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ABSTRACT The drive for 'inclusion' has become a prominent feature in UK educational policy agendas and school improvement programmes. The term refers to all children achieving and participating despite challenges stemming from poverty, class, race, religion, linguistic and cultural heritage or gender. While much has been written about inclusion, evidence on how teachers perceive inclusive education practices among young people who are disengaged from learning and educational opportunity (as manifested by non-attendance or under-achievement at school) has been less thoroughly explored. This multiple case study draws on research on secondary school music teachers in 'poorly performing', so-called 'under-achieving' schools, including three comprehensive secondary schools in the east and south-east regions of England. It reports on what it is that three music teachers can tell us about their beliefs and approaches to inclusive teaching and learning in their pedagogical settings. A phenomenological approach utilizing semi-structured interview was employed to explore music teachers' perceptions of what it is that they think they do in responding to and overcoming the challenge of re-engaging disaffected youth – their perceptions of their own inclusive pedagogic practices. In order to explore the teachers' perceptions further, some artefact prompts in interviews, such as curriculum planning documents, were employed to provide an opportunity to discuss key factors concerning the content of the music courses. The findings emphasize that, for these teachers, inclusive pedagogies involve more than the accumulation of teaching strategies employed by teachers for supporting troubled and troublesome learners. These teachers' pedagogies are informed largely by particular views of music, views of musical learning and learners, views of the kind of knowledge that is created and the educational outcomes that are desired in overcoming the particular challenges of attuning to and re-engaging disaffected learners. Inclusive pedagogic practices in this study were foregrounded and framed by attuning to and re-engaging disaffected learners by: (a) democratizing music learning as social practice; (b) foregrounding high-status creative projects; and (c) using digital technology as pedagogic levers for re-engaging learners. The emergent themes provide a preliminary basis for theorizing about the role of music education in the schooling of disaffected youth.

KEYWORDS: *inclusion, music teaching, pedagogic practices*

Introduction

Social exclusion is a complex phenomenon with varied roots, including poverty, special needs of all kinds, personal and family origins and history, low educational attainment, peer group relationships and the impact of racism. Pupils who count as excluded can range from those who are temporarily or permanently excluded from school by school authorities, to those who absent themselves from individual lessons or for whole days or weeks. Exclusion also covers 'disaffected' students who are in some way at risk of developing a poor sense of self-worth and agency (Finney, Hickman, Morrison, Nicholl & Rudduck, 2005; MacBeath, Gray, Cullen, Frost, Steward & Swaffield, 2007).

Increasingly, teachers in general education are under pressure to promote inclusive learning and teaching, to offer a school experience which addresses individual needs and equality of opportunity (Alexander, 2000; Fischman, DiBara & Gardner, 2006; NIACE, 1999). Similarly, in contexts of music education, teachers are under pressure to find ways of engaging young people in their own learning and gaining meaningful control over their own school lives (Finney et al., 2005). The inclusion agenda has been widely promoted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). A paper reporting the challenges and visions for overcoming exclusion through inclusive approaches in education states:

Inclusive education is concerned with providing appropriate responses to the broad spectrum of learning needs in formal and non-formal educational settings ... Inclusive education is an approach that looks into how to transform education systems in order to respond to the diversity of learners. It aims to enable both teachers and learners to feel comfortable with diversity and to see it as a challenge and enrichment in the learning environment, rather than a problem. (UNESCO, 2003, p. 7)

As a term, 'inclusion' refers to the practice of ensuring that all children achieve and participate despite challenges stemming from poverty, class, race, religion, linguistic and cultural heritage or gender. We witness inclusion as an important tenet within the current policy for education in the UK (Hall & Thomson, 2007), the USA (Berry, 2006), Australia (Darrow, 2003), and elsewhere (see ISME, 2007). The main focus in promoting inclusion has been on young people who are disengaged from learning and educational opportunity, as manifest by non-attendance, exclusion or under-achievement at school. The key priorities have been to raise standards, broaden and enrich the curriculum, improve pupil self-confidence, and promote creativity and innovation in teaching (Creative Partnerships, 2004; Hall & Thomson, 2007).

As music educators, we are familiar with the disruptive effects of the 'disengaged' student for whom school music doesn't fit with what counts as 'their' and 'your' music (Lamont, Hargreaves, Marshall, & Tarrant, 2003; Richardson, 2007). Increasingly, there has been concern about the need to engage and sustain young people's interest and motivation (Burnard, 2004; Harland & Kinder, 1995; Harland, Kinder, & Hartley, 1995b; Harland, Kinder, Lord, Stott, Schagen, & Haynes, 2000; Lamont, 2002; Lamont et al., 2003; Sloboda, 2001); reform the curriculum (Berkley, 2001; Green, 2001; Kushner, 2006; Swanwick, 1999); rethink pedagogical appropriateness (Hargreaves & Zimmerman, 1992; Kushner, 2006; Stålhammar, 2003); and make music learning more enjoyable and motivating to pupils (Cox, 1999; Dolloff, 1999; Green, 2001; Pitts, 2000a, 2000b). A widely held view is that assumptions about

music education need to be challenged, with key educationists calling for a 'rethink of music education practices' and 'a significant paradigm shift from what music educators have been used to' (Leong, 2003, p. 153).

Frameworks facilitating standardization in education – foregrounded in British education by the publication of *Every Child Matters* (DfES, 2004) and pre-empted, in rhetoric at least, by the *No Child Left Behind* US legislation in 2001 (US Government, 2001) – have brought with them an expression of concern over the persistent gap between high and low achievers in our school system. This has been echoed in music education literature (Cox, 1999; Marshall & Hargreaves, 2007), while arts teachers have been prominently identified in the same literature as providing useful insights into pedagogical styles that offer 'elements of repair' (Creative Partnerships, 2007). These pedagogical styles establish 'positive personal relationships', representing and modelling pro-social values, respect and a sense of fulfilment in their own achievements for the young person (Kinder & Harland, 2004, p. 53).

Within music education, it is a cherished belief that musical participation has the potential to offer young people a range of emotional and social benefits (Pitts, 2005). There is general agreement that music as a school subject should be enjoyable and motivating to both teachers and pupils. Yet, it is argued that music education is failing to address the problem of youth disaffection, despite its potential to do so, and that for many pupils the music classroom can be an environment that is a 'turn-off' (Finney & Tymoczko, 2003). The overall picture is confusing, and teachers' voices on coping with learner disaffection (itself a complex and multidimensional phenomenon) often go unheard.

There are many examples of learner transformation in deprived councils in the country, where teachers or visiting professionals are the main agents of change. These abound in literature (see, for example, Burnard, 2007; Cockett, 2006; Pitts, 2005, 2007). Yet, more often, findings report that the music curriculum is narrow and dull (Harland et al., 2000; Kushner, 2006), noting how young people's difficulties with learning in school is often expressed through disruption (Harland et al., 2000; Kushner, 2006). We know that teachers who tackle disaffection in schools demonstrate an intense commitment to teaching their art form, added to which is the intrinsic reward of the sheer enjoyment of teaching young people, while providing support and direction for improved attainment (Cochrane & Cockett, 2007; Colley, 2003). For many music teachers, this commitment to teaching not only determines the extent to which pupils seem jointly and inseparably engaged in the process of music learning *with* their teacher, but also the features of effective music teaching (Harland et al., 2000). Approaches to helping retain youngsters who are vulnerable to disengagement have included changing to more confrontational styles of teaching (Ravet, 2007), as well as listening to and acting on what students have to say about learning (Rudduck & Flutter, 2000).

A current debate in the literature claims that artistic practices are first and foremost exclusionary (Kearney, 2003; Tate, 1999). It also argues that, while recognizing the tensions of cultural relativism, artistic practices need not be exclusionary, restrictive or judgemental. In order to combat the exclusionary tendencies 'a pedagogy that is open about questions, uncertainty and difficulty' (Jeffrey, 2005, p. 16) is more likely to make a real difference for individual young learners for whom most

conventional approaches do not work. If this is so, then what should we expect to see happening in music classrooms with pedagogies that are aimed at promoting inclusiveness? What assumptions underpin learning that is situated musically in the real lives of learners and teachers – and yet shared as members of a learning community (Lave & Wenger, 1991)?

Theoretical perspectives

Constructionism asserts that knowledge is *constructed* through the interaction of people and their social world – both the subject and the object are integral to meaning. Instead of seeking knowledge in the ‘outside world’, learning occurs through ‘participation in an activity system about which participants share understanding concerning what they are doing and what that means in their lives and for their communities’ (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 98). Constructionism seeks knowledge that is context-bound and socially constructed for a certain group of people at a certain time. For example, in teaching effectiveness research, Siedel and Shavelson (2007) argue that in order to recognize the effects of teaching on student learning we need to understand how events come to be, as mediated through the professional worlds of the teachers and on motivational-affective student outcomes.

Drawing upon Fraser’s (1997) work on injustice, the remedy to exclusion is through cultural or symbolic change. Fraser argues that exclusion is caused by:

Cultural domination (being subjected to patterns of interpretation and communication that are associated with another culture and are alien and/or hostile to one’s own);

Non-recognition (being rendered invisible by means of the authoritative representational, communicative and interpretative practices of one’s culture); and

Disrespect (being routinely maligned or disparaged in stereotypic public cultural representation and/or everyday life interactions). (Fraser, 1997, p. 14)

Within the context of music education, perhaps it is not enough to just believe that music is valuable in itself, or for music teachers to assume that teaching music is automatically good. Applying Fraser’s arguments to the teaching of music, the proposed solution would be to upwardly revalue disrespected, marginalized or maligned individuals or groups and nurture cultural diversity by recognizing cultural difference. Fraser’s definition of ‘recognition remedies’ (1997, p. 38) provides a basis for thinking about inclusive pedagogic practices in music education and particular constructions of music teacher thinking. By reframing the role of music teachers in relation to disaffected learners, these elements provide scaffolding for thinking about inclusive pedagogic practices in terms of the opportunity offered to the individual to participate, to be recognized, to engage and to be respected.

We know the arts are important in the lives of young people and closely associated with inclusiveness (Creative Partnerships, 2007). The degree to which the practitioner can engender an inclusive approach to learning is evident (Kinder & Harland, 2004). However, the question remains as to how music teachers working with disengaged students – whose difficulties with learning in school are expressed through disruption, disengagement and withdrawal – promote inclusiveness through the development of particular pedagogic practices. What underpins inclusive pedagogies

that help young people to reclaim their confidence and commitment (Finney et al., 2005; Richardson, 2007)? We know music teachers advocate music as: a powerful channel of communication for everyone; a social process; a way to develop a range of skills, for example, cognitive, physical and emotional; and a way to promote well-being and self-esteem. But what should we expect to see happening in pedagogies aimed at promoting inclusiveness?

Another related question arises: what is it that music teachers think they do in developing inclusive pedagogies in classroom contexts where young people are most at risk of exclusion? In order for us as music teachers to understand this in practice, we need to work at understanding how inclusion is (re-)contextualized in various pedagogic settings (Alexander, 2000; Bernstein, 1996). For young people who are in some way at risk of not developing a sense of self-worth and agency as learners, simply being allowed to participate (i.e., not being excluded) may provide the recognition needed to build talents and to build self- and mutual respect. This is the view firmly espoused by Fraser (1997).

The case for how inclusive practice is understood and made operational in the everyday pedagogy of music teachers, as well as its contribution in helping to re-engage learners, has yet to be demonstrated empirically. A description of the research methods used to collect representations of inclusive pedagogic classroom practices, as perceived differently by three teachers working in three different pedagogic settings, follows.

Purpose of the study

The accounts of experienced music teachers involved in challenging pedagogical settings where young people are most at risk of exclusion are crucial. This study presents three music teachers' accounts of the pedagogic approaches they undertake in their efforts to tackle self-perceived challenges and obstacles to their students' engagement. While these teachers do not constitute a representative sample of the general population, the study does contribute to broader goals which involve:

- unravelling further, from teachers' accounts, the complex interplay of teachers' values and the power of pedagogy in shaping what is distinctive about 'inclusive' pedagogic practices; and
- provoking insights that will help teachers to act as role models for learners who are vulnerable to marginalization and bring in their personal and social knowledge to enrich and develop new teaching materials.

Description of research methods

A phenomenological approach, with semi-structured in-depth interviews and open-structured recall interviews, was used to explore teachers' lived experiences of teaching as perceived by them. As a result of the sensitive and marginalized circumstances of some classroom settings, no videographic observation was conducted, because not all of the students were willing to provide informed consent and some had learned to be extremely guarded in their trust of observers (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2003).

In the interviews with teachers, the school's music documentation (i.e., curriculum), their teaching methods and pedagogical approach were discussed along with their handling of difficult and challenging students' behaviour. The context for these accounts of classroom pedagogies, as reflected-on experience described by the teachers, was drawn from a one-day visit involving preliminary observation of the teacher and the range of opportunities for pupils to become involved in music. The visit essentially took the form of informal discussions with the teacher, observation of a range of teaching episodes and classes taught by the teacher, and an initial in-depth teacher interview.

BASIS FOR ADOPTING A CASE STUDY APPROACH

The research aimed to learn about teachers' practice from their own perspective and from within the context of their own lived experiences. Data collection was carried out in three comprehensive secondary schools in the east and south-east regions of England, which included Norfolk, Cambridgeshire and Sussex. A multiple or collective case study approach (Stake, 2000) was adopted. The focus, or *phenomenon in context*, was inclusive education practices, which, according to Robson (2007), should be a real-life context 'typically in situations where the boundary between the phenomenon and its context is not clear' (p. 179). Each teacher was regarded as a particular case to be studied in his/her own right within the context of his/her own pedagogical setting. Each case, therefore, was unique. The aim of the study was not to generalize in the 'probabilistic sense' (Rossman & Rallis, 2003, p. 104). Depth of understanding was chosen over breadth.

TEACHER SELECTION AND SAMPLING CRITERIA

Selection of research sites involved two sets of sampling criteria. First, schools had to be selected on the following contextual characteristics and criteria:

- schools serving particularly disadvantaged communities, such as poor socio-economic background and social deprivation;
- schools that have comparably low-attaining intakes;
- schools that were coming out of 'special measures', that is, schools that were assessed as failing to provide an acceptable standard of education, or were so called 'under-achieving' schools that 'performed significantly less well than others in similar contexts' (National Audit Office, 2006).

Common to each context were teachers of students who were disenfranchised learners. The second sampling criteria took into account:

- teachers who exercised leadership in the pursuit of school improvement;
- teachers who regarded themselves as active learners;
- teachers known through professional organizations and university partnerships as 'exceptional', who work to overcome exclusion through inclusive approaches to music education.

INTERVIEWS

Data were obtained by means of two in-depth semi-structured interviews with each teacher. Each interview took approximately two hours, resulting in a total of nine hours (six interviews and several introductory conversations) of interview data. I also included the use of documents such as students' work, photographs, curriculum guidelines and data on class planning as prompts during the interview.

In interview, teachers were asked to use their own words to describe how they saw the demands and opportunities of teaching music in their setting, as well as contextual information about lessons, such as classroom organization, climate, tasks, timing and activities. They were also asked about their ideas and approaches to re-engaging disaffected students, and their recommendations to beginning music teachers (Alexander, 2000).

The interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim (i.e., word for word without inclusion of paralinguistics or thinking sounds). The interview conversations resulted in approximately 60 pages of transcription, which provided data about: the career path and critical incidents in the lives of the teachers; their professional and pedagogic functioning; their perceptions with regard to their responses to disaffected students; and the impacts of their practice. Initially, interview transcripts were read carefully and repeatedly. Their content was analysed for emergent themes, and from these themes a coding frame was developed and themes were sorted into a number of appropriate categories (see Patton, 1990). Following categorization, a process to reduce overlap and redundancy within categories was performed (Miles & Huberman, 1994). As mentioned earlier, the researcher visited the teachers' classrooms over several hours on one day, observing the teachers prior to conducting the interviews to establish a comfortable level of rapport, and as a background to thinking for the later research process of analysis and interpretation.

ACHIEVING METHODOLOGICAL RIGOUR

In qualitative research, consideration of the quality of data collected is particularly important. Through using triangulation, researchers are less likely to draw conclusions from data that are not trustworthy or representative of the situation under study. Data triangulation, two of four methods of triangulation outlined by Wellington (2000), was used in this study, in that teachers across different pedagogical settings were interviewed. Methodological triangulation was also used, since the same method of data generation was used on different occasions to answer the same research questions (Wellington, 2000).

My role as researcher was an active one (Harvey, 1990). I engaged in member checks with the teachers, allowing them the opportunity to comment on the accuracy of the data, analysis and interpretation. In so doing, I increased the study's trustworthiness, and avoided misrepresenting my participants' views. This is considered a useful way of validating research findings (Creswell, 2003).

INTRODUCING THE THREE PEDAGOGICAL SETTINGS

Site 1

At the secondary school in Cambridgeshire (in Cambridge), more than half of the students live in local authority housing on the council estates close to the school.

A higher than average percentage of children qualify for free school meals (24%). The school has been in and out of special measures with major truancy problems. The music teacher has worked in the school for eight years. He plays several instruments and is highly regarded by the school community. He teaches across all year levels. He has a leadership role as Key Stage 3¹ personal tutor for students identified as 'at risk'.

Site 2

The secondary school in Sussex is affected by unemployment and poverty. Its borough has the largest proportion of illiteracy in the country. The school has been in and out of special measures since 2002, with major truancy problems, bullying and other anti-social behaviour. The school has a vigorous whole-school improvement plan and strategies for working with emotional, behavioural and learning difficulties. The head of performing arts is a specialist music teacher. Working along with a large team of full- and part-time (including itinerant) instrumental, visual arts and drama teachers, this music teacher has been teaching in the school for 20 years and has been on the senior management team for the past five years where he is working to bring about improvement in the culture of classrooms throughout the school. He also regularly produces and conducts community concerts and theatrical productions.

Site 3

The secondary school in Norfolk was chosen because it was in one of the 36 Creative Partnership (2004) areas identified as suffering multiple deprivations. The following issues were in the process of being addressed: the underperformance by students in the school; the widening attainment gap between pupils with low and higher socio-economic status; and the re-engagement of the disengaged in the process of learning and improving school test scores. The music teacher has been teaching in the school for five years and teaches music across all year levels with a central concern for changing motivations of his students through the use of information and communications technology (ICT).

Findings

The findings identify three interrelated ways in which social inclusion is expressed in the ideas and practice of three particular teachers.

RE-ENGAGING LEARNERS THROUGH DEMOCRATIZING MUSIC LEARNING

Teacher 1 (from Site 1) had a strong commitment to the belief that the teacher should take on the role of a *learning mentor*. His description of practice emphasized the social relationships involved in music-making as being the most significant factor for effecting behavioural change. In his own words:

Whatever problems are associated with music learning, they do not come from music *per se* but from the particular blend of social interactions and musical activities that comprise the totality of the student's musical experience in your classroom.

He focused on the social processes in the music classroom – how pupils related to each other. He represented and modelled collaborative pro-social and musical values,

working hard to change unproductive or unsatisfying ways of working or relating to others.

I want the kids that have earned themselves a bad reputation in Year 7, who don't like themselves too much, to start believing in themselves. I want to know what they're saying and thinking – and they do have a great deal to say about their own education if you give them the opportunity – it's here where I get them to recognize what it is to think about themselves in relation to others – that's how I begin to break the cycle of diffidence and disruption.

'Respecting' students was regarded as paramount, even with the most challenging young people, who often had very fragmented and difficult personal circumstances.

He believed that his stance towards these young people was positive, encouraging and flexible. He noted how he would often change his approach to reflect his determination not to underestimate them. It was his intention to build on their positive experiences and show *musical empathy*, creating a shared sense of purpose in respect of what counts as music in and beyond the school's aims. He believed that the effects of this approach were significant. He reflected:

I don't see myself as a resource as much as I see the whole class as a resource with knowledge to share with each other. I have to constantly change the way I teach because I am rethinking how it is these kids learn. I don't stand in front of a class and think now I'm going to teach you X. That never works.

For this teacher, diversity in learning relationships, even in the presence of extreme student diversity in the classroom, was seen as an opportunity rather than a problem:

The best conditions for learning, if you really stop and notice, are not tense. I'm very much of the belief that the act of teaching is contingent upon the needs and interests of all those that are in my classroom and that this way of working nourishes me as much as the young people.

He regarded reflecting on his own practice as critical. He tried to become increasingly aware of any constraints embedded in his ways of working and the social relationships in the classroom. He wanted to change the learning reality for his students in order to change how they engaged with social life. He said 'by listening we learn to change their lives'.

This teacher's practice was built around the students' perceptions of their own expertise being important rather than those of the teacher. He believed that the act of teaching was contingent upon the needs and interests of all those in his classroom and that this way of working nourished him as much as his students. For a teacher whose practice relies heavily on ideas around a 'listening pedagogy', the most important verb in practice is not to talk, to explain, or to transmit, but to really listen. He said:

Inclusive learners require inclusive teachers of music ... when you are listening to kids who have given up, who don't find school relevant let alone meaningful, who are more often removed from lessons by teachers for one reason or another, much of the quality of what you are hearing is your effect on them. Your attention, your listening, is that important.

He took every opportunity to educate his students about the cultural experiences of different communities, races, genders and religions. His music classroom was

considered to be a place where 'musical prejudices are not allowed'. This was achieved through what he called 'musical socialization' and was supposed to be a smaller example of the wider world. He said:

I spend a lot of time thinking about mixing people together in groups, so that they have a range of people from different backgrounds, in a way that feels quite normal. This way I start to break down prejudice ... I get rid of sets which divide people according to ability. My kids are treated like they can do it.

In trying to sense where relationships exist between the students' home-school musical worlds, *their own* views count. What is important is how *they* feel. In the course of music lessons, students are asked to articulate those feelings and make them accessible, a further element in the process of changing attitudes to learning.

Within the pedagogical setting described by this teacher, there was a strong and clear commitment to democratizing the music learning process as social practice. The emphasis was not on the activity type as the vital element in re-engaging young people, but on community building with a high premium upon respect and recognition. The music teacher considered this to be primarily a process of empowerment and trust, allowing students to cast off their negative reputations – at least in some of their classes – and to reinvent themselves by democratic learning or sharing power in music learning.

RE-ENGAGING LEARNERS THROUGH HIGH STATUS CREATIVE PROJECTS

Teacher 2 (in Site 2) regarded the curriculum diet offered to young people as going beyond the narrow confines of subject-based learning (i.e., doing music) and even beyond the remit of school-based activities. This teacher's view was that to make a real impact on learner disaffection, a multi-agency approach should be adopted. He built bridges between schools, community agencies and young people by setting up high-status creative projects involving external experts (many of whom were friends, fellow professional musicians, composers and performers from London). Varied teaching methods were employed by these visitors to the school, and on field trips to historical sites such as churches and cathedrals.

Within a larger community context, partnerships between key groups of individuals and neighbouring schools, community agencies and parents were set up, and partners were invited to work together to address the issue of disaffection in the school. This resulted in connecting, extending and building a sense of community. For Teacher 2:

Those at most risk of losing self-esteem are not those who have rejected academic or school achievement as a marker but those who have accepted it but are likely to miss the grades they need: those getting grade D for composition or performances when they hoped for grade C, those who worked hard for and got level 3 when they know that level 4 is the expected standard. These are the kids whose identity is most affected by working with professionals. They know how to give back control, these young people who have particularly turbulent home life, regularly suspended from school or just spend most of their time watching and showing off to each other. The creative opportunities offered and supported by these artists, as well as me as their normal [music] teacher, offer an alternative route where you can put aspects of the learning in control of the learner. To be inventive, to experiment, to cooperate with others, to have a purpose which you are pursuing, like a concert in the Cathedral or wherever requires a personal

commitment. These kids learn the benefits of putting themselves on the line. You can't be creative or be the star of the production by sitting back and letting someone else do it for you. This way they learn. And it changes them.

Teacher 2 believed that the celebration of the pupils' work in and beyond the music classrooms had significant effects. He believed that publicly shared high-status creative projects, for example, conferred on students an alternative status that they valued in their lives. The challenge for this teacher seemed to lie in sustaining higher status projects in alternative settings while working collaboratively with other teachers in the school to get school-defined recognition for this success. He believed that the local communities *in which the young people recognized themselves*, with the support of the high status visiting artists' inputs, enabled pupils to take control and 'own' the music. Involvement in high-status creative projects, many of which were presented publicly, enabled them to realize the benefits they could gain from a commitment to music learning.

Re-engaging students who had disengaged involved this music teacher, along with several other teachers within the school, in projects where visiting artists offered informal learning opportunities. Together, teachers and students were involved in different ways of working, ways of breaking from the familiar boundaries of the classroom. Several projects involved visiting sites outside the school:

Working with visiting professionals in partnership projects allows you to understand and support even the most troubled student ... Some of these students come to find their niche, their way of working ... they work with us to help empower students ... and it empowers me working alongside colleagues who are professionals in their fields ... Performing in different ways, giving the students different experiences ... The visiting artists get us all talking in conversations about music, the arts, life ... in which everyone feels safe to speak and all voices are respected ... the dynamics of power change ... working on arts projects in and outside of the classroom encourages an openness about outcomes and a dialogue about problems that arise in the course of the learning ... we can have ideas that are much bigger scale and more authentic to the experience of music learning than we use in the classroom.

An important finding, central to this music teacher's beliefs about the value of teachers, professional artists and young people working in participatory arts and cross-disciplinary activities, was the importance of authentic learning spaces in bringing about students' engagement and music learning:

Working with composers and composing in churches, cathedrals and other historical spaces offers new opportunities; a way of listening to sound, and listening to sound in the landscape and nature. Students learn a new vocabulary for talking about sound and sounds. Of course it is that the hyper-naughty students who have emotional and behavioural problems will attract different responses from visiting artists. But although with these kids, there's always something that they'll do differently . . . They'll work and play in very different kinds of space, within different contexts and with different people. It provides a kind of experiential learning which involves us all in dialogue with space. I reckon it opens up new contexts for learning and provides me with insights into my students in ways that help me to help them re-engage.

Within this pedagogical setting, this teacher espoused a strong and clear commitment to creative partnerships between artists, teachers and students where risk-taking and creativity were driven by consensual and convergent sets of values. Here, the activity-led

project was the vital element in re-engaging young people with a high premium placed on the authenticity of the resources available to students, along with respect and recognition for participation. Again, the music teacher considered this to be primarily a process of empowerment, allowing students to cast off their negative reputations and to reinvent themselves through participation.

RE-ENGAGING LEARNERS THROUGH DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY

The curriculum 'mix' for pupils in the Norfolk teacher's music classroom offered tailored support that took into account individual needs and interests. Focusing specifically on young people's creative and collaborative interactions, ICT was embedded in such a way that most of the learning was done with sequenced keyboards and computer-based sampling software. Online, mobile and wireless networks and broadband technologies also featured heavily at the upper end of the secondary levels.

Teacher 3 was a young, charismatic music teacher whose work was about improvement/development and use of technology in music teaching. He had a strong allegiance to both R&B and hip-hop. He believed in offering learners new ways to view knowledge, conceive of music and form patterns of interactions across the world of music. The learners' attitudes and expectations about what was valued and possible for them to achieve, as well as the type of provision for achieving collaborative music-making and sharing, were key factors in the ways he harnessed enthusiasm.

From descriptions of his teaching, this teacher seemed to be working beyond the margins of prescription in the Key Stage 3 and 4 curriculum. His innovations were on the edge, and he believed they were making a difference in exceptionally challenging circumstances. For example, he enabled ICT skills (including all the associated expertise in media applications, graphic art and design and digital technology) to be formally recognized alongside four years' formal training on an instrument. This enabled pupils who were disenfranchised by the lack of specialist formal training on musical instruments (i.e., musical literacy and notation and other associated expertise) to bridge the barrier to making music. He said:

I think music teachers have to, against all the odds, demand more from themselves and their students. You can't afford to be afraid or shy of the challenges. You have to be sure of what is the responsibility of the/a music educator – where does it begin and end?

A by-product of his attitude to learning was his promotion to Head of Technology. This was critical to the success of his style of practice since it enabled ICT to be embedded in his ways of working. In addition, as the process of increasing participation and involving students in planning and decision making was identified as central to his practice, there were few barriers to inclusive practice. The popular nature of ICT and his access to the latest technology meant that, in his view, students worked hard to gain his approval. In turn, he explained that he worked hard to create the climate for constructive classroom interactions, to find ways to overcome learner isolation and to build confidence:

I focus in my work on interpersonal skills and teamwork. They have to discover their own creativity and imagination and technology offers great opportunities to develop these kinds of communication skills, to better understand themselves and to build their confidence. This is where I step in to the frame and work with young people with networks that are collaborative and usually formed around friendship groups or converting

friendship work into opportunities to learn. You have to use these networks, recognize them as tools in classroom situations. They offer powerful learning opportunities. These students love sitting next to someone that they get on with, doing the work, and having a laugh about it. You have to set individual targets; and you have to give rewards for even the smallest achievement.

According to this teacher, several factors can bring about a slow shift away from deficit models of pupil behaviour and disengagement. These include the mediating influence of technology, its relevance to teacher (and pupil) perceptions, good teacher–pupil relationships, and a heightened sensitivity to issues of power and authority in relation to pupils. Teacher 3 did not emphasize social behaviours as problematic nor did he appear to witness pupil disengagement in the classroom. He did, however, speak of a range of pupils' feeling states such as enjoyment, fear, boredom, anger or frustration, and he considered negative feeling states as being at the root of pupil disengagement.

There are plenty of times when pupils express their concerns about and responses to things they dislike of specific sorts of learning activity such as writing tasks. Boredom is usually linked not to the content of the course but to the sustained effort that some tasks call for and the fatigue and frustrations generated by this effort. I find that one form of empowerment or a process of control which helps them overcome these challenges is to enable these guys most het up about things to cast off or at least manage their negative reputations by doing some peer leadership activities; to be given responsibilities that allow them to contribute meaningfully to help them to redirect negative energy. You've got to be looking out for the things that lead students to disengage; it can happen in a second. You've got to continually find things that are going to work with kids.

This teacher tackled disaffection by the provision of supporting strategies (and structures). He worked hard to give students a voice. His use of online collaborative technologies provided space for students to upload music samples and share with others. The use of group-constructed and shared sample libraries allowed students from different geographic locations to interact directly through the sounds and music they created. Through music, he believed that the students could cast off their negative reputations and be helped to build positive learner identities in at least some of their classes.

Overall conclusions

From three pedagogical sites, these music teachers made available their thoughts on pedagogies aimed at promoting inclusiveness. Each music teacher described a deep commitment to meeting individual students' musical needs. They worked hard to connect with students and to find new ways to satisfy their students' needs. These teachers worked with minimal guidance to carry out what they saw as 'inclusive work'. They created their own goals and expectations, principles and practices, while also aiming to meet school and national standards.

In terms of their stance towards tackling disaffection, these teachers valued suitably structured musical participation as a vehicle for developing self-worth, identity and agency for young people who are in some way at risk, as well as for those who are not (MacDonald, Hargreaves, & Miell, 2002). They offered some pedagogical

insights into the task of supporting students in the process of change. They reiterated the importance of providing supportive, flexible and adaptive structures that redirect negative energy into something more positive (Jeffery, 2005). This is particularly true if pupils are given more, rather than less, responsibility and agency within and beyond the music classroom (Pitts, 2007).

They believed that young people need to experience learning in pedagogic settings in which they recognize themselves, ones that allow them to develop a sense of their own agency. This principle is writ large in the practice of the teachers featured in this study and elsewhere (Finney et al., 2005; Siedel & Shavelson, 2007).

Evidence that a focus on high-status creative projects can have an impact on the severely disaffected was highlighted. There was an emphasis on all individuals being included, being visible, having a sense of themselves and being seen by others.

The earning of respect and recognition, articulated in Fraser's (1997) theory, occurred through self-development in music and working on musical talents (self-respect); through care of the musical self (musical honour); and through giving back to others (mutual respect). Musical respect was not derived simply from being required to be respectful but through mutual recognition that these teachers described as being negotiated. Performing music was about 'performing' respect, negotiating boundaries and establishing musical respect in pedagogic relations. Here we saw the particular role (and value) that teachers play in spurring improvements in learning, in which notions of inclusive pedagogy are implicit. These ranged from using music participation, and ICT-based learning, to the high-status creative project or event-based activities that were believed to engender a redemptive self-respect in those who felt otherwise excluded from society.

As Fullan said some 15 years ago, 'Educational change depends on what teachers do and think. It's as simple and as complex as that' (1991, p. 117). This article has shared what teachers think they do that transforms the learning experiences and learning culture that young people and teachers develop in their classrooms.

In a sense then, the role of music education among disaffected youth can be thought of as more than the accumulation of effective teaching strategies. Rather, what these teachers tell us concerning inclusive pedagogies appears to have the potential to re-engage learners – by developing learning terrains that build democratic relationships in and out of the classroom, where disengaged students may enjoy the respect and recognition of their peers and, most importantly, reframe the roles of teachers.

NOTE

1. Key Stage 3 includes young people from Years 7–9 (ages 11–14).

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