Autonomy and the instrumental music teacher: negotiating culture in professional practice

Boyle, Kerry

Autonomy and the instrumental music teacher: negotiating culture in professional practice.

Kerry Boyle

Canterbury Christ Church University

North Holmes Rd Canterbury CT1 1QU

kerrymboyle1@hotmail.co.uk

Abstract

This study provides valuable insights concerning the nature of professional practice in instrumental teachers working in a range of professional contexts in the UK. Using Bourdieu's conceptual tools of habitus, field and capital, the analysis explores the way in which individuals negotiate the field of instrumental music education, revealing high levels of professional autonomy and specific understandings of the role of the contemporary professional musician. The findings demonstrate the extent to which musicians' understandings and practices are culturally determined and perpetuated, highlighting the relationship between specific aspects of the field of instrumental teaching and learning and understandings of professional identity. The perception and experience of professional identity revealed in this study suggest a need to revise understandings of the role and identity of the professional musician in the context of contemporary portfolio careers in music. Using an explanatory sequential research design to combine data from a national survey of instrumental teachers with findings from eighteen individual case study interviews and one focus group, the research prioritises the lived experience of participants in generating understanding of professional lives and identities in this context.

Introduction

Instrumental music teachers working in the UK are not subject to regulation and can teach in a range of formal and non-formal contexts including schools, colleges, universities, conservatoires, music centres, private rented studios, and the teacher's own homes (Hallam and Gaunt 2012). Literature in the field suggests that the diverse nature of teaching in this professional context renders the practice difficult to access (Gaunt 2005), and existing research examines the practice and perceptions of professionals working as instrumental teachers in specific and relatively accessible contexts such as music services, universities and conservatoires rather than in the broader field of peripatetic instrumental teaching (Mills 2004c, Bernard 2005, Baker 2005). This study therefore addresses the need for research in this area through examination of the experience of professionals working as instrumental music teachers in multiple contexts across the UK, including a range of institutional and social situations. The study reflects practice in this field by exploring the experience and perceptions of those working in a broad range of professional contexts rather than limiting the scope to specific geographical, professional or institutional locations and contexts (Hallam and Gaunt 2012, ABRSM 2014, Pitts 2012, Creech 2010). The study introduces valuable insights into the professional lives and identities of instrumental music teachers which challenge existing assumptions regarding professional practice and identity in this context. Survey findings and case study interviews reveal a complex approach to professional identity in the portfolio career in music, determined by high levels of personal and professional autonomy and specific understandings of the role identity 'musician'.

This article presents aspects of a larger research project concerning the development of professional identity in instrumental music teachers which was submitted as a doctoral thesis in 2018. The aim of the thesis was to explore the nature of routes into instrumental teaching in the UK and to assess the influence of the culture of music and music education on understandings and expressions of professional identity in this community of practice.

The research study uses an explanatory sequential design involving a national survey of instrumental teachers to generate data relating to broader trends and experiences, which are then explored and explained through the perceptions and experiences of individual case studies and a focus group of instrumental teachers. The analysis adopts elements of Bourdieu's theoretical approach, using the notions of habitus, field and capital to explore the way in which individuals negotiate and develop identities through the culture of music education (Burnard,

Hofvander Trulsson and Soderman 2015). The study proposes an alternative understanding of individual experience in this context, where individuals enjoy high levels of professional autonomy in portfolio careers in music and demonstrate an adaptive, personal and highly individual approach to professional identity, including specific understandings of the meaning of 'musician' as a role identity.

Instrumental teaching in the UK

Instrumental musicians working in the UK are able to progress from the role of student to instrumental teacher with no formal training, perpetuating methods and techniques potentially acquired in an apprenticeship model of tuition in a range of professional contexts (Triantafyllaki 2010, Mills 2007, Burwell 2012). Individuals working as instrumental teachers commonly provide specialist tuition in a variety of contexts and in a range of styles and teaching arrangements including individual lessons, small group and /or large group tuition and ensemble direction. Teaching can be arranged on a freelance or employed basis or most commonly, a combination of both. The routes and experiences involved in becoming teacher in the UK is a subject area which has generated little research, possibly because of the inherently individual and diverse nature of the process and varied working patterns of those involved. While private or studio based instrumental teachers can experience greater levels of professional autonomy than those working as classroom teachers in mainstream education, the predominantly one to one nature of studio based tuition and absence of training and regulation have led to perceptions of this aspect of the profession as a 'secret garden' (Gaunt 2005; Young, Burwell and Pickup 2003) where teaching is reliant on 'self- devised strategies, common sense and tradition' (Persson 1996, p.25).

Literature in this field suggests conflict related to the hierarchical nature of instrumental music education and notions of professional status in musicians, where the focus on the development of advanced practical skills determines notions of success and therefore influences perceptions of the status of professional roles in music (Bernard 2005, Roberts 2004). Studies of identity in this context suggest that the professional status of instrumental teachers is linked to notions of teachers as 'failed performers', resulting in a rejection of the teacher identity and preference for performer or musician identity (Roberts 2007, Bouij 2007). Representations of the professional options available to instrumental musicians typically idealise the performance career and allocate lesser status to the role of teaching. This approach is highlighted in the following analysis of the career choices available to instrumentalists from Bouij (2004):

'a good performer possesses what the student culture cherishes as the most valuable gift. If the student strives for the performer role-identity but can't reach this position, he has two ways to withdraw with some dignity. First, he can proclaim that he is an all-round musician, a broad musician, that means that he is not so well specialised but can play in a couple of styles or can play more than one instrument quite well. The other way is to declare that you are first and foremost a teacher' (Bouij 2004, p. 8-9).

This portrayal suggests specific cultural understandings in relation to the role – identity of instrumental teachers and proposes that individual autonomy in this context is restricted by a limited range of available options. Here, the role identity of teacher is evidently subordinate to that of performer and there appears to be little representation of the most common career model where musicians combine multiple professional roles in portfolio careers (Bennett 2008, Hallam and Creech 2010, Creech 2010, Bennett 2016). The choices described by Bouij are framed in understandings of the instrumental teacher as 'failed performer', and while there is some recognition of autonomy in this representation, the analysis provides only the most simplistic view of individual agency and autonomy in this context. This research aims to interrogate these suggestions through the experience and perceptions of instrumental music teachers working in a range of professional contexts in the UK and to examine suggested conflicts between identities where musicians balance the role of teacher with other professional roles in music (Mills 2007, Bernard 2005).

Bourdieu's notions of Habitus, Field and Capital

The use of Bourdieu's approach as an analytical lens highlights the rich nature of professional autonomy for those involved in portfolio careers in music where individuals working as instrumental teachers are agential in negotiating the professional environment, continually adapting their working lives to suit their circumstances. Bourdieu's notions of habitus, field and capital, offer a way to explore behaviours and interactions in a specific context and to 'codify what is happening', and as such, can be used to examine the role of the individual in negotiating the culture of music and music education (Burnard, Hofvander Trulsson and Soderman 2015, p.10).

Habitus as musician knowledge

Bourdieu's notion of *habitus* allows exploration of the values, habits, and traditions of a specific social group or community (Bourdieu and Passeron 1990, 52- 65). These attributes, developed through experience, are central to our understanding of the world, shaping and

defining views and judgements on a subconscious level and in turn reinforcing the structure of society (Bourdieu and Passeron 1990, 52 -65).

Defined as the 'modes of thought, opinion, and behaviours which are the internalisation of experience built up over a lifetime' (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992), the concept of habitus is a central 'conceptual tool' in Bourdieu's theoretical approach (Stahl, Burnard and Perkins 2017, p.60). Applying the notion of habitus in the context of professional musicians, Sagiv and Hall (2015) portray the musician's habitus as a 'multi-layered 'cultural ensemble' that is conveyed to students over time' encompassing not simply issues relating to technique, style and language but also interpersonal and social codes (Sagiv and Hall 2015, p.115).

The theory of habitus allows for the study of ways in which we use cultural or social capital and suggests that individuals regulate their actions not through consideration of future goals, but through negotiation and adaptation within the field in what Bourdieu call 'a feel for the game' (Bourdieu 1998). In negotiating the habitus of various sub fields within the broader field of music, the professional portfolio musician is therefore potentially adapting and applying existing musical habitus and musical capital in specific sub fields. The development of musical habitus in professional musicians necessitates an understanding of the habitus in each specific sub field and their status within each of these fields is determined by their musical capital and successful adaption of their musical habitus (Moore 2012).

Examination of specific aspects of the field, including understandings about the nature and aims of activity and the extent to which practice is determined by external influences, reveal a context in which autonomy is a central feature. The concept of field is described by Maton (2005) as the 'centrepiece' of Bourdieu's theoretical approach, with autonomy as its most important and influential feature (Maton 2005, p.688). Exploring the internal and external characteristics of a specific field, including relevant understandings of capital, can facilitate a deeper understanding of discourses and practices which determine the specific habitus of those involved and ways in which the field relates to broader political and economic fields and structures (Maton 2005).

The field of instrumental teaching and learning corresponds to Bourdieu's theory of fields as autonomous worlds where individuals strive to improve their status through the acquisition of capital (Maton 2005). The interactions which make up the specific field are dominated by the

relationship between the individual and the field itself and the individual is always positioned in relation to the hierarchical structure of symbolic practices within the specific field. Maton (2005) suggests that each field demonstrates autonomy in the way in which it 'generates its own values and markers of achievement' and through the specific structures, attributes and understandings which it exhibits to society (Maton 2005, p.689). Furthermore, Maton's analysis proposes relational and positional forms of autonomy to determine the relationship between values in specific fields and those from other external contexts. The level of relational or positional autonomy in a specific field is categorised according to the extent to which practices are influenced or determined from within the field itself or by external factors or bodies (2005, p.697). A field where the principles of hierarchization look inward to its specific activities, and where authority and decision-making positions are held by those within the field exhibit strong relational and positional autonomy (2005, p.697). From this perspective, the field of instrumental teaching and learning can be characterised as inward looking, with an autonomous principle dominated by the physical acquisition of practical skills. While institutional principles might involve a necessary external focus relating to relevant governing and funding bodies, the individual and autonomous nature of the broader field of instrumental teaching and learning outside these institutional contexts, where individuals can determine the aims and practical aspects of activity with minimal external regulation, suggests a more complex and diverse notion of field with high levels of both relational and positional autonomy.

In his comparison of autonomy in the two fields of mass production and local, low level activity, Hesmondalgh (2006) suggests that levels of autonomy are greater in sub fields of small - scale production where there are lower levels of economic capital and very high levels of symbolic capital. The field of instrumental music teaching can be characterised as a sub field within the broader field of music education, where symbolic capital is related to practical skills rather than economic gain and can be defined as having high levels of autonomy. Practice in this field is therefore determined by cultural assumptions relating to autonomy in both field and practice, where instrumentalists are able to teach from any age, with little experience of tuition themselves in some cases, devising their own strategies and methods with no external regulation or qualification (Persson 1996, Swanwick 1994). This feature of the field is acknowledged by individuals in all aspects of their professional activity, from progression to teaching and the balance of professional roles.

Bourdieu and research in music education

Existing research in this field applies Bourdieu's theoretical approach to examine the ways in which individuals negotiate the culture of music and music education, including the influence of background and existing musical experience on development and participation, the embedded and physicalised nature of cultural understandings relating to progression and practice and the nature of symbolic capital in this context (Hall 2015, Perkins 2015, Sagiv and Hall 2015, Stahl & Burnard 2017).

Research which explores the individual experience of instrumental music education adopts Bourdieu's notion of symbolic capital to represent instrumental skills where the most advanced practitioners acquire status through their ability and students actively compete to improve their standing in institutional hierarchies through the acquisition of advanced practical skills (Hall 2015). The notion of symbolic capital as physically embodied in instrumental students highlights the individual and social nature of the culture of technical rationality in instrumental teaching and the way in which those involved in the field actively reproduce habitus in the field.

Studies which focus on issues relating to identity in instrumental musicians place significant emphasis on the way in which notions of status and identity are determined by practical ability (Roberts 1991a, Mills 2004b, Perkins 2015). The use of Bourdieu's analytical tools to examine concepts of process in this field, including the necessity for repetitive physical practice, highlight the role of agency in the acquisition of musical habitus (Sagiv and Hall 2015). Habitus in this context is portrayed as a physical, social and cultural system of understandings in which the individual is always actively operating, where competition for capital in the field is portrayed as the dominant focus of the instrumental student and emerging professional musician (Stahl, Burnard and Perkins 2017). The vocational habitus of the professional musician involves the ability to understand and adapt to the specific habitus of various sub fields in music as the individual negotiates the complexities of the portfolio career. The role of the individual is therefore pivotal in this field where 'structure and agency combine to render the process of acculturation far more complex than a passive absorption into a community of practice' (Colley, H. et al. 2003, p.488).

Participation in the Field of Instrumental Music Education –Musical and Vocational Habitus

From a Bourdieusian perspective, students who begin instrumental study at a young age are involved in a process of socialisation or enculturation, where practical skills as musical capital

form part of a developing musical habitus or embodied knowledge (Hall 2015, Stahl, Burnard and Perkins 2017). This notion of musical capital is useful in defining the 'interconnected cultural, social and symbolic assets that musicians acquire and turn to economic advantage in the music field' (Coulson 2010, p.257). The musical capital of the portfolio musician is perceived as the collected skills and attributes specific to the musician which enable the individual to work across a range of contexts. This compares with the complimentary notion of a musical habitus as a constantly developing set of dispositions, beliefs and understandings common to individuals working in this way (Smilde 2009).

The related concept of vocational habitus is relevant in the context of instrumental teaching and learning as it suggests that 'the learner aspires to a certain combination of dispositions demanded by the vocational culture' and describes the way in which specific occupational cultures act in 'disciplinary ways to dictate how one should properly feel, look and act as well as the values, attitudes and beliefs that one should espouse' (Colley, H. et al. 2003, p.488). The notion of habitus and the related concept of vocational habitus (Colley, G. et al. 2003) can therefore be used to explore the nature and influence of social and cultural practices in instrumental teaching and learning and to examine the way in which individuals develop culturally specific attitudes and behaviours in this professional context through a process of orientation and adaption.

Describing Bourdieu's approach as 'deterministic and circular', Jenkins (1982) suggests that the nature of the analysis in which 'objective structures produce culture, which determines practice, which reproduces those objective structures' fails to adequately address the relationship between the objective and subjective (Jenkins 1982, p.270). Furthermore, Naidoo (2004) argues that the 'strict relational nature of Bourdieu's framework' limits the opportunity for a more in-depth analysis of broader social meaning and interaction (Naidoo 2004, p.457). However, for the purpose of this study, where the aim is to examine the influence of objective structures and culture on the individual, Bourdieu's approach provides an effective analytical lens, helping to explore the complex nature of interactions between individual and field in this context, including the nature of individual agency and symbolic capital in instrumental music education.

Methodology

The research used both quantitative and qualitative methods in an explanatory sequential design to explore the experience of instrumental music teaching, including the nature of progression and the way in which individuals identify themselves professionally in this context (Pring 2000).

The explanatory sequential design involves the collection and analysis of first quantitative and then qualitative data in two consecutive stages within the same study (Ivankova, Creswell and Stick 2006). In this research, the quantitative method in the form of a national survey (N = 338) was used as the first strand to generate data relating to the broad experience of practice in this context, followed by the second, qualitative strand in which eighteen individual case studies and one focus group were used to explore findings from the quantitative strand through the lived experience of participants.

The rationale for gathering both forms of data was influenced by the complex nature of the role of instrumental teaching in the professional lives of musicians and acknowledges that neither quantitative nor qualitative methods alone are sufficient to capture the overall trends of instrumental teaching and the individual experience of the progression from student to teacher (Creswell and Plano Clark 2011, Burke Johnson and Onwuegbuzie 2004). While the survey strategy is useful in contextualizing the experience of individuals within a community of practice, providing scope for a broader analysis, the qualitative tool employed in the case studies allowed for exploration of understandings associated with identity in this context (Strauss and Corbin 1998). The research design therefore aims to 'make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them' (Denzin and Lincoln 1998, p.3).

The survey questions were designed to gather data relating to professional practice, including routes, training, participation in CPD, employment, income and expressions of professional identity from instrumental teachers working across the UK. The survey was distributed nationally via various music organizations, institutions and platforms. The aim of this strand was both to develop some understanding of contemporary practice in this field and to examine existing notions of professional identity in instrumental teachers in the broader context of peripatetic and portfolio instrumental teachers working in the UK. The survey findings were analyzed using comparison and filtering tools to establish general trends and explore links between a range of factors including training, CPD, income, age, employment status, range of professional roles and professional identity. Some responses were missing on each question and in each case the analysis was performed using only existing responses rather than making any attempt to infer or generalize from any missing data.

The case study method involved individual, semi-structured interviews with instrumental teachers working in the UK. Used as part of the explanatory sequential design, the case study interviews offered an opportunity to explore the meanings associated with specific responses in the survey strand of the research, specifically areas relating to progression and identity. The case study interviews were therefore used in this context to 'bring about the discovery of new meaning, extend the reader's experience, or confirm what is known' (Merriam 1998, p.30).

The interviews were conducted with 18 individual instrumental teachers, each digitally recorded, transcribed, verified by participants and saved as anonymized, uniquely identified files. Initial exploration of the case study data involved the identification of two broad thematic areas these being *routes* and *experiences and perceptions*.

These thematic areas were informed by the interview strategy and derive from the way in which participants recounted and then reflected on their experiences. The two thematic areas therefore represent the overarching themes in the account and these were used as an organizational tool in the analysis. Following this initial phase transcripts were then subjected to two further phases of manual coding to establish themes and sub themes within each of these broad areas.

The focus group offers an opportunity to 'study ways in which individuals collectively make sense of a phenomenon and construct meaning around it' (Bryman 2012, p.505). Existing levels of intersubjectivity relating to practice in this context provide a useful starting point from which to initiate conversations around the issue of professional identity. The case study and focus group participants were all professional instrumental teachers who had volunteered for the interviews having first completed the survey. These discussions were invaluable in providing insights into the lived experience of instrumental teachers working in a diverse and complex professional field. The focus group conversation was centered around key themes emerging from the interviews and was digitally recorded, transcribed and verified by participants. The transcripts were then manually coded using the same process applied to the case study interviews.

Ethical issues

The survey was anonymous and all case study interview and focus group data has been anonymized in order to protect the identity of participants. All case study interview and focus group volunteers were sent copies of the interview transcripts for verification and approval and were invited to discuss the process in follow up sessions. All study participants were provided with explanatory material along with information relating to the aims of the study and consent forms.

Care was taken to ensure the positive experience of participants, specifically in relation to the perception of the project goals and assumptions regarding the professionalism of instrumental music teachers. It was anticipated that some individuals may be offended by questions related to the lack of training or professional qualification for instrumental music teaching as this may be perceived as an implicit comment on the degree of professionalism. For some case study participants, the interview itself was an emotional experience as they were asked to discuss their early aims and ambitions in music and reflect on the nature of their current identity as professionals. These understandings and experiences were deeply rooted in the personal histories of those involved and every care was taken to maintain a positive, non-judgemental and supportive approach throughout the interview process. All questions were sensitive to the professional context and the introductory and pre - interview material emphasized the interest in participants' experience of teaching rather than their qualification or merits as teachers. The researcher discussed these issues with case study participants before beginning the interviews and consent was voluntary and informed.

Study Findings

The survey was completed over a six-month period and was distributed through a range of local, regional and national organisations and institutions. There are 18 questions relating to the age, professional occupation, training, CPD, background, employment status, range of professional activity. The aim of the survey was to establish whether there are significant links between these key features and the way in which individuals identify themselves professionally.

Findings suggest that instrumental teachers generally prefer to identify as musicians when offered a range of professional roles, though the number of individuals identifying as teachers was higher than expected having explored the literature in this field. The data also confirms that instrumental teachers receive limited, if any, training or guidance before becoming teachers and commonly combine a range of professional roles in portfolio careers in music, the number of roles increasing with age. The study findings therefore confirm existing suggestions relating to the lives and professional identities of instrumental teachers working in the UK.

Through manual coding, it was possible to assess the most common and significant themes across all case study interviews. The dominant theme in all interviews involved references, acknowledgements or assumptions relating to the culture of music education, and therefore represents understandings of the culture of instrumental music education. These understandings include notions of practice and progression, expectations of ensemble playing at progressively higher levels, exams, music courses, summer schools, the regional and national network of orchestras and choirs, busking, concerts and performance culture. Participants were conscious of these features of the culture of instrumental music education, in some cases from an early age and the majority appeared to accept routes, practices and norms associated with the field without question. While two participants were self-taught and therefore appear to defy the norms in terms of tuition, their experience represents an alternative approach to training which is in itself linked to the culture of pop music and pop musicians. The case study data therefore shows the extent to which practice and identity in this context are embedded in culturally determined understandings.

The case study accounts confirm the prevalence of the portfolio career as the dominant working model for musicians with participants combining multiple professional roles including teaching. The participants acknowledge high levels of autonomy in their working lives which allows them to adapt to changing circumstances and balance various sources of income. The approach to

identity demonstrated in participants' accounts reflects the functional nature of practice in this field, where the portfolio career necessitates the balancing of multiple professional roles and associated identities. The findings suggest that the musician identity is used to summarise the range of professional activity, but also, crucially, to connect professional activity with aspects of personal identity. The research suggests therefore that for instrumental teachers in this research, personal and professional identity are inseparable.

Discussion

In contrast to existing notions of identity conflict in this context, the study proposes that instrumental teachers identify as musicians for a range of personal and practical reasons and suggests that existing views of professional identity in this field are limited by a preoccupation with hierarchical assumptions relating to professional roles in music. The study highlights the way in which understandings specific to the field of music education, including the role of individual agency and autonomy and the nature of symbolic capital in this context, enable instrumental musicians to negotiate the culture of instrumental music.

In this research, individuals involved in instrumental teaching are commonly involved in a range of other professional roles in music, including performing, directing and arranging. The interview accounts suggest that individuals working as instrumental teachers enjoy high levels of professional autonomy, anticipating and accepting the combination of multiple professional roles as a necessary feature of the portfolio career model (Mills 2007, Bennett 2008). These accounts contrast with suggestions that individuals in this context are perpetually preoccupied with notions of status related to their success as professional performers (Bouij 2004) and as such, this study highlights a need to revise understandings of the lived experience in this field, where the rich nature of autonomy and agency enables individuals to negotiate precarious contemporary portfolio careers in music (Presceski 1997, Woodford 2002, Bennett 2008).

The rich data relating to the lived experience of individuals working as instrumental teachers in this study can potentially provide insights which will help to revise assumptions regarding the nature of professional careers in this community of practice. The use of Bourdieu's analytical tools of habitus, field and capital helps to expose the way in which the individuals negotiate the culture of music and music education and highlights the autonomous and agential nature of practice in this context.

Individual autonomy in instrumental teaching and learning

Findings in this research correspond with accounts which suggest a lack of formal training and guidance both for instrumental music teaching and for the portfolio career in music in the UK (Persson 1996, Gaunt 2005). The survey responses revealed that 52.24% of respondents had received no training and the dominant source of guidance across all age categories was the instrumental teacher rather than formal courses or training programmes. The majority of case study participants in this study embarked on private teaching without training or guidance, in some cases devising their own teaching materials with little influence other than their own experience of tuition to determine their approach. Individuals were therefore aware of opportunities available to them as instrumentalists, demonstrating culturally determined assumptions relating to autonomy and the value of their symbolic capital in their interactions with the professional field. Those who had participated in formal training reflected that the experience wasn't necessarily an effective preparation for instrumental teaching in schools and the initial experience of teaching is characterised by expressions of feeling isolated, being *'in at the deep end'* and '*having to find one's own way'*.

17 of the 18 interview participants describe teaching while still in education, and this experience is articulated in the following excerpt where an experienced instrumental teacher recounts her first experience of teaching, aged 17: *'She saw me playing and asked to have lessons. I remember having a massive wobbly over it and my mum making me do it. I was saying I don't know what to do and I've never done it before and my mum had a really sharp chat with me and I did it and it was fine because I knew more than she did. So, it was fine'.*

The ability to teach from any age as recounted in the case study interviews, without training or qualification, in some cases devising the teaching materials from the outset, based on practical skills and understanding alone, is an accepted feature of instrumental teaching, along with the necessary process of working out how to communicate these skills. The understanding of technical ability as symbolic capital in this context is articulated in the following excerpt from a case study participant working as a professional performer as well as teacher: ' *I think the experience that a teacher brings - the passing on of the technique, how to do it makes a big difference and only comes from playing for a while - 20 years or something. Your first few lessons are very much sort of stabs in the dark'.*

These accounts highlight the way in which many instrumental teachers learn to teach through practice and correspond with the Colley, H. et al. (2003) suggestion that individuals are aware of their symbolic capital in the form of practical ability from an early stage in their development

as instrumentalists. This understanding, along with knowledge of the field, contributes to high levels of professional autonomy in this context which in turn form part of the understanding of professional practice for portfolio musicians (Perkins 2015).

This study therefore suggests that the individual and autonomous nature of practice in instrumental teaching and learning, perceived in some studies as lacking in formal structures and codes (Persson 1996), is nevertheless a central feature of professional activity in the field. Autonomy in all aspects of teaching and learning is represented in the attitudes, assumptions and behaviours which inform the habitus of the individual in this field, reinforced and perpetuated through the 'guiding ideology of practice' in instrumental music education (Colley, H. et al. 2003, p.487).

Autonomy and portfolio careers for musicians

With no necessity for qualification or training and an absence of regulation, individuals working as instrumental teachers in the UK are able to negotiate the professional context based on their understanding of the field and of the value attached to their own ability and attributes, or symbolic capital in each specific context (Mills 2007, Canham 2016, Coulson 2010). This study therefore promotes an understanding of instrumental teachers as autonomous professionals engaged on the whole in freelance portfolio careers as musicians who, demonstrating an understanding of their symbolic capital and the relative nature of their practical skills in comparison with other musicians and within the culture of music, negotiate professional pathways within the field (Burnard, Hofvander Trulsson and Soderman 2015). This view challenges notions of instrumental musicians as passive participants in the culture of music education, working as teachers where aspirations for performance careers have proved unsuccessful (Bouij 2007). Individuals working in this field clearly understand the nature of symbolic capital and make decisions based on an understanding of the field, based on high levels of professional autonomy as demonstrated by the following participant who started instrumental teaching while studying at a London conservatoire : *'I was living in London and had to support myself and so I did what felt natural and started teaching'*.

Case study accounts suggest that instrumental teachers whose professional goals relate to performance acknowledge the economic value and potential of advanced instrumental skills and identify teaching as *'a way of getting a little bit of pocket money to top up the gig-money'*. The majority of participants in this study began teaching through financial necessity, either

during education or supplementing precarious performance incomes with the more reliable income from teaching, in each case demonstrating an understanding of both field and capital (Perkins 2015, Canham 2016, Coulson 2010).

While some interview participants described early career goals as performers which they maintained throughout their professional careers, others aspired to teach from an early age, identifying their instrumental teachers as inspirational role models and 'possible selves'. Other participants recognised the limitations in their skills in relation to professional performance goals or aspects of the field which were not suited to their personal lifestyle or habitus as musicians and focussed on other musical roles which suited their circumstances, approach and ability (Perkins 2015, Coulson 2010). The experience of individual participants in this study demonstrates the broad range of experience in this diverse community of practice and highlights the necessity to fully acknowledge the complex and agential nature of interactions between individuals and the field in this context (Perkins 2015).

Capital and musicians

In instrumental music, practical ability can be identified as symbolic capital which allows access to specific fields such as conservatoires, where 'collective practices of learning shape what it means, and can mean, to learn to be a professional musician' (Stahl, Burnard and Perkins 2017). In Bourdieu's analysis, capital represents, 'the social products of a field or system of relations through which individuals carry out social intercourse' (Grenfell and James 1998, p.18-19), making social interaction and function 'something other than simple games of chance offering at every moment the possibility of a miracle' (Bourdieu 1986, p.46). Capital is therefore regarded as a form of asset which can bring social, cultural and economic advantage (Moore 2008, p.104). Various forms of personal, social and human capital represent the fundamental features of the vocational habitus of instrumental teachers, which individuals develop through experience in the field as students and practitioners. The active embodiment of these attributes and dispositions is, according to Colley, H. et al. (2003) an integral part of the development of identity in vocational cultures where the individual is agential in aspiring to the behaviours and practices which determine 'a sense of how to be' (Colley, H. et al. 2003, p.471).

Instrumental music teachers' knowledge as capital

In this research, practical ability or symbolic capital in the field of instrumental teaching represents the central attribute which determines the ability to negotiate both field and sub field

(Perkins 2015). However, understandings of knowledge for instrumental music teachers extend beyond the development of practical skills to encompass a form of specialised, tacit knowledge incorporating broader cultural and contextual understandings which are central to the way in which teachers regard their professional practice (Porter 1998, Harwood 2007, Triantafyllaki 2010). This specialised knowledge is employed across a range of professional contexts and includes understandings of the way in which relevant skills can be communicated in various performance and teaching situations (Odam and Bannan 2005). Practitioner knowledge as capital is applied across a variety of sub fields within the broader field of instrumental music and represents the central attribute or expertise which allows individuals to function as professional musicians in the portfolio career model. This practitioner knowledge, encompassing understandings of field and culture and various forms of capital necessary for successful and sustained participation in portfolio careers can be described as the vocational habitus of those working in this context (Colley, H et al. 2003). Individuals in this study demonstrate understandings of the vocational habitus as they recount ways in which they negotiate multiple role identities in practice, as highlighted in this excerpt from an instrumental teacher and performer: '*I was talking to someone the other day, one of the mums at the school gate and she said what do you do? And I said oh I'm a flute teacher whereas normally in a professional situation I'd say I'm a musician. I just sort of thought you make a judgment call based on the situation and that person. I don't have time to go into what type of musician I am, so I just said I'm a flute teacher and led into the conversation that she was looking for a piano teacher'.*

Agency and resilience in musicians' careers

Professional musicians working as instrumental teachers in this study demonstrate an understanding of the ability to 'initiate and carry out activities on one's own', based on existing skills. This understanding, defined by Bruner (1996, p. 35-36) as personal agency, provides the individual with a form of professional resilience where self-efficacy, autonomy, aspiration and mastery provide a sense that they are able to accept and overcome challenges (Rutter 1990). Agency and resilience in professional musicians, arising from understandings of the culture and the value of their own practical instrumental skills, enable the individual to successfully adapt to the challenges of the professional context of instrumental music. The ability to play an instrument, to do music, as the central and defining attribute or form of capital, provides agency and autonomy in individuals, enabling resilience by allowing the musician to adapt and diversify, developing their range of abilities in order to sustain a professional and fulfilling

career in music (Wiggins 2011). In choosing to identify as 'musicians', participants are therefore foregrounding a fundamental ability to do music, linking the personal ability or symbolic capital which enables them to engage with the professional context with their professional identity across a range of professional roles. The term encompasses the range of activity involved in complex portfolio careers and links the professional with a more personal and foundational identity grounded in individual ability. This foundational identity is articulated in two excerpts from the case study interviews, the first from a teacher and performer who suggests that she identifies herself as a musician *'because its who I am and it doesn't matter what I do – that's what music is about – you become a musician'.* Another participant clearly links the personal and professional in the following statement, *'Music is me and all of our friends, they always say I'm the musical one or the musician, not just for work – for in life in general. They'll say 'Go ask the musician, she'll know'*.

This research therefore suggests that for these individuals, the term musician reflects specific and unique understandings, developed through and relating specifically to activity and understanding in the field, rather than a reluctance to identify with the role of teacher. The nature of symbolic capital in this context is therefore specifically related to fundamental practical and theoretical knowledge along with contextual understanding, autonomy and adaptability (Perkins 2015).

Where instrumental teachers are operating at the intersection of fields with contrasting assumptions and understandings regarding the role of the professional musician, or where their understanding of the role identity and their own status as a musician, informed through the development of their habitus within the field of music, conflicts with those of other fields in which they operate, tensions are inevitable. These experiences highlight the complex nature of the vocational habitus for musicians, encompassing fundamental musical skills, cultural knowledge of the field of music and an understanding of these practices and meanings in a range of sub fields (Dwyer 2015, Triantafyllaki 2010, Perkins & Triantafyllaki 2010).

This study suggests that while individuals are aware of the complex and hierarchical nature of professional role identity in music (Roberts 1991a), they are less aware of context-specific notions of 'musician' where necessary understandings of the role and identity of instrumental teacher in institutional contexts do not correspond with shared understanding of the role and identity of musician. Individuals appear to assume that their symbolic capital will be recognised in institutional contexts due to the nature of musical activity involved. These assumptions fail

to acknowledge the various meanings associated with the identity, role and symbolic capital of the professional musician. Experiences of conflict, where instrumental teachers are 'pigeonholed' as teachers rather than musicians whilst at the same time denied the status of teacher in the same institutions therefore reflect the nature of assumptions on both sides regarding the role of 'musician'.

Conclusion

While the survey findings in this study confirm existing understandings of the role and professional identity of the instrumental teacher working in the UK, the experience of individuals represented in the case study interviews allows a more nuanced and informed analysis of practice in this professional group. This analysis suggests that instrumental music teachers working in portfolio careers are immersed in the culture of instrumental teaching and learning from an early age (Colley, H. et al. 2003) and that their ability to successfully negotiate careers involving multiple professional roles in music is derived from knowledge of the field and sub fields and understanding of their role and capital in each context (Coulson 2010). Expressions of professional identity emerging from experience as teachers and portfolio musicians in this field are of deep significance as they provide an opportunity to explore the complexity involved in the development of professional identity on a practical level, as related to the 'social norms and values that are central in the cultural environment in which it is situated' (Mateiro and Westvall 2013, p.158).

This study portrays the instrumental music teacher as an autonomous professional with an embedded understanding of culture and context and an firm awareness of their symbolic capital, enjoying high levels of professional autonomy in careers which involve a variety of professional role identities. The Bourdieusian analysis, using the analytical tools of habitus, capital and field, reveals the active role of the individual in negotiating the culture of music education.

This analysis highlights the autonomous, adaptive and agential nature of practice in this field where individuals, far from being subject to oppressive hierarchical structures, recognise both understandings of capital in the field and the value of their own symbolic capital across a range of professional contexts. The use of Bourdieu's approach as an analytical lens therefore reveals the way in which practice in this context is determined by understandings developed at an early

age as part of the musical habitus and proposes a more positive version of the role and professional identity of the instrumental teacher.

References

ABRSM (2014). *Making Music: Teaching, Learning and Playing in the UK. A Collaborative Report.* London: ABRSM.

Baker, D. (2005). *Music service teachers' life histories in the United Kingdom with implications for practice.* International Journal of Music Education, 23 (3), 263-277.

Baker, D. (2006). *Life Histories of Music Service Teachers: The Past in Inductees' Present'.* British Journal of Music Education, 23 (1), 39-60.

Bennett. D. (2008). *Understanding the Classical Music Profession: The Past, the Present and Strategies for the Future,* Farnham: Ashgate.

Bennett, D. (2016). *Developing Employability in Higher Education Music.* Arts and Humanities in Higher Education, 15 (3-4), 386-413.

Bernard, R. (2005). *Making music, making selves.* Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education, 4 (2). http://act.maydaygroup.org/articles/Bernard4_2.pdf

Bourdieu, P. (1986). *The Forms of Capital.* In: Richardson, J. (ed.), *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education.* New York: Greenwood, 241- 258.

Bourdieu, P. and Passeron, J. (1990). *Reproduction in education, society and culture*. London: Sage.

Bourdieu, P. (1998). *Practical Reason: On the Theory of Action.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Bourdieu, P. and Wacquant, L. (1992). *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Bouij, C. (2004). *Two Theoretical Perspectives on the socialization of music teachers.* Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education, 3 (3). http://mas.siue.edu/ACT/v3/Bouij04.pdf

Bouij, C. (2007). *A comment to Rhoda Bernard: Reframing or oversimplification?* Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education, 6 (2). http//act.maydaygroup.org/articles/Bouij6_2.pdf

Bryman, A. (2012). *Social Research Methods (4th edition). Oxford: Oxford University Press.*

Bruner, K. (1996). *The Culture of Education*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press

Burnard, P., Hofvander Trulsson, Y., and Soderman, J. (2015). *Bourdieu and the Sociology of Music Education.* Farnham: Ashgate.

Burwell, K. (2012). *Apprenticeship in Music: A contextual study for instrumental teaching and learning*. International Journal of Music Education, 31 (3), 276 -291.

Burke Johnson, R. Onwuegbuzie, A. J. (2004). *Mixed Methods Research: A Research Paradigm Whose Time Has Come.* Educational Researcher, 33 (7), 14-26.

Canham, N. L. (2016). *Making Mavericks: Preparing musicians for independent artistic culture.* Arts and Humanities in Higher Education, 15 (3-4), 407- 413.

Colley, H. et al. (2003). *Learning as Becoming in Vocational Education and Training: class, gender and the role of vocational habitus.* Journal of Vocational Education and Training, 55 (4), 471- 498.

Coulson, S. (2010). *Getting 'Capital' in the music world: musicians' learning experiences and working lives.* British Journal of Music Education, 27 (3), 255-270.

Creech, A. (2010). *The Music Studio.* In S. Hallam and A. Creech (2010) (eds) *Music Education in the 21st Century in the United Kingdom. Achievements, analysis and aspirations.* London: Institute of Education, 295 – 313.

Creswell, J. W. & Plano Clark, V. L. (2011). *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. S. (1998). *Introduction: entering the field of qualitative research*. In N.K. Denzin and Y.S. Lincoln (eds.), *Strategies of qualitative inquiry*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1-34.

Dwyer, R. (2015). *Unpacking the habitus: Exploring a music teacher's values, beliefs and practices.* Research Studies in Music Education, 37 (1), 93-106.

Gaunt, H. (2005). *Instrumental /vocal teaching and learning in conservatoires: A case study of researchers' perceptions.* In, G. Odam and N. Bannan, (eds.), *The Reflective Conservatoire: Studies in Music Education.* Research Studies 4, London / Hants: The Guildhall School of Music and Drama and Ashgate. 249 -271.

Grenfell, M. (2008). *Pierre Bourdieu: Key Concepts.* Durham: Acumen Publishing.

Grenfell, M. and James, D. (1998). *Bourdieu and Education: Acts of Practical Theory.* London: Falmer Press.

Hall, C. (2015). *Singing Gender and Class: Understanding Choirboys' Musical Habitus.* In P. Burnard, Y. Hofvander Trulsson and J. Soderman (eds.), *Bourdieu and The Sociology of Music Education*. Farnham: Ashgate. 43-60.

Hallam, S. and Creech, A. (eds.), (2010). *Music Education in the 21st Century in the United Kingdom; Achievements, analysis and aspirations.* London: Institute of Education.

Hallam, S. and Gaunt, H. (2012). *Preparing for Success: A practical guide for young musicians*. London: Institute of Education.

Harwood, E. (2007). *Artists in the Academy: Curriculum and instruction.* In, L. Bresler (ed.), International Handbook of Research in Arts Education, New York: Springer, 313-330.

Hesmondalgh, D. (2006). *Bourdieu, the media and cultural production.* Media, Culture and Society, 28 (2), 211-231.

Ivankova, N.V., Creswell, J.W., and Stick, S. L. (2006). Using Mixed – Methods Sequential Explanatory Design: From Theory to Practice. Field Methods, 18 (1), 3-20.

Jenkins, R. (1982). *Pierre Bourdieu and the Reproduction of Determinism*. Sociology, 16 (2), 270-281.

Mateiro, T. and Westvall, M. (2013). *The Cultural Dimensions of Music Teachers' Professional Knowledge*. In E. Georgii – Hemming, P. Burnard and S. Holgersen (eds.), *Professional Knowledge in Music Teacher Education*, Farnham: Ashgate. 157-173

Maton, K. (2005). *A question of autonomy: Bourdieu's field approach and higher education policy.* Journal of Education Policy, 20 (6), 687-704.

Merriam, S. B. (1998) *Qualitative Research and case study applications in education: Revised and expanded from case study research in education.* San Francisco: Jossey- Bass.

Mills, J. (2004b). *Working in Music: Becoming a Performer-teacher*. Music Education Research, 6 (3), 245 -261.

Mills, J. (2004c). *Working in Music: The Conservatoire Professor*. British Journal of Music Education, 21 (2), 179 -198.

Mills, J. (2007). *Instrumental Teaching*. Oxford: OUP

Moore, G. (2012). *'Tristan chords and random scores': exploring undergraduate students' experiences of music in higher education through the lens of Bourdieu.* Music Education Research, 14 (1), 63-78.

Moore, R. (2008). *Capital.* In: Grenfell, M. (ed), *Pierre Bourdieu: Key Concepts*. Stocksfield: Acumen Publishing, 101-119.

Naidoo, R. (2004). *Fields and institutional strategy: Bourdieu on the relationship between higher education, inequality and society.* British Journal of the Sociology of Education, 25 (4), 457-471.

Odam, G. and Bannan, N. (2005). (eds.), *The Reflective Conservatoire: Studies in Music Education, Research Studies*, 4, London / Aldershot, Hampshire: The Guildhall School of Music and Drama and Ashgate.

Perkins, R. and Triantafyllaki, A. (2010) *School and Conservatoire Music Teachers' 'Vocational Habitus'; Lessons for Music Teacher Education, in Professional Knowledge.* In E. Georgii–Hemming, P. Burnard and S. E. Holgersen, (eds.) *Professional Knowledge in Music Teacher Education.* Farnham: Ashgate. 173-189.

Perkins, R. (2015). *Bourdieu Applied in the Analysis of Conservatoire Learning.* In P. Burnard, Y. Hofvander Trulsson and J. Soderman (eds.), *Bourdieu and The Sociology of Music Education.* Farnham: Ashgate. 99 -112.

Persson, R. (1996). *Brilliant Performers as Teachers: a case study of commonsense teaching in a conservatoire setting*. International Journal of Music Education, 28 (1), 25-36.

Pitts, S. (2012). *Chances and Choices: Exploring the impact of music education.* New York: OUP.

Porter, K. (1998). *Management in the conservatoire of the future: Administering or leading?* Studies in Higher Education, 23 (1), 7-16.

Presceski, R. E. (1997). *A study of preservice music education students: Their struggle to establish a professional identity* (Doctoral dissertation, McGill University, 1997) Dissertation Abstract International, 59 (08A), 2898.

Pring, R. (2000). *Philosophy of Educational Research.* London: Continuum.

Roberts, B. (1991a). *Musician: A Process of Labelling.* St Johns Newfoundland: University of Newfoundland Publication Committee. ISBN 0-88901-157-5

Roberts, B. (1991b). *Music Teacher Education as Identity Construction*, International Journal of Music Education, 18, 30 -39.

Roberts, B. (2004). *Who's in the Mirror? Issues Surrounding the Identity Construction of Music Educators.* Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education, 3 (2), 2-42.

Roberts, B. (2007). *Music making, making selves, making it right: A counterpoint to Rhoda Bernard.* Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education, 6 (2), 2-13. http//actmaydaygroup.org/articles/Roberts6_2.pdf

Rutter, M. (1990). *Psychosocial resilience and protective mechanisms.* In, J. Rolph, A. Masten, D. Cicchetti, K. Nuechterlein and S. Weintraud, (eds.), *Risk and Protective Factors in the Development of Psychopathology*. New York: Cambridge University Press. 181-214.

Sagiv, D. and Hall, C. (2015). *Producing a Classical Habitus: Reconsidering Instrumental Music Teaching Methods.* In P. Burnard, Y. Hofvander Trulsson and J. Soderman (eds), *Bourdieu and The Sociology of Music Education*. Farnham: Ashgate. 113-126.

Smilde, R. (2009). *Musicians as Lifelong Learners: Discovery through biography*. Netherlands: Eburon Academic Publishers.

Stahl, G., Burnard, P. and Perkins, R. (2017). *Critical Reflections on the Use of Bourdieu's Tools 'In Concert' to understand the Practices of Learning in Three Musical Sites.* Sociological Research Online, 22 (3), 57-77.

Strauss, A. and Corbin, J. (1998) *Basics of Qualitative Research*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

Swanwick, K. (1994) *Musical Knowledge: Intuition, Analysis and Music Education.* London: Routledge.

Triantafyllaki, A. (2010). *Performance Teachers' identity and professional Knowledge in advanced music teaching,* Music Education Research, 12 (1), 71-87.

Wiggins, J. (2011). *Vulnerability and agency in being and becoming a musician*. Music education Research, 13 (4), 356-367.

Woodford, P. G. (2002). *The Social Construction of Music Teacher Identity in Undergraduate Music Education Majors,* in R, Colwell and C. Richardson (eds.), The New Handbook of Research on Music Teaching and Learning, New York: OUP. 675-694.

Young, V., Burwell, K., and Pickup, D. (2003). *Areas of study and teaching strategies in instrumental teaching: A Case Study.* Music Education Research, 5 (2), 39-155.