In her interview, Leanne described the reciprocity of our way of working as a 'two-way thing' and also alluded to the collective nature of our relationship and how this differed from the usual interactions with other external 'helpers' by saying:

> Leanne: Sometimes when you get helpers in school you see it as, you know if P.E. people come in the take your class and you get like a half an hour to do something else but it wasn't like that. It was very much how you're going to help us rather than, the children are obviously going to be having a good time, but it's more for *us*, to help us to be able to carry it on for our future classes. So I would say from the start we always knew that it was going to be a two-way thing.

Evidence of reciprocity can be seen in the teachers' comments on the dialogic way in which Kirsten and I interacted with the children with my own accounts in Chapter Four of watching the teachers work and my descriptions of their already dialogic pedagogies. For example, this comment from my own description of the field study baseline observation in Leanne's classroom[100]:

> *Karl's confidence to ask to sing and to request his favourite song despite having severely limited speech is evidence of Leanne having created an environment where children feel confident to contribute to class discussion.*

Leanne valued the same approach on the part of Kirsten and me of making the children feel confident to contribute in the musicking sessions, commenting:

> Leanne: When it comes to singing you and Kirsten are really good at not saying, you know, sometimes as a teacher you've got something in mind and you want to get there and when other suggestions come in that aren't going to get you to there you dismiss them. But with you, you don't, it could be, no matter how silly or whatever a suggestion is, you just go with it and I've learned to do that now rather than say: 'well no that's not what I meant'. Instead of saying 'no', you know, it's kind of like saying: 'no, well I don't care what you've got to say' if you say no to them. But now because

[100] Chapter Four, 4.4.2.

> they know everything that they say in the singing lessons is going to be taken on board they've got the confidence to just give their ideas.

I don't recall witnessing Leanne ever dismissing a child's idea and although the commitment to inviting and honouring children's ideas was certainly part of my pedagogy prior to the study, this was further influenced and consolidated by my work with the teachers at Morningside. This suggests that we each came to the study with shared approaches and ontological views of the children as agentic and that our experiences of teaching collaboratively further strengthened this element of our pedagogy and can be considered as a co-constructed pedagogy.

Instances where we shared ideas were numerous and these included ways to support particular children, ideas for repertoire linked with learning topics and ways to extend songs and activities. In illustration, I taught Patricia and her class the 'Banana Milkshake' song. From the way that she went on to use that song in relation to cross-curricular learning, I learned from her that this song could be used to introduce children to the idea of sequences and I have used this regularly to great effect in numerous primary schools since.

Supportive - When I asked Ruth in her interview to describe our relationship she specifically used the word 'supportive', along with: 'fun', 'a good laugh', 'easy' and 'open'.

Ruth regularly attended the teacher ukulele group and became quite proficient at playing to accompany a handful of children's songs. Her presence at the sessions was imperative in creating the informal atmosphere within them. At the start of the ukulele group meetings a few of the teachers attending articulated feelings of nervousness about learning to play an instrument, making mistakes or looking stupid in front of their colleagues. Ruth was vocally supportive and assumed a role of 'joker' within the group, her self-deprecation making us all laugh and reducing any worry the others might feel. This is demonstrative of the dialogic nature of our relationship within the ukulele community of practice. All were able to 'articulate their ideas freely, without fear of embarrassment over 'wrong' answers' and, in doing so, we helped 'each other to reach common understandings' (Alexander, 2006: 38) about music, music teaching

technical knowledge of the ukulele, repertoire and in relation to our own relationships and identities as Small predicts.

Cumulative- Cumulatively building on each other's ideas was also part of the reciprocity of our relationship as shown in the description of how Patricia and I used the milkshake song and they ways in which we influenced and consolidated each other's pedagogies.

The repertoire learned within the ukulele musicking was suggested based on songs we each wanted to learn, either for our own enjoyment or to use in the classroom and each new piece, led cumulatively to another suggestion for the next.

In addition, Patricia showed in interview that she was building upon what we had done together during the study when I asked her what changes, if any she would make to our way of working for future consideration. She told me:

> Patricia: I'm not too happy about, well I'm *ok* with it, but I'm not really bothered about linking what you do with *themes*. I would rather look at the *elements of music* as such, rather than say, you know: 'We're doing a topic on transport so can we have some songs about that?' I would prefer that, well say for example, that when you're doing the rocking songs I would like to know more [about why we are rocking in time to the music], and when we're doing the timed phrases. Knowing what I know now and from what you've taught me rather than us say: 'Our theme is this.' I would rather say: 'What *aspect of music* can we look at?'

The fact that Patricia *did* specifically request songs that linked to topic work as in the case of the banana milkshake song, earlier in the study, taken together with this response, suggests that the experience of the study has broadened Patricia's view of how singing and musicking more generally might exist in the primary classroom for its own sake, as opposed to applying music to support cross curricular learning. Patricia's 'confession' about not being 'too happy' with this emphasis on topic based musicking in interview conducted in the latter part of the study, as opposed to earlier on, hints again at the extended length of time that it took for her to feel that we had a dialogic relationship in which she could voice her thoughts. By the point of the interview, she felt able to share these without fear of offense and thankfully, there was still enough time remaining in the study for me to pick up on her suggestion of looking more closely at 'aspects of music'. Patricia herself commented further on feeling able to be honest with me within our relationship, commenting:

> Patricia: I mean even you know, the fact that I feel comfortable enough, because normally you know when you do these sorts of things when you're asked: 'Is there anything different to do?' we would just sort of be looking at you, watching, thinking: [assumes bored monotone] 'Oh yes, it was all wonderful. Thank you very much. Let's go'. But the fact that I can say: 'If we were to do this again can we just look at the technicalities of music rather than the topic?' I feel comfortable enough to say that to you.

This comment, in addition to both Ruth and Leanne citing 'honesty' and 'openness' as key features of what worked for them in terms of our relationship, again demonstrates reciprocity along with the importance of truthfulness within our dialogic relationship.

Purposeful – The 'steering' of the study 'with specific educational goals in view' (Alexander, ibid.) was certainly a feature of the teacher/musician relationship in this study. Overlapping with the features of reciprocity and cumulative working, along with the additionally identified feature of honesty, a case in point is Ruth's suggestions as to how we might extend our musicking to benefit areas of educational need within the classes. She said:

> Ruth: It's not, it's not a criticism it's just a thought that maybe we could move out of the classroom a bit more. For my children who are a bit more 'sparky' than the other two classes and a bit 'fizzy', that would have made it slightly easier to just keep them…although they've been great, but they do need a lot of physical activity do my class…I mean they enjoy being in the hall or going outside. That would be the only thing, only thing…Do you know what, no, no do you know what might have been nice now I think about it? Maybe if we'd mixed up the classes a bit. Because these children were two classes down in Reception and then they've been mingled into three and they do miss still the people that they were with in reception. I mean we could just say right: "I'm gonna' take…could we choose…could we just do all boys today, for this session?" Now our girls are underperforming here compared to boys and nationally it's the other way round. Now we believe it's to do with our outdoor area and the boys are really getting good upper body strength, they're climbing, their writing is much better, they've got better control of the pencil and our girls are not suffering but they're not doing as well as they could and it would've been nice to have I think now a little girly session, sing girly songs, sing girly pop songs, let's get dressed up. Do you know what I mean?

Ruth knew her children, the school, the demands of the curriculum and the surrounding environment in which the children lived in far more detail than I could ever hope to and by making such honest suggestions for ways in which to extend our work, she enriched not only the study, but my learning and understanding of the children and education in general.

The freedom to be honest, and in her own words, to 'stick her two penneth in' gave Ruth agency within the partnership that was equal to my own and to the other teachers taking part and is further indication that our relationship was truly dialogic.

In summary, the field study programme of classroom and ukulele musicking enabled the teachers to explore their relationship with me and with Kirsten as 'musicians', along with exploration of their own musical self-perception. These exploratory acts through musicking did result in shifts in the teachers' views of their own musicality and what it means to be 'musical' and although the issue of claiming the title of 'musician' remained problematic, all three became able to self-define themselves as 'musical' by the end of the study. Recognition of shared experience and vulnerability was found to be key to establishing an equal relationship in which dialogic interaction could feature. Furthermore, it was through this dialogue that the teachers and children became agents or artistic contributors to the content of the musicking.

I now arrive at the point where I will explain the model, already briefly introduced at the opening of Chapter Six – Part Two, as an initial guide to my argument.

6.3.5 The model of dialogic relationship – real partnership identified

The model of dialogic relationship through musicking is represented in Figure 5. It depicts the 'flow' of collaborative musicking of teachers and musicians, through which ideal relationships, both sound-relationships and human relationships, can be explored. Small describes these relationships as: 'a complex web' (Small, 2001: 345). He posits that at the centre of the web are the musical sound-relationships from which the inter-personal relationships between the performers and listeners radiate out and feed back (ibid). The diagram shows that if the relationships explored are found to be alienating in the way described by Green (see 6.3.2), the musical self-perception of the individual musicker remains fixed, or as we are able to see in the account given by Leanne of her musical experiences with Mrs Piano, can potentially worsen.

Conversely however, if the musicking is found to be affirming, then musical self-perception and self-definition *can* be explored and potentially enhanced. In Smallian terms, through musicking interactions, ideal relationships can be 'explored, affirmed

and celebrated' (Small 1998b: 183), while musical identities can also be explored, and potentially transformed. Also possible in instances of affirmation through musicking is the creation of the dialogic relationship.

The model conceives dialogic relationship between teacher and musician as linked to the five tenets of dialogic interaction earlier outlined. To the diagram I have also added key points of learning that arose from my experience of the field study and that inform the model itself. These are core commitments that I suggest must be made in agreement between teacher and musician *before* any musicking begins and are linked to Pugh and De'Ath's definition cited in Chapter Two of partnership which they characterize as:

> A working relationship that is characterised by a shared sense of purpose, mutual respect and the willingness to negotiate. This implies a sharing of information, responsibility, skills, decision-making and accountability. (Pugh and De'Ath, 1989: 33)

My own suggested core commitments for dialogic relationship influenced by this definition include:

The honouring of respective expertise – irrespective of role or title, both parties must recognize and accept the professional skills, knowledge and expertise of the other as being of fundamental significance in the pursuit of dialogic relationship.

Observe respective practice – I suggest that observing the teachers teach in general terms in their own classrooms on the part of the musician and the teachers then observing the musician lead musicking at the outset of any collaborative music project would inform both of the other's pedagogic style, while providing scope to identify and understand commonalities as well as differences within each other's work and role.

Share vulnerabilities and experience – The sharing of our musical 'histories' within the study provided a basis for redressing inherent power balances within the study. Although this was not done intentionally, once the teachers told me of their own experiences of fear, shame or loss, clear points of shared vulnerability and experience came into view despite our differing roles and musical identities. This, along with the ukulele community of practice was the catalyst for resituating our respective self-

perceptions, allowing for the *real* partnership to emerge. If I were to enact a similar study in the future, I would make this sharing of experience a key initial and ongoing feature of the study design.

Honesty – Cited by all three teachers as integral to the success of our relationships, honesty and openness must be a key feature of the dialogic relationship. Being able to be truthful and constructively critical without fear of causing offence, was integral to the teachers' agency within the study.

Allocate time for joint reflection – The time that Leanne and I had each week at the end of the school day before the ukulele group convened allowed for us to discuss and reflect on the day's musicking while also planning for the following week. This regular dialogue was not possible with Ruth and Pauline due to constraints on their time, but these weekly short conversations as we set out the chairs for the ukulele group meeting were crucial in establishing the particularly strong sense of partner relationship that emerged as the study progressed between Leanne and me. Linking back to Small and the lens of musicking, these discussions can be considered to be part of the musicking within the study. Although they were not musical 'acts' as such, they were crucial in terms of our developing relationship which ultimately informed the musical activity. Through these dialogues, Leanne and I were able to explicitly and implicitly negotiate and recognize our 'ideal' relationship with one another, making the musicking partnership meaningful and mutually beneficial. Given the positive effect these dialogues had in enhancing my relationship with Leanne in comparison with the (nevertheless fruitful and positive) relationships I developed with Ruth and Patricia, I propose that such reflective time be afforded within the pursuit of dialogic partnership in order to potentially maximize and enhance the musician/teacher relationship.

In addition to these five initial core commitments, the potential success of the model also depends on the time allocated to developing the relationship, and the regularity of the musicking interactions. The findings of the Music Potential study as described and discussed in Chapter One, suggest that knowledge of one another built over time and regular interaction between musicians and teachers was crucial to establishing the hallmarks of dialogic relationship contained in the diagram. This was supported by

the success of the study at Morningside which replicated the duration and frequency of visits of that first study. This indicates that a weekly, or at least fortnightly, frequency of visits to the classroom over two academic terms, although time intensive, is optimal for the development of dialogic relationships within which equality, familiarity, cordial feeling, honesty and trust can flourish.

6.3.6 The potential effect of the model on teacher musical-self perception

The way of working that this model of partnership represents had clear implications for the musical self-perceptions of the teachers at Morningside and for Sally in the earlier Music Potential study. Taking the cases of Leanne, Ruth, Patricia and the earlier example of Sally in the Music Potential study, all entered into a music teaching partnership (with me) considering themselves to be musically 'deficit' to differing degrees, yet the musical confidence of all was transformed through a rebalancing of power and the dissipation of hierarchical role and title through the identification of ideal relationships in and through our musicking. Ruth found herself with a new 'angle' on the 'best ways to physically teach music' and also believed as a result of the study that it is not necessary to play an instrument to be a musician. Echoing this, Patricia's interview revealed that she conceived of the human voice as a legitimate instrument possessed by everyone[101]. Thus it can be seen that through the dialogic relationship, teachers *were* able to find space 'between' the binary of 'musical' and 'non-musical'.

For Leanne, the transformation occurred most effectively as a result of the ukulele community of practice as she gained musical skill, agency and confidence. As the balance of power between us altered to become more equal, Leanne's musical self-perception also altered, becoming able to accept herself as 'a little bit of a musical person now'. Through our musicking and the consequent dialogic relationship developed, Leanne and I moved from what Draves (2008) defines as the 'Student/Teacher' relationship, a dynamic that preserves a relationship of dependency as discussed in Chapter Two (2.2 and Fig. 2) along the continuum to the more equal relationship of 'Collaborative partnership'.

Leanne's move towards self-definition and thus power in Smallian terms (Small,

[101] See Chapter Five for these responses in full.

2001) can be seen through the application of her own verbal assessments of her musicality to an adaptation of Draves's (2008) *Power Sharing Continuum*.

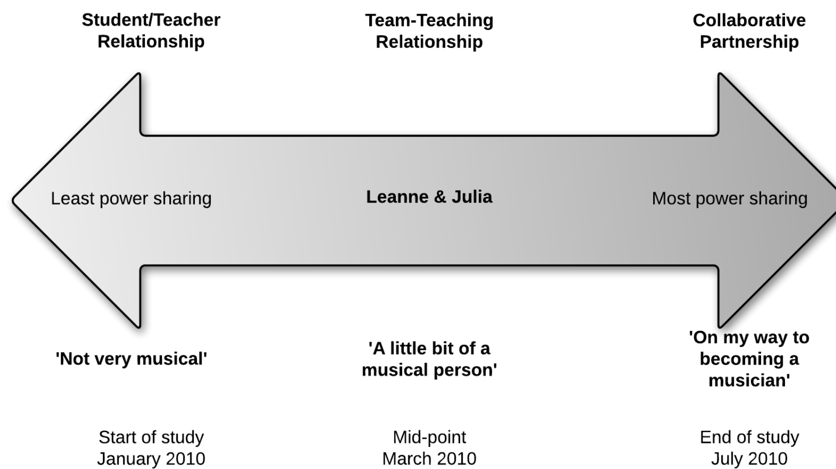

Figure 6: 'Teacher musical self-perception power sharing continuum' based on Draves's 'Power Sharing Continuum of Cooperating Music Teachers' (Draves, 2008).

This example, along with the numerous accounts contained within this chapter of the changing relationships between musicians and teachers as a result of our musicking makes it evident that the study was successful in resituating the musical self-perception of the three primary teachers towards one in which they were able to feel musically confident and artistically agentic.

However, as can be seen from the complexities of the relationships examined in this chapter, along with the recognition of the author that such successful relationships are dependent on additional factors such as the personalities of teachers and musicians, the proposed model of partnership is no 'quick fix' to the problem of pervasive levels of low musical confidence among primary teachers. Leanne, Ruth and Pauline's musical confidence was raised within the study but none of them would confidently claim now to be a 'musician' or that they could match my technical vocal skill. Small provides us with reassurance in this matter by proposing that 'we can always get a glimpse of beauty' if the performer 'is doing his honest best' (1998a: 71). He extends this comment on quality and beauty by proffering his 'Law of Quality in Musicking'

(2006: 14) which he describes as:

> The best musicking is done by those who do the best they can with what they have. According to this law, the eager beginner can make performances of finer quality than the bored routinized professional. It is not, as some people have suggested to me, a recipe for smug mediocrity. Rather, it reminds us that we are musicking from the first moment we open our mouths to sing or when we lay our hand on our first instrument, and from those first moments the act of musicking is functioning to empower us to explore, to affirm and above all to celebrate that precious sense of who we are. (Small, 2006: 14)

Coming full circle to return to Small's concept of artistry over consumerism, it is the privileging of *process* over product that teachers and musicians should concern themselves with. Acquisition of virtuosic technical musical skill takes a great deal of time and is, as Small suggests, not necessary in the pursuit of 'finer quality' musicking. I find resonance here with the words of Sybil Marshall, pioneer of creative educational approaches and child-centred learning, who claims:

> Infants learn by imitation and are quick to do so. They must be fed in the earliest stages with nothing but the best, and plenty of it. Their daily meat must be folk-tales and stories, nursery rhymes and jingles, songs and endless conversation. (Marshall, 1963: 103)

The overarching impetus for the study and for my own daily work as a music educator is to ensure equality of musical opportunity for as many children as possible, attempting to disrupt the cycle of socially constructed attitudes that ascribe musicality to the few and not to all. These attitudes are picked up and as Marshall suggests, imitated by children. What is of prime importance in the context of primary school music education is that children are offered opportunities to music and to explore, affirm and celebrate their own identities and ideal relationships by teachers who are confident and able to, as Small says, 'do the best with what they have' in musical terms. In the following chapter I will propose ways in which the findings of this study might influence further work that may make this a realistic prospect.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion

7.1 Answering the research questions

My research aimed to develop a model of partnership which resituates teachers as self-perceived competent musickers. The findings of the study overall strongly indicate that the classroom musicking between teachers, musicians and children *was* successful in supporting the development of dialogic relationships between teachers and musicians.

The insights presented in the previous chapter respond to my initial research question: *'In what ways might the relationship between primary class teacher and visiting musician be better understood, developed and enhanced in order that the teacher's musical potential may best be realized?'* in that they contribute to a greater understanding of the ways in which relationships between visiting musicians and teachers can potentially contribute to the remusicalization of teachers. Additionally, however, the findings also show how, in some instances, the teacher/musician relationship might conversely serve to reinforce traditional music education models of practice that locate teachers as dependent consumers of music packages and of the external input of 'specialists' which may further alienate and demusicalize them.

In answer to the second research question: '*what are the crucial aspects of this model of partnership?*' a model of dialogic relationship has been constructed, and propositions for ways in which this model might be used for future research and music education projects will be discussed presently.

The musicking within the study, particularly the ukulele group musicking, was found to have affirmed and celebrated the ideal relationships of teachers and musicians in the Smallian sense (1998b) and this facilitated the repositioning of teachers as active agents of musicking in their own classrooms. This being so, the study had a positive effect on teachers' musical self-perceptions and also on their ability to self-define as increasingly musical, demonstrating, in answer to my third research question: *Does this model of partnership positively affect teachers' perceived and actual musical competence, and their music teaching confidence?* that the proposed dialogic

partnership model *can* potentially achieve this outcome.

7.2 New insights

7.2.1 'Hearing' one another: towards dialogue

Both in the Music Potential study and in the far more intensive investigation that formed my own field study, what is striking and what has not been revealed in any of the related literature to date, is my discovery that teachers who self-define as being musically unconfident at the outset of such studies appear initially unable to 'hear' what the musician is saying about classroom musicking with the children. This inability to transcend barriers created by commonly accepted notions of 'expertise' and what it means to be musical can be detected in Sally's reflection on her visceral response to the early musical content of the pilot study, which I repeat here in support of this key finding:

> I know from documentary evidence that we were taught some basic singing techniques and some songs that we could use as an initial repertoire. However, my recollection of this session is dominated by memories of my feelings of insecurity. Singing like the specialists seemed an impossible task and I could not empathize with their confidence. My perception of them was that they were 'musicians', while I was not, and that only being a musician enabled you to teach music effectively […] This insecurity and apprehension appears to have overridden any sense of learning during this session on my part. (Bremner, 2013: 102)

This experience was clearly replicated in my extended study, with the teachers initially giving tacit and overt cues that (of course unintentionally) 'blocked' my early intentions to share expertise; in response, I then tended to revert to traditional, hierarchical approaches of me doing things *for* the teachers and remaining in the role of leader in the early part of the field study.

A key area of unexpected learning for me was how complex it was to break away from these more typical approaches and the length of time it took to do so. I make specific note of this here to again illuminate the entrenched nature of attitudes in primary education and music education towards the ways in which visiting musicians are expected to work in the classroom. Even with my intention from the outset being entirely contrary to the doing things *for* teachers, along with my previous experience of the pilot study and our spoken intentions in the first meeting in 2009 that the

teachers and I would work *together* in a different way, it was still difficult to make this a reality while simultaneously protecting the teachers' fragile musical confidence.

My findings show that through the establishment of relationships between musicians and teachers bearing the tenets of my proposed dialogic relationship, the teachers gradually became receptive to the possibility of repositioning themselves as 'musical' and could conceive of their own professional knowledge and expertise as artistically valid and on a par with that of the musicians. Such a repositioning of attitudes within the primary classroom, filtered as they are to children who Mills calls 'the teachers of tomorrow' (Mills, 1994: 6), has potential for the wider disruption of commonly held, dominant cultural assumptions of what it means to be musical and who has the right to music.

7.2.2 Relocating power

Disruption of these notions of expertise and musical talent, coupled with a teacher who feels competent and confident with regard to their own musical skill and creative agency, leads to far less reliance on curriculum as expressed in the consumerist, pre-prepared, packaged material with which schools are inundated. The visiting musician commonly leaves behind packaged resources, such as CDs and songbooks in the 'traditional' model of primary music education. As Patricia's request for my lesson plans[102] demonstrates, such written and recorded material can act as a useful aide memoir for teachers, ensuring that repertoire and ideas can be used in future with reduced risk of them being forgotten. However, Leanne and Ruth's recollections of the use of songbooks in their musicking with Mrs Piano[103] show how reliance on 'hard-copy' resources can act to further alienate and demusicalize teachers in the absence of dialogue with someone who can offer guidance on how to use such objects in action.

The repertoire used within the field study often acted as 'sketches'[104], a song or musical activity that can be easily altered in order to incorporate teacher's and children's ideas, language and facilitate artistic agency. Due to the flexibility of this

[102] See Chapter Four, 4.5.3.
[103] See Chapters Five and Six.
[104] I attribute the term 'sketch' in this context to my colleague Brendan Murphy.

kind of repertoire, each song or activity could be adapted in multiple ways, ensuring that the teachers themselves could differentiate songs to meet the needs of future classes, rendering them far less reliant on external resources in order to learn new songs to match different topics and areas of children's interest. Evidence of the teachers at Morningside doing just this can be found in the description of the final concert[105]. The selection of the concert programme by the teachers from our shared repertoire, incorporating their own devised dance routines and costumes, represented a co-produced performance that did not rely on externally pre-written and purchased proforma. During this concert, the teachers were scaffolded in the Vygotskyian sense (Berk and Winsler, 2002) by the musicians but once this first performance had been successfully presented, they were able to, and did go on to, develop future concerts for parents without reliance on either our support or resources that they could not create for themselves.

I propose that such a move away from dependency of the consumption of pre-packaged musical resources towards musicking activities that are directed and co-created by teachers and children represents a certain level of reduction of the power exerted in schools by the curriculum and those who impose it. Therefore, the dialogic model put forward in this thesis serves as an alternative to teacher reliance on pre-produced repertoire and music teaching packages.

In terms of power, my study also gives insight into the hierarchies inherent between researcher and research. As discussed in Chapter Three, my negative experience of *being* researched correlated with the teachers' experiences of previous music projects in which they felt vulnerable and musically alienated. My shared experience of such feelings influenced my research design and the selection of narrative inquiry as research method. Through the equal credence in terms of meaning given within this thesis of the teacher's and my own 'stories' I present narrative inquiry as a useful approach to redressing issues of hierarchy and power within qualitative research approaches.

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[105] See Chapter Four, 4.5.4.

7.2.3 Contributing factors to the successful realization of dialogic relationships in this study

Time

The study spanned a period of seven months, within which time I visited the school weekly for the first month and then weekly or occasionally fortnightly in negotiation with the teachers in relation to other demands on their teaching time. In interview Ruth identified the duration of the study and the regularity with which we musicked as integral to her sense of our dialogic relationship by saying:

> Ruth: Because I just think we've got to know each other, because it's been for so many weeks. Yeah! If it had just been: 'Oh look we're coming in for one day a term or blah de blah de blah' but because you're here *every* week you've got to know the children really well, you've got to know us really well and we know you really well!

Ruth also identified that it was 'a couple of weeks in' that she realized working with me would be a more equal experience than those of previous music projects. This was supported by Leanne and corroborates the findings of the pilot project outlined in Chapter One that relationships that felt 'safe' and cooperative between teachers and musicians were established within the first four weeks of working together. What took longer in both studies was the re-balancing of agency and expertise of both teachers and musicians to form an equal grounding for the development of dialogic relationships, this taking up to eight weeks in the pilot and a similar period of eight to ten weeks in my later field study[106].

It can be surmised therefore that the length of time spent getting to know one another and the regularity with which the teachers and musicians musicked together were important factors in the development of dialogic relationships in this context. Wenger supports the crucial role that time plays in the establishment of communities of practice such as ours. He explains:

> The development of practice takes time, but what defines a community of practice in its temporal dimension is not just a matter of a specific minimum amount of time. Rather it is a matter of sustaining enough mutual engagement in pursuing an enterprise together to share some specific learning. From this perspective, *communities of practice can be thought of as shared histories of learning*. (Original italics. Wenger, 1998: 24)

[106] See Chapter Four, 4.5.2 for description of this.

Head teacher support

In an article on primary music education de Vries (2015: 220) points out the crucial influence of the head teacher in supporting primary teachers to teach music effectively. Without Enid's support and approval of my field study, it would have been very difficult not only to gain such frequent access to the teachers and their classrooms, but also to encourage the teachers to participate. Primary school teachers have a great many demands on their time and therefore, making space to music regularly, learn to play the ukulele, chat with a visiting musician/researcher and be interviewed would undoubtedly have been difficult at times for the three teachers. However, the support Enid offered, both in terms of creating an environment in school in which music was a valued activity and in ensuring the teachers could be afforded the necessary time to spend with me and Kirsten, ensured the adequate 'mutual engagement' identified by Wenger for developing our community of practice and through it, our dialogic relationships.

Ukulele community of practice

The ukulele community of practice was not an intended part of my research design. Rather, it was instigated by the teachers as a result of both their identification of learning to play an instrument as important in their reconceptualization of themselves as musical and their emerging agency over the study and its content.

The shared experience of legitimate peripheral participation (Lave and Wenger, 1998) as novices, regardless of whether our professional titles were 'musician' or 'teacher' appears to have been an important lever in the study in terms of redressing the pre-existing musical hierarchy and resituating the teachers into positions in which they were able to 'hear' and fully embrace the more equal way of working I was attempting to establish.

The success of the ukulele group in promoting the teachers' musical self-perception and confidence adds further credence to Small's call for musicking 'in the present' (1996: 200) and to the corresponding work of Conway and Finney (2003) and Dogani (2008) who propose that teachers learning to teach music do so most effectively when through active music making experiences.

7.3 Outstanding tensions relating to the research

7.3.1 Shared experience

In Chapter Six I discuss my recognition of collective vulnerability (Jordanger, 2015) that is, the shared experience between the teachers and myself and the role this played in the study and the consequent development of the model of dialogic partnership. In the context of this study, the shared experience was the fear of being judged 'unmusical' as a result of 'missing' musical knowledge. However, this would of course not be the same for everyone adopting the dialogic relationship model. There are different kinds of lacking confidence and different vulnerabilities depending on the subjective experience and ontology of each individual. In clarification, it is not the recognition and comparison of negative experience and emotion between participants in pursuit of dialogic relationship that is important, but rather an exploration and discussion of what they *share in common,* be it positive or negative.

I did not call on my shared experience with the teachers outright in that I did not converse with them about it, most likely out of concern for saving professional 'face', which is in itself telling about how deep issues of musical hierarchy go within all of us, musician and teacher alike. In hindsight, I see this as a missed opportunity for perhaps deepening our relationships and for challenging their perceptions of me as 'expert' and unfailingly musically confident early in the study. To do so would also have further undermined the accepted notions of talent that I seek to dispel.

Furthermore, dialogic interaction relies on each participant adopting a sympathetic, non-judgmental position from which they attempt to understand each other's point of view, regardless of social group, professional role or depth of musical knowledge. Small exemplifies this within the context of musicking as:

> […] it is not necessary to belong to a given social group in order to enjoy its musicking; were this not so, no traffic whatsoever could take place between cultures. What is necessary, however, is for the outside participant to feel some empathy with the people whose musicking it is, to feel some comprehension of and sympathy with their values, even if that sympathy is not fully conscious. (Small, 1998a: 74-75)

I would argue that creation of this mutually sympathetic environment in fact requires unambiguous consensus at the outset and commitment for the duration of working together to being explicit about expectations, 'ideal' relationships and looking at

commonalities as well as difference. As a result, I have highlighted this sharing of experience at the outset as being key within the model of dialogic partnership.

7.3.2 Small's call for music to be removed from school

Having used Small's work heavily to inform and interpret the study, I must address his call towards the end of his life that to take music out of the school curriculum 'would do more good than harm to the pupils' experience' (Small, 2010: 287) counter as this is to my study that aims to enable music to be taught and learned at primary level. It is clear, given the advocacy for the importance of music in children's lives threaded throughout his work and particularly within *Music, Society, Education* (1996) that such a statement must be in response to the persistence of the consumer model of education over the forty year period in which Small wrote his critiques.

I cannot support the removal of music entirely from school however. In my work as a music educator I meet many very young children for whom musicking out of school is confined only to the music of TV, radio and toys. While in Smallian terms listening to these are indeed instances of musicking, they do not necessarily involve interaction with other people. Sadly, it is not uncommon for me to meet young children arriving at school aged four, for whom even the most common nursery rhyme is unfamiliar. No one sings to or with them at home and the possibility of identifying their own musicality and enjoyment of music is limited. Generally speaking, these children are disadvantaged in socio-economic terms. Such circumstances make the perpetuation of music as only for the 'musical' (and therefore, read 'affluent') all the more likely and limiting to children's potential. As previously cited Small himself describes how these kind of 'messages' are passed on to children and the cyclical myth of musicality continues on.

While it may first appear that my work (based as it is within school) and ontological stance are at odds with his statement, I find congruence in Small's use of the word 'curriculum' in this instance. I agree with him that the way in which the National Curriculum currently dictates musical learning is not optimal and is more likely to alienate children and teachers' ideal relationships than to affirm and celebrate them. Indeed, my field study confirms this. However, as explicated above, the study *subverted* the power of the curriculum by resituating the teachers and children as

agentic, competent and creative musickers. In this way, the study can be conceived of as an alternative to taking music out of school and circumventing the control and domination of both the curriculum and musical 'experts'.

7.4 Legacy

I returned to Morningside four years after the study to spend two afternoons in Leanne's classroom both to observe musicking and to participate in it. The purpose of these visits was to see how sustainable the study might have been. By this point, Patricia had retired and Ruth was acting as a support teacher across the school rendering her unavailable on the dates that I visited.

Leanne had continued to confidently music daily with her classes in the intervening four years and was still playing her ukulele regularly both as part of classroom musicking and for her own pleasure. In Leanne's view, the study, and our relationship within it, enabled the children to develop their musical confidence as a direct result of the increased opportunities they had to develop their singing and pre-instrumental skills, saying in interview in 2010:

> Leanne: For instance when we had our Year Two leavers' concert, they were my last class and you could see the difference in them, in *their* singing ability compared to when we did our concert [in the field study] and our Year One singing ability [study class groups], the difference, you could see it. So, now they're going up into Year Two, they're already at that good stage because we've got them there but now we can, me and the other Year One teachers, we can get the Year coming up to that standard without you because you've taught us how to do it. So therefore, it's impacting on the entire school, rather than just one class.

The sense of 'partnership' and also of her own agency is evident in Leanne's use of the phrase 'because *we've* got them there'.

Because of demands on Leanne's time, it was not possible for me to interview her at length during the follow-up visits but we did talk informally during which she told me that although she could now feel confident leading musicking with her class independently, she valued the opportunity to have me 'drop in' occasionally. She felt that meeting with me once a term, or even less frequently, would help to keep her 'inspired' in terms of ideas for new activities and songs. While she was now equipped to adapt repertoire with the children, she missed having me to 'bounce ideas' around

with. She, Ruth and Francesca did share ideas in a community of practice but opportunities for doing so were limited and the ukulele group had disbanded by this point due to pressures on teachers' time. What Leanne felt was crucial to keeping the momentum of the musicking going was 'fresh inspiration' along with 'protected time' for teachers to keep developing their musical practice. Music remained high on this school's agenda as Enid continued to encourage her staff to sing with their classes. However, Leanne's insight that regular investment of time to enable staff to sustain a musical community of practice reveals that even in schools were music is a valued activity, making time for teachers to continually develop their musical skills and ideas is challenging, often giving way to assessments, supporting student teachers on placement, paperwork and the 'core' subjects of the National Curriculum.

Small suggests that ideal relationships are 'brought into existence for as long as the performance lasts' (1998a: 70). The dialogic relationships that existed between the musicians and teachers in the field study and in the Music Potential pilot have nonetheless persisted beyond the duration of the musicking. In the cases of Sally, Ruth and Leanne, I have developed personal friendships in parallel with ongoing professional relationships in which we can consult with each other on educational and musical matters reciprocally. These relationships far outlast any others I have with teachers that I have worked with on any other music education projects over the past twelve years. This indicates the long-lasting potential for the dialogic model proposed in this thesis for ongoing professional partnership in its *truest* sense.

The legacy of the study on my own professional practice is a greater awareness of the usefulness of acknowledging shared experience with teachers when attempting to challenge underlying hierarchy in the music classroom. My experience of being researched greatly informed my subsequent practice as a researcher concerned with the ethical implications of research into musical confidence and the potential negative effect this can have on research participants. Additionally, working in equal dialogue with the teachers at Morningside increased my knowledge of wider educational issues and debates, not least the pressures teachers face in terms of meeting the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum in schools where there is a high level of socio-economic disadvantage. I learned to play the ukulele alongside the teachers to a

far better standard than I ever expected I could and this served as reparation for many of my own deeply held feelings of musical self-doubt discussed in earlier chapters.

7.5 Future research

The long-term relationships that I have with Leanne, Ruth and Sally offer a potential longitudinal extension of this research. I have maintained contact with all three teachers and continue to 'check-in' with them about how they feel in relation to their musical confidence. This may lend itself to future research that explores the longer-term effects of the dialogic model of partnership and the implications of this for primary music education.

The model of dialogic relationship provided seems to afford a strong generalizability to the music classroom given the well-documented existing teacher attitudes towards their own musicality and towards the musician expert who visits, and overall structural similarities in school structure and conduct. The model itself may well be generalizable to other forms of partnership beyond the field of music education; however, my main recommendation at this point would be that the proposed model be adopted by other music education researchers, musicians working in primary schools and the teachers with whom they are working. In this way, it might be further 'tested' and additional insights found concerning into how it works beyond the circumstances of this study. This in turn will provide a greater insight into the generalizability of the model and its possible implications.

7.6 A Final Comment

It is not enough for teachers and musicians to simply enter into a benign, well-meant relationship. The defining tenets of dialogic interaction as contained in the model proposed (Fig. 4) would need to be adhered to and all entering into the relationship able to agree to maintain the core commitments and any additional commitments depending on the individual circumstances. While the dialogic relationship model cannot be regarded as a 'recipe' to follow in certainty of arriving at a true, equal partnership, I would nevertheless propose that successful dialogic relationships between musician and teacher will always require both a fundamental understanding

and recognition of the embedded nature of hierarchy in the musician/teacher relationship and also continuous effort to reallocate power and expertise to all within that relationship. It is therefore not a simple task to undertake this model but I suggest that for musicians, music educators and teachers, an exploration of this model of dialogic relationship will serve the interests of challenging the power and control of 'experts' and the National Curriculum, and the interests of reclaiming of the musicality of both teachers and children – that is, of remusicalizing teachers, and ensuring that children are *never* demusicalized by school music. As Small tells us, our 'job as music teachers is to treasure and encourage that creativity and that musicality which is part of the universal human birthright' (Small, 1990: 5).

Epilogue

Excerpt from my reflective diary – June 22nd 2010

The children in all three classes are becoming increasingly confident and enthusiastic musical performers. Leanne has created a 'stage' in the role-play area of her classroom. It is very impressive, with a raised platform big enough for five or six children at a time with a 'spangly' backcloth and cardboard microphone stands. She has arranged a box of instruments nearby including triangles, a ukulele, shakers and plastic microphones that make the children's voices reverberate when they make sounds into them. There was quite a crowd in this area when we arrived this afternoon!

Three boys in Patricia's class are now a 'boy band' and they demonstrated this on entering and leaving the classroom today by singing and dancing (with impressive choreographed routines) together. We discussed this with Patricia and she thinks that the children's aspirations in relation to singing and the image of singing as a 'cool' activity have increased partly because of the amount of daily singing that they now do in school and partly because of the recent success of Joe McElderry, (a local resident) winning the X-Factor.

We found out today that Ruth has been playing her ukulele and singing with the children when we are not there. She hadn't told us this but we found out from Anna (the child requiring Karen's support in order to engage in musicking). The minute we arrived, she came to show us her 'ukulele' that she has made herself from a cereal box with a hole cut out of the middle and four elastic bands stretched across it. When we asked her questions about it, she told us she 'wanted to play like Mrs Curry' [Ruth]. Anna has even drawn her own scribbled SpongeBob Squarepants on the side of her ukulele to imitate Ruth's instrument.

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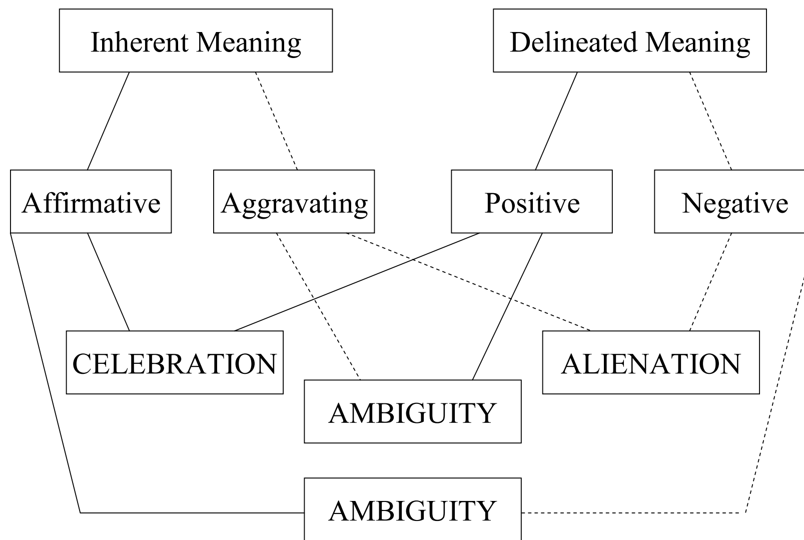
Appendix 1



'Dialectical musical experience' adapted from Green, 1988: 138 and Green, 1997: 133 and 251.