Chapter 4

Undergraduate students' experiences of community music: Developing the musician within a

University module

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## Introduction

The past decade has seen an acceleration of research interest in the interdisciplinary field of community music, together with an increasing recognition of the positive emotional, social and cognitive benefits of musical participation in community contexts for all parties involved (Hallam & MacDonald, 2009). The focus of researcher attention has remained for the most part outside of formal educational settings, however and where undergraduates have engaged in community music activities either as part of their course or as an extracurricular activity, it is often the case that the wider benefits for students themselves are only tacitly spoken of rather than the focus of systematic research; and more often than not students' *musical* development is at the centre of such discussions, with references made to students receiving valuable experience in areas such as, for example, performing, conducting, improvising, experiencing 'other' musics and musicians (Campbell, 2010). Additionally, where university music departments and conservatoires/music colleges have included community music modules in their courses of study, the positioning of those modules within particular institutional and disciplinary knowledge cultures is seldom addressed.

In this chapter, we call for a renewal of well-established perceptions of norms and values in higher music education; the expansion of students' professional identities; the development of a range of generic skills, such as teamwork and the ability to communicate effectively; and ultimately, the renovation of their previous knowledge and creation of new knowledge through the experience of dealing with new, challenging situations (Hagar & Hodkinson, 2009). We do this by reporting on a study conducted on student engagement in

community music in the context of a Music in the Community module taken within a musicology degree at a university music department. We present it as a case study whereby undergraduate music students undertake community placements in a variety of healthcare and day-care settings. The term-long course brings together interdisciplinary theoretical considerations and their practical application; the community placements offer students the opportunity to experience novel spaces beyond the familiar environment of their undergraduate courses; to engage for an extended period of time in small-group collaborative activity; and through improvisational music-making, to interact with sensitive populations in their communities.

We begin by sketching the links between community music and higher music education. In doing so, our aim is not to offer a definitive account of research in this area, but rather to illustrate how community music could be conceptualised within current formal educational structures and, further, to provide the backdrop against which the present study was developed. To this end, we examine issues relating to informal and formal music learning and transmission from an epistemological viewpoint. Secondly, we draw on the multifaceted research literature of student learning in higher music education, and focus in particular on the debates surrounding transferable knowledge and skills and more recent calls for lifelong learning. Finally, we draw on a series of focus group discussions with student-participants of the Music in the Community module so as to present some ways in which community music in higher music education can be understood, implemented, and researched.


**Community music and higher education: The informal-formal spectrum**

It is often stated that, where community music (hereafter CM) is viewed as a situational practice, that is, defined by its social setting – cultural, institutional, formal or informal - it can be understood only in its specific relational situation and not as an isolated abstraction

and therefore might defy definition (Veblen, 2007; Phelan, 2008). Yet, as Veblen and Olsson (2002) suggest, where definitions arise, most will conform to the fact that CM activities and programmes involve active participation in music making of all kinds (performing, improvising and creating) and are often based on the premise that everyone has the right and ability to make and create music. Veblen (2007) identifies five issues for consideration in relation to CM as follows: the kinds of music and music making involved in a program of CM; the intentions of the leaders or participants in a program; the characteristics of the participants; the interactions among teaching-learning aims, knowledge and strategies; and interplays between informal and formal social-educational-cultural contexts. As this chapter ultimately aims to emphasise the benefits to prospective musicians that alternative ways of 'learning' and 'knowing' may offer during an undergraduate degree, we focus here on two of the above, notably the nature of teaching and learning in CM settings and the interplay between formal and informal contexts.

Teaching and learning modes in CM activities often include a rich mixture of oral, notational, experimental, experiential elements; multiple learner/teacher relationships arise as a result of the activities, and an interchange of roles and expertise as well as knowledge exchange is the norm (Veblen, 2007). One example of such knowledge exchange is what Campbell describes as:

> [a]borderline community music venture, where university students are not only introduced to musical communities far from their own experience but can also take exchange with young people in and through music. (2010, p. 304)

The example is one which was firmly established within a teacher training university degree programme and aimed at providing musicians-becoming-teachers with first-hand interaction with children and youth of the Yakama Indian and Mexican-American cultural communities. Students signing up to take part are encouraged to listen to and participate in

the music made in these communities: a facet of the experience Campbell describes is that the university students become 'learners' of the music of the communities with which they engage. The experience is further described as 'mildly disorienting in the midst of their orderly university lives' that nevertheless opens their minds to different ways of conceiving 'musicking, learning and transmission' (Campbell, 2010, p. 306).

Universities are well placed to connect with their local communities in many ways, and can be seen as one of several groups that engage in community music activities (see Veblen & Olsson, 2002). Their degree programmes often have service learning components that reflect a new commitment to community outreach, with benefits to both parties involved; they are also cost-neutral, since services are exchanged in kind (Carruthers, 2005). Yet, between the two contexts, there remains a tension - for many a creative one - that has much in common with the classic dichotomy of theory and practice (Veblen & Olsson, 2002). This is due to the fact that CM provides an appealing alternative to the formal learning environment of university education. In CM activities, music transmission and learning emphasise informal ways of learning, whereby knowledge is not separated from the activity or practice from which it emerges (Eneroth, 2008). There is reference to the related notion of 'context-based learning' (Renshaw, 2006, p.12), where knowledge and skills are acquired in a communal or collaborative setting, generating a shared sense of belonging and knowing within a particular context. In distinguishes between three different types of learning situations –formal, non-formal and informal –Eneroth (2008) suggests that in both non-formal and informal learning situations, knowledge is acquired through participation in a practice rather than through accumulation or possession. Much earlier, Ryle (1949) coined this latter form of knowledge as 'knowing how' as opposed to 'knowing that'. This 'know-how' knowledge does not exist in a vacuum, but rather is constructed within particular

settings and arises in and through participation in various interactive, communal practices that structure and shape activity (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

While this might seem at odds with university learning, epistemological issues relating to knowledge and learning in higher music education are also becoming increasingly important, with the case being made that informal learning should be recognised as at least as significant as formal learning and should, therefore, be valued and appropriately utilised in formal processes (Green, 2008). In a report of their investigation into artist-community collaborations, Triantafyllaki and Burnard (2010) argue that, for informal learning to contribute to formal educational aims and agendas, it is essential that greater attention be afforded to the social, cultural, and physical contexts in which the learning is promoted. Findings from the two case studies -  involving professional artist-school partnerships and arts students' work-related learning placements in inner city schools - reveal how collaborative learning in informal settings encourages the integration of students' conceptual or formal knowledge with their understandings and expectations of 'real' situations, contexts and spaces. From this vantage point, 'knowledge is a multifaceted object, requiring engagement of the whole person and not simply a reification of facts to be applied or remembered' (Shreeve & Smith, 2012, p. 542) and 'learning (is)… a largely incremental development and adjustment of existing knowledge and experience' (Shreeve & Smith, 2012, p. 545). Our focus on CM activity within and during a university degree could be viewed in the light of an increasing pre-occupation with the need, in higher education for due recognition to be given to students' informal and non-formal learning that takes place in higher education, beyond the university yet during a university education (Jackson, 2008). It can also be related to a growing recognition of the importance of broadening the social and musical skills of these students, to acknowledge their multiple roles and multidimensional

careers and, ultimately, to expand their opportunities for employment after graduation, and it is this to which we now turn.

**Community music, learning and knowledge transfer**

It has been indicated that the workforce of the future in all disciplinary areas will consist increasingly of individuals pursuing 'portfolio' careers, including those who are self-employed, freelance, casual or part-time, and are thus able to assume a range of professional roles (Smilde, 2007). This new type of entrepreneur will exist in all disciplines but will be particularly prevalent in arts industries that include performing arts activities (see Brown, 2008). For example, studies have revealed that being a 'musician' (whether teacher, performer, composer, arts administrator, community worker, music therapist, or other), involves multiple roles and an ever-changing range of knowledge and skills, as musicians adapt their practice to reflect personal circumstances and employment opportunities (Youth Music, 2002; Bennett, 2008). There is now a growing body of research around arts higher education teaching and learning in relation to student employability, entrepreneurship and work-related learning (Odam & Bannan, 2005; Bennett, 2008; Ball et al, 2010). In economically challenging (and therefore highly competitive) times such as these, it is vital that music graduates have the widest possible conception of the career opportunities and roles available to them and that higher education institutions facilitate the development of a range of subject-specific knowledge and generic skills that can support new career paths, including that of the CM worker or facilitator.

In the music field, the pervasive social and economic influence that music has on individuals and groups in contemporary society (Youth Music, 2002) can be seen in the increase in work in the wider community in the past decade, especially in countries like the United Kingdom or the Netherlands and the Nordic countries. While social enterprise and voluntary work continue to be undervalued within many higher education institutions, there

are encouraging reports of art students' engagement in non-profit, community-based activity as an essential part of a university education (Triantafyllaki & Smith, 2009). Creative arts graduates are known to have a predisposition for work of social and educational value and indeed, recent research reveals that increasing numbers of arts students are devising alternative approaches to gaining vital work experience, using their creative practice in new ways that benefit both their communities and their own career goals (Shreeve & Smith, 2011).

Closely linked to this debate, the arts-based research community is steadily raising awareness of informal, experiential and work-related approaches to learning as a result of and in relation to the perceived benefits of an arts-based education. Reports suggest that an arts education provides us with opportunities to develop our social skills, initiative and creativity; richer understandings of the social and cultural contexts in which we live, interpersonal sensitivity and a capacity for critical reflection; as well as improved self-esteem and transferable skills (Kleiman, 2003; UNESCO, 2006; DCMS, 2001). In a study of undergraduate creative arts students' work-related learning experiences in the non-profit and voluntary sector, Shreeve and Smith (2012) provide evidence of knowledge transfer as 'renovation and expansion of previous knowledge in the experience of dealing with new situations in new settings' (Hagar & Hodkinson, 2009 p. 620). Student participants in a range of community and voluntary work used their subject disciplinary skills in new ways, adding to skills while simultaneously adapting and extending them, drawing also on their lifewide knowledge (Jackson, 2008) as they brought together different aspects of their lives, adopting and adapting knowledge and experience in the new work situations they encountered (Shreeve & Smith, 2011).

The burgeoning interest in CM research and practice raises new expectations in higher music education concerning expanded roles for musicians, not least regarding the possibility

there is for musicians to use transferable skills in their initial training. In order for music graduates to move smoothly from one musical medium to another and to work in a range of contexts with diverse populations, they need to be able to draw on both their subject-specific knowledge, generic skills and 'lifewide' (Jackson, 2008) experiences, to adapt these in responding to new, challenging situations in our knowledge-based society and becoming lifelong learners. Conceptualised as a dynamic concept centrally concerned with establishing different ways of responding to change, lifelong learning involves 'transforming experience into knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, emotions, beliefs and the senses' (Jarvis, 2002, p. 60; quoted in Smilde, 2009). Lifelong learning requires students to develop their self-reflexivity; it supports the engagement of the whole person who is able to learn effectively from others, and be open to collaborative activity, interdisciplinary perspectives and cross-cultural understandings of the environment. Ultimately, it requires students to be able to deal with complexity through creative, imaginative and knowledge creation approaches to learning (Jackson et al, 2006; Triantafyllaki & Burnard, 2010). Student participation in CM activities that involve collaborative ways of engaging the whole person, has the potential to enhance their creativity and lifelong learning, transforming their experience into valuable learning, instilling in them a sense of ownership and responsibility in both process and product (Gregory, 2005).

**The *Music in the community* module**

The module discussed here is an elective seminar module offered at the Department of Music Studies, University of Athens, and led by the second author of this chapter. Seminar modules carry four times the weight of ordinary modules; they are research focused, with an emphasis on student-based learning, and an expectation that they provide a written report on completion of the module. The module forms part of a five-year musicology degree programme which has a mainly theoretical multidisciplinary focus, and covers various

aspects of the science of music, such as systematic and historical musicology, music education, music psychology, music technology and informatics, ethnomusicology and anthropology of music. There is little provision for practical work on the degree programme, and what is offered sits within the framework of traditional modules such as aural skills and conducting. The Community Music module addresses this gap in the curriculum in two important ways: firstly, through the inclusion of practical music making such as activities in improvisation, composition and performance in various settings, coupled with the academic backing which the module provides; and secondly, through student contact with the outside world, and especially with disadvantaged groups of society, where students can put into practice what musical and theoretical skills they possess.

As is the case with most CM university modules, the module contains a theoretical and a practical component. In the theoretical part, topics covered include definitions and aspects of community music, aspects relating to music therapy, debates on musical semiotics, basic principles of psychiatry, and issues  in the social, clinical and cognitive psychology of music. For the practical part, students are divided into groups of three or four, and choose a placement in which to work for a whole semester. Each group has a placement supervisor, usually a musician trained in community music or a graduate student of the module who has voluntarily continued his or her involvement.

Placements are related to psychiatric wards and rehabilitation, drug rehabilitation programmes, hospitals, and immigrant children's day centres. While on the CM placement, students are expected to visit their chosen placement with their group once a week; they also have preparation and evaluation meetings before and after each placement session. They report back to the whole class once a week during the university contact time where they can bring up anything of interest, questions on how to proceed, problems that arise, thoughts,

feelings, and so on. An account of the ideas of some of these students is presented below, with many of these also mirroring conversations which had taken place in class.

**Research procedure**

We carried out five focus group interviews with students who took part in the course in the academic years 2009-10/2010-11. Many of them continued to work voluntarily in/with the communities they met during their time on the CM module. We considered focus group interviews to be a useful means of gaining access to individual elaborations of student experiences, as these were negotiated in social interaction with their peers (Kitzinger & Barbour, 2001). Purposive sampling enabled us to select students for each focus group from within the same placement groupings; we believed this would encourage recollection of the experiences and provide a safe environment for sharing memories, reflections and new viewpoints. The focus group discussions took place across three weeks in Spring 2011; they served also as an opportunity for initial groups to meet up again and reflect on their experiences. The discussions varied from between 1 and 2 hours in length, were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim, with student names changed to preserve anonymity.

In total, we interviewed 14 students about their experiences of participating in the community music activities as part of their course. All of them were at an advanced stage of study, that is in the fourth or fifth year of the degree programme. We asked them to describe what they did during the community placements, their motivation for taking the course, what they learnt from the experience (including what kinds of prior knowledge and skills they drew on) and challenges they found. We sought to encourage them to reflect on their experience in terms of where they now were in their life-study-career trajectories and ultimately on what they considered the value of the experience to be. We were also interested in exploring whether they thought what they had learned in the community activities influenced their university work on their return to the course.

Thematic analysis (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998) allowed the themes to emerge from participants' own words, with initial coding used to produce as many sub-themes as were evident in the data. By drawing on the aforementioned literature on ways of learning and knowing in CM, in both informal learning situations and in higher music education, common links were found among the sub-themes and these were threaded together to form larger themes. The aim of this procedure was to construct themes that captured the recurring patterns that were most prominent in our dataset and that cut across all collected data. Analysis was ongoing in that initial interpretations after each focus group discussion were questioned, informed or elaborated on the basis of themes evolving from the analysis of subsequent interviews. We continued this process until we felt that no new insights emerged, and that the 'boundaries' of our themes were relatively stable, thus reaching 'saturation' (Cohen et al., 2007).

Three key themes were evident in students' perceived shifts. The first of these was with regard to changes in their perceptions of their relationship with 'others' (both student peers and community participants); a second was related to a shift with regard to their perception of 'self' and their developing professional identity; and a third concerned itself with the changes in their perceptions of 'music' as their disciplinary focus. The three themes can be conceptualized as perceived learning outcomes – *professional, personal and musical –* of student engagement in community work. A fourth theme, student perceptions of 'teaching and learning' both within and beyond the university arose through discussions on both the placement experiences and the structure of the workshops of the module. For the purposes of the current chapter, however, we focus on the first three key themes only. We also highlight instances where transfer seems to be taking place throughout the presentation of the findings. While for the purpose of the analysis each theme is presented separately, in reality all three themes are highly interdependent.

**Outcomes of the research**

*Professional learning outcomes*

A central characteristic of the experience was students' collaborative small-group work, both with their student peers (in groups of 3-6) and with community participants (sometimes as many as 10-15 people). Focus group discussions initially highlighted the challenges brought about by working in groups, and their frustrations with collaborative working patterns which were unfamiliar to them up till then in their studies. The development of responsibility and consistency in such working patterns was also stressed, especially in relation to undergraduate student mentality,

> Student 1: we did have issues working in a team; we'd never been taught how to! But out there in industry, we wouldn't know what to do. Now, in this context the fact that we needed to function meant we had to listen to each other, to respect one another.

> Student 2: respecting the fact that someone disagrees with you [and that] if his idea is better there is no reason not to run with it…

> Student 1: consistency was another issue. When you say you will do something...then to actually do it... You must be on time; you must take on your role. It was more like working in a space where you must consciously be there and have your role, rather than the usual student mentality. It was the opposite, so we had to test our limits. (Interview 4)

The following two groups of students emphasise again this sense of reliance on their peer groups, yet now project it as being a kind of 'safety net' when 'filling the gaps' during the ebb and flow of the activities or when the provision of emotional support in particularly crucial moments was necessary,

> Student 1: But we may have gone in with a plan of the activities, and anything could change our flow. It was there that we worked as a team, because we would remedy the gap and move on.

Student 2: There was definitely a sense of teamwork. You wanted to know that the other was next to you; it gave you such strength and that would happen simply with a glance. (Interview 2)

Student 1: we were quite supportive of each other. During the activities, someone would ask Hara for a piece, and when she signalled she didn't have it, Lina would jump in...

Student 2: so the flow wasn't lost..

Student 1: exactly. We kept the flow, this continuation all together as a group; where one would stumble, the other would go ahead with it…it's like the group gives you a security.

Student 2: exactly. With the group you are not so scared what will happen. You know it will be resolved somehow, each one of us will offer a piece of him/her and it will be resolved…

Student 3: there was a sense of security also for the other group (community participants). They had us linked up all together. They needed stability, when one of us was away, there was a problem. We had to be consistent, not just for us, also for them. (Interview 3)

The development of teamwork here is highlighted in the form of co-dependency on student peers in sustaining the 'flow' of the activities. Also evident is a developing sense of professional responsibility, highlighted by the importance of consistency in student attendance - across the length of the placement - for the wellbeing of community participants. This need for consistency was a common sub-theme in our dataset.

Student 1: the sense of teamwork was evident when someone was missing. The balance was lost. You knew that at a difficult point that person would say or do something.. each person had their own energy, it's like they took on a role. It's like bricks; when one is missing there is a tilt.

Student 2: Many community participants also connected with particular students, so when one of us was away, that participant would feel lost…as a team we were also connected. (Interview 1)

On a more practical level, a range of skills were developed as a result of the experience,

Student 1: imagination and strong will were some of the things we developed. We'd be so productive by keeping on our toes.

Student 2: yes, you needed to be there... and improvise, be very well prepared because, even when everything went up in the air, you needed to do something.

Student 1: flexibility, because you'd go in, say 'hello children' and you'd be lifted in the air with children performing cartwheels. How can you keep a distance to that?

Student 2: you'd go in prepared to work with older children and then get all the young ones. (Interview 4)

Where the placement was particularly challenging, group cohesion and communication seemed to increase, as indicated by the comments of students placed in the hospital setting;

Perhaps because our team had a lot of issues with the patients, we were much more connected as a group during the Seminar. Because other teams would get together for an hour during the week, set their schedule and be ok. We wouldn't have a meeting and finish before a couple hours had passed. There was a lot of meaning to our meetings. We produced work all of us together. I think communication was one of our strongest links. (Interview 2)

The fact that we had to face a situation there that we'd never before encountered and the fact we'd do it as a group, was something that brought us together. (Interview 3)

Finally, group collaboration with community participants took longer to form, yet it was felt to be a very rewarding aspect of the experience,

Student 1: I felt this connection with some of the participants, when they finally started to open up and after a point began to express themselves. During the break they wouldn't leave the room. When we prepared to leave putting our instruments in bags, they wouldn't leave. Often, they would sit with (student name) and play guitar and sing. (Interview 2)

> Student 2: when arriving and departing we were two groups, but when playing we were one. When singing using the instruments and so forth, there was a communication that didn't exist before or after, I think. (Interview 3)

> Student 3: that we could communication things through music without words, especially with these individuals, I saw very clearly. I learnt the meaning of the word team very clearly; that, in our lives we will come across many groups and that we'll participate in more than one group and it's how you react, how you behave towards such individuals and how they react to you and how a team is formed. It's so important for the group to have communication and respect. (Interview 1)

Three viewpoints are brought forward above by students from three different placement groups. Student 1 above tells us of the connection that slowly formed between the two teams. Student 2 talks about the binding role of music in such settings, while Student 3 talks about the transferable social skills she developed through the experience. The CM activities encouraged students to forge connections with community participants and to be flexible, adjusting to diverse populations and their needs.

*Personal learning outcomes*

A range of personal learning outcomes arose from the focus group discussions. Initially, students highlighted the role of self-reflection during the course of the placements, and saw it as an activity that directed them either inwards in developing personal understanding and knowledge or outwards in highlighting the role of the experience in their interactions with others,

> Student 1: There was a significant aspect of communicating with the self. From a point onwards, we had to identify what we feel, analyse it, think about what it is to be in such a situation. This helped me manage my feelings and my behaviour, what I did, when and why…It really helped me with regards to relationships with others. I think you enter a process of understanding what you feel, and why and you use this in your other relationships.

> Student 2: We trained ourselves to observe other people. So now in our other relationships in our lives we do the same. You learn how to function using body language mostly rather than what is said. You learn to stop observing yourself and start observing others.

> Student 1: It also really helped me when playing music with others. (Interview 2)

Both students above were able to translate their experiences of working closely with others during the module into a range of 'similar yet different' situations in their daily lives (for example, peer and professional relationships, group music-making). In addition, during the discussion it became clear that there were changes in empathy, and they noted shifts in their own perceptions of the community participants,

> My view regarding these individuals started to shift. What I saw on the outside I started to see from the inside and I began to respect it. It's a heavy word but appropriate. I began to appreciate these children that seemed so lively and I learned myself better through all this. My views on children and labour and what I'd seen in the streets till then, has completely shifted. (Interview 4)

Alongside this, students reported an increase in levels of confidence when dealing with sensitive populations as a major benefit of the experience,

> Student 1: I now deal with such situations. They used to frighten me, I felt like a fish out of water. Now I examine everything on a more mature basis, knowing there are things that can be done.

> Student 2: The fears we had in dealing with people with mental illness, we overcame them. We accepted them and they accepted us. And I think we communicated in the end... it was the group that made us trust others, both student and community teams...understanding, trust and care; to be able to integrate into their group and be able to make music. (Interview 2)

As Eraut (2007) notes, confidence is dependent on two factors: being able to meet successfully the challenges in one's work and feeling supported in that endeavour by colleagues or superiors. In the account above, both students emphasise their ability to move from insecurity to confidence in dealing with sensitive populations, through acknowledging

that they could now 'deal' with the particularities of such community work and that collaborative, supportive ways of working could make that happen. In fact, within a university degree where collaborative ways of working are the exception rather than the norm, the students below stress the added benefits of the creation of lasting friendships and links between undergraduates after the end of the module,

> Student 1: This close connection with student peers created a friendship, a comradeship and I felt this coming out of the Seminar, when seeing someone in the corridor, that we'd shared something very special…

> Student 2: it's the only module where I'd met all my classmates. I still say hello to them. Because in the Seminar I experienced them, in the Seminar we'd all help each other as a team. I have a different relation to them, we are more connected. (Interview 1)

Finally, for some students the experience opened new career pathways and invited them to imagine different futures,

> To be honest, I used to reside more in the music technology field. After this I was drawn toward this field, engaging also professionally if possible with volunteering. The experience drew me to this to a big extent. (Interview 3)

> It's really impacted on my future plans. I'd really like to work in music therapy. I'd like to develop what I did here and be able to change some things more substantially; that's why I'd enjoy the more therapeutic side. (Interview 5)

> I changed so much as did my direction. I thought I'd do something practice-based but not with children! I thought I couldn't be of much use in this field. I saw many changes in myself, so the next step was to work with individuals with special needs and I saw that I could do so. This led to other steps and hopefully many more. (Interview 4)

Hence, this experience encouraged some students to renew their perspectives of the non-commercial and voluntary aspects of music as a profession.

*Musical learning outcomes*

The CM activities served as a springboard for new ideas about music and its use, by encouraging students to respond to, and adapt their activities to the physical spaces in which found themselves and the populations with which they worked,

> Student 1: there were no rules for good behaviour, as there might be in a classroom. The space where children moved was chaotic and it was there we needed to use music in some way. I remember we told ourselves 'if they can't be quiet, then let them make organized noise'. It worked and they enjoyed it so much! There were pauses of silence, calmness, before they took off again.
>
> Student 2: it worked for us.
>
> Student 1: yes, but in order to think of it we had to understand the way in which they functioned till then.
>
> (Interview 4)

Students were encouraged to find ways in which to attain their goals through music. In some cases, this was achieved by bringing together their conceptual knowledge and their prior lifewide knowledge (Jackson, 2008) in managing challenging situations, that is their prior situational understandings of working with similar populations in the past,

> Student 1: I'd had some personal experience with children, as my dad worked for years in a children's orchestra and I was surrounded by children from when I was little. (Interview 4)

> Student 2: I'd never done any group work or anything like that, but I've done something similar with my grandmother, who was very ill, alone at home. And I would slowly put some music on and then play to her. It is kind of similar with the community work. My aim was to connect with her through the music and I did it. I got things out of this, probably unconsciously I hadn't thought about it before and then I understood when I came to the group here 'so, that's what it was!' I told myself. (Interview 3)

Eraut and Hirsch (2007) report that, where the new situation is very similar to some of those previously encountered, the transfer process is simplified. This was also achieved as students came up with creative solutions to enable their engagement in the activities, such as, for example, by viewing music as context-dependent and adjusting and broadening its use in the

various settings they entered. The group below provides a useful overview of the way in which music was used during the placements.

> Student 1: Basically, it's an experience, it's your tool. It's something you create, as a part of you, and this is used as a tool to achieve your aim, whether it's to engage someone or to entertain or whatever. It's not music with its typical manuscript packaging.

> Student 2: You get to the essence of music as people use it because they like it and have fun through (music). You put aside everything you've learnt all those years and ask 'why did you begin learning music? Why do you like it? Why do people sing?' Right there, in the group, this is what you do.

> Student 3: beyond creating something, it's the emotional bit as well. Often in our daily lives we create things, but it's mechanical, you don't know why you do it. In music it was creation, and emotion, and the value of giving, and our own expressivity. Not only do they express themselves, you also express yourself and see how a particular song or melody can affect you, or the group emotion, where this takes you. (Interview 3)

Music is conceptualized as experience, as emotion, as a form of engagement and participation in a social group. Importantly, as student 1 discusses above, music is part of the individual taking part in a practice in a particular space in time. The above student quotes remind us that CM engagement involves the group as a whole and is not confined to a limited few with formal musical training.

Similar to students taking on the role of expert, at least during the planning of the activities and in their initiation during the meetings, the excerpt below emphasises the potential for music to increase self-worth in community participants. Again, the situated nature of the activities is recognised and a holistic understanding in accordance with participants' backgrounds is achieved,

> We are talking about people who are usually sidetracked. So music provides something they don't find anywhere else in their personal lives and perhaps they identify with it, they feel important. When

someone gets the solo, he immediately is important. And he won't have this from his family or society. It's one of the most important things music does, in my view. (Interview 3)

Students recognised in this experience that the CM activities provided community participants with an opportunity to take on leadership roles with support from the group; this led to an increase in their feelings of self-worth and in their sense of ownership of the musical process (Dabback, 2008).

For many students, their experience of the CM module represented a renewal of well-established perceptions of norms and values in their higher education,

Student 1: what we analyse back at uni has been written by one person only and then five students together with a professor analyse it. It's something that involves a limited number of people: those that know or that happened to learn. While this is something we create all together - that very moment - and you don't need any prior knowledge. You just have to be there at that moment, with these people, creating music with them.

Student 2: being musicians, it is more difficult to find the music that will excite us or do what we feel… when I go to concerts now, I think about the structure of what I hear, A' subject, B' subject…

Student 3: it's like breaking down the myth. Someone who doesn't know what they are listening to just listens, without interpreting it. When you sit down and add rules …

Student 2: you make it logical

Student 3: and something is lost.

Student 2: someone else might say you make 'noise'.

Student 3: perhaps it is that, but we don't evaluate it but rather look at how we experienced it by actually doing it. Listening to it afterwards for me didn't have much worth. It's what you do then and there. (Interview 5)

A number of issues related to music are taken up here. Student 1 stresses the importance of inclusivity, accessibility and participation in music-making whereby teacher-apprentice roles are broken down in favour of group ownership of the musical process, communal ways of working and tacit ways of knowing. Student 3 returns to this in his last quote which emphasizes process over product in the group improvisations and the value of the experience itself. An interesting dialogue takes place between Students 2 and 3, whereby formal education is conceptualized as hindering emotional, experiential and situated responses to music.

*Summary of the findings*

The findings revealed that the learning outcomes as perceived by student-participants were numerous and diverse on a professional, personal and musical level, yet highly interrelated.

On a professional level, students developed a range of generic and personal skills while working collaboratively within their peer groups and with community participants. More specifically, students developed their communication and social skills, as well as their sense of responsibility towards their co-workers, including community participants, as they navigated their way in often challenging situations.

On a personal level, students reported an increase in self-confidence and an openness towards diversity. Students also stated that they were able to use their newfound skills in a variety of similar situations. Broader career trajectories were also highlighted, together with a shift toward the more non-commercial and voluntary aspects of music as a profession. Intertwined with these perceived benefits were perceptions of the use of music in the CM activities. Students began to view music as context-dependent, adjusting and broadening its use in the various settings they entered. This called on them sometimes to take on leadership roles with support from the group, leading to an increase in their feelings of self-worth and in their sense of ownership of both process and product. They 'used' music in order to deal with

challenging situations, an outcome which was already a teaching aim at the start of the module.

Subject-specific knowledge, generic skills and lifewide knowledge were all brought to bear on the challenging situations encountered by the students during their placements. Increased levels of reflexivity ensured that they were able to learn effectively from peer and community participants and to deal with complexity through developing creative, imaginative ways of working (Jackson et al, 2006). As mentioned at the outset, we believe that being a musician requires multiple roles and an ever-changing range of knowledge and skills, as musicians adapt to their practice to reflect personal circumstances and employment opportunities (Bennett, 2008; Brown, 2008). An important outcome of students' participation in the CM activities was their reflexive transformation of experience into valuable learning, a key characteristic of lifelong learning, and an important pre-requisite for the type of adaptability and responsiveness required throughout a musician's career span.

**University-based community music engagement: Some considerations**

The three themes prominent in our analysis provide us with an appropriate backdrop to exploring now some of the issues pertinent to the development of the musician in the framework of CM activities during a university degree. For the majority of our students this would have been their first time participating in a practice-based musical activity, one that expected of them a range of roles including those of leader, facilitator and contributor; a range of skills such as practical musicianship, improvising, composing; small-group collaborative ways of working; as well as the use of tacit, experiential and lifewide forms of knowledge. University student engagement in community music activities provided an exciting (and challenging) alternative to a well-worn undergraduate student identity as one that is mainly developed by being on the receiving end of disciplinary (and largely

theoretical) knowledge with few opportunities for collaborative forms of learning and practice-based and informal ways of knowing and learning.

CM activities during a higher music education degree could become a vehicle for students to re-examine and possibly revise their musical identities. Musical identities negotiated through participation in the CM activities are distinguished not only by the embodiment of a variety of musical knowledge and skills but also by the adoption of roles as valuable contributors to the group. When students are faced with experiences unfamiliar to them, such as the case in the account presented in this chapter, they are prompted to engage in reflection on their acquired habits and understandings and are led to question their existing identities and the relationships in which these are situated (Field, 2012). Following Campbell's (2010) suggestion, cited earlier in this chapter, 'mildly disorienting experiences' in the midst of rather ordinary university lives may lead to a broadening of conceptions regarding 'musicking, learning and transmission'. Students' perceptions suggest an acceptance of the validity of a variety of ways of making music, an emphasis on musical behaviours and musical reception, the enabling of processes of socialization and, finally, the development of empathic understanding towards diversity, all of which we consider to be key aspects of music education in the twenty first century.

The context of our study was quite specific in that it involved a particular departmental knowledge culture that is grounded for the most part in theoretical expertise – albeit multidisciplinary – rather than experiential, situated forms of knowledge and practice-based ways of learning; yet it is felt that some parallels could be drawn by readers with their own institutions and countries. The integration of CM modules during higher music education should not be overlooked as just another practice-based course. The benefits of such integration extend far beyond the more obvious learning outcomes discussed in this chapter. They reach inwards – re-examining institutional cultures, norms and values – and

outwards – facilitating exciting collaborations with local communities – and therefore have the capacity to ensure that more comprehensive views of *musicians* and *music* are achieved; a renewal of approach to university music education can only follow.

## Acknowledgements

The authors gratefully acknowledge the contribution of the students who participated in this study.

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