CORA Cork Open Research Archive
Cartlann Taighde Oscailte Chorcaí

Title	Who pays and who plays? Mapping the discourse of publicly funded instrumental music education in Ireland
Authors	Deloughry, Ciaran
Publication date	2014
Original Citation	Deloughry, C. 2014. Who pays and who plays? Mapping the discourse of publicly funded instrumental music education in Ireland. PhD Thesis, University College Cork.
Type of publication	Doctoral thesis
Rights	© 2014, Ciaran Deloughry. - http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/
Download date	2026-11-15 03:20:52
Item downloaded from	https://hdl.handle.net/10468/2078



UCC
University College Cork, Ireland
Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh

Who pays and who plays? Mapping the discourse of publicly funded instrumental music education in Ireland

Ciaran Deloughry

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, School of Education, National University of Ireland, Cork.

Supervisor: Dr Paul Conway

Head of School: Professor Kathy Hall

2014

Abstract

Background to the study

Instrumental music education, formalised as Western classical music, is provided as an extra-curricular activity on a fee-paying basis by a small number of Education and Training Boards, formerly Vocational Education Committees (ETB/VECs) through specialist instrumental Music Services. While concepts of social justice, universal access and inclusion inform and underpin the primary- and second-level education sector, such discourses have less currency in the area of instrumental music education. Although all citizens' taxes fund the public music provision, participation in instrumental music during school-going years is predominantly accessed by middle class families.

Research question/focus of the study/purpose of the study

The research questions extend beyond constructs of social class and privilege to interrogate 'taken-for-granted' belief systems of practitioners and, by extension, organisations as factors which may be complicit in the reproduction of advantage. Foucault's conception of discourse provides a lens with which to map professional practices. Drawing on Bourdieu's analysis of the reproduction of social advantage through *cultural capital* and *habitus,* the study examines cultural assumptions, which appear to place the learning of musical instruments within the educational choices of middle- and upper middle-class families to the exclusion of other social groups.

Research methods/analytical framework

Theoretical concepts derived from the research literature sensitise the study: *musical taste and value, constructs of musical ability/talent and giftedness, social class and gender.* The philosophical orientation of the research is within the transformational paradigm A series of semi-structured interviews sought to access the perceptions and beliefs of performance music education practitioners (N=14) in seven publicly-funded music services in Ireland. Canonical dispositions were interrogated and emergent themes were coded and analysed in a process of *Grounded theory*.

Research claims and findings

Instrumental music education policy and practice inhabit a space, which is separate and autonomous from mainstream education. Findings show that within the music-services, long-held aesthetic and pedagogic discourses of the 19th century Conservatory system exert a hegemonic influence over policy and practice. An enduring 'examination culture' located within the Western art music tradition determines pedagogy, musical genre, and assessment procedures. Tangible boundaries of fee-payment and restricted availability are compounded by invisible boundaries of concealed selectivity, aesthetic taste and ideologies of musical value. Practitioners are aware of a status duality whereby instrumental teachers working as visiting specialists in primary schools experience a conflict between specialist and generalist educational aims. Nevertheless, study participants advocated siting the point of access to instrumental music education in the primary schools as the most equitable means of access to instrumental music education.

Significance of the study

This study contributes to filling a 'knowledge gap' in the sociology of music education in Ireland. It provides an empirical basis for rethinking instrumental music in the Irish education system as equitable in-school musical participation. The conclusions of the study suggest starting-points for further educational research and provide key 'prompts' for curriculum planners of instrumental pedagogy modules in teacher preparation programmes.

Acknowledgements

I wish to thank those people to whom I owe a great debt of gratitude for their encouragement and support during the completion of this thesis. Thank you to my supervisor, Dr Paul Conway for your guidance, constructive comments and scholarly advice. To my loved ones, thank you for your constant support, and for accommodating, without complaint, my frequent withdrawals from family life in recent years. Finally, I acknowledge the generosity of the fourteen interview participants who gave so freely of their time to share their opinions and beliefs.

Table of contents

Abstract .....
Acknowledgements i
Table of contents ii
Figures and tables vi

Chapter 1 1
Introduction 1
1.1 Background to the study 1
1.1.1 Research questions 3
1.1.2 Access and participation 4
1.1.3 Piloting change 7
1.2 The music education sectors 9
1.2.1 Publicly funded instrumental music provision in Ireland 9
1.2.2 Music in Primary education 11
1.3 Study design 12
1.3.1 The scope of the study 12
1.3.2 Purpose of the study 13
1.3.3 Statement of the problem 14
1.3.4 Theoretical framework 15
1.3.5 Research gap 16
1.4 Time-line of the study 18
1.4.1 Developing the proposal 18
1.4.2 Drafting Chapters 2 and 3 19
1.4.3 Piloting the research 19
1.4.4 Data collection 19
1.4.5 Data analysis 20
1.5 Chapter summary 20

Chapter 2 22
Literature Review 22
2.1 Introduction 22
2.2 Locating the study 25
2.3 A historical context for music education in Ireland 29
2.3.1 Music in primary education 30
2.3.2 Music in Secondary education 33
2.3.3 Music in Vocational Education 36
2.3.4 Instrumental music services 38
2.4 Music education as social practice 43
2.4.1 The social construction of music 43
2.4.2 Patterns of musical consumption 47
2.4.3 Education and cultural advantage 51
2.4.4 Social class 54
2.4.5 Gender 55
2.4.6 Music in the middle-class family 57
2.4.7 The benefits of playing a musical instrument 59
2.4.7.1 Cognitive function 60
2.4.7.2 Personal and social development 61
2.4.7.3 Educating the emotions 62

2.5 Social justice 64
2.5.1 Private or public good? 65
2.5.2 The illusion of choice 66
2.5.3 Distributive justice 67
2.5.4 Status equality and parity of participation 68
2.6 Music in school curriculum 69
2.6.1 The arts in education 70
2.6.2 A utilitarian view of arts education 72
2.6.3. Music education – aesthetic or praxial? 74
2.6.4 The primary music curriculum 77
2.6.5 Subject hierarchy at second-level 80
2.6.6 Constructs of value in school music 81
2.7 Exploring the sectoral discourse 83
2.7.1 Instrumental music education 85
2.7.2 The Academy 87
2.7.3 Privileging high art 87
2.7.4 Constructs of musical ability 90
2.7.5 Transitions, contexts, partnerships 94
2.7.5 'A quiet revolution' 96
2.8 Insights from abroad 98
2.8.1 Instrumental music education in the UK 98
2.8.1.1 England 100
The Henley Report 2011 101
The National Plan for Music Education (2011) 102
2.8.1.2 Scotland 104
Report by the Scottish Government's Instrumental Music Group (2013) 106
2.8.2 El Sistema Venezuela 108
2.8.2.1 Sistema Scotland 110
2.9 Conclusion 111

Chapter 3 115
Methodology 115
3.1 Introduction 115
3.2 Ethical considerations 116
3.2.1 Researcher positioning 116
3.2.2 Gaining access 118
3.2.3 Informed consent 120
3.3 The characteristics of research perspectives 122
3.3.1 Theoretical orientation 123
3.3.2 Validity and reliability 126
3.4 Study design 127
3.4.1 Case study 127
3.4.2 Piloting the study – the online questionnaire 128
3.4.3 Interview as a qualitative method 130
3.4.4 The interview process 130
3.4.5 The interview sites 131
3.4.5.1 County Music-Service 132
3.4.5.2 Urban District Music-Service 133
3.4.6 The responses 134

3.5 Data analysis 139
3.5.1 The grounded theory approach to analysis 139
3.5.2 Coding the data 142
3.6 Conclusion 146

Chapter 4 147
Data analysis and presentation of claims 147
4.1 Organisation, structure and practice 148
4.1.1 Funding 149
4.1.1.1 Uneven resourcing 152
4.1.1.2 Public access to a scarce provision 156
4.1.2 Social profile 159
4.1.2.1 Gender 159
4.1.2.2 Social class 166
4.1.3 The instrumental courses 173
4.1.3.1 Musical genre 173
4.1.3.2 Individual tuition 176
4.1.3.4 Conceptions of musical ability 183
4.1.3.4 Achievement criteria and assessment 189
4.1.4 A general overview of instrumental music education provision 195
4.2 The cultural world of the Music Services 198
4.2.1 Three musical narratives 198
4.2.1.1 Claire, Music Service administrator 199
4.2.1.2 Órla – Teacher of flute, piano and music-theory 202
4.2.1.3 Brian – teacher of violin 204
4.3 Analysing belief: interpreting discourse 209
4.3.1 A bounded system 210
4.3.1.1 Professional identity 210
4.3.1.2 Specialism 214
4.3.1.3 Traditions challenged in a time of change 217
4.3.1.4 The autonomy of the teacher 221
4.3.2 Perception of parental motivation 226
4.3.2.1 ‘Another skill they’d have for life’ 226
4.3.2.2 ‘Children that study music do better in school’ 227
4.3.2.3 ‘It’s to do with your background’ 228
4.3.2.4 ‘To be like Johnny next door’ 230
4.3.2.5 ‘Because they have the money to do it’ 231
4.3.4 Crossing boundaries 233
4.3.4.1 Educational aims in conflict 233
4.3.4.2 Converging paths: specialist music teachers in primary school 236
4.3.4.3 Opening access 237
4.4 Conclusion 241
4.4.1 Exclusionary boundaries 241
4.4.2 Sectoral isolation: constrained autonomy 243
4.4.3 Divergent objectives 244
4.4.4 Concerted cultivation and the privatisation of public goods 245
4.4.5 Summary 246

Chapter 5 247
Conclusions 247
5.1 Introduction 247
5.2 Culture: the hegemony of the Conservatory 250
5.2.1 A systematised workable model 250
5.2.2 Examination culture 251
5.2.3 Middle-class advantage 252
5.3 Structure: a bounded cultural practice 253
5.3.1 Restricted availability 254
5.3.2 Concealed selectivity 255
5.3.3 Taste as boundary 256
5.3.4 Achievement and ability 258
5.4 Agency: a constrained autonomy 259
5.4.1 Where stands teacher agency? 261
5.5 Aims: reconciling the irreconcilable? 262
5.5.1 Competing educational goals 263
5.5.2 Specialist and generalist: parallel educational discourses 264
5.6 Coda: closing notes 269
5.6.1 Contribution of the study 270

References 273

Appendix 1 285
Application to Social Research Ethics Committee 285
Appendix 2 286
Letter requesting access to research site 286
Appendix 3 287
Letter to principals requesting interview volunteers 287
Appendix 4 288
Online survey 288
Appendix 5 290
Survey results 290
Appendix 6 295
Information Sheet – Interview Participant 295
Appendix 7 296
Consent Form 296
Appendix 8 297
Interview protocol 297

Figures and tables

Figure 1.1: Specialist instrumental music education....4
Figure 1.2: Visual representation of the study....21
Figure 2.1: Three approaches to school music....24
Figure 2.2: The structure of instrumental music education....25
Figure 2.3: The instrumental-music canon....26
Figure 2.4: Sensitising concepts from research literature....29
Figure 2.5: Gender correlation of musical instruments....56
Figure 3.1: Social class formation of musical access....115
Figure 3.2: The grounded theory approach to data analysis....139
Figure 5.1: Case study: instrumental music education....247
Figure 5.2: Competing educational goals....263

Table 1.1: Time-line of the study....18
Table 2.1: Sales of recorded music by genre by percentage of albums (1997)....50
Table 3.1: Theoretical orientation of the study....124
Table 3.2: Summary of data sources....129
Table 3.3: The interview sites....132
Table 3.4: Summary of County Music-Service and Urban-district Music-Service....134
Table 3.5: Sample of interview protocol....135
Table 3.6: Start-list based on *sensitising concepts*....143
Table 3.7: Example of code-development from *musical genre (C1.2)*....144
Table 3.8: Example of theme development....145
Table 4.1: The Music Services – fee levels....150
Table 4.2: Level of tuition fees (survey)....150
Table 4.3: Fee-remission or fee-reduction for families of limited means....151
Table 4.4: Gender-profile of student-enrolment....160
Table 4.5: Professional areas of teacher-participants....173
Table 4.6: Instrument choice....174
Table 4.7: Class size....176
Table 4.8: Perceptions of musical ability....184
Table 4.9 Key themes emerging from three biographical narratives....208

Chapter 1

> It is through our own narratives that we principally construct a version of ourselves in the world, and it is through its narrative that a culture provides models of identity and agency to its members.
>
> What does it take to create a nurturing school culture that empowers the young effectively to use the resources and opportunities of the broader culture?
>
> (Bruner 1996, *The culture of education,* p.*xiv*)
>
> Equally if not more important is the role of education in enabling a person to enjoy the culture of his society and to take part in its affairs, and in this way to provide for each individual a secure sense of his own worth.
>
> (Rawls 1971, *A theory of justice,* p.101)

Introduction

1.1 Background to the study

Vignette 1

At an enrolment night, a young parent approached me to ask if a waiver of fees was possible for social welfare recipients. Her seven-year-old daughter was applying as a first time violin student. I relayed the query to a superior, but the request was refused on the grounds that the family did not have a 'track record'.

I was ashamed to go back to the mother and refuse her request. It brought home to me the impossibility of access to music for this family, and resonances of 'the undeserving poor' came to my mind. Her family was deemed not deserving of a start on a musical instrument – the risk of failure – the lack of understanding by bureaucrats of working-class people.

Effectively the child was precluded from accessing music lessons, whereas her more materially advantaged peers gained access on payment of a fee. This incident has remained with me and I can identify it as a significant moment in my questioning of instrumental music education as a system of educational rationing (Gillborn and Youdell, 2000), which, at worst, knowingly ignores, or at best, is neglectfully unaware, of social injustice.

Music is important to humanity. It accompanies many areas of human activity and is inherently pleasurable at an emotional level (Sloboda 2005, p.80). At a societal level music evokes shared meanings and social identities (Hallam 1999, p.2; Hargreaves and North 1999, p.79). Sound technology enables musical listening to such an extent that unlimited choice in musical genre is readily available to the present-day listener. Access to music has been democratised and demystified and, at the same time, commodified and individualised (Hargreaves and North 1999, p.73). While music-*listening* is a modern universal practice, participation in music-*making* is restricted to the relatively few in contemporary society (Blacking 1976, p.4; Green 2002, p.2).

When it comes to the learning of musical instruments, it has been my experience as an instrumental music teacher with a publicly-funded music-service in Ireland that participation in instrumental music education is in alignment with middle-class cultural choice. I refer to the vignette above to assert my perception that ability to pay is a reliable correlating factor of instrumental music participation; and further support this by my own student enrolment, which has been solidly middle-class over my whole teaching career.

In undertaking this study, I am motivated by a general sense of unease – what Dewey referred to as a 'felt difficulty' (Dewy 1910, pp.72-4). Dewey presented the idea of 'felt difficulty' as a first stage in problem-solving, whereby a perplexing awareness of a problem provokes reflection in a practitioner. My sense of unease is provoked by a perception that a large demographic of people, who may not have the cultural background or the financial means to access instrumental music-making, is excluded from a public educational resource. And then there is my personal sense of shame at my complicit role in the rejection of the tentative approach made to the local publicly funded music-service by this family of limited means.

From the outset I make explicit my researcher position as that of an insider examining the tacit knowledge and professional discourses of my own professional community (Miles and Huberman 1994, p.4). This positioning obliges me to self-consciously stand apart and sustain my research by adopting a balanced perspective. To affect a sense of balance, I call upon considerations of social justice as a lens with which to scrutinise the fairness of institutional practice. In order to assess official policy as just or unjust, I draw on principles of status equality, distributive justice and fair equality of participation (Drudy and Lynch 1993, Fraser 2001, Lynch 1999, Lynch and Moran 2006, Miller 1999, Rawls 1971) as a foil with which to critique policy and practice, which enact the publicly-funded instrumental music provision. In Chapter 2, I will explore *justice of recognition* as a means of conceptualising fair practice in publicly-provided instrumental music education.

1.1.1 Research questions

Framing the study as an analysis of discourse (Foucault, 1985), in this dissertation, I will seek to unravel belief systems and discursive practices which may serve to align instrumental music education with the cultural needs of privileged social groups. I ask the following research questions in a spirit of personal curiosity and professional enquiry:

> *To what extent is social class background a predictor of participation instrumental music education?*
>
> *To what extent does professional discourse contribute to socially inequitable musical participation?*
>
> *From what cultural context do these discourses emanate?*

The salient feature of the instrumental music courses is the high-cultural form it takes. Western art music played on the orchestral stringed and wind instruments,

classical guitar and piano structures and identifies the music courses. An individuated pedagogy featuring one-to-one instrumental lesson and assessment through annual examination emphasise high technical, musical and artistic achievement criteria. There is also a gender consideration. It is my perception as a teacher and musician that the gender ratio tends towards a more female than male participation. This becomes evident when one attends the annual Festival of Youth Orchestras at the National Concert Hall in Dublin. In short the publicly-funded instrumental music education provision is presents as a highly specialised, high-cultural musical activity with a socially restricted access and participation.

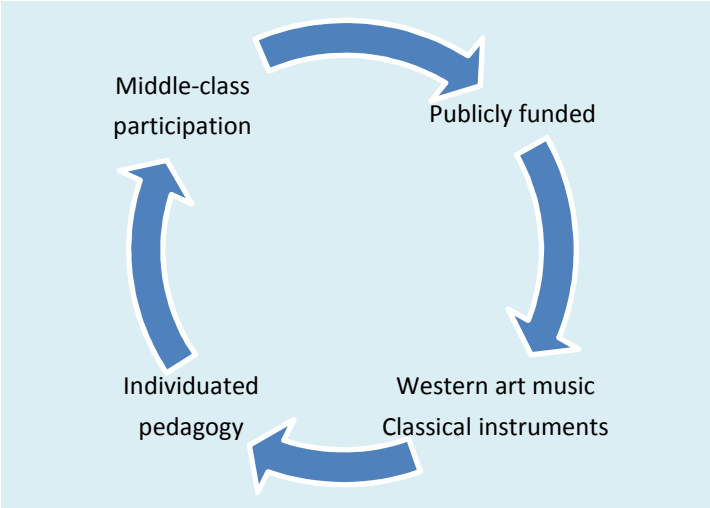


Figure 1.1: Specialist instrumental music education

1.1.2 Access and participation

Research in the sociology of education indicates that the children of lower social groups participate in fewer organised extra-curricular enrichment activities than the children of middle- and upper middle-class groups (Lareau 2002, p.748; Vincent and Ball 2007, p.1066). One of the criticisms of instrumental music education in UK Local Education Authorities (LEAs) is that of elitism. Such criticism is made on the grounds of the high cultural status of music tuition, which is rooted in the Western

classical music tradition, its selectivity and the fact that children of low income groups are denied the opportunity to learn instruments because access to instrumental courses is based on the ability of parents to pay (Hallam 1998, pp. 5-6).

If we look at Irish children's schooling, the broad similarities with the UK are clearly visible. While music is a core area of general activity in the primary curriculum, participation in specialised vocal and instrumental music is confined to that minority of pupils who are able to access instrumental tuition outside of school. At second-level, music is a minority subject, and of those who take music for Junior and Leaving Certificate, the school music course is usually supplemented by instrumental tuition funded by parents outside of school hours as an extracurricular activity (Drury 2003, p.7). Drury's study, *A National System of Local Music Education Services - Report of a Feasibility Study* (2003), jointly commissioned by the Department of Education and Science and the Department of Arts, Sports and Tourism (as then configured) reported the feasibility of national system of publicly funded local music-services in Ireland.

My interest in researching the area was provoked by my realisation, at a certain stage in my career, that the learning of musical instruments is a profoundly middle-class activity. As a musician and teacher, I am passionate about the musical experience and believe that all individuals have a right and human entitlement to share in musical participation. I have a profound awareness of the generosity of most of my fellow instrumental music teachers in their engagement with their students. Teachers devote time and effort over and above their teaching contracts to heighten the musical experience of their students, providing extra performance opportunities, organising group music exchanges, giving extra tuition or participation in community musical participation. However, the vignette, which introduced the

study, encapsulates the dilemma that confronted me with the realisation that families of very limited disposable income stand no realistic chance of ever gaining access to this rich musical world. I felt conscience-bound to make such changes in my teaching practice that organisational structures allowed.

Doubtless, the *quality* of extracurricular music courses is of a high standard in the publicly-funded sector, as instrumental music teachers are well-qualified, and I have personal knowledge that my colleagues are highly motivated and ambitious for their students – but the quality of the instrumental courses is not what is at issue here. The central issue of this research study is the fact that that, under the present system, a majority of young people is unlikely to have the opportunity to avail of this high quality musical participation during their school-going years.

My experience as an instrumental music teacher leads me to a conviction that the most equitable method of involving all children in instrumental playing would be to introduce them to group instrumental music classes in primary schools during normal school hours using fully qualified specialist instrumental music teachers. The Vocational Education Committees (VEC) and their successors at the time of writing, the Education and Training Boards (ETB) are well placed as local statutory education bodies to join in partnership with local primary schools in providing access to specialist instrument teachers at minimal expense to families. In 2014 the thirty three Vocational Education Committees were reconfigured as sixteen Education and Training Boards (ETBs). Throughout the dissertation I will refer to VEC/ETB.

The immediate prospect for learners would be participation for all in instrumental music-making, hitherto the preserve of members of privileged social groups.

1.1.3 Piloting change

Vignette 2

My four violin classes are now almost through their first year of group-violin lessons. On Wednesday mornings the boys troop up to my teaching room in groups of about twenty with their class-teacher for their half-hour lesson and the activities begin with short posture exercises, quickly followed by playing together to the selected backing-tracks in varied musical genres – *salsa, rock, classical, reggae.* From the first lesson my aim was that they would have the experience of being musicians.

Last week the principal brought a group of visitors, which included a Government minister, to the school to see the group-violin classes in action and one of the boys asked to play by himself for the visitors. He played the simple piece of music beautifully. I was astonished at his perfect posture and bow-hold and the look of total absorption on his face as he played along with the backing-track. He played with the confidence of a seven-year-old who knew he was good and wanted to impress – and he did impress.

Later in the staffroom, the visibly delighted principal remarked to me, 'you know that little guy, L- , coming from the family background that he comes from, he'd never have had the chance to even touch a musical instrument but for this project'.

In recent years, whenever opportunities arose, I was proactive in piloting change in my own teaching practice using whatever autonomy was at my disposal, in order to address the many issues that concern me. One such change was moving from individual to small-group lessons, which had the resulting benefit of lowering the fee level while providing a social context for learning; and I was able to transfer a significant proportion of my junior violin teaching into the local primary schools during school hours.

More recently I piloted further innovation by persuading one of those primary schools to integrate whole-class group-violin lessons into the school day to address the performance strand of the primary school music curriculum. All members of the participating classes attend a routine weekly lesson in groups of twenty learners at a time partnered by the class teacher or special needs assistant. The school invested in

an instrument-bank of twenty violins with part-funding from the local credit union resulting in little or, in some cases, no expense for the families.

This learning model, integrating specialist and generalist in the primary school classroom, was piloted in a small number of primary schools – initially targeted at DEIS primary schools in disadvantaged areas of West Dublin, whole-class group-violin pedagogy is now being adopted by a small number of non-DEIS primary schools in other areas of the country. However, these projects are local initiatives, confined to schools that have a special interest in developing the performance strand of the music curriculum and their sustainability relies on the local availability of a specialist instrumental music teacher – typically a commercial arrangement between the school and a private teacher.

My group-violin project is unique as a partnership between a primary school and the local VEC/ETB music service utilising existing educational infrastructure. As the learners are already on site within the school, every child participates in the same manner as in a PE class. Were a modest music programme developed as a model for general implementation, it would present the broadest possible base on which to structure a cost-effective system of basic instrumental performance-music education to include children from all social groups. Because instrumental classes are conducted during the school day, such a music programme would be non-restrictive, cross-sectoral and socially open and inclusive. The scale of participation in such a music programme would ensure low-cost in the present circumstance of a severely contracted national economy.

1.2 The music education sectors

1.2.1 Publicly funded instrumental music provision in Ireland

In Ireland, responsibility for the public provision of instrumental music education is delegated to regional VEC/ETBs. Central Government has no direct policy input in instrumental music education. At an early stage in my research, a search unearthed only one relevant official document – the O'Brien Report (2001), which deals with projected staffing in the three largest Music-Services of Dublin, Limerick and County Cork.

The Municipal Schools of Music in the cities of Dublin and Cork, which were established in the nineteenth century at the same time as the London colleges, were administered and funded first through Corporation rates, and from 1930, by the VECs of those boroughs; and since 1960 Limerick City VEC has operated a Municipal School of Music. In recent years, the Cities of Dublin and Cork VECs transferred their city-centre music-schools to the local Institutes of Technology as junior components of the larger music conservatories, which includes first, second and third-level cycles. County Cork is unusual among rural VEC areas in having an instrumental music service, which has been in existence since 1949 as a dispersed music school throughout its county area. Hopes expressed during the 1950s that similar instrumental music schemes might be established in all VEC areas, were never realised, although, for a time, a small number of rural VECs provided some instrumental tuition.

More recently, some Midland counties and the county area of Donegal have initiated small-scale instrumental music services; and a new organisation, Music Generation, is currently being developed by Music Network and operated under local VEC/ETBs and County Council Arts Offices. Music Generation is financed under a match-

funding arrangement between the rock group, U2 and the Ireland Funds as a philanthropic initiative with the aim of enabling children and young people to access instrumental music education in their own local areas.

Successive reports into instrumental music education prepared by devolved state agencies such as the Arts Council and Music Network have pointed to geographic and social inequity with regard to public provision.

> While Ireland has an enviable reputation as a country steeped in musical tradition, the country's infrastructure for performance music education remains one of the weakest by international standards…access is inconsistent and it tends to be a 'geographic lottery'. (Music Generation 2010, p.1)

The report from Music Generation describes a longstanding state of affairs regarding instrumental music education. Two previous reports addressed instrumental music education in some detail and made conclusions and recommendations. The *Deaf Ears? Report* (Herron, 1985) contrasted music education in Ireland with that in the rest of Europe and stated that in 1985 the state of music education in Ireland was not much better than in the previous decades. Herron concluded that

> Irish young people are grievously disadvantaged when compared with their European counterparts…the young Irish person has the worst of all European 'musical worlds... major portions of the country are denied the full range of instrumental tuition. This facility is available only to a fortunate few areas and within those areas only to those who can afford it' (Herron 1985).

Almost two decades later, Music Network's, *Report of a Feasibility Study* (Drury, 2003) reiterated this state of affairs:

> Without provision of access to a comprehensive, equitable, and publicly-supported instrumental and vocal music education service, this potential will not be fully realised for a significant number of children… Whereas some students are in a position to supplement their instrumental or vocal studies by availing of tuition services outside of school, the fact that large numbers of children in many parts of the country cannot do so creates inequity. (Drury 2003, p. 7).

Both reports recommended equitable provision by way of a national system of music education but neither report was addressed directly by Government. While the Arts Council and Music Network are public bodies, they are at a remove from

Government, which consistently disregards the recommendations of reports emanating from these bodies. Apart from general funding and staffing of music services, Government does not concern itself with instrumental music education at a policy level. It might not be unreasonable to conclude that it is failure of Government to engage with instrumental music education policy, which permits a continuing acceptance of middle-class advantage with regard to access.

Because the learning of musical instruments takes place independently of mainstream schooling the instrumental music education sector has been enabled to maintain a rarefied cultural status which is out of alignment with modern principles of equity and inclusion on the one hand, and lives of working-class families on the other. While social justice, universal access and inclusion inform discourses in general education in Ireland, the same discourses would not appear to have topical currency in the area of instrumental music, even though the performance music provision is funded by Government through the VEC/ETBs. Because of its non-engagement with policy, Government can be regarded as neglectfully complicit in supporting the cultural needs of middle class families above those of other social groups.

1.2.2 Music in Primary education

All primary school students in Ireland experience music making in childhood as group activity in singing class, tin-whistle or recorder band and participation in school concerts. A generalist policy may be interpreted from the primary school music curriculum. Since 1999, a music curriculum comprising the inter-related concepts of *performing – listening/responding – composing* is in place in primary schools. The Teacher Guidelines document acknowledges that 'approaches to teaching music can vary greatly from class to class and from school to school' (p.

18). However, there is an anomaly in the enactment of the curriculum owing to the fact that Primary teachers do not have specialist musical skills or backgrounds in music education. The curriculum document recognises the need to co-ordinate the organisation of the teaching of music (p. 29). Group percussion, singing, tin-whistle and recorder addresses performance and music literacy, but the *performance* strand of curriculum would require specialised musical skills and subject knowledge; and bringing in music specialists from outside the school would not be an option. The document advocates that 'children who learn instruments privately should have opportunities to participate in classroom music making' (p. 41); and mentions, as examples, piano, violin and flute. However, specialised instrumental music tuition may only be accessed as an extracurricular activity, subject to the payment of fees. This again points to the exclusion of the majority of children for reasons including inability to pay fees, taste preference or geographical remoteness from affordable music tuition (Drury, 2003; Heneghan, 2002, p. 77; Herron, 1985; O'Brien, 2001). A detailed history of music education in the Irish State since 1922 will be presented in Chapter 2.

1.3 Study design

1.3.1 The scope of the study

This is a study of access to a public education resource. It seeks to examine practitioner belief with the purpose of uncovering the extent to which shared practitioner dispositions may determine the discursive practices of the publicly funded instrumental music provision. The focus of the study is the access-level stage of learning a musical instrument with particular attention on the affordances and barriers experienced by families in gain that access for their children.

1.3.2 Purpose of the study

The study originated with my questioning of cultural assumptions surrounding the learning of musical instruments; and issues of *musical genre, conceptions of musical ability, gender and social class* emerged at an early stage as concepts with which to sensitise the enquiry.

The first point of enquiry into this area was a search for policy documents, which might reveal an official policy or at least an official attitude towards instrumental music provision. My expectations were frustrated due to the absence of any documentation, which in itself is a significant finding. I requested a copy of the unpublished Report of the O'Brien Review of instrumental music provision in City of Dublin, City of Limerick and County Cork VECs, as then configured. The O'Brien Report (2001) was forwarded to me by post, closely followed up by lunchtime the same day in a phone call from a civil servant who instructed me that the O'Brien Report was not, under any circumstance, to be regarded as official instrumental music education policy, as it was merely dealing with the staffing of the three VEC/ETB music-services. The urgency of the direct telephone reply clearly suggested to me Government unwillingness to engage with instrumental music education provision at any level of policy, which might be interpreted by local VEC/ETBs as a general principle. Unlike the general education service, publicly funded instrumental music is not legislated under the Education Act (1999). The Vocational Education Act (1930) placed instrumental music under the administration of the VECs. Although Government provides limited funding to a small number of VEC/ETBs for the administration and staffing of music services, it does not concern itself with a national policy that would enable the setting up of instrumental music

education in all regions of the country. The obvious reason for this lack of engagement would be cost, which would probably be regarded as prohibitive.

In the absence of direct Government involvement, the study will focus on the instrumental music education sector itself. At the heart of the study lie the belief systems and tacit knowledge, which inform the professional practice of the administrators and instrumental music teachers who staff the publicly funded music services. There is a dearth of research into social equity and instrumental music participation in the Irish context, and this study will make an original contribution to education research. This study proposes to map the culture and discursive practices of publicly funded instrumental music education in the Republic of Ireland.

1.3.3 Statement of the problem

International research suggests that it is the manner in which instrumental music courses are conceptualised and enacted that aligns musical participation with middle class cultural practice (Bourdieu, 1985; Green, 2003; Pitts, 2001; Regelski, 2009; Woodford, 2005). Music Services present as an area of activity where middle-class cultural preference, high-culture musical heritage, scarce educational resources and organisational disposition intersect in the form of a publicly-funded provision which responds to the needs of the more privileged sector of society. More than a century of tradition underpins an enduring time-honoured system, guided by traditional cultural assumptions and biases. I proffer the assertion that inherited cultural biases, which are shared by instrumental music professionals, have coalesced over time into an organisational blindness, which rules out consideration of social equity in the distribution of the benefits of learning musical instruments. I suggest that instrumental music teachers, who constitute a valuable component of the Irish

education system, are disconnected from the mainstream of primary and second-level education in a privileged world of high culture.

1.3.4 Theoretical framework

This study critiques unjust practices through an engagement with the belief-systems of a sample of professional people who are directly involved in the music services. Qualitative in orientation, the enquiry is approached in an interactive mode, which acknowledges that reality is socially constructed (Mertens 2005, p.15). I recognise that, as a constructionist researcher, I am the primary instrument of the research process (Patton 2002, p. 14).

Conceptualising the enquiry as case-study, I employed a mixed-methods research model in the form of a series of in-depth semi-structured personal interviews, preceded by a pilot online questionnaire survey which provided data to inform the main study (Seidman, 2006) (See Appendix 4 for the questionnaire). The research sample was sought from among the administrators and instrumental teacher who are currently working in the VEC/ETB music service sector. Digitally recorded interviews of between 45 and 90 minutes were conducted with fourteen individual instrumental music professionals, equally distributed over early-, mid- and late-career stages, during the period January to April of 2011. The development of an interview guide was derived from themes, which emerged from the literature review and were piloted in the online questionnaire. (See Appendix 8 for the interview protocol). The process of qualitative data analysis was by way of a three-phase *grounded theory* technique, as advocated by Glasser and Strauss (1967), whereby theory emerges inductively from the researcher's observations and interviews (Patton 2002, p.11). The interview transcripts were reviewed line by line and thematic codes applied and recorded in a code-book (Miles and Huberman 1994, p.

58). Rather than employ computer software, I utilised a manual coding technique, as I valued the process of engaging closely with the data.

1.3.5 Research gap

At an early stage in the literature review, I became aware of a research gap with regard to the teaching and learning of musical instruments in Ireland, which necessitated a survey of international research. The review of this broader body of literature yielded research into music education in first- and second-level schooling, but a much smaller amount of research into the specific context of instrumental music education. In order to construct a research background with which to conceptualise the study, my reading encompassed this wider sweep of music education literature within the still wider world of arts education. Taking my own professional experience as a means of initiating the study, I drew on my knowledge of various aspects of instrumental music education, which might present barriers to participation:

- *Tuition fees* – participation is dependent on the ability of parents to afford the cost of tuition fees and the purchase of musical instruments. Many families are not in a position to pay, or may not value paying for extra-curricular music tuition (Philpott 2001, p. 156).
- *The extra-curricular positioning of instrumental music courses* – many families do not value formal learning outside of school hours. Lareau argues that poorer parents believe providing 'love, food and safety, their children will grow and thrive. They do not focus on developing their children's special talents' (Lareau 2002, p. 748).

- *The Western classical canon* – listening to classical music, let alone playing classical music on orchestral instruments or piano, would be out of alignment with the culture and musical practices of some families (Green 2003, p. 264).
- *The individuated learning model*– individual tuition is a relatively expensive and scarce resource necessitating placement on a waiting list or selection by musical aptitude testing
- *A high skills approach to tuition* – the escalated individuated learning model may not be appropriate for all young learners and many quit and are likely to never play again (Green 2002, p. 2).

Taking these observations as points of departure, I sought to situate the study in current thinking on instrumental learning through a wide literature search. Five themes emerged, which afforded a means of surveying the landscape of music education:

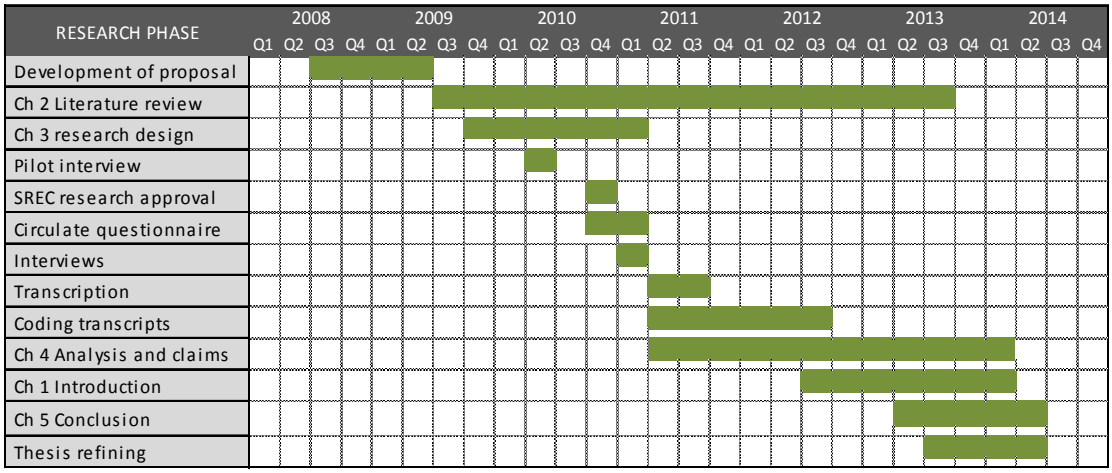
- *The social demography of instrumental music participation*
- *Constructs of musical value*
- *Conceptions of musical ability*
- *Taste as a correlating factor in musical participation*
- *Gender as a correlating factor in musical participation*

Discursive practices associated with the teaching and learning of musical instruments are critiqued in terms of *musical value, ability conception, taste and gender-participation*. These themes are worthy of research as interlinked taken-for-granted dispositions, which may characterise the worldview of practitioners within instrumental music education; may be examined in the context of a bounded system, which places limits on access to those who can negotiate and cross those boundaries (Akkerman and Bakker, 2011; Lamont and Molnar, 2002; Sonnett, 2004). These themes are suggestive of *boundary* in the context of instrumental music education. The concepts of *boundary, boundary crossing* and *boundary objects and markers* serve to focus the study around the unequal distribution of a public resource (Lamont and Molnar 2002, p.168).

1.4 Time-line of the study

The time-frame of the study extends over five years from September 2008 to May 2014. Figure 2 shows the phases which mark out the progress of the research, beginning with the development of the dissertation proposal (September 2008-July 2009).

Table 1.1: Time-line of the study



1.4.1 Developing the proposal

The proposal identified the research problem as a perceived middle-class bias in publicly funded instrumental music education. An intensive reading phase exploring research literature identified *conceptions of musical ability, taste and musical value, social class and gender* as sensitising concepts with which to inform the study (Bulmer 1979, p.654). The proposed study would seek to identify embedded assumptions which might pose barriers to a socially equitable participation in the learning of musical instruments. Given the sociocultural context of the phenomena under examination, the constructivist paradigm was suggested as the philosophical location of the study and a qualitative mixed methods research design was proposed. Data collection would be by way of an interview research study, which would be

piloted by a questionnaire survey. The completed proposal was submitted and accepted in July 2009.

1.4.2 Drafting Chapters 2 and 3

The proposal took the form *introduction – literature review – methodology – conclusion;* and this structure became the embryonic chapters of the developing dissertation. My reading of research literature continued throughout 2009 and 2010 as the key ideas emerged and crystallised into sensitising concepts, which served to describe and theoretically structure the beliefs and practices that operationalise the teaching and learning of musical instruments. The 'lit review' solidified into the first draft of Chapter 2 between September 2009 and June 2010. Meanwhile, the Methodology section was developing as Chapter 3 and a first draft was finalised by October 2010. Both chapters, although well in place by the end of 2010, were constantly reworked, developed and refined over the lifetime of the whole study

1.4.3 Piloting the research

An interview protocol was designed, guided by the sensitising concepts derived from the international research literature with which I conducted the first pilot interview in April 2010 and the subsequent analysis and reflection enabled me to prepare myself for the main research study. This would follow in the following year.

1.4.4 Data collection

The Methodology, Chapter 3, was progressing during autumn of 2010 and in October/November I applied and received permission from the Social Research Ethics Committee of the university to commence the research. An online questionnaire was circulated in November 2010. Responses began to arrive immediately and the final completed questionnaire was received in March 2011.

The administrator and teacher interviews were recorded over a three month period between January and March of 2011 and typed transcripts were prepared over the following summer months.

1.4.5 Data analysis

Thematic coding of the data began in June 2011, simultaneously with the transcription of the interviews. Data coding continued in three main phases over the extent of the study until April 2013. Over the same timeframe the analysis and presentation of claims were written in chapter form. Chapter 4 grew out of the memos deriving from the thematic coding of the interview data. There was constant navigating back and forth through the three chapters as the work progressed.

1.5 Chapter summary

Chapter 1 introduces the study, presenting the background, purpose, rationale, research problem, methodology and time-line.

Chapter 2 places instrumental music education within a wider general education context, paying particular attention to the music curriculum of the primary education sector. A search of the research literature revealed four key concepts with which to theorise the area under examination: *music education and culture, conceptions of musical ability, musical value and taste as a factor in musical participation, gender as a factor in musical participation.*

Chapter 3 discusses the research methodology and theoretical framing of the study, describing the development and design of data collection through questionnaire and in-depth interview.

Chapter 4 presents and analyses the claims and findings emerging from the data in addressing the main research questions.

Chapter 5 concludes the study, discussing and summarising the findings of the research under the headings of *structure, culture, aims* and *agency*. Implications for instrumental music education are explored in context of the findings.

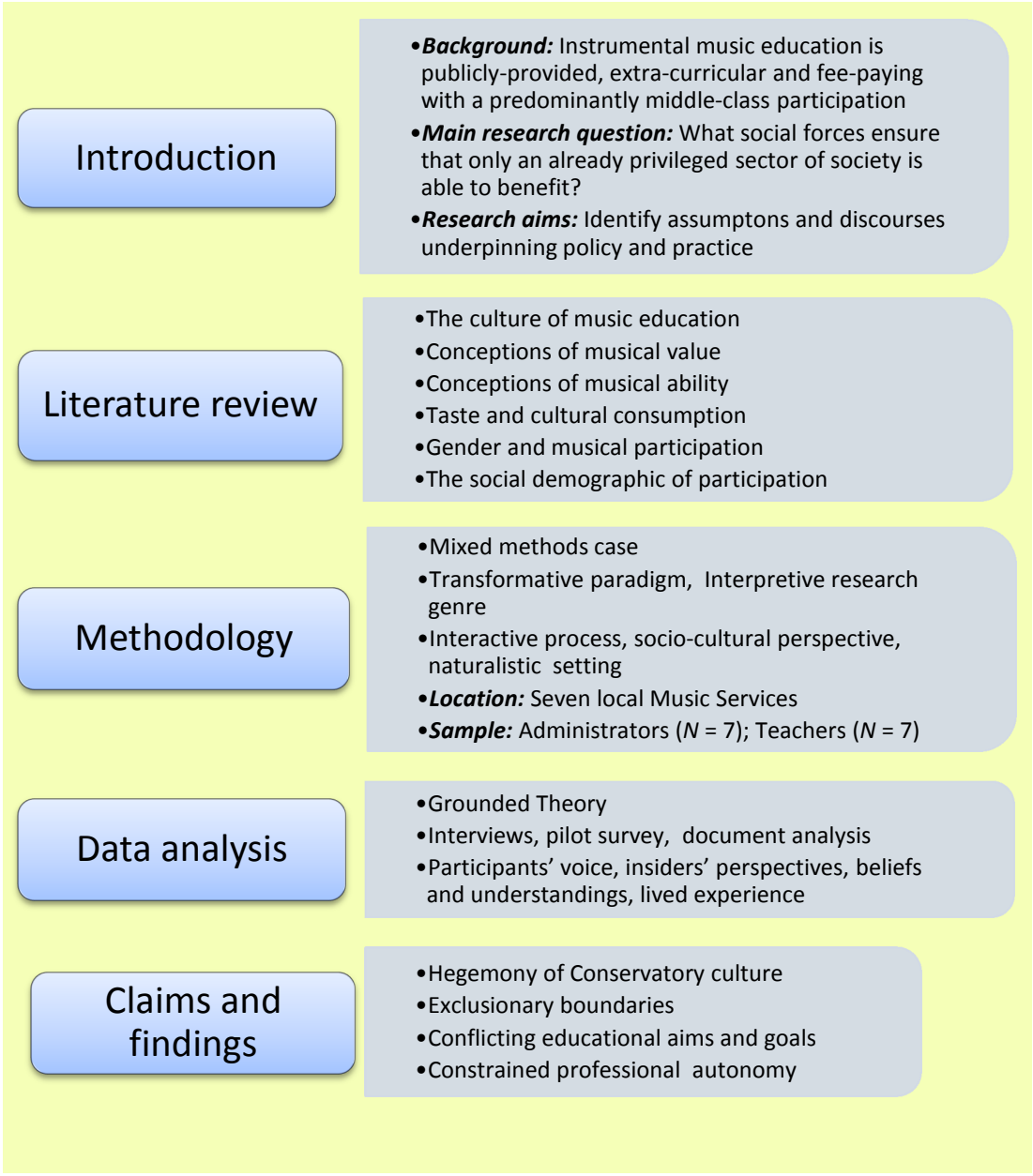


Figure 1.2: Visual representation of the study

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to review the body of international literature relevant to the key issues on which this study is to be constructed. The study sets its focus on the obvious inequity of access to publicly-funded instrumental music education in Ireland, whereby social class background is a significant factor in determining who will participate. My research questions were introduced in Chapter 1:

> *To what extent is social class background a predictor of participation instrumental music education?*
>
> *To what extent does professional discourse contribute to socially inequitable musical participation?*
>
> *From what cultural context do these discourses this emanate?*

To probe these compelling research questions, a literature-search for Irish-based research in the form of peer-reviewed journal articles was initiated. From an early stage, a dearth of research into the learning of musical instruments in Ireland became evident. While research into music education in Ireland is primarily concerned with first- and second- level school music curriculum (for instance Downey 2007, Kenny 2010, O'Callaghan 2003, O'Flynn 2005, Stakelum 2008), little reference was unearthed into the learning of musical instruments. Likewise, the few official reports commissioned into instrumental music education provision on behalf of government departments through the Arts Council and other subsidiary agencies are in the form of critical reports into instrumental music provision in Ireland (Drury, 2003; Heneghan, 2002, p. 77; Herron, 1985; O'Brien, 2001).

While this body of research may provide a backdrop to my study of culture and discursive practices, existing research into music education in Ireland is limited and under-theorised as a means of interpreting the hidden world of instrumental music education in the context of my research questions. Turning to international educational research, while the body of instrumental music education research is slight in comparison to research into music in school curriculum, a spectrum of literature does exist that is accessible to the educational researcher whose research-interest is situated in the learning of musical instruments.

In this review of research literature, my task is to first of all to describe the form which music education takes in Ireland with a focus on the parallel sectors of primary school music curriculum and the extracurricular instrumental music-services provided by a small number of local VEC/ETBs. I critically examine the primary school music curriculum through the lens of international educational research in terms of *arts education* and *justification as a curriculum area*, (Byo 1999, Hofmann-Davis 2008, Koopman 2005, Reimer 2003, Russell Bowie 2009), *subject status* and *time allocation in school timetable* (Bresler 1993, Hallam et al 2009, Wiggins 2008). I outline three ways in which school music may be conceptualised:

Utilitarian perspective

Music education is useful in terms of cognitive transfer to other school subjects and as a means of influencing good citizenship through the life-enhancing effects of participation in the arts (Bresler 1998, Hofmann-Davis 2008, Koopman 2005, Winner and Hetland 2000).

Aesthetic perspective

Music education is determined by the nature and value of the musical work through characteristics which are representative of human feelings as imagined by composers. Purposive musical and analytical engagement with musical works constitutes musical learning. (Langer 1973, Reimer 2003).

Praxial perspective

*M*usic-making and listening are areas of activity situating the participant in the meanings and values deriving from particular cultural and community contexts. This perspective challenges the aesthetic principal of the primacy of the 'musical work' (Elliott 1995).

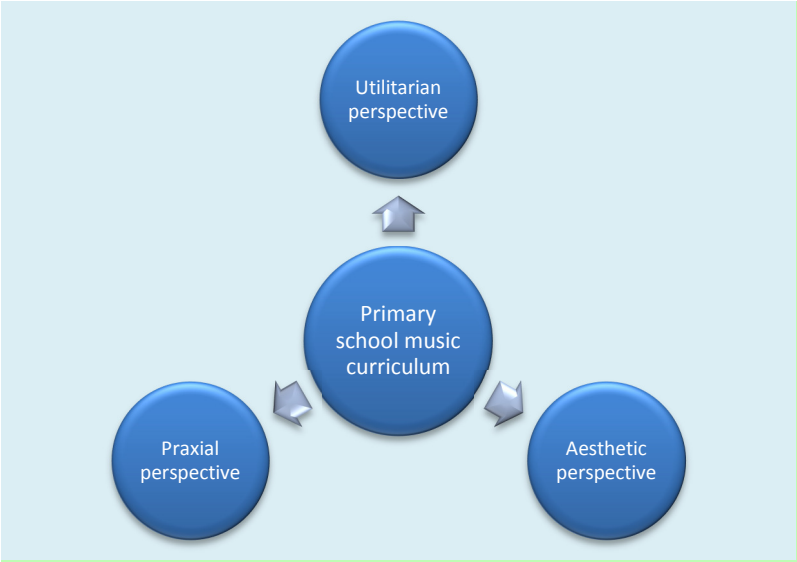


Figure 2.1: Three approaches to school music

2.2 Locating the study

The location of the study is the publicly-funded instrumental music-service. A brief outline of the self-contained world of instrumental music education reveals a tightly structured system of skills-training aimed at the selection of the most motivated and able among the instrumental learners to bring them to levels of professional attainment. Depicting the structure as a pyramid, professionals occupy the highest, narrowest layer at the apex, but the broader, lower layers hold a complex mix of learners of different ages, stages, standards motivations and aspirations.

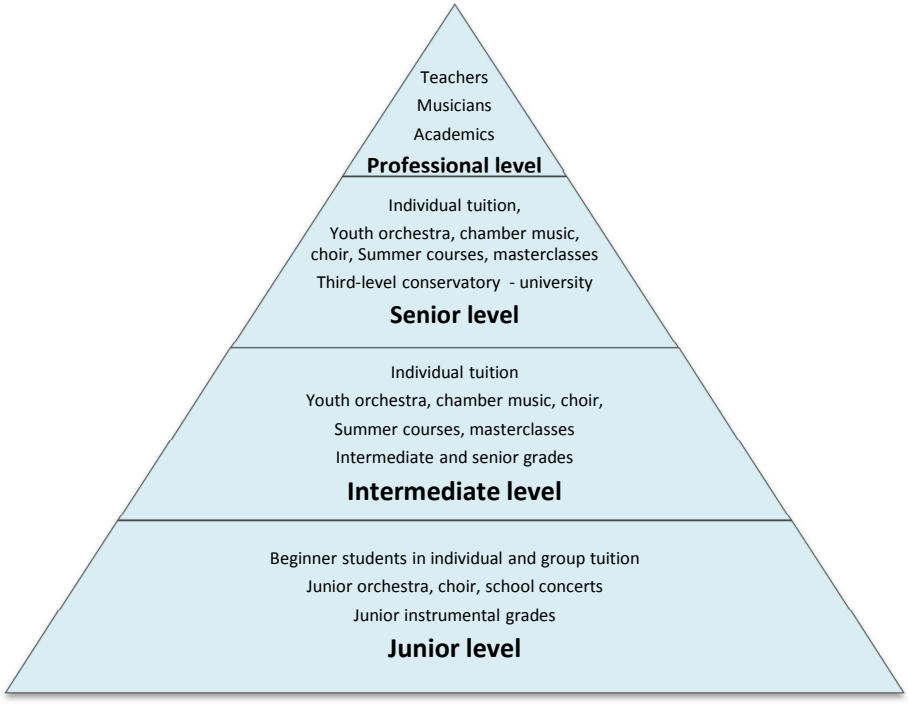


Figure 2.2: The structure of instrumental music education

The conservatories and their feeder music-academies select students by achievement criteria but the publicly-funded VEC/ETB music-service sector rejects selection by high ability in favour of a more egalitarian community-based model. While this model is based on the same principles of instrumental skills-training, the main aim of the music-services is to enable young people to participate in musical activities at the

level of their own personal ability (transcripts of participant interviews). However, drawing on personal experience of teaching in a local music-service, I have an awareness of the conservatory structure alive in the minds of most of my teaching colleagues, influenced by musical training and operationalised in the tightly-structured system of the annual graded instrument examination, which influences the pedagogy and content of the instrumental music instrumental courses.

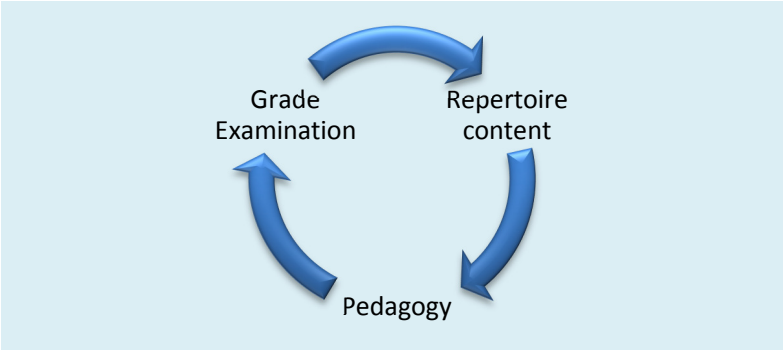


Figure 2.3: The instrumental music canon

This specialised system of formal instrumental tuition is availed of by a relatively small proportion of the school-going population. Although music is described as an innate human response (Trehub 2003, p.669) and is experienced as a constant companion in people's daily lives, active music-making involves only a tiny minority of the population in the developed industrialised world (Blacking 1976, p.4; Green 2002, p.2). Approximately 1 percent of population in the United Kingdom is actively participating in amateur music-making (Green 2002, p.2). The study derives from my perception that publicly-funded instrumental music education in Ireland is provided and distributed in a manner that privileges access to the children of middle- and upper middle-class families. Research suggests that configuring an educational activity as an after-school discretionary fee-paying activity is likely to present a financial barrier to participation for members of families of limited means (Lareau 2002, p.748; Vincent and Ball 2007, p.1066). Where instrumental courses take place

in a city-centre music school, unskilled working-class parents, who may be experiencing material poverty, might not be in a position to transport children to music lessons (Gewirtz 1998, p.481). The grounding of instrumental music in the high-aesthetic world of Western art-music evokes the 'ghostly memories of legitimate cultural capital' (Bourdieu 1986, pp.6-7; Bennett et al 2009, p.75). Taking these conditions and dispositions into consideration, it would be reasonable to conclude that the presentation and structuring of instrumental music education in its current form as an extracurricular enrichment activity renders the participation by members of disadvantaged groups unlikely.

My task in this chapter is to prepare the research study through an examination of related literature in order to unravel the layers of discursive practices which are of historical provenance and which reinforce the formal learning of musical instruments as a socially restricted high culture enrichment activity (Bennett et al 2009, Bourdieu 1986, Lareau 2002, Vincent and Ball 2007). Bourdieu's analysis of middle-class cultural assertion through taste-preference affords a basis for interpreting the motivation of some families in seeking out tuition in classical instruments for their children, often at great effort and expense in time and finance.

Bourdieu's research took place in the French higher education system during the 1960s and '70s. In subsequent years, although the principles of Bourdieusian theory continue to be applied to sociological analysis, researchers find that aristocratic French taste preferences may be less relevant when applied in contexts other than France. An analysis of aesthetic taste examines changing trends in cultural consumption, which would no longer be aligned with a rarefied aristocratic musical taste field, such as that outlined by Bourdieu (1986); but while retaining Bourdieu's analysis of taste as cultural assertion, research points to a blurring of taste

boundaries. The literature shows a complex differentiated range of musical tastes – an *omnivore* musical consumption on the part of middle-class individuals who can now combine diverse cultural products in contrast to the more 'restricted' musical tastes of lower-class counterparts (Bennett et al 2009, Chan and Goldthorpe 2007, Peterson and Kern 1992, Peterson and Simkus 1992, Skeggs 2004, Van Eijck 2001). Moreover, institutional dispositions, such as teacher preparation, job descriptions and employment contracts promote the primacy of the Western classical *musical genre* as the defining marker of the music-services in Ireland, despite the likelihood that young people's musical tastes lie elsewhere (Green 2002).

An analysis of the form, which instrumental music education takes, reveals a range of practices, which are legitimised as historically 'tried and trusted' teaching techniques and assessment procedures, supported by inherited dispositions and beliefs regarding *ability and talent.* The research literature suggests that, although the fixed 'inherent talent' conception of musical ability may be outdated, the *talent* explanation of why some children thrive learning a musical instrument and some children do not, is still widely evidenced in the practices of instrumental teachers and institutions (Barab and Plucker 2002, Blacking 1976, Hallam and Prince 2003, Gillborn and Youdell 2000, Sloboda 2006).

A further social boundary marker is that of gender. Research correlates gender and participation in instrumental music to the extent that some instruments are perceived as masculine or feminine; and playing classical orchestral instruments in general is regarded as a mainly female activity (Abeles and Porter 1972, Delzell and Leppla 1992, Green 1994, Hallam et al. 2008, O'Shea 2008, Roulston and Misawa 2011). The gender issue in musical instrumental choice is well documented and appears to be accepted by administrators and teachers and parents alike as a reality in

instrumental music education. Sensitising concepts deriving from the research literature characterise the operational profile of instrumental music education as inhabiting a high-cultural aesthetic domain, middle to upper middle-class participation, conditional on the talent conception of ability and subject to a feminised gender-bias.

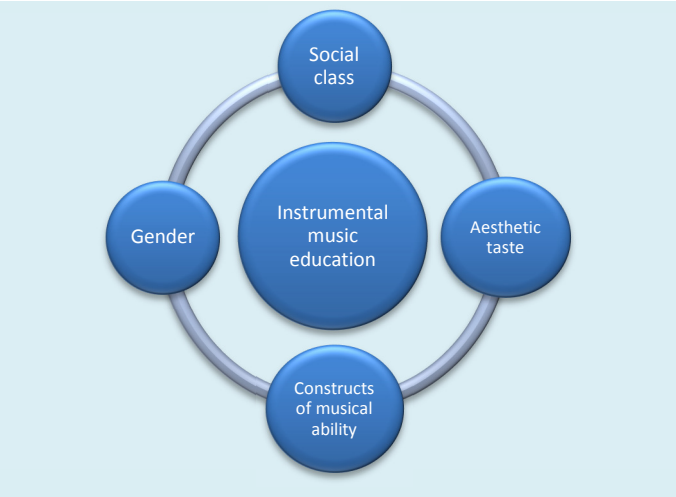


Figure 2.4: Sensitising concepts from research literature

Sensitising concepts provide a means of entry into the research area; and act a guide for the construction of the study design. These initial concepts thread a path through the emergent themes and eventual generation of theory (Bowen 2006, p.12).

2.3 A historical context for music education in Ireland

In Ireland, music education in the public provision presents with distinctively different functions in three educational sectors – primary, second-level and instrumental music. Music exists as an activity in all primary-schools, taught by the generalist class teacher who teaches all areas of the curriculum. At post-primary level, music is an optional Junior and Leaving Certificate subject in most (but not all) schools, taught by a specialist music teacher. Instrumental music is highly specialised and is accessed outside the general education system, subject to the

payment of tuition fees. Apart from a small number of publicly funded music services, which charge 'affordable fees' (approximately 20 percent of real cost), in most areas of the country private instrumental tuition is expensive, and for many families the cost is prohibitive. Ability to pay and the geographical patchiness of provision renders instrumental music education inequitable in terms of access.

Points of connection between the instrumental and mainstream sectors occur when young instrumentalists play during school occasions and fulfil the performance section of the Junior and Leaving Certificate examinations. Leaving Certificate music is highly valued as a means of attaining 'points' for third-level entry. In this section I examine the development of music education in the Irish state since independence in 1922.

2.3.1 Music in primary education

In the first decades of the independent Irish state, language policy, to a large extent, shaped music in primary education. Education, particularly the primary curriculum, became an important site of identity construction through the ideals of nationalism, language revival and religion (Lee 1989, p.132). Official policy required the teaching of singing through the medium of Irish so that the singing of Irish songs came to dominate the music curriculum.

Music became a core subject in primary education in 1930, with a rudimentary provision for instrumental music by way of tin-whistle and percussion bands in junior classes, although this was by no means a general provision.

> There are schools, which do not teach music due to the teachers not being trained in the subject, and there are other schools where the teachers do not have a strong musical inclination and the children learn only a small amount of songs. (Translated from Irish) (Reports of the Department of Education 1936/37)

Donnchadh Ua Braoin, Organising Inspector of Music, wrote in Fleischmann's *Music in Ireland* (1952), that twenty five per cent of teachers left training college incapable of teaching music. This had the greatest impact in rural areas in the one- and two-teacher-schools, resulting in 20 to 90 per cent of children being classed as 'non-singers'. He reported some standard of music education in the female teacher training colleges, but that, in his opinion, 'few of the men students bothered about instrumental music, owing to the sub-conscious Irish complex that music is a frivolous occupation fit only for girls' (Ua Braoin 1952, pp.37-39).

Language revival combined with efforts to improve standards in church music to determine the content and practice of school music (McCarthy 1999, p.109). Between the 1920s and the 1940s, annual plainchants summer schools were held, which were attended by many primary teachers; and liturgical festivals, which took place in many provincial centres, featuring massed children's choirs, held considerable popular appeal (McCarthy 1999, p.110). The effort of the Catholic Church to improve liturgical music was rooted in the aesthetic traditions of Western classical music. It represented the continuation of an effort, begun in the nineteenth century, to strengthen the Church's power and to promote its own brand of nationalism; and music in education was an effective means of achieving these aims.

The Report of the Council of Education (1954) suggested that 'many of our young people have poor taste in music, while the number who can play a musical instrument or sing creditably is regrettably small'. The connection between the singing class and the teaching of Irish remained, with advice on the teaching of the words during the oral Irish class. The influence of Church music on musical standards was acknowledged with the recommendation, that 'wherever circumstances permit, such music should find a place in the Music class'. Although

the report did not overtly allude to the funding of teachers' musical training, it called for the training of teachers to a level of musical competence.

> There should be no school without a teacher competent to teach vocal music.
>
> All teachers should be trained in musical appreciation, and as far as possible, should also acquire some skill in instrumental music.
>
> Further refresher courses in Music over longer periods, should be held, more provision to be made especially for conducting and choral singing.
>
> (Report of the Council of Education (1954), pp.282-284)

The Report recommended three weekly periods given to music, and stressed that all pupils should be included, and suggested that all children could be taught to appreciate music and there was a recommendation that a gramophone be the minimum equipment in every school. The recommendations of the Report were of a practical nature and if followed might have enhanced pupils' musical experiences in subsequent years.

In 1971 the role of music in the primary school classroom was revised and expanded in *An Curaclam Nua*. There was an emphasis on self-expression, and music literacy was promoted in contrast to the rote-learning of previous eras (McCarthy 1999, p.149). The new child-centred curriculum was supported by teaching materials and in-service courses but problems persisted because teachers' lack of background subject knowledge and methodologies denied necessary foundation for implementing the music curriculum (Herron 1985, p.2). Herron's report, *Deaf Ears?* concluded that, compared to their European counterparts, Irish children had the 'worst of all European 'musical worlds'' (Herron 1985, p.8). McCarthy cited a 1974 survey of primary teachers, in which 79 percent of respondents stated that they taught music and 50 percent of thought they were teaching it adequately. 76 percent considered that effective implementation of the music curriculum required special musical ability (McCarthy 1999, p.149).

The current primary school curriculum, introduced in 1999 as a component element of an arts education programme, has raised the status of arts education, including music. (DES 1999a, pp.3-4). Socially equitable, child-centred principles inform the curriculum, which draws from the Hungarian *Kodaly Method* of music education (Choksy, 1988; Vajda, 1981). Indeed, Kodaly's influence was also felt on the previous 1971 Primary School Curriculum.

The curricular document presents music experienced through activities integrating a three-stranded approach: *listening-responding, composing-improvising and performing*, based on nine musical elements: *pulse, duration, tempo, pitch, dynamics, structure, timbre, texture, style*. The music course is organised over four two-year stages (DES 1999b, pp.6-7, 10). The primary music curriculum will be analysed in greater detail in Section 2.6.

2.3.2 Music in Secondary education

The newly independent Irish State inherited the colonial curricular model of secondary education that remained that of nineteenth century Intermediate Education. 'High' classical culture defined secondary school music. Irish traditional music did not feature and the language revival movement so characteristic of primary school music was not as evident at second-level (McCarthy 1999, p.129). In 1922, the Music Committee of the Dáil Commission on Secondary Education recognised the unsatisfactory position of music in the curriculum and recommended that music be taught in all schools, with a competent music teacher attached to every secondary school. Although the Music Committee of the Association of Secondary Teachers of Ireland (ASTI) was supportive of school music, this was not reflected in official Department of Education policy (McCarthy 1999, p.127). While there were recommendations that music be at the core of education, it remained an optional

subject, grouped with science, domestic science and drawing. Consequently, music remained as an exclusive academic school subject for certificate examinations, closed off from the majority of students (McCarthy 1999, p.128).

> The course followed in Music should provide for ear-training, cultivation of taste, study of Musical History, development of technique, exercise in creative work, and training in the principles of composition. Provision should be made for bringing the pupils into contact with the works of the great composers. It is essential that throughout the course the foreground should be occupied by the music itself and not by the system of names and symbols by which it is represented…It is a fundamental principle that the things of music should come before the names and symbols…While all pupils should participate in the choral work, it is only such pupils as show marked musical ability who should be taught to perform on an instrument.
>
> (Reports of the Department of Education, 1924-41)

The rules for examination lay emphasis on theoretical knowledge of the rudiments of music. Musical performance was through choral singing. It was recommended that only those students showing 'marked musical ability' would be taught a musical instrument, limited to a number of approved instruments, *violin, cello, piano, organ* and *harp*, which could only be accessed outside of mainstream schooling. Small grants were payable to schools which had choirs, bands or orchestras, with a bonus for examination results and competition success. This was a legacy of the British system, which was maintained in the Irish Free State, and, according to McCarthy (p.130), had the effect of reinforcing traditions already in place, rather than stimulating new musical traditions. In a 1952 article, John F. Larchet, Professor of Music at UCD, referred to Leaving Certificate instrumental music:

> This course is intended for students who have a special talent for music, and who intend to pursue the subject seriously, and eventually to obtain a Diploma or University Degree, perhaps with a view to making music their profession.
>
> (Larchet, 1952, p.33)

There was a substantial examination entry fee, which suggests instrumental music was considered as an activity for those wealthy enough to afford it. The *Reports of the Department of Education* from the 1920s through to the 1960s show that, while the entry fee for Leaving Certificate was 2s/6d, the extra music fee amounted to

10s/6d. Instrumental music was closed to the majority of pupils and was locked into the conservatory type of music education that stressed theoretical knowledge and evaluation by examination.

For the vast majority of students who were not taking music as an exam subject, however, secondary school music amounted to little more than a weekly singing class. Inspectors' reports of the time attest to low musical standards:

> The proficiency in Singing rarely rises above good, and is in too many cases only fair. It would appear that adequate attention is not given to voice-training, and that many lessons degenerate into mechanical singing of songs. Expression and clear enunciation are rare. (Reports of the Department of Education, 1925-27)

The Report on the Curriculum of the Secondary School in 1962 recommended curricular change, citing difficulty and the demands it made on the students' time as factors responsible for the position of music as a minority subject. It recommended that the syllabus be remodelled with the non-performing student in mind.

The year 1966 saw developments such as the new comprehensive school, a common Intermediate Certificate for all post-primary schools and plans for free post-primary education. New music courses were introduced in 1969: *Music, General Musicianship* and *General and Practical Musicianship*. According to McCarthy (p.157), the new syllabus lacked clear aims and was not accompanied by a new form of assessment – in practice, the general music student was assessed in the same way as the instrumental student who attended private lessons and who intended to pursue a career in music.

During the 1980s Irish harp and traditional instruments were introduced for the performance section of the Leaving Certificate examination and the 1989 Syllabus Review included a prescribed list of appropriate traditional dance tunes and slow airs (McCarthy 1999, p.159). The current Leaving Certificate curriculum (1999)

broadened the syllabus to include school-based group performance and opened up accessibility beyond those students taking instrumental lessons outside the school. The 1999 curriculum included a broad range of musical genres and styles including popular culture, traditional music and contemporary Irish composers. Music technology features as an elective option. Between 1999 and 2007, a more than fourfold rise in uptake occurred – 1,037 increasing to 4,857 (Flynn 2013, p.343).

2.3.3 Music in Vocational Education

The Vocational Education Act, 1930 established vocational education in the context of the modernisation of Irish education. The 1930 Act entrusted continuation and technical education to a local Vocational Education Committee (VEC) with ultimate responsibility vested in the Minister of Education. Vocational education, closely bound to apprenticeship in the trades, supplemented and continued education provided in primary school, included practical subjects in preparation for employment in trades, agriculture and industry.

> Vocational education can be seen as the main element of the manpower policy of the new state: as part of the infrastructure to promote agricultural and industrial production. Courses were designed with the objective of fitting a segment of the youth population into slots in the developing system of production. (O'Reilly 1989, p.153)

Before the 1930 Act, the function of vocational or 'technical' education was to develop the practical skills of fourteen to sixteen year-olds intending to enter trade-apprenticeships. Under the 1930 Act, separate definitions were applied to *continuation* and *technical* education. Although the role of music was not central in curriculum under the 1930 Act, under 'continuation' education much of what formed primary education continued through to the vocational curriculum and singing was one of those activities (Curtis 1952, p.45). McCarthy alluded to 'the rising interest in cultural subjects creating an atmosphere that was receptive to music'.

> The view of culture as belonging to all people and all people as being cultured, regardless of social class or ethnicity, was also becoming popular and underpinning the philosophy of music education in vocational education. The school was seen as serving a predominantly rural, folk culture and, by inference, serving to transmit that culture. (McCarthy, M. 1999, p.132)

Memorandum V.40 (1942) added religion and cultural studies to the vocational curriculum. As in the primary schools, music and the Irish language were viewed as cultural activities by the Department of Education, but it did not necessarily follow that music would be conducted to any level higher than that pertaining in the primary school, as the same constraints regarding resources and training existed in the vocational education sector. Exceptions to this were the two city areas of Dublin and Cork, where the respective Municipal Schools of Music were under VEC administration (Statute No. 29. Vocational Education Act 1930) and served as supports for promoting music in the vocational schools of those borough areas. During the 1930s, Dublin Municipal School of Music held summer courses for teachers, which attracted a certain amount of interest. According to McCarthy (p.133), eighteen Vocational School teachers attended the Summer course in 1936. *Claisceadal*, a movement promoting community choral singing in the Irish language, was active in many vocational schools up to the early 1970s. In rural areas vocational schools constituted the majority of schools and were regarded as centres for revitalising the cultural life of communities (McCarthy, p.133). In Dublin and Cork the VECs supported municipal schools of music. These music institutions in turn supported music in the schools. Even though the music-schools existed in a conservatory culture, music in the vocational schools was based in rural life and folk and popular culture. Perhaps the vesting of music schools under the VECs suggested their vocational potential.

Unlike secondary-school music, which was classically based and emphasised high-cultural values, vocational school music had more in common with primary school

music – its function was to teach the Irish language, and enrich community life. With the revival of traditional music in the 1950s, Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann (CCE) held classes in vocational schools (McCarthy 1999, p.134).

Following the introduction of free post-primary education in 1966, vocational and secondary education began to converge. In 1966, the Intermediate Certificate was introduced and in 1969 the Leaving Certificate followed with the first vocational school students sitting the Leaving Certificate examination in 1971.

2.3.4 Instrumental music services

The municipal schools of music in the cities of Dublin and Cork, a legacy of British rule originally established in the nineteenth century, were administered and funded under the Vocational Education Act (1930). In 1949, Order S.I. No. 74 broadened the terms of the 1930 Act to include choirs, orchestras, theory of music and musical appreciation in vocational education, thus opening the potential for music schools to be established in some or all VEC areas. In the same year, County Cork VEC established an already existing small community music provision as a Music Scheme of Provision under the Order and in 1960, Limerick City VEC established a Municipal School of Music under the 1949 order. Unlike the Municipal Schools of Music, the County Cork Music Scheme supported adult choirs, pipe bands and brass and reed bands. During the 1950s and '60s the music provision expanded to include traditional music and instrumental music for children.

Hopes expressed during the 1950s that instrumental music services might be established in all VEC areas were never realised, although a small number of rural VECs temporarily funded rudimentary instrumental tuition for a time in mid-

twentieth century. Writing in *Music in Ireland* (1952), Aloys Fleischmann expressed the hopes of the time as follows:

> As encouraging signs one must refer to...the new scheme of the County Cork Vocational Education Committee by which a network of nearly a hundred choirs is to be created all over the county... It is in such schemes for the promotion of music among the younger generation that any real hopes for the future lies.
>
> (Fleischmann 1952, pp.275-6).

During the 1960s and 70s instrumental music services within the four VECs expanded significantly, until, in the mid-1980s, the VECs experienced severe financial stringency reflecting wider national and international economic contraction. In 1986, the Department of Education withdrew official recognition of the VEC instrumental music services. Teachers were not appointed to fill vacancies arising from resignations and retirements, with the result that work in the VEC Music Services was not perceived by instrumental teachers as a secure career path, resulting in uncertainty in the retention of teachers as many part-time teachers sought full-time employment elsewhere (Personal recollection). Employment conditions of part-time teachers were, for many years, a cause of resentment. My employment as violin teacher at County Cork Music Scheme began in 1980 and I have personal experience of difficult conditions, such as the cessation of salary during school holidays.

It is notable that 1985 was designated Music Year and was marked by concerts and musical activities throughout the country. The Irish Committee for European Music Year commissioned Donald Herron to compile a report on the provision of music education in Irish schools. The Arts Council Report, *Deaf Ears?* depicted an impoverished and inequitable music provision across all categories of music education. Herron's Report examined music in Primary and Post-primary education as well as instrumental music education and compared music education in Ireland with that in the rest of Europe. The Report concluded that in 1985 the state of music education in Ireland was not much better than in the previous decades.

> The majority of Irish primary school children leave school musically illiterate, with little vocal or aural training and with a repertoire of songs that is usually learned by rote. As a consequence they have no worthwhile basis from which to extend their repertoire, or to avail of music as a subject at post-primary level, the curriculum which is anyway quite discontinuous with that at primary level. Primary schools have little or no money with which to buy instruments, and even if they had, a large proportion of teachers find difficulty implementing the primary school music programme and particularly the creative sections. There is an insidious view held by some that the arts would be better served by voluntary effort outside school hours…
>
> - All institutions, agencies and individuals providing instrumental tuition outside the schools charge fees. This fact necessarily excludes many young people.
> - The non-school system of provision cannot hope to provide for *all* instrumental group experiences. Their role is to provide tuition in individual instruments.
> - Major portions of the country are denied the full range of instrumental tuition. This facility is available only to a fortunate few areas, and within those areas only to those who can afford it.
> - Ireland's unfavourable position (in European terms) is not due to lack of demand as any of the organisations or institutions involved will attest.
>
> …While there are some very hopeful developments such as the music schemes initiated by certain Vocational Education Committees, the overall situation is little short of appalling. (Herron, 1985)

Heron's report provided an analysis of the poor state of school music and the inequitable provision of instrumental music education in the country. He concluded, that 'Irish young people are grievously disadvantaged when compared with their European counterparts…the young Irish person has the worst of all European 'musical worlds'' (Herron 1985).

In 1993, Cork School of Music and Dublin College of Music became constituent schools of, respectively, Cork and Dublin Institutes of Technology, ensuring their continuation and development as third-level institutions. While City of Cork VEC divested itself of its instrumental music education provision, City of Dublin VEC retained an instrumental music centre at Kylemore College, Ballyfermot, which had already existed for many years as an outreach music-centre of the College of Music.

During 2000-01, a review of the music provisions in the VEC areas of County Cork, City of Limerick and City of Dublin, had a markedly positive outcome for those three Music Services. The O'Brien Report (2001), which emerged from the review,

recognised the existing teaching allocations, accepted the need for individual tuition and formulated a method of calculating an overall pupil-teacher ratio. Significantly, the Report accepted the concept of affordable fees, which were maintained at the existing level of 20 percent of real cost. New permanent posts and posts of responsibility were recommended to the Department of Education and Science. The Report referred to a widespread demand for music tuition in the country and recommended its provision:

> If the Department takes a decision to recognise the music schemes as an integral part of the educational service, the question arises whether it would then become simply demand–led. Other VECs would immediately follow suit and those already providing the service would extend their operation. We are told that large waiting lists exist already. The service is a costly one, has the potential to become more so and it is inevitable that it would develop. While this is true, Departmental control can be exercised through the provisions in the annual estimates. In general, it can be argued that an extension of the service currently being provided would be no bad thing.
> (O'Brien 2001)

As Schemes of Provision, the Music Services are funded by local VECs subject to official Department of Education and Skills allocation of teaching hours. The O'Brien Report (2001) established a working methodology for calculating staffing and fee-levels. Naming the three largest Music Services, the report pointed to the fact that fees do not relate to tuition costs. In those cases the fee income at that time represented about 20 percent of actual tuition costs (p.13).

> The question of the level of fee, if indeed a fee is appropriate at all, is one which merits attention. On the one hand it could be argued that the service being provided by the three VECs in question is a particularly valuable one from the educational and cultural viewpoint and it is a service that should in fact be provided in the schools as part of the curriculum. This being so it might be argued that the service should be provided free of charge. On the other hand the service is provided, as it happens, to a largely middle-class element of the population and as such a more economic fee should be charged. I believe that on balance the answer lies in between these extremes – there should be a fee but one that is not exorbitant. (O'Brien 2001).

The report recommended retention of this arrangement as a middle course between free tuition and full commercial tuition fees. It is interesting that the author of the report briefly reflected on an argument for providing free access during mainstream

schooling but countered by identifying instrumental music education with middle-class participation. The factoring of a middle-class status quo into the setting of fee-level clearly indicates an official policy position accepting that instrumental music would be targeted at middle-class families. This is highly significant as the O'Brien Report recommendations underpin methodologies for determining funding and staffing allocations.

The low priority accorded musical participation during childhood is manifested in the severe geographic 'patchiness' of provision, the miniscule scale of local supply and a socially inequitable pattern of access and participation. Although music service provision in a handful of VEC/ETB areas is 80 percent publicly funded (20 percent by parental contribution), access to the instrumental courses nonetheless correlates with social class membership. Non-provision of instrumental music services in the majority of local VEC/ETB areas implies low priority and a level of scepticism with regard to the benefits to be derived from funding such services. However, in those local organisations, instrumental music education is regarded as a valuable public good; albeit one that excludes a majority of potential participants. The inequity of both provision and access calls into question the fairness of providing quality affordable instrumental music tuition to only a tiny proportion of citizens. In order to approach the provision of instrumental music in terms of social justice, it must be established that a majority of citizens are missing out on a public benefit or 'good'. If the personal and social benefits to be derived from playing musical instruments amount to a general personal and material enhancement, such as is the case with numeracy or literacy, then it might follow that all school-going children would be entitled, as a matter of fairness, to a basic instrumental music education.

2.4 Music education as social practice

This study adopts a sociocultural perspective, which understands the inseparability of individuals from social context, rejecting the individual cognitive perspective as a foundation for social research, (Sawyer 2002, p.283). While recognising and respecting human individuality, the units of analysis within the study look to participations, shared beliefs and processes in social practice (Anderson et al 2000, p.11).

2.4.1 The social construction of music

While the physiological, emotional and cognitive processes that evoke musical response are present in all humans (Blacking 1976, p.7), as a proportion of population, few individuals in the industrially developed world are active musicians.

> Music presents a puzzle. On the one hand, people love music and devote much time and effort to put themselves in the way of it. On the other hand, the levels of musical skill achieved by the vast majority of people in contemporary Western society are surprisingly low (Sloboda 2006, p.333).

As society becomes less traditional and more technologically sophisticated, active music-making appears to decline. Blacking, in *How Musical is Man?* (1976), describes a southern African culture where every member is actively involved in music-making; and Green refers to the communality of musical practice in pre-industrial Europe (Green 2002, pp.1-2). In *How Popular Musicians Learn,* Green correlates a progressive division of labour since the Industrial Revolution and the development of music-making as a specialised sphere of human activity (Green 2003, p.263). In Ireland we are aware of our heritage of folk-music, song and dance in which, in the past, the whole community participated. According to Green,

> The evidence suggests that self-entertainment through vernacular music-making, as well as amateur performance of classical or 'art-music', were more common in the past than at the beginning of the twenty-first century (Green 2002, p.2)

Referring to the progressive expansion of music education over the last one hundred and fifty years, Green concludes that as formal music education in schools, conservatories and universities has expanded, music-making has declined (p.263). Most people participate in music as listeners rather than as vocal or instrumental performers (Green 2002, p.3). A survey during the 1990s found around 1 per cent of the British population active as amateur musicians (National Music Council 1997, cited in Green 2002, p.2).

Although only a small section of society participates in music-making, there is a common intense human interest in music (Trehub 2003, p.669). Music and language are specific to humankind, one marker of the uniqueness of the human species. However the literature on the evolution of music is rather sparse (Tolbert 2001, p.84). Blacking describes music as 'humanly organised sound' reiterating the claim of ethnomusicologists correlating human organisation structures and sound-patterns produced by human interaction (Blacking 1976, p.26). Music is represented in terms of recognisable structured regularities in the minds of listeners.

According to Sloboda, 'almost everyone in our culture has found the structure of music'. Exposure to music lays down mental structures, so that even very young children without formal musical training are already sensitive to the structures of music (Sloboda 2005, p.334). This phenomenon may be contextualised by the vocal interactions of infants and mothers and other care-givers, during which the musical perception of pre-linguistic infants is equal to those of listeners who have had many years of musical exposure (Trehub 2003, p.669). The musical beginnings of people in societies throughout the world originate in these intensely social interactions where mothers vocalise melodious tones to infants during the weeks and months prior to linguistic comprehension.

Tolbert argues that music and language are mutually dependent as they are embedded socially across many sociocultural contexts (Tolbert 2001, p.84). The music and language pairing is compelling as a means of understanding the origin of music as a form of primitive pre- or proto-language; however the embeddedness of both language and music as meaningful forms of human to human communication implies music as non-verbal communication organically grounded in human evolutionary history. It might be useful to regard music and language as parallel but mutually dependent communication systems. Both are governed by rules of grammar and syntax – music is just as rule-governed as language (Trehub 2003, p.669). For example - just as sentences can be syntactically joined together or lengthened by addition of phrases, so too can a musical piece be altered by addition of musical phrases. However, while language is referential and representative of precision of meaning, musical meaning is vaguer and may be regarded as non-referential and lacking in obvious utility; but music is strongly emotionally significant (Cross 2008, p.180; Tolbert 2009, p.84-85).

Music is part of the society of all cultures, where it is closely woven into the fabric of people's lives. Outside of Western culture in which music has become an aesthetic object, music is valued for its extra-musical social meanings, of which ritual holds cross-cultural context (Tolbert 2009, p.85). In Western culture we can recognise ritualistic occasions such as weddings, funerals, or other contexts celebratory or civic in which music plays a central ceremonial part. As societal members, we can understand the social place of music in ritual and partake of its sociocultural essence. According to Blacking, music and dance are, in a general sense, forms of ritual communication that 'enhance co-operation and educate the emotions and senses' (Blacking 1987, p.67).

Music may be experienced purposively, passively or often involuntarily. Private musical listening is a relatively common modern phenomenon brought about by technological change during the twentieth century. The development of communication technology has gathered pace through radio, television, record, tape, compact disc, miniaturisation of portable music players; and now the internet music data-bases, whereby wide choice in musical styles and genres is immediately available. Musical experience has been commodified, individualised and, arguably, democratised and demystified; and as access increases – older ideas of 'popular' or 'serious' are increasingly blurred (Hargreaves and North 1999, p.73). Listening to music can accompany almost any activity context, such as relaxing, driving, shopping, washing the dishes, as well as being a purposeful activity in its own right such as concert-going. The functions of music are mainly of a social nature, which are manifested for the individual listener or participant as means of self-management in terms of emotion and self-identity (Hargreaves and North 1999, p.72).

The pleasure that music engenders draws people to listen to music, learn instruments and participate in musical performance. An inherent pleasure and 'strong and valued emotions seem to be at the core of music engagement' (Sloboda 2005, p.334). Film-makers employ music as an essential component in heightening the emotional impact of cinema and television. The retail industry has a keen awareness of the effect of music on the behaviour of consumers utilising mood-enhancing music in shops and supermarkets – although many people experience piped music in public places as an irritant.

A Keele University study, co-ordinated by psychologist John Sloboda, involving participants who had no formal musical training, found that mood was enhanced when they exercised personal musical choices. Participants reported feeling happier,

more alert and less bored during episodes of purposive music-listening (Sloboda 2005, p.335). Evidence suggests that people listen to their preferred style of music as a means of mood-management in their everyday lives and that raises the question of personal musical taste, which may act as a correlating factor in defining social identity (Hargreaves and North 1999, p.80).

People appear to be drawn towards musical styles which relate to social groups to which they have membership aspirations – ethnic group, subculture, social class or indeed lifestyle (Hargreaves and North 1999, p.79). Adolescents, for example, adopt musical subcultures as a means of defining themselves – a 'badge of identity'; and particular musical allegiance may ease entry into desired social groups. In a pre-industrial era identity and social bonding were aided by social participation in music and dance through physical and emotional synchronicity (Trehub 2003, p.671). In religious worship, musical participation can bring people into relationship with others – human solidarity evoked through an emotional response to the rise and fall of communal hymn-singing (Sloboda 2005, p.358). Participation in or allegiance to particular musical practices seem to reflect or, at least resonate with, membership of particular social groups. For instance, middle-class membership is the most likely social indicator of an opera audience and age group would identify the participants in the 'mosh-pit' at a metal concert. The musical allegiances of social groups are defined more by how musical taste is used (in what contexts and to what purpose) than the judgement of musical style-preference alone (Sloboda 2005, p.367).

2.4.2 Patterns of musical consumption

Among the social fields, music has been found to be the most contentious. A recent British survey of taste and class found musical consumption to be more differentiated than, for instance, sport or television viewing (Bennett, et al., 2009, pp.

46, 76). Findings demonstrate highly differentiated social constituencies aligning with different musical genres. For instance, those who attend rock concerts speak of excitement in joining with like-minded enthusiasts, but in contrast classical music does not so much evoke excitement but, rather, for elite groups it provides 'repertories and a public arena for socialising while continuing to enjoy public legitimacy – 'Classical music evokes hierarchy and power' (Bennett et al, 2009, p. 75). Peterson and Simkus (1992) demonstrated in a study of musical tastes and occupational status groups in the U.S. that the Western classical genre occupies the upper end of the taste hierarchy, which they characterize as a 'taste pyramid' (p. 168). Descending the pyramid, layers are occupied by more and more alternative taste-forms until, approaching the bottom layer, musical taste represents not alone status level, but marks boundaries between demographics, which are defined by gender, race, age, life-style and so on (Peterson and Simkus 1992, p. 169).

A study examining social stratification and cultural consumption of music in England indicate musical consumption as being closely associated with levels of education and income, rather than purely with social class, whereby musical participation is more accessible to aspirant families who can afford it. Among the findings, 'self-realisation' rather than 'status competition' was suggested as more likely to determine musical consumption (Chan & Goldthorpe, 2007, p. 14).

Researchers working in the UK, Netherlands and the US use the concept of the 'cultural omnivore' when referring to members of high-status social groups who participate in a wide range of cultural consumption (Bennett et al 2009, Chan and Goldthorpe 2007, Lamont 1992, Peterson and Kern 1996, van Eijck 2001). Peterson and Kern (1996) present findings derived from a quantitative longitudinal study that American musical taste has shifted towards a broader taste repertoire –

'omnivorousness is replacing snobbishness among Americans of highbrow tastes (Peterson and Kern 1996, pp. 103-104). Reference to the rise of the 'omnivore' indicates a younger middle-class generation showing 'a different manner of appropriating music, an orientation which distinguishes them from their working-class counterparts, whose tastes are more restricted' (Bennett et al. 2009, p. 93). A study of musical taste in the Netherlands examined the ways in which elements of 'highbrow' and popular culture are combined to show that diverse cultural products may be appreciated simultaneously (Van Eijck, 2001, p. 1166).

It does not necessarily follow that familiarity with cultural products implies familiarity with the cultures from which those products derive. Since all music is now readily available through mass media, an individual's musical taste could not be regarded as consequent to their belonging to the social context from which a particular musical genre originated. Referring to the US, Van Eijck points to evidence that social mobility in recent decades has been in an upward direction, so that the heterogeneity of high-status groups has resulted in a diversity of musical tastes. Lamont's study of French and American upper-middle class men which surveyed means of asserting cultural sophistication, the broad cultural repertoire of the Americans incorporating a range of mainstream culture being as relevant to conveying status position as much as exclusive aristocratic taste is to the French. This suggests that, outside of France, aversion to popular culture might not be an adequate indicator of high status position (Van Eijck, 2001, p. 1164). A young middle-class person with an upwardly mobile profile would have a lifestyle which might not fall into heretofore traditional patterns (p. 1167). Van Eijck's study indicates cultural dispositions in the Netherlands to be closer to the American than the French cultural context. Whereas the members of an older age-group with high

education levels may still prefer classical genres, the younger age-group displays a broad cultural repertoire. Difference between highbrow and pop culture is less clearly defined as the middle-class appropriates and re-evaluates cultural forms, which would have traditionally been associated with working-class musical taste (Skeggs 2004, p. 79). As boundaries between musical genres become blurred, aristocratic ideals of cultural taste may have little meaning as class-based taste distinctions break down. If we consider patterns of musical consumption as a 'weather-vane' of musical taste in the general population, the distance of high-brow musical taste from the lives of the general population becomes clear. A 1997 survey of UK album sales reveals preference for Western classical music at 3.6% (Dane and Laing 1998, p.10).

Table 2.1: Sales of recorded music by genre by percentage of albums (1997)

Pop	34.5	Jazz	1.2
Rock	25.7	Children's	1.1
Dance	11.8	Spoken word	1.0
MoR/Easy listening	8.3	Reggae	0.8
R&B	7.7	Folk	0.7
Classical	3.6	Blues	0.3

Source: BPI, 1998, based on Millward Brown data

(Dane and Laing 1998, p.10)

While recent sociological research reports an eroding of boundaries and a broadening of musical taste among middle- and upper middle-class social groups (Chan and Goldthorpe 2007, Lamont 1992, Peterson and Kern 1996, van Eijck 2001), Western art music still has the legitimising evocation of power and hierarchy – 'the ghostly memories of legitimate cultural capital' (Bennett et al 2009, p.75).

Turning to the learning of musical instruments, while contemporary Irish cultural consumption may have less in common with exclusive high-status musical taste, the process of learning an instrument necessitates that a student be initiated into the

classical cannon, given the close alignment between instrumental skills training, musical genre and teaching contracts. Because instrumental music education in the public provision continues to be aligned with Western art music, instrumental pedagogy involves the cultivation of student musical taste. Despite the broadening of musical taste, familiarity with Western art music still underpins the culture and practice of instrumental tuition in Irish instrumental music services.

2.4.3 Education and cultural advantage

The dynamics of cultural assertion and exclusion as outlined by Bourdieu demonstrate the process by which members of the dominant social class maintain their power and advantage through the assertion and legitimation of its own culture and taste (Bourdieu 1986, p. 246). The connection between power and culture is central to Bourdieu's sociology – societal stratification preserved through culture and education (Wright 2010, p.12). Children arrive in the education system equipped with widely varied levels of habitus. Children of the middle-classes are already competent in a range of linguistic and cultural skills, which offer an advantage. Schooling requires these prior competences for academic success, thus disadvantaging children who do not possess them. In this way, schools reproduce and legitimate inequality by representing academic achievement as an outcome of natural ability (Wright 2010, p.13).

Elaborating on Bourdieu's assertion, Bernstein explains the reproduction of educational advantage in terms of differential linguistic codes deriving from the social division of labour (Bernstein 1981, p.334). Bernstein's model emerged in the 1960s as he sought ways in which to 'prevent the wastage of working-class educational potential' (Sadovnik 1991, p.61). Focusing on the relation between knowledge and power, Bernstein pointed to the disadvantaging of working-class

children due to their more context-dependent linguistic code compared to the elaborated linguistic code of middle-class children. Since schools adopt a common elaborated linguistic code, many working-class children are disadvantaged by having to navigate the dominant code of education (Wright 2010, p.14).

Cultural practices or *habitus,* determined by home background, social origin and levels of education effectively smooth the process of cultural acquisition; and both the process of acquiring a cultural repertoire, and manner in which it is used as an aesthetic taste preference, act as markers of social distinction (Bourdieu 1986, p. 1). Habitus, subconsciously acquired during early childhood through parental behaviour follows social structures and practices, which reproduce and persist without 'conscious recognition by society's members' (Di Maggio 1979, p.1461; Wright 2010, p.13). Using the metaphor of *capital,* Bourdieu's theoretical framework presents the social world as a system of social stratification in which societal groups are dominant or dominated. Various forms of capital – *financial, social, cultural* – represent resources that may be acquired, accumulated and utilized as a means of assertion by those who are in possession of recognized, legitimated capital. The principal forms of capital are economic and cultural and when possessed in combination they provide a variety of enhanced social positions in the power-field, whereby members of well-advantaged social groups can combine their economic capital with cultural capital by investing in their children's education and high quality extra-curricular activities (Wright 2010, p.13). In their turn, children who are subjects of cultural investment can transform their social and cultural capital into economic advantage through enhanced job-prospects and salaries arising from the initial investment (Di Maggio 1979, p.1466).

Conceptualising cultural consumption as a form of capital accumulation, transforms cultural activities and accomplishments into a resource that can be transmitted from one generation to the next to solidify class advantage. Pointing to aesthetic taste as cultural assertion, Bourdieu demonstrates a nexus between family and education working to maintain the inequalities of society. Prominent areas of life are contested *fields* in which members of dominant social groups preserve their advantage through judgments of what may be tasteful and desirable. Operationalised as socialised understandings, embedded in the course of growing up, taste judgements enable individuals to navigate unwritten social codes, necessary to full participation in the social group (Bourdieu 1985, p.13).

Engagement with an art form can be understood as being affirmative of one's class, and Bourdieu asserted that 'nothing more clearly affirms one's class, nothing more infallibly classifies, than taste in music…there is no more 'classifactory' practice than concert-going or playing a 'noble' instrument (Bourdieu 1986, p.18).

> …taste classifies…art and cultural consumption are predisposed, consciously and deliberately or not, to fulfil a social function of legitimating social differences (Bourdieu 1986, pp.6-7).

Introduction at an early age to classical music through playing a 'noble' instrument like the piano produces a more familiar relationship to music, than the 'often verbose relation of those who have come to music through concerts…or records'. Early acquaintance with classical music is a particularly efficacious mode of acquiring cultural capital (Bourdieu 1986, pp. 75-76). Evidence shows that high status groups participate more often than other groups, not alone in high-status musical activities, but in most types of leisure activities (Peterson and Simkus 1992, p. 169).

2.4.4 Social class

In the course of the literature review, the examination of instrumental music education reveals *ability, genre* and *gender* as boundary markers to be negotiated by learners. High status groups seek high-status leisure activities for their children, who participate more than any other social group in extracurricular enriching activities (Vincent and Ball 2007, p. 1066). Working class families and families of limited means, whilst providing the emotional and material conditions to enable their children to grow and thrive do not generally support their special interests outside of 'accomplishments of natural growth'. Lareau shows that children of lower social groups participate in 'few organised activities' (Lareau 2002, pp.748-749). The identification of instrumental music with Western classical music characterises the learning of musical instruments as high culture and is, as a consequence likely to further confine participation to the minority of middle- and upper middle-class families who have the background or *habitus* enabling them to regard playing a musical instrument as a natural form of personal enrichment (Vincent and Ball 2007, p. 1066).

Learning a musical instrument is elective and discretionary, similar to playing a sport. However, while many forms of sport may be accessed at a minimal cost to families, individual instrumental tuition is expensive to provide, necessitating either prohibitively high fees or public subsidy. In practical scale, the individuated learning model renders instrumental music a scarce educational resource, access to which is regulated either by auditioning or waiting list. It is an arrangement that precludes the participation of the children of lower social groups who might not have the tenacity to wait on a list, the material resources to purchase an instrument and pay a fee or the cultural values needed for high-culture engagement. Locating access to instrumental

music as high-cultural activity outside of school hours make it unlikely that less well-off families will seek to access music lessons. Locating the point of access to instrumental music education in a group-learning context within the time-tabled primary-school day at minimal cost to families would extend the benefits of equitable instrumental musical participation to Irish children.

2.4.5 Gender

The formal learning of musical instruments is generally regarded as a proportionately more feminine activity; with research finding boys to be under-represented worldwide among those learning musical instruments (Hallam et al. 2008, p.8.). Gender stereotyping extends to perceptions of what seems appropriate for males and females in terms of musical activities to the extent that musical instruments themselves are perceived as subject to a gendered perception. High-pitched instruments are usually associated with girls and low-pitched, percussion and electrically amplified instruments with boys (Abeles and Porter 1978, p.65; Delzell and Leppla 1992, pp.100-101; Green 1994, p.103; O'Shea 2008, p.56). International research shows that girls are now found to be more successful than boys in most academic subjects (Elwood, 2005; Hoffmann Davis, 2008). In the US, it has been shown that by the eighth grade, girls outperform boys in music test-scores (Roulston and Misawa 2011, p. 4). Sloboda suggests that strong male conditioning against emotional display may be one of the main reasons that music is seen by many children as an essentially female activity (Sloboda, 2005, p. 310). Green focuses on musical discourse as a social construct in which gendered relationships with music are learnt (Green 1994, p.99). Green gives a compelling account of the musical discourse as patriarchal – a microcosm of the society that supports it. The patriarchal definitions of femininity affirm the duality of woman as temptress or idealised

mother – the female singer in the public arena or mother singing to her baby. Historically women were usually associated with singing rather than with playing instruments, and according to Green this persists in the discourse, whereby playing an instrument interrupts 'the appearance of the woman's natural in-tuneness…' (Green 1994, p.100). Helen O'Shea (2008), writing about the 'performativity of gender', refers to the restricted position of the female musician in the 'fraternity' of the Irish traditional pub-session – 'the generic woman musician… with her downward glance, the constrained posture of her knees and feet together, her arms resting demurely in her lap, affirms her femininity' O'Shea likens the female concertina-player to the seated figure of the woman playing the piano 'accepting her audience's gaze but not looking at them' (O'Shea 2008, p. 63). Green asserts that the 'problematic relationship between femininity and instrumental performance' tends to preclude women from playing large, unwieldy, high volume or technologically complex instruments (Green 1994, p.101). Abeles and Porter (1972) delineate a masculine-feminine eight-instrument continuum:

Most masculine							*Most feminine*
Drums	Trombone	Trumpet	Saxophone	Cello	Clarinet	Violin	Flute

(Abeles and Porter 1972, p.62)

Figure 2.5: Gender correlation of musical instruments

Three decades after Abeles and Porter (1972), a report of a large-scale study, researching 150 local Music Services in England, confirmed this to be an unchanged state of affairs (Hallam et al 2008, p.10). Gendered attitudes towards musical genre associate engagement in popular music and music technology with boys; whereas classical music practices such as singing in choir and playing the flute are linked with girls (Green, 2003, p. 269). There is evidence that teachers and parents share these assumptions (Delzell and Leppla 1992, p.95; Hallam et al 2008, p.8). Delzell

and Leppla point out that music teachers in school music programmes in the US are pragmatically aware of the instrument-gender issue as students' preferences affect instrumental balance in the bands and orchestras (p.95).

Although often disruptive and disengaged in music class, boys are regarded as 'naturally more adept, spontaneous and creative' when linked with composition or popular music, while girls singing in choir and playing orchestral instruments, although regarded as hard workers, persevering and committed, are seen as 'conformist and conservative' (Green 2003, p.270). International research finds that teachers, curriculum planners, pupils and parents share these assumptions and Green concludes that labelling and self-fulfilling prophecies can have a considerable effect on long-term musical success. In general, the circumstances and issues around gender and musical instrumental choice are well known – what urgently needs researching are the reasons underpinning the persistence of gendered stereotypes; and what policy interventions would address and target the proportional non-participation of boys in formal instrumental music education.

2.4.6 Music in the middle-class family

In the early years of childhood, family is the site of musical stimulation by which early experiences of pleasurable musical experiences develop motivation for later involvement in music (Hallam 2002, p234). Parents, key to initiating and sustaining a child's musical activities over years at a time play a critical role in the development of musical ability (Creech 2010, p.15; Dai and Schader 2002, p.135; McPherson 2009, p.93). A 1996 study conducted with the parents of more than 250 children who were learning musical instruments found that parental interest and involvement had a strong influence on whether their children would continue with lessons and practice.

The study found that 'the most musically able children had the highest levels of family support' (Davidson et al 1996, p.399; Davidson and Borthwick 2002, p.125).

Learning a musical instrument in the childhood years, in common with other extra-curricular activities like sport or drama, is a common 'enrichment activity' (Vincent and Ball 2007, p. 1066). These activities often set a frenetic pace for families, as parents seek out age-specific and sometimes gender-specific organised activities for their children. Dominating family life and creating heavy commitments, particularly for mothers, extra-curricular enrichment activities create a cult of individualism within the family as a consequence of the strong emphasis on children's performance (Lareau 2002, p. 748). The requirement for on-going parental support and commitment to purchasing instruments, funding tuition, encouraging home practice and transporting children to music lessons and rehearsals marks out the learning of musical instruments as a quintessentially middle-class cultural activity (Lareau 2002, p. 748; Vincent and Ball 2007, p. 1066).

In Kubacki et al's mixed methods study, 76 percent of parent interview-participants perceived the child's influence on the decision to seek music lessons as significant with strong evidence pointing to the mother's influence in the decision to seek out music tuition (Kubacki et al 2007, pp.9, 17). The 'overwhelming majority' of participants perceived the 'acquisition of musical skills' as one of the most important reasons for attending instrumental lesson. Other reasons given were 'musical skills as part of general education', 'intellectual skills' and 'building a child's confidence and social life' (p.16). Some participants mentioned the 'snob-value' of playing a musical instrument, but attributed this to others (Kubacki et al 2007, p.13). In the supporting survey the researchers found that '...nowadays only wealthier socio-economic groups can afford regular music lessons' (p.17).

Although there is an obvious correlation between learning of classical instruments with high cultural values (Bourdieu 1984, p.18; Bennett et al, 2009, p. 75), apart from a miniscule number of elite performers, professional classical musicians' earning power is far less than that of professionals in domains, which undergo similar high-levels of training, such as medicine (Dai and Schader 2000, p.23). Dai and Schader point to the ambiguous status of music in modern society: while, on the one hand, the ability to play a musical instrument hold high status and respect as a cultural activity, on the other, musical illiteracy does not hold a stigma and may be regarded as a cultural norm (Dai and Schader 2000, p.23). Therefore, expectation of a future career-path is unlikely to feature as a factor in most parents' motivation when they seek formal instrumental music education for their children. It is more likely that middle-class parents would want an absorbing cultural activity or hobby for their child that would enrich the child's life. While aware of the cultural value of playing a musical instrument, parents, as the main instigators, are motivated by the intrinsic benefits of music, such as the development of musical and aesthetic sensitivity and the extrinsic benefits, such as the development of personal attributes of diligence, work-ethic or increased academic performance (Dai and Schader 2000, p.23; Kubacki et al 2007, pp.12, 13).

2.4.7 The benefits of playing a musical instrument

Recent studies into music cognition have demonstrated connections between early experience in life and consequent beneficial effects on brain structures and cognitive functions (Hetland 2000, Ho et al 2003, Franklin et al 2008), social development (Gewertz 2003, Hallam 2000, Hille and Schupp 2013) and education of the emotions (Blacking 1987, Hoffmann-Davies 2008, Philpott 2013).

2.4.7.1 Cognitive function

Neuro-scientific research since the late 1990s has advanced understandings of the effects of active musical engagement on other areas of activity, for instance, the correlation between the processing systems of music and speech linking musical learning with language perception, which in turn will have a beneficial effect on verbal skills, literacy and intellectual development (Hallam 2010, pp.270, 274).

Magnetic resonance imaging of the cerebral cortex has shown development of the left temporal lobe of the brain in adults who have received musical training before the age of twelve compared to non-musicians (Chan et al 1998, p.128). This is the area that primarily mediates verbal memory – the right temporal region mainly processes visual memory, which remains unaffected by musical activity. Similarly, neuro-imaging has shown a 25 percent increase in auditory processing in the left temporal region during active musical activity (Chan et al 1998, p.128; Ho et al 2003, pp.439, 447). Ho et al propose that the instrumental music training, beginning in childhood, modifies the left-brain area responsible for verbal processing and spatio-temporal reasoning, thus facilitating verbal memory. They propose in explanation that periods of intricate finger movement and the memorising of long passages of musical notes stimulate neural growth in musicians (Ho et al 203, p.447).

While these studies lend more than a correlational explanation connecting active musical activity to improved test outcomes in verbal memory and spatial reasoning, it can be argued that more investigation is necessary into unsettled issues. In contrast to studies conducted by Chan et al (1998), Hetland (2000) and Ho et al (2003), Forgeard et al did not control the research sample by SES or social demographic. Their study only included children who had persisted with instrumental tuition for

more than three years and the study was subject to a correlational design (Forgeard 2008, p.7). Forgeard et al acknowledge that non-causal explanations for observed cognitive development advantage in musicians, such as family dynamics and heightened motivation, are proffered as explanations for associating enhanced learning advantage with active musical training (Forgeard et al 2008, p.7). They point to parental expectations in enrolling children in instrumental music lessons compared to parents who do not choose to provide such enrichment activities. It is probable that these same parents insist on a school work-ethic and support their children's homework as well as providing other additional extra-curricular activities. Motivational skills learnt through persisting with instrumental music training are likely to transfer to other school learning-domains.

2.4.7.2 Personal and social development

Because formal musical instrumental study involves regular purposeful practice and close involvement with the learning activity, instrumental students are likely to develop qualities of self-discipline, persistence and commitment that will have beneficial effects on their lives (Hille and Schupp 2013, p.4). A study based on data from the German Socio-Economic Panel (SOEP) on the effects of long-term exposure to instrumental music education, found that adolescents with musical training have more developed cognitive and non-cognitive skills, better school grades and 'are more conscientious, open and ambitious' (Hille and Schupp 2013, p.1). The significance of the study lies in the consistency of the findings over differing levels of socio-economic status. The study was controlled to take account of socio-economic status, personality, parental involvement in the child's school, family background and artistic taste (p.1).

Young people from low or medium socio-economic backgrounds who learn musical instruments between the ages of 8 and 17 years are found to be more optimistic about future success in life. In cognitive tests, scoring more than 25 percent of standard deviation over others– this advantage shows in verbal rather than mathematical skills (Hille and Schupp 2013, p.23). Children learning instruments in group or orchestra gain social perspectives not usually experienced in classroom interactions, learning to closely and directly interact with both peers and persons in authority. Playing an instrument in social contexts gives a sense of belonging to a group in a non-competitive context, thereby raising the well-being of the individual (Hille and Schupp 2013, p.6).

Hallam (2010) suggests that an increase in cultural and social capital may partly mediate intellectual attainment, since students participating in musical activity interact more with parents and teachers; and their parents are more likely to interact with friends' parents, in turn raising self-esteem, increasing motivation and self-efficacy (Hallam 2010, p.285). Extending instrumental tuition on a socially equitable basis has the potential to address a gap in young people's social and cultural capital. Enhancing social skills through positive self-perception contributes to personal well-being, which in turn has beneficial effects on social cohesion in wider community.

2.4.7.3 Educating the emotions

> In addition to these values [self-esteem and identity] musicing and listening extend the range of people's expressive and impressive powers by providing us with opportunities to formulate musical expression of emotions, musical representations of people, places and things, and musical expressions of cultural-ideological meanings.
>
> (Elliott 2005, p.10)

The cognitive and social benefits of musical engagement are well-recognised in advocating music in children's education, usually expressed in terms of skills transfer and the development of citizenship. However, the intrinsic benefits of the musical experience itself in the formation of the young person are given less

emphasis by music education advocates. In an era when education is primarily focused on the preparation of young people for materially productive labour, there is a palpable imbalance between the drive to achieve numeracy and literacy and the education of the emotions through arts-participation in the school-going years. Music provides that counterbalance as it evokes the subjective world of feelings and emotions in contrast to the objectivity of the sciences (Blacking 1987, p.118; Philpott 2012, p.58).

Emotions are sociocultural constructions suffused with assigned meanings that become expressions of feelings. Closely connected to human culture, emotions, music and cultural forms in general result from human intentions towards meaning-making (Blacking 1978, p78). Participation in music provides opportunities to recognise and give form to emotions (Hoffmann-Davies 2008, p.61). For example, the synchronicity experienced during participation in music and dance 'enhance co-operation and educate the senses' (Blacking 1987, p.67; Trehub 2003, p.671). Language use around music-making is the language of feeling and expressiveness; and young children, easily connecting with movement and sound, are sensitive to representations such as 'exciting', 'happy' or 'sad' in music and movement (Hoffmann-Davies 2008, p.58).

Woodford cautions that emotion be fused with intelligence if music and music education is to be attractive to children while contributing to their development and preparation for participation in musical life (Woodford 2005, p.29). Gewertz notes a 'growing body of research' that suggests that a purposeful comprehensive approach to teaching social and emotional skills have the effect of both strengthening children's enthusiasm for learning and reducing behaviour problems (Gewertz 2003, p.40). Hallam, in her survey, *The Power of Music* (2001) for the Performing Rights

Society, found that 'people can use music in their lives to manipulate their moods, alleviate the boredom of tedious tasks, and create environments appropriate for particular social events...[and] use music to optimise their sense of well-being (Hallam 2001, p.1).

There is a compelling argument in favour of establishing the right to a broadly equitable music education provision, which would contribute to the emotional education of the mass of school pupils. Similar to literacy education in preliterate societies, there is a sense that one cannot judge the benefit until it has been experienced. The present historic class division whereby the dominant class holds a monopoly of the arts is a socio-political issue to be challenged. The assumption that musical 'talent' is a rare gift and that learning a musical instrument is for a 'special class of citizen' needs to be probed and exposed to rigorous analysis.

2.5 Social justice

Article 31, Section 2 of the *Convention of the Rights of the Child* states:

> States shall respect and promote the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and shall encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activity.
>
> (United Nations 1989, p.9)

Although Ireland is party to the Convention of the Rights of the child, it does not approach Article 31 with any real sense of providing 'appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activity'. A public policy is unjust when an individual or a whole social group can be shown to be losing out in comparison to others in the distribution of societies' advantages (Miller, 1999, p. 1). In *A Theory of Social Justice* (1971), John Rawls provides a framework for the distribution of goods and responsibilities among members of a society, assuming it consists of free and equal persons. A basic concept of justice is that of *distributive*

justice which suggests that all members must receive a fair share of both *public goods* and *public responsibilities* (Rawls 1971, p. 4).

> ...the primary subject of justice is the basic structure of society, or more exactly, the way in which the major social institutions distribute fundamental rights and duties and determine the division of advantage from social cooperation (Rawls 1971, p.7).

According to Rawls' model, social institutions, such as family, private property, education and health systems, constitutional rights, competitive markets, and so on, have a major influence on a person's life prospects and opportunities, but social position due to class membership comprises a key factor in achieving life's opportunities.

2.5.1 Private or public good?

Publicly provided goods and services share certain features: costs are divided among community members who may have differing wealth, tastes and interests; supply is subject to collective demand depending on local demographic characteristics; tax burdens are equitably divided; public goods are not subject to exclusion, but are subject to jointness of use (Bergstrom and Goodman 1973, p.280; Ostrom 1999, p.1). An example of jointness of use are police and health services, which are of primary benefit to individual citizens, but also have substantial external benefit for the community (Ostrom 1999, p.18). The education system, which is of both primary and external benefit, is vulnerable to manipulation by parties with vested interests because educational goals are many and varied.

The public instrumental music provision bears many features of the private sector, which is co-ordinated through the market system of supply, competitive buying and selling, distributed in a manner that cannot fully meet demand (Ostrom 1999, p.1). Due to its peripheral position in relation to the Irish education system, instrumental music education is vulnerable to colonisation by middle-class families.

Many middle-class and upper middle-class parents, aware that education is not neutral, choose schools with prestigious reputations, seeking academic success for their children over others (Bernstein 2001, p.xxiii). In this manner, public goods can effectively be vulnerable to a form of quasi-privatisation. Sensitive to perceptions of opportunities and constraints, individuals apply strategies in order to enhance well-being (Ostrom 1999, p.9). Instrumental music education presents as a privatised public good, provided at public expense for the benefit of a minority of citizens, but funded by the entirety of the population (Langbeim 2004, p.86).

2.5.2 The illusion of choice

The instrumental courses are offered as optional and discretionary to anyone who wishes to apply. While this arrangement might be nominally open and fair, on closer inspection equality of choice to participate in learning musical instruments proves to be illusionary rather than substantive, what Bernstein referred to as *horizontal solidarities* (Bernstein 2000, p.xxv; Bernstein 2001, p.28). Horizontal solidarities are the means by which state agencies create the illusion that the 'vertical' divisions of social inequality experienced by children are neutralised by offering equal access to the resources, opportunities and advantages that schools can provide (Spruce 2013, p.112). In actuality, those without appropriate cultural, social or economic capital are effectively denied an aspiration that their children might experience the benefits of playing a musical instrument. This constitutes a social disjuncture between the wish to participate and the means of access, which is hidden by the 'façade of equal opportunity' (Lynch and Moran 2006, p.122).

The ability of middle- and upper middle-class families to seek out and appropriate educational opportunity for their children is a recognised social phenomenon. 'Families and education interact to produce and reinforce social and economic

inequalities in society' (Bourdieu 1986, p.122; Drudy and Lynch 1992, pp.138, 157). The ability to negotiate the education system gives a material and cultural advantage to middle- and upper middle-class families over working-class families in terms of life choices (Lynch and Moran 2006, p.221). In short, for low-income families choice is, at once, limited and limiting. According to Lynch and Moran, choice ideology, allied to meritocratic individualism, fosters an illusion of educational choice (p.222). This is the widely accepted notion that if you have the ability and you choose to work hard, success will surely follow. The meritocracy of choice fails to acknowledge the class differential of 'starting-place' or, in Bourdieu's terms, class habitus.

2.5.3 Distributive justice

A habitus differential must be taken into the reckoning when considering how public cultural goods are to be fairly distributed as the reality of unequal 'starting-place' renders problematic the concept of distributive justice. Growing up in the middle-class family, the practical mastery of the mother tongue prepares children for the scholarly language of education (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977, p.71) In comparison, growing up in an unskilled working-class family, a child is likely to be comparatively linguistically limited due to a cultural discontinuity between the languages of home and school. An ability to use an elaborated language gives more socially advantaged children an enhanced 'starting-place' in the field of education (Drudy and Lynch 1993, p.152; Wright 2008, p.14).

The evocation of hierarchy and power through the legitimate language of education echoes the 'ghostly memories of legitimate cultural capital' of classical music. The legitimising effect of cultivated language and the high-cultural value of Western art music place both within the cultural repertoires of already advantaged social groups

(Bennett et al 2009, p.75). Because individual and social valorising of particular public goods may diverge, instrumental music education is peripheral in the debate on social justice (Miller 2003, p.7). It is likely that the enhancement of people's lives by active musical participation would not be equally regarded as a realisable prospect by all social groups. Individual values and priorities vary, and the priority between funding the cost of a child's music lessons and the sense of value and benefit to be derived would vary from family to family. This raises a problem of definition for advocates of public resources or services, which might regarded as vital by some but met with indifference by others

When assessing distributive justice, the enrichment potential to people's lives is probably not a material consideration. As distributive justice does not concern itself with the manner in which public goods enhance individual lives, a purely distributive framework may be insufficient in addressing the means of equitably sharing public cultural and educational goods.

2.5.4 Status equality and parity of participation

A status equality model of social justice based on the capacity of institutions to enact parity of participation focuses on constructs of common humanity to promote the fair distribution of cultural goods among members of all social groups (Fraser 2001, p.25). The adoption of *status equality* as a lens with which to assess fairness and equity of distribution, places a focus on the extent to which individuals or groups are enabled to access and participate in publicly-funded educational provision by virtue of equal entitlement. A status equality assessment exposes to scrutiny exclusionary practices with regard to publicly-funded enrichment activities, which are defined by 'institutionalised patterns of cultural value' (Fraser 2001, p.38).

The level of intentionality of policy makers in application of parity of participation must be exposed to scrutiny. The fact that well-subsidised music services staffed by well qualified teachers are provided by some local education authorities, suggests that some local educational bodies, as well as a significant proportion of middle-class society in those areas, regard the learning of musical instruments to be a valued and important part of children's personal and social development. The willingness of a small number of local VEC/ETBs to fund an instrumental music educational service in their areas suggest that those public bodies are sensitised to the high value placed on it by local parent groups. Parity of participation deriving from recognition of status equality would be the litmus test of a truly socially just instrumental music education provision.

2.6 Music in school curriculum

In Ireland, school music and instrumental music inhabit separate educational areas, characterised respectively as generalist and specialist. All young people attending primary school in Ireland participate in some form of group music-making, usually Irish and English language group singing. Instrumental music in the primary school may take the form of singing, tin-whistle or recorder class depending on the musical capacity of the school or on the initiative of an individual class teacher. Similarly, in post-primary education, specialised instrumental music tuition is beyond the scope of the music class so that performance often depends on students' access to extra-curricular tuition. However, in the last decade and a half, non-specialist music students can take part in a broadly accessible music curriculum. Music is a core activity at primary-level but, as a second-level subject, it is vulnerable to the competitive academic curriculum, which causes music to compete for subject status in school timetable with those subjects that are strongly linked to future employment

(Goodson, 1992, p. 67). The *Report of a Feasibility Study* (Drury 2003) criticised Irish music education on the grounds of equity:

> The primary curriculum envisages that children will learn simple music performance skills within the classroom, by singing and playing basic musical instruments. However, the primary curriculum also aims 'to enable the child to develop his/her musical potential. It is natural for parents wishing to realise their children's musical potential to seek opportunities for their children to expand and develop their instrumental or vocal skills, thereby allowing them to become increasingly involved in the process of music-making. Without provision of access to a comprehensive, equitable, and publicly-supported instrumental and vocal music education service, this potential will not be fully realised for a significant number of children.
> Similar problems are manifest in second-level schools, where the music curriculum at both junior and senior cycles includes an essential component of instrumental or vocal performance. At Leaving Certificate, for example, candidates have the option to choose a performance module accounting for 50% of available marks. Yet, publicly-funded opportunities to develop the performance skills required for the Leaving Certificate performance module are limited to what the classroom music teacher can provide within the confines of the music timetable. Whereas some students are in a position to supplement their instrumental or vocal studies by availing of tuition services outside of school, the fact that large numbers of children in many parts of the country cannot do so creates inequity. (Drury, 2003, p. 7).

2.6.1 The arts in education

The plural term 'arts in education' refers to teaching and learning in different learning domains such as visual arts, music, dance or drama within the broader school curriculum. The arts are regarded as an essential component of every child's education. Engagement with the arts has the potential to provide an alternative way of approaching and knowing the world, which recognises the many ways that reality can be conceived.

The Primary Arts Curriculum describes four areas of arts activity: the visual arts, music, drama and dance, as 'organised expressions of ideas, feelings and experiences in images, in music in language, in gesture and in movement' (DES 1999a, p.2). The aims of the arts curriculum, as outlined in the curricular document, evince a common objective of developing expressiveness, sensitivity, aesthetic awareness and enjoyment of participation in different art forms, which will enable the child to

develop natural potential and an ability to solve problems through imaginative thinking (p.4). Engagement with arts activities enables young people to coherently express their own feelings and to be sensitive to the feelings of others. Hoffmann Davis characterises the experiences gained from arts participation as *making sense* (what does it mean?) and *critiquing* (how effective is it?). Children learn from the act of producing something and make sense from a work of their own making or from the work of others (Hoffmann Davis 2008, pp.48-49). According to Hoffmann Davis, the unique feature of the arts among the school subjects is the fact that piece of music or a drawing is a *tangible product*, the creation of which stimulates imagination and fosters agency in the young person. It *educates the emotions* through developing self-expression and empathy. Creative behaviour fosters a tolerance of *ambiguity*, enabling students to interpret a subject in many viable ways, and respect the interpretations of others (p.50).

Music is one of a range of school activities, which come under the general term of 'arts education'. As an art form, music is centrally rooted in human nature. The ubiquitous presence of music in the world suggests that the musical response is an inherent human disposition (Blacking 1976, p.7). As one of the great modes of knowing about the world, music has a potential to play a key role in children's education (Reimer 2003, p.5), yet the arts in general and music education in particular occupy a position, which is always in an unequal tension with academic subjects (Bresler 1998, p.13; Koopman 2005, p.85; Russell-Bowie 2009, p.24). Music educators, deeply aware of this dualistic tension, feel compelled to constantly justify the importance of music in the education of children. According to Reimer,

> an uncomfortable amount of defensiveness, of self-doubt, of grasping at straws that seem to offer bits and pieces of self-justification, has always seemed to exist in music education. (Reimer 2003, p.2)

In no other educational domain is the issue of justification as prominent as in the area of arts education (Koopman 2005, p.85). To counter a common administrative perception that the arts are merely decorative (Bresler 1998, p.13), advocates for arts education make claims that extend beyond the intrinsic qualities of the arts themselves. These claims usually focus on the cognitive transfer of the beneficial effects of arts education to directly influence positive academic outcomes – that engagement in the arts directly enhances aspects of life that may be of value to society (Hofmann-Davis 2008, pp.1-3; Koopman 2005, p.86; Langbeim 2004, p.84).

2.6.2 A utilitarian view of arts education

A utilitarian approach to arts education focuses on the positive effects the arts reputedly have on improved school performance through enhancing cognitive skills; and generally on the claim that arts participation makes for good citizenship (Bresler 1998, p.11; Hofmann-Davis 2008, p.46). Bresler describes the culture of justification as 'the prime characteristic' underlying the drawing up of policy documents for *Schools, Communities and the Arts (1995)* and *Priority for Arts Education Research (1997)* in the US, which furthers the pragmatic view that 'the arts prepares students for jobs' (in Bresler 1998, p.12). According to the utilitarian view, engagement with arts education reputedly enhances children's creativity, concentration and motivation; and enables social skills, the channelling of emotions and the formation of self-image (Hofmann-Davis 2008, pp.2, 46; Bresler, 1998, p.11; Koopman 2005, p86). Specific learning enhancements are claimed for individual art forms: music and visual arts are advocated as a means of improving reading skills, while drama is said to develop verbal skills and narrative-understanding. Spatial and temporal awareness and mathematical reasoning is believed to be improved by the

learning of musical instruments (Hetland 2000, p.230; Ho et al 2003, p.439; Franklin et al 2008, p.1; Koopman 2005, p. 86).

A purely utilitarian justification limits arts education to those criteria of transference, which may not stand up to close scrutiny. A study evaluating claims of causal links between engagement with one or more art forms and non-arts academic outcomes, established that no significant evidence exists for this (Winner and Hetland 2000, p.6; Koopman 2005, p.87). In a review of existing research, some positive relation was found between arts education and academic achievement, but the authors emphasised that this correlation could not be concluded as being causal. At most, it was the beneficial effect of attitude, motivation or good working habits learnt in arts participation applied in the academic domain (Winner and Hetland 2000, p.7). The researchers expressed the opinion that a more extensive exploration would be required to determine the underlying mechanisms of cognitive transfer, which may exist with regard to arts education academic outcomes (Winner and Hetland 2000, p.7). Cautioning against the adoption of a narrow utilitarian approach to justification of arts education, Bresler indicates the promotional business voices that emphasise careers, economy and citizenship depending on educational outcomes such as the ability to communicate, solve problems and find creative solutions. She suggests that basic literacy and numeracy skills are better addressed directly, rather than introducing the idea of cognitive transfer to bolster the status of the arts; and concludes that policy-makers would do well to find alternative terms of reference, such as an aesthetic framework, with which to inform arts education (Bresler 1998, p.12).

The functional viewpoint that the arts in education enhance the core literacy and numeracy skills undervalues the distinctively intrinsic qualities of the art-forms

themselves. While primary school curriculum documents integrate the linked objectives across all the curricular areas (DES 1999a, p.9), it is not usual to value subject areas such as geography or mathematics for their potential to improve, say, literacy outcomes. As academic subjects are valued for the intrinsic qualities that make them essential on their own merit to the curriculum, so too should the arts subjects if they are to be regarded with the integrity that is claimed and advocated by music educators; and not merely ask of arts-learning if it can escalate learning in other areas valued by society. As mathematics is valued precisely because it is mathematical, music must be valued for being musical.

2.6.3. Music education – aesthetic or praxial?

In the 1970s, Bennett Reimer, proffered a premise on which to base a philosophy of music education.

> The nature and value of music education are determined primarily by the nature and value of music…I continue to believe that music has characteristics that make it recognisably and distinctively a subject, or a field, or a practice, or an 'art'…that music is of value to humans and their communities in a variety of ways related to these characteristics; and that the primary mission of music education is to make musical values widely and deeply available. (Reimer 2003, p.ix).

Reimer's attention to the intrinsic qualities of music focuses on the emotional dimension as the defining characteristic, which makes music central to humankind, going to the core of all cultures (Reimer 2003, p.73). Music education, according to Reimer, deepens subjectivity by 'probing beneath the surface of our feeling' by purposive listening to musical works, expressively manipulating tones through improvising, composing and performing. He concludes that music education educates the emotions (Reimer 2003, p.101).

Reimer was building on ideas developed in the 1950s by philosopher, Susanne K. Langer (1895-1985), based on the seventeenth and eighteenth century aesthetic perspective. Key to Langer's perspective is the assertion that engagement with a

musical work is an aesthetic encounter with musical qualities that are representative of human feeling. She concludes that the function of music is not so much to evoke emotion, but rather to represent the *symbolic* expression of feelings as imagined by a composer (Langer 1973, p28).

> the tonal structures we call 'music', closely correspond to forms of human feeling such as tension/resolution, ebb/flow, rise/fall, excitement/ dreaminess...music is a tonal analogue of emotive life (Langer 1971, p.26).

The aesthetic perspective, when applied to music education, operationalises the belief that engagement with, and experience of music itself is the 'corner-stone' of music learning; recognising that the 'power of musical experience…deepens, broadens and enhances human life' (Reimer 2003, *p.x*).

The term *aesthetics* can be traced to German philosopher, A. G. Baumgarten (1714-1762), who sought to establish a field of analysis of poetic imagery that would have a similar function to the role of *logic* in analysing conventional reasoning (Elliott 1995, p.22). In the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the term broadened to include visual art and musical 'works'. Differentiating between the apprehension of art objects or musical works and the beauty of nature, aesthetics focus on the aesthetic experience of the art-work. The aesthetic perspective formalises taste, fine art, connoisseurship and the idea of autonomy in works of art (Elliott 1995, p.26).

Until recently, the wide acceptance of the superiority of classical music over other musical forms in terms of complexity, autonomy and transcendent potential was the corollary of the eighteenth and nineteenth century aesthetic perspective (Green 2003, p.264). Teasing out some implications of this reasoning, since relatively few people are capable of the pure enjoyment of music, they content themselves with the non-musical aspects; so it would follow that high-cultural forms of music, while of

heightened social value, would naturally be of limited availability (Reimer 2003, pp.42-43). This may answer the seeming contradictory dichotomy of the high aesthetic value that middle-class society places on instrumental music education in its approved form of orchestral instruments and piano on the one hand; and on the other, the acceptance by many policy-makers that music is only important for the few 'talented' children (Elliott 1995, p.5).

Elliott challenges the philosophy of music education as aesthetic education on the grounds that learners are regarded as consumers of music rather than as active music-makers or potentially future amateur musicians. According to Elliott, the aesthetic perspective favours listening over performance in the general music curriculum, effectively disregarding the performativity of music.

> Because of its focus on the consumption of aesthetic objects, past philosophy also promotes an illogical educational dichotomy. On the one hand, says Reimer, there ought to be listening-based general music programmes for the majority of students. On the other hand, there ought to be elective performance-based programmes for others. The MEAE [music education as aesthetic education] philosophy assumes that musical performance is not a viable educational end for all children. A musical double standard is taken for granted: one kind of music curriculum for the majority of students, another for the rest. (Elliott 1995, p.32)

Arguing for a *praxial* approach to music education, Elliott contests the principle that music education is aesthetic education. He challenges the perception of the primacy of the musical work – 'music-as-object' – in favour of a multidimensional praxial philosophy of music education, which emphasises music, understood in relation to the meanings and values emanating from actual music-making and music-listening in particular cultural contexts (Elliott 1995, p.14). This approach places an importance on music as a lived experience – a sphere of activity or practice, which situates the music-maker or listener in a purposive relation with culture and community.

2.6.4 The primary music curriculum

In common with many school systems worldwide, music in Irish primary education is taught by the generalist class teacher. The curriculum document confirms the position of the generalist teacher in primary education:

> Since music is an essential part of an integrated and child-centred curriculum, the class teacher is the most appropriate person to present rounded musical experiences in listening and responding, performing and composing in most circumstances (DES 1999b, p.29).

In most primary schools fulfilling the teaching of the *listening and responding, performing and composing* strands of the music curriculum is the sole responsibility of the class teacher, but there is a suggestion that this may need to be supplemented, in some circumstances, with outside support due to inadequate musical expertise on the part of class teachers. There is no reference in the curriculum document to specialist musical input into the schools, implying that employing specialist music teachers is not a policy option for the Irish primary school music class. The curriculum documents does acknowledge that that the class teacher may require support and, if appropriate, the support of outside organisations may be sought, subject to available resources, if it furthers the quality of music in the school.

> There is also a special need to support class teachers so that they can teach music, make music with children and develop positive attitudes towards music. This may mean seeking the support of organisations outside the school and working in collaboration with them in a spirit of involvement and inclusiveness. (DES 1999b, p.28)

The directive, while permitting flexibility in seeking outside musical expertise to support school music, does not make specific reference to the employment of music specialists. Some suggestions are made that schools would have informal relationships with local libraries, music organisations, local musicians, choirs, orchestras and 'other less obvious patrons of music…living in the community' (DES 1999b, p.30). Although some schools might be in a position to provide funding to

support an instrumental or class music specialist, those local arrangements would probably be the exception rather than the rule (Downey 2007, p.4).

An operational problem exists with primary school music. Due to the likelihood that a large proportion of primary teachers is likely to have little no background in music education, an expectation that the teacher draws on his or her own musical understandings makes for uneven class-music provision. The curriculum document does not overtly address teachers' musical backgrounds. but it does refer to the need for co-ordination and support from a member of staff who has some musical expertise - a teacher or principal who, though not a qualified music specialist, might have an enthusiasm or 'leaning' towards music, which made them more likely to teach music within their own school (Wiggins 2008, pp.9-10).

> A member of staff, particularly in the larger schools, may have a special interest or expertise in music and he/she may wish to take responsibility for the general organisation of the teaching of music in the school. The staff member need not have special skills but may enable the expertise of individual teachers to be availed of by others (DES 1999b, p.29).

Wiggins dubs as *serendipitous* the precariousness and uncertainty of schools having an availability of competence in their music provision (Wiggins 2008, p.9). The haphazard conduct of the primary school music curriculum, which is subject to the variability of class teachers' understanding of what constitutes music learning is dependent on the emergence of a music enthusiast from within the school staff who may have the best intentions, but may lack the subject knowledge or sophisticated musical understanding to 'follow through' and bring the process of musical learning to a higher level. The corollary of this apparent policy gap with regard to music educational expertise is that class-teachers complete tertiary teacher preparation without adequately developing a musical background, subject knowledge or music pedagogic skill to teach the primary school music curriculum. Research findings show that minimal student teacher preparation in music at tertiary level bear

responsibility for the low level of musical pedagogical knowledge and low levels of skills-based competence in the primary school classroom (Byo 1999, p.113; Holden and Button 2006, pp.29-30; Wiggins 2008, pp.4, 10; Hallam et al 2009, pp.14-15).

International research literature, over recent decades, indicates the low priority given to arts education in most primary schools, with class-time allocated to music at a minimal level or, in some cases, scheduled outside of the academic day (Byo 1999, p.114; Russell-Bowie 2009, p.24). Ideally, children would engage with music throughout their schooldays in well-resourced music programmes, taught by motivated, inspiring teachers. However, the relegation of music education to the margins of curriculum, due to the dominance of the 'competitive academic curriculum', condemns music to lose out in the drive towards fostering the 'basic skills' of literacy and numeracy (Goodson 1992, p.67; Russell-Bowie 2009, p.24), which have a more overt association with academic and vocational preparation of the young person for future employment (Bresler 1998, p.13).

No doubt, attention to literacy and numeracy skills in early primary school is justified as a priority educational objective, but the heavy investment of class-time in these areas has the effect of pushing other apparently less vital subjects and activities to the periphery to form a divide between academic and artistic areas of curriculum.

> When was it decided that over here are academics and over there are arts? When in the splitting and sorting of curriculum did we designate some subjects, like math and science, as essential to learning, and others – specifically the arts – as bastions of emotion and play, extraneous to the purpose of school? (Hoffman-Davis 2008, p.80)

A dualism in educational objectives between the academic and artistic areas of curriculum condemns music among the arts to a lower status perception as an educational 'frill', which must be advocated and justified in terms of transferrable skills which may contribute to academic success in other subjects (Bresler 1998, p. 13).

The proportionally low allocation of class time to arts and music in the primary school classroom is mirrored in scheduling patterns at tertiary-level during teacher preparation (Bresler 1993, p.1; Wiggins 2008, p.11). A study of primary school music in an unidentified national school system, typical of many throughout the world, found that, since student teachers receive arts education within the same school system, they enter arts methods classes at tertiary-level with little or no musical background knowledge or experience (Wiggins 2008, pp.11). Compounded by an insufficiency of contact time for knowledge, skills, pedagogic and artistic development through tertiary-level teacher preparation reproduces the same haphazard basis upon which the emergent generalist primary teacher will have responsibility for teaching music to the next generation of children (p.12). Research into teachers' perception of their own competence in teaching music consistently finds that lack confidence to teach the music curriculum is due to a combined lack of prior musical experience and inadequate preparation at tertiary level (Byo 1999, p.113; Holden and Button 2006, pp.29-30; Wiggins 2008, pp.4, 10; Hallam et al 2009, pp.14-15).

2.6.5 Subject hierarchy at second-level

While music-making is widely accepted as being personally enriching, within schools there is on-going pressure on music as a subject, particularly at second-level, where music teachers are constantly on the back-foot as they struggle to justify music as a curricular subject (Byo 1999, p.114; Ballantyne 2001, p.2; Russell-Bowie 2009, p.24). Many understand the purpose of education as preparing students for the world of work and see music and the arts as subsidiary to this objective. Music education competing in the school for scheduling, budgets, equipment and space is therefore threatened as a school study in favour of studies that society finds more

valuable or relevant to future employment (Goodson, 1992, p. 67; Regelski, 2009, p. 69). During primary school, all children experience music as a general school activity, which is dependent for its effectiveness on the prior music experience and musical competence of the generalist class teacher in pre-service preparation (Byo 1999, p.113; Holden and Button 2006, pp.29-30; Wiggins 2008, pp.4, 10; Hallam et al 2009, pp.14-15). At second-level, because music is an elective minority subject, its provision precarious and not always included in the subject choice of individual schools, so the inclusion of music in the curriculum may be a reflection of a musical culture within school, or may be responsive to extra-curricular instrumental music tuition in the school's locale. In short, the role and status of music in a school is a measure of how music is perceived and valued (Ballantyne 2001, p.2). In the hierarchy of subjects, music is ranked at the lower end.

2.6.6 Constructs of value in school music

Although boundaries between musical genres may have blurred in wider society, 'music education still participates in the construction and perpetuation of valorising ideologies of music' (Green, 2003, p. 264). While, school music since the nineteenth century has been based on a Western classical and folksong canon, listening to classical or folk music would not be a common cultural practice in the lives of most school children (Green 2006, p. 6). Conflict exists between 'home' and 'school' musics due to a divergence of musical value, whereby school music is welcomed by some and experienced with indifference by others (Pitts, 2001, p. 57). Research literature on school music acknowledges a discrepancy between students' and teachers' perceptions of what constitutes 'good' music, particularly at post-primary level, where there is a divide between students' musical preferences and the musical content of school curriculum (Lamont, 2003, p. 231).

Genres such as jazz, folk and non-Western musics are now included in post-primary school music curriculum, but nevertheless, non-classical musical forms in school curriculum are treated in terms of the analytical criteria, which are usually applied to Western art music (Green, 2003, p. 265). In this manner, school music curriculum demotes genres other than Western classical music through implicit valorising messages conveyed through analysis of aspects of classical, folk, jazz or popular musics. Criteria of autonomy, complexity and originality which are analysable features of classical music tend to imply that other genres may be simplistic and derivative (Green, 2003, p. 264). In order to become a curricular musical form, jazz, folk, metal, hip-hop and others are extracted from their social context and 'cleaned up', thus altering them. Pop music holds even greater difficulties as the rapidly changing Top 40 precludes music teachers from keeping up with the ever-changing musical allegiances of students (Green, 2006, p. 7). Truly all-inclusive curriculum content would present musics without privileging any one form while simultaneously including pupils' own musical values in a non-patronising manner. This is not only a challenge for curriculum planners – it is also a teacher education issue. The report of a recent British survey on school music concluded that because secondary school music teachers are typically trained in traditional classical music degrees, music education was relying on that same received knowledge so that the culture and structure of school music tended to be introverted and unchanging (Woodford, 2005, p. 23).

While the beneficial effects of the arts on individuals and society is generally recognised, and music and arts education is usually advocated in terms of emotional, cognitive and transferable skills development (Hoffmann Davis, 2008, p. 46), school music seldom lives up to the hopes of those who advocate those benefits. A US

ethnographic study into non-specialist music teachers in elementary schools found that where music education is present in schools it is 'delegated to the role of a vehicle for other ends….rather than cherished for its intrinsic aesthetic/cognitive value' (Bresler 1993, p. 1). Bresler found that music is placed in a 'double bind' – it fails to draw on its higher order values and, at the same time, 'it is marginalised for its dispensable role as entertainment' (p. 1).

Regelski speaks of a 'legitimation crisis' in music education (Regelski, 2009, p. 69). As a human artefact, music is subject to its social function which is valorised as *praxis* by individuals in so far as it makes a difference to them and plays a regular role in their lives. According to Regelski, music education functions within 'at least two worlds of *praxis*' – the 'worlds' of music and schooling; worlds, which are understood as contested 'fields' or socially competitive arenas. Regelski considers music education to be marginalised in both domains. Marginality in the musical field is defined by the dominance of Western art music which is marginal to people's everyday life necessitating government or private subsidy. In the world of schooling, music education's marginality, according to Regelski, arises from a perceived lack of lasting, life-long impact which school music has on students or society (Regelski, 2009, p. 68).

2.7 Exploring the sectoral discourse

This study set out to discover the discourse of instrumental music education. Instrumental music educators, working together in the field of activity, who hold a recognised body of *truth statements* in common, may be regarded as a discourse community for the purpose of analysis. The network of dynamic relationships, which binds the discourse community, connects individuals, institutions, practices, ideas and beliefs in a uniting framework or 'school of thought. At the heart of discourse is

the body of 'truth statements' that are recognised and validated as concepts that are readily familiar to group members (Foucault 1989, p.121; Olsson 1999, pp.137,138). According to Schein, group-culture grows over time out of 'repeated success and a gradual process of taking things for granted' (Schein 1984, p.10).

> …the pattern of basic assumptions that a given group has invented, discovered or developed in learning to cope with external adaptation and internal integration and that have worked well enough to be considered valid, and therefore to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think and feel… (Schein 1984, p.3).

For Foucault, *discourse* provides a means of comprehending the social world of institutions and social groups. He defines discourse as 'merely representation, itself represented by verbal signs'. Social and professional discursive modes of verbalisation distinguish sectors and institutions (Foucault 1986, p.90). Statements relating to bounded systems serve to define what may be commonly regarded as good practice or shared value. As Nerland points out, discourses 'position individuals in certain ways, and make up a repertoire for action…they legitimise the social actions taking place, causing them to become 'invisible' or taken for granted by the participants involved' (Nerland 2007, p.401).

Holding firmly to the theoretical framework of the study, which is underpinned by a justice and equity analytical context, the belief systems of the instrumental music professionals, the source of those beliefs and the power relations which connect certain dominant 'truths' to participant statements are key to discovery of the underlying discourse. Certain identifiable discursive formations imbue the teaching and learning of musical instruments with characteristic professional belief system embedded in a normalised status quo. Within these formations, the well laid-down beliefs within the social structure of instrumental music education determine what is acceptable as legitimate music, what are the agreed achievement criteria, and regulate who may be permitted to play. It is the function of social research to expose

the workings of institutions, which present themselves as neutral, to criticism in a manner that unmasks injustices (political violence) so that they can be opposed and fought (Rabinow 1984, p.6).

2.7.1 Instrumental music education

Instrumental music education in the public provision is conducted at a remove from mainstream schooling. It is accessible to a minority of young people, restricted on a geographical basis, is subject to fee-payment and has an elite aura of high art. As an area of privilege within the wider educational sector, performance music is not offered on a universal basis subject to the principle of equity and inclusion, which inform the mainstream education provision. Indeed, it may be regarded as inhabiting a world of its own – a 'secret garden' hidden from outsiders' view.

The general term, *instrumental music education* refers to the sequenced teaching and learning of musical instrument in formal settings, situated in a one-to-one master-apprentice type teacher-pupil relationship and characterised by a high degree of specialisation (Jorgensen 2011, p.58; Nerland 2007, p.339). The individuated pedagogic model of vocal and instrumental music education is long regarded as the key determinant of long-term musical success.

The organisation of the learning process places a high value on daily solo practice in preparation for the weekly instrumental lesson, a model of learning that entails a significant proportion of home-time spent alone with the instrument. The complexity of musical and instrumental skills development is achieved through deliberate interactive, perceptual, cognitive and kinaesthetic processes (Davidson et al 2009, p.1026). Achieving success in the annual grade examination holds status among students who are conscious of 'grade rivalry' among their instrumental music peer group and parents regard grade exams as 'value for money' external learning

motivation (Davison and Scutt 1999, p.93). An ethos of 'working towards the exam' characterises the pedagogic practices of many teachers in utilising examinations as a means of assessing students' instrumental achievement against a commonly recognised benchmark of competence (Sloboda 2005, p.280).

Instrumental music teachers, employed in the publicly funded music-schools and music-services have been prepared in the same conservatory system of annual fixed-stage grade examinations, assessed by strict technical and musical criteria, reproducing the heritage of Western art music to form the following generations of musicians and teachers. The alignment of teacher accreditation with teaching contracts in the public sector music provision is a critical link in the cultural reproduction of the conservatory system of instrumental music education.

The examination syllabus influences the technical and musical repertoire content of instrumental music, exerting both positive and negative effects on student learning. While the syllabus document provides a repertoire of musical works, applying too narrow an adherence to the syllabus document can confine the student to merely playing the graded content of musical repertoire, technical exercises and scales to the neglect of informal music-making in social contexts (Davidson and Scutt 1999, p.81). This is probably a particular condition for piano students as a solitary instrumental study, while students of orchestral instruments have many opportunities to participate in groups, bands and orchestras.

As a pedagogical context for learning classical instruments, the one-to-one instrumental lesson affords the individual learner an engagement with a teacher that most primary school pupils will never experience. This holds implications for classroom music as children who begin learning an instrument at six or seven years-of-age soon progress to a level of knowledge and musicianship, which is far beyond

their classmates – and in most cases beyond the class teacher who is presented with widening ranges of student musical abilities (Ballantyne 2001, p.5). No other area of school curriculum, apart from some sports, has such a potential for intensive extra-curricular study during the primary school years. Such high-level learning engagement cannot exist in and of itself, requiring a high level of parental support and encouragement. The following sections explore the procedures and practices to provide an insight into the secret garden of instrumental music education.

2.7.2 The Academy

The Academy is made up of the conservatories, university music departments and the formal structures and practices which frames instrumental music education and hands it down the generations. Frith characterises the Academy as 'appropriating the gateways which provide cultural scaffolding for moving up the ladder of achievement'. Central to this world is the teacher/pupil relationship, the belief that musicians must serve an apprenticeship, must proceed through fixed stages (like the Associated Board's instrumental grades in Britain) before they are 'qualified' to play (Frith 1998, p.36).

2.7.3 Privileging high art

In earlier times, music-making was a collective social participation, contextualised by its role in ritual and celebration at domestic, street, church and state levels (Green 2002, p. 263; Spruce 2001, p. 2001). During the Industrial Revolution, Western society underwent a fundamental change. As manufacturing industry expanded, a new wealthy upper middle class emerged, which adopted the culture of the aristocracy, sharing the same musical tastes. (Weber 1979, p.179). Art music came to fulfil a position as a tool of emerging social stratification among the wealthier social

classes in the growing large towns and cities. Theatre- and concert-going developed as important occasions for the wealthy to gather socially and assert the high-culture of their class.

> … physical access be restricted to members of the bourgeoisie by means of the removal of art music to concert halls with the cost of entry prohibitive to all but the wealthy…reflecting the inherent superiority of its consumers ... appreciated only by those of the refined sensitivity and sensibilities of the bourgeoisie (Spruce 2001, p. 119).

The alignment of instrumental music education with the bourgeois aesthetic, enacted through the 'cultural hegemony of Western art music' (Spruce 2001, p. 118), can be illustrated by a consideration of its historical development during the late nineteenth century, whereby a system of specialised instrumental music tuition developed independently of mainstream education in response to the musical requirements of prosperous Victorian society (Wright 2005, p. 255).

Formerly practiced as an accompaniment to social occasions, music came to be consumed in the concert hall as an autonomous form in itself. The consequent enthusiasm for concert attendance during the nineteenth century necessitated the training of professional musicians to fulfil the needs of performing orchestras. As Victorian society became wealthier, demand for instrumental tuition increased; mass-produced instruments became less expensive and consequently more available to middle- and upper middle-class families. This was especially the case with the piano, which was as much valued as a status symbol as a cultural artefact (Wright 2005, p.255). People wanted to play musical instruments, so instrumental music teaching became a viable career path in the late nineteenth century; while advances in printing enabled the mass-production of cheap to purchase sheet music.

The establishing of schools of music in Britain and Ireland from the 1870s onwards put in place a model of systematic instrumental training, beginning in childhood and extending over several years of tuition. The characteristic features of this new system

of instrumental training were individual tuition on orchestral instruments and piano, supported by classes in musical theory, annual fixed-stage grade examinations and the Western classical musical canon. Wright describes the graded system, beginning in preliminary grade and continuing incrementally through eight annual grades to professional level, as 'a system of mass production that 'industrialised' the cultural process of musical achievement' (Wright 2005, p.257). The musical repertoire of the graded exam syllabus in particular was (and still is) supported by the music publishing industry, which supplied the repertoire requirements of music schools and in turn reinforced Western art music as the core musical canon of the music school system. According to Wright, this market-driven musical repertoire determined what students studied, as well as what they were less likely to encounter (p. 258). As a 'tried and trusted' system of music pedagogy, the conservatory system, continues with little change into the present day.

The high-status of Western classical music, which frames the learning of musical instruments in a narrow understanding of what constitutes musical performance, presents instrumental music education as a particularly high-art musical form, arguably presenting a barrier to wide social participation. Historically associated with the royal court, Western art music occupies a central position in European high-cultural heritage. The autonomous nature of Western classical music, with its dominance of form over content aligning Kantian aesthetics with the distancing of high art from everyday life as lived by ordinary people (Bourdieu 1985, p.6).

Sloboda asserts that the Academy is inaccessible to most people since it does not adequately represent the values, which most people bring to music, and furthermore, the core musical forms, which constitute the canon of the Academy (concertos and symphonies), demand such high levels of proficiency that they have no points of

contact with the musical lives of most people (p.341). This may go some way to explaining why so few people in wider Western society acquire formal musical skills in the tradition of the Academy (Bourdieu 1986, p.13).

The official discourse of the Academy is framed in terms of 'concepts of talent, achievement and success, rather than in terms of community, fulfilment or transcendence' (Sloboda 2005, p.341). Considering the practices that make up instrumental music education as 'discourse' allows the researcher to study the beliefs and professional practices as a unified system, or field, in which identities, continuities, concepts and interchanges are deployed (Foucault 1989, p143).

2.7.4 Constructs of musical ability

The talent conception of musical ability is a widely held assumption in Western culture. As a boundary marker, it simply delineates the divide between those who are regarded as possessing musical 'talent' and those who are not. Ethnomusicologist, John Blacking posed the rhetorical question, *'Must the majority be made unmusical so that a chosen few may become more musical?'* to highlight the 'talent' conception of musical ability in Western societies (Blacking, 1976, p. 4). He suggested that rather than constituting an advance in human sensitivity and technical ability, the restriction of access to musical participation to a privileged minority is in reality 'a diversion for elites and a weapon of class exploitation' (p. 4).

Supported by conceptions of musical ability which maintain that some people have inherited an innate aptitude for music, the talent assumption reasons that because few have the necessary 'talent', few people are destined to become expert musical performers (Sloboda, 2005, p. 297). In short, musicians are considered to be in possession of a special inherited musical talent and are primed to play instruments. The 'talent' explanation of why one child is regarded as being more musically

accomplished than another utilises conceptions of ‘natural aptitude’ and ‘inborn ability’ connected to the notion that such capacities are fixed and immutable (Sloboda 2005, p. 297).

The psychology of the ‘talent’ conception may be observed in the structures of the ‘conservatory’, its main pedagogic feature, supported by more than a century of practice, being selection by aptitude testing and the individuated form that learning takes. Many music schools test children at entry level to determine musical aptitude for placement in instrumental music programmes. Although there is no musical equivalent to IQ testing, musical aptitude testing profiles sensory discrimination skills or gauges responses to the artistic qualities of music. Musical ability testing began as early as the 1880s with the development of simple tests by Carl Stumpf (Hallam & Prince, 2003, p. 2). Musical aptitude testing was utilised and refined over the next century to determine basic musical capacities to select those ‘most likely to succeed given that resources for providing tuition were scarce’ (Seashore et al. 1960, in Hallam and Prince 2003, p.3).

The ‘talent’ concept of musical ability is not shared across all cultures. Studies show that some Eastern Asian cultures regard children’s attainment depending on effort rather than innate ability (Hallam and Prince 2003, p.7). Observing musical practices among indigenous African societies during the 1970s, Blacking observed the concept of special musical ability to be non-existent in some cultures. Researching musical practices among the Venda people of southern Africa who regard all members as musical, he concluded that all humans have an equal capacity for musical competence of a similar order to linguistic ability (Blacking 1976, p.7).

Sloboda argues that there is no logical connection between the ‘talent’ explanation and differences in the performances of learners, maintaining that the perceived

outcome differentials consistent with equal human potential for musical activity indicate that differences in performance are entirely due to prior musical experience in particular family cultural backgrounds. (Sloboda 2005, p.297). Most instrumental music teachers perceive musical skills as developing on a continuum through opportunity and effort, depending on the commitment and motivation of the learner (Hallam and Prince 2003, p.19). Thus, from a socio-cultural perspective, musical ability is socially constructed; but nevertheless, traditional conceptions of 'talent' persist in the discourse of instrumental music with regard to levels of musical expertise.

Assumptions and beliefs concerning ability are not only peculiar to the musical ability context. Looking at reading and 'spelling age', Gillborn and Youdell refer to schools adopting a view of 'ability' as if it were fixed, generalised and measurable (Gillborn & Youdell, 2000, p. 162). In a comparative study of two UK second level schools they found a contradiction in teachers' beliefs regarding the relationships between 'ability' and outcomes. Teachers initially spoke of 'loose fits' and were reluctant to acknowledge clear connections between the two, but under further examination it became clear that these relationships are at the centre of their approach to prediction and selection. While teachers question the deep-seated belief in the 'simple, unitary version of ability/intelligence', they ultimately exhibit the same beliefs through their actions Gillborn & Youdell, 2000, (p.162). On the basis of these conceptions of ability, 'underachievement' becomes a prominent discourse surrounding ability and attainment (Gillborn & Youdell, 2000, p.135).

Terms like 'ability' and 'talent' minimise the dynamic of the contextual relationship between individual and environment. Despite advances in the conceptualising of learning as socio-cultural participation, traditional entity-based theories of

knowledge still locate learning in the head of the learner. Recent research has shown the weakness of traditional approaches to ability and talent (Barab & Plucker, 2002, p. 168). Positivist epistemology directly feeds into perceptions of learning as acquired, and 'talent' as the possession of the individual.

Jerome Bruner expresses a cultural understanding of mental activity being 'neither solo nor conducted unassisted...mental life is lived with others, is shaped to be communicated, and unfolds with the aid of cultural codes, traditions and the like' (Bruner, 1996, p. xi). This is developed by Lave and Wenger, who show learning to be an integral aspect of social practice, whereby the whole person is understood as actively engaged and participant in the world, rather than seeking to acquire a body of factual knowledge. In short, 'learning is an integral and inseparable aspect of social practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 31). To illustrate learning as social practice, Barab and Plucker cite studies showing inconsistencies in the ability of persons performing maths calculations in different settings: adults in the US who seldom make an error in supermarket calculations averaged poorly in maths-testing situations; similarly, children selling in street-markets in Brazil easily make complex calculations, but perform badly in formal maths-testing (Barab and Plucker p.167). Both of these examples demonstrate that characterising ability as inherent 'talent' in purely mechanistic cognitive terms is lazy and misguided – rather, abilities and competencies must be situated in the active relation of persons in particular environments. Therefore learner, learning material and context cannot be separated. Barab and Plucker advocate that educators try to understand how some individuals can take advantage and function within contexts, which are supported by whatever resources, social or material, they may have at their disposal. 'Educators must

support smart contexts, not simply smart individuals' (Barab and Plucker pp.170, 175).

In musical ability terms, a distinction may be perceived to exist between 'ability' and 'talent'. A 'talented' person is usually regarded as being possessed of exceptional musical ability. What about everyone else? Constant testing and selecting imposes a deficit verdict on the musicality of those regarded as being less than 'talented'. Sloboda identifies three cultural myths regarding talent:

i) Musical ability depends on a pre-existing rare inherited 'talent.
ii) Musical excellence comes from within by solitary effort.
iii) Work and pleasure are separate (Sloboda 2006, p.312).

Barab and Plucker's argument is that 'ability is not a trait existing within an individual but instead is a description of contexts through which some individuals appear to be talented' (Barab and Plucker p.175). The responsibility lies with the educator to provide supportive structures and contexts in which potentially talented *activity* can be facilitated.

2.7.5 Transitions, contexts, partnerships

Music education in Irish schools has changed since the 1990s. New school curricula based on educational research during the 1980s and early 90s, which recognise the socio-cultural character of music-making as an activity has transformed the experience of primary and post-primary students. The debates of the time, such as the *aesthetic* versus *praxial* perspective of music education may be found in the MEND Report (Heneghan 2001). Marie McCarthy, in her socio-historical account, *Passing it on* (1999), of the transmission of music in Ireland up to the late 1990s, wrote that issues of inclusivity, diversity and democracy were key elements in the discussions of the time (McCarthy 1999, p.172). Certainly, post-primary school

music has shaken off its air of high-cultural elitism with the broadening of the courses to include the non-specialist student, but at primary-level, the music curriculum still remains dependent upon the musical competence of the generalist class-teacher.

Instrumental music education may be said to be in transition. The music-services of County Cork, and Cities of Dublin and Limerick, which are based in the Western classical musical genre and pedagogy, are assured of their continuing funding and status as schemes of education provision. However, in the thirteen years, which have elapsed since the O'Brien Report (2001), instrumental music provision on this scale has not been initiated in any other VEC/ETB areas. Instead, the development of the instrumental music provision has by-passed the classical music-school model in favour of a more diverse community partnership model, which has flowed from the report by Music Network *A National System of Local Music Education: Report of a Feasibility Study* (Drury 2003). Following an evaluation of Music Education Partnership (MEP) pilot projects in Donegal and Dublin (Music Network 2008), a partnership model was adopted with a view to implementation in a number of local areas over a five-year period. Under the organisation, *Music Generation*, the music partnerships are supported by government and philanthropic part-funding from the Ireland Funds and the rock-group U-2. At the time of writing, there is little information on music education provided under the auspices of Music Generation beyond policy documents and mission statement.

It is probably too early to draw firm conclusions regarding inclusivity, diversity and democracy as instrumental music education transitions into new models of delivery. Instrumental music is costly to provide; and until sustainable, dedicated funding is

achieved, this educational sector will be perpetually subject to some form of distributional rationing.

2.7.5 'A quiet revolution'

Since 2007, the *Primary Strings Project* has supported whole-class group instrumental music tuition programmes in more than twenty primary schools in the Republic of Ireland. Until 2013, the project was facilitated by the National Concert Hall (NCH) Education Department, which funded the services of a project director who was tasked with developing group-instrumental tuition within the primary school curriculum. The Report into the first six years of the project describes the process as 'a quiet revolution ...in the way children experience instrumental tuition' (Conaghan 2014, p.5).

Originally targeted at disadvantaged areas in the western suburbs of Dublin but subsequently extended to schools outside the capital, many of the participating primary schools are designated DEIS schools. DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools) is a policy instrument of the Department of Education and Skills (DES), which was designed in 2005 as a means of addressing education inequality and disadvantage. The founding aim of the *Primary Strings Project* was to 'bring instrumental music lessons to groups of children who would not otherwise experience them' and the inclusive practices that characterise the project have enabled children from very diverse backgrounds to participate in learning musical instruments (p.1).

At the set-up stage, participating schools were supported by workshops in order to assist the school staff with initiating and sustaining the music programme. The key to sustainability is the adoption of a holistic approach to the wider culture of the

school and the linking of the instrumental music programme into the existing music curriculum (p.5). The programme is structured on common criteria:

- The school Principal or delegated staff-member is the first point of contact.
- Every child in the class is included.
- A qualified instrumental teacher is funded by the school.
- A class set of 30 instruments is purchased by the school.
- Lessons are to be of little or no cost to the students.
- The class teacher is happy to assist the instrumental teacher; and is willing to back up work covered in the violin class.

Prior to the *Primary Strings Project,* school managers would not have had access to information or strategies for initiating an in-school instrumental music programme, given the separateness of the two sectors and the lack of official guidelines. There is no state funding available for such a programme, a circumstance that obliges schools to source finance through fund-raising drives or contributions from philanthropic benefactors.

Sourcing instrumental teachers with the appropriate skill-sets to teach large groups is problematic as there is a 'training gap' in music college post-graduate instrumental pedagogy courses. Instrumental group-teaching is usually understood as eight students or less, not twenty or more (Conaghan 2014, p.7). Conaghan reports that the most effective form of teacher training is through mentorship by experienced teachers (p.7). She noted in the report that over half of the project schools replaced their instrumental teacher after the first year 'due to a lack of understanding on both sides as to their respective roles and expectations' (p.7). The fact that there is, as yet, no formal instrumental music curriculum for primary schools, coupled with the absence of a mandatory minimum qualification for visiting instrumental music teachers within the primary sector, makes for an unevenness and variability in tuition

quality. In essence the primary school instrumental music programmes are private arrangements between school and instrumental teacher; and there is no assurance of tuition quality in a potentially 'hit or miss' situation. The *Primary Strings Project* has been invaluable to school Principals in its ability to advise on the hiring of suitably experienced instrumental music teachers. However, the Arts Council grant to the NCH was significantly reduced in 2013 and it was obliged to withdraw funding of the project as one of its cost-cutting measures. The participating schools continue to run their instrumental programmes, but they no longer have access to the mentoring and professional development workshops previously part-funded by the NCH project.

The *Primary Strings Project* is an effective workable model of equitable whole-class group instrumental music education. A formal partnership linking primary schools and an expanded VEC/ETB Music Service together with new developments in instrumental music teacher training would join up many of the loose ends in providing equitable access to learning musical instruments. A similar, but nationally extended system of access-level instrumental music education exists in the United Kingdom (examined in detail in Section 2.8).

2.8 Insights from abroad

2.8.1 Instrumental music education in the UK

Instrumental music education in the United Kingdom is provided through Local Education Authority (LEA) Music Services. The LEAs play a similar role to the local VEC/ETBs in the Republic of Ireland but there is a substantial contrast in scale of provision with regard to the respective countries. In the Irish context, local

VEC/ETBs organise the education provision in a minority of state-run second-level schools, while in the UK, the LEAs are responsible for all state-maintained first- and second-level schools. Well subsidised instrumental music tuition is provided in a handful of Irish VEC/ETBs on an extra-curricular basis to a minority of young people, whereas in the UK, LEA music services have a statutory role in supporting music as a curricular subject in all 'maintained' schools, in addition to providing in-school specialist instrumental music tuition. Instrumental music services in the UK are legislated and funded by acts of parliament, but in the Republic of Ireland, it is notable that, outside of Arts Council reports, there is an official avoidance of naming the instrumental music provision either as an educational sector of itself or as a component of general education. Because of the structural similarities between the respective education authorities (LEA and VEC/ETB) an examination of instrumental music services in the UK might map a potential pathway for instrumental music education provision in this country.

The earliest instrumental Music Services in the United Kingdom were initiated in 1935 (Hallam et al 2005, p.22) and, following a post-war expansion of instrumental music tuition in schools during curriculum time, by the 1970s almost all LEAs were providing teams of peripatetic instrumental music teachers to work in schools during school time and, after curricular hours, in designated local music centres (Cleave 1989, p.113). However, during the 1980s, financial restraint forced LEAs to severely reduce the dedicated funding of Music Services in order to devolve funds to the schools. The Music Services were therefore obliged to find alternative funding sources and reduce staff costs by employing more part-time staff on temporary contracts teaching longer hours; and parents were contributing significantly to tuition

fees. During the 1990s, Music Services were significantly reduced and, in some local authority areas, publicly funded instrumental music tuition had disappeared.

In 1999, devolved Assemblies in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland set the respective education systems in similar but separate directions. Surveys taken in England, Scotland and Wales in the years 1999 and 2002 for the Department of Education showed wide variations in instrumental music provision with some (especially large city, and small rural area) LEAs poorly served. In many cases ability to pay determined who played, resulting in inequality of opportunity (Hall 1999, p.8; Hallam and Prince 2000, p.4; Hallam et al 2005, p.15).

In the years since power was devolved from Westminster to the National Assemblies, the respective education systems have developed in ways which reflect social priorities and political ideologies in the different jurisdictions. Variations in approach may be demonstrated in the cases of England and Scotland.

2.8.1.1 England

In England, a Music Standards Fund was in inaugurated in 2002, with the intent of stabilising the decline of existing Music Services. The *Wider Opportunities* programme, which would initially offer a year of group instrumental tuition to all K2 pupils, and subsequently to a self-selecting cohort of those who wished to continue, was piloted in 2002 and implemented in 2004. All LEA Music Services received dedicated budgets to set up instrumental music pilots. By 2005, 13 percent of K2, 8 percent of K3 and 5 percent of K4 pupils were receiving tuition under the Wider Opportunities programme during timetabled school hours – and 76 percent of primary and 88 percent of secondary schools were receiving music-curricular support from LEA Music Services (Hallam et al 2005, p23).

Following the launch of the *National Strategy for Music* (DfES 2006), teachers of the National Curriculum were encouraged to understand the meanings and values of music-making as relating to cultural context (Elliott 1995, p.14). An alternative approach to Wider Opportunities was offered by the *Musical Futures* Project through the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, a charitable foundation focused on arts, education and social justice (Spruce 2013, p.114). The Musical Futures programme harks back to the progressive child-centred tradition, introducing informal pedagogies to the classroom. Based on Lucy Green's work with informal learning (Green 2002, 2003, 2009), the programme supports pupil agency to address disengagement from the formal music curriculum. Informal music-learning practices bear few features of formal music education; and are characterised by listening and imitating from recordings, often in haphazard fashion. Learners choose their own music and peer-learn in 'friendship-groups' with a minimum of adult input (Green 2002, p.5; Green 2009, p.10).

The Henley Report 2011

In 2010 the incoming Conservative government commissioned Darren Henley, head of Classic FM, a commercial radio station specialising in popular classical music, to review music education in English schools. The Henley Review of Cultural Education in England (2011) represents the most significant development in contemporary music education in England. Henley noted the geographic and demographic 'patchiness' of music provision recommending that all children should expect a minimum level of cultural education. The Report set out a funding strategy through partnership between Government, lottery funds, English Heritage and British Film Institute. It envisaged that OFSTED would create a guide for standards criteria for judging the work of teachers and recommended a scheme for connecting

teachers to the arts and culture industries. The Government gave general agreement to the twenty four recommendations contained in the Henley Report.

Henley Recommendation 7: New Local Partnerships sets out the vision for music education operationalised through formal partnerships between class teachers, specialist music teachers and professional musicians to deliver music education to students, co-ordinated and funded through local Music Education Hubs, to which both private and public sectors are eligible to tender their services. The Government responded with a National Plan, based on the recommendations of Henley, *The Importance of Teaching: A National Plan for Music Education* (DfE and DMCS 2011), which articulates the projected structures of music education of pupils from age 5 to 19 in England up to the year 2020.

The National Plan for Music Education (2011)

The National Plan was initially well received across the music education sector for both its support of music in schools and its commitment to funding for instrumental music tuition in a time of economic austerity (Spruce 2013, p.112). Spruce expressing a twofold concern with the National Plan, notes the narrowing of the music curriculum to a *performance* oriented vision of musical learning, with less emphasis on the creative aspects of *composing and responding.* This, he claims, is the result of successful lobbying and advocacy of the instrumental music services and professional private musicians who earn significant income from providing instrumental tuition to schools. Secondly, he characterises the National Plan for Music Education as emanating from the broader conservative/neo-liberal education policy agenda, which envisages a return to a more ordered and autocratic representation of society (Spruce 2013, pp.112, 116). A feature of the neo-liberal educational agenda is its lack of recognition of the complexity of educational issues

and a mistrust of progressive education, which Woodford refers to as 'a nostalgic desire to return to the simplicity, certainty and stability of the good old days when society was more rigidly and autocratically controlled' (Woodford 2005, p.65).

Spruce analyses the preface to the National Plan for Music, which extols the greatness of England as 'a world leader in music education' and the composed heritage of Tallis, Byrd, Elgar and Vaughan-Williams through to the Beatles and Adele, as reinforcing the stratification of music upon which curricula have traditionally been based. This, he notes, combines church, state, empire, nostalgia for a pastoral past and the valuing of the commercial needs of the music industry as fitting consistently with neo-liberal educational approaches (Spruce 2013, p.115).

While all this may stand up to scrutiny, viewing the English music education provision from the impoverished vantage point of Irish music education, where Arts Council reports are not acted upon, and instrumental music education is not underpinned by legislation, conditions in England are, nevertheless, enviable. The executive summary of the National Plan for Music includes the following statements:

> 'children from all backgrounds and from every part of England should have the opportunity to learn a musical instrument...if they wish to.
>
> ...change is needed to ensure that all pupils receive a high quality music education.
>
> ...all schools should provide high quality music education as part of a broad and balanced curriculum.
>
> New music hubs will take forward the work of local authority music services...helping improve the quality and consistency of music education across England, both in and out of school'.
>
> Children will experience:
>
> 'Music education across the age range...whole-class ensemble teaching programmes...opportunities to play in ensembles and to perform; clear progression routes available and affordable...' (DfE 2011, p.7)

Addressing social disadvantage and access directly, the National Plan for Music initiated a group-music programme, *In Harmony Sistema England,* to enable

'children of exceptional deprivation to achieve their full potential and have a positive impact on their communities' (p.7). The *In Harmony* programme has so far been rolled out in six disadvantaged urban areas of England. Inspired by the Venezuelan *El Sistema* instrumental music education programme*, In Harmony* enables children living in extreme poverty to experience music-making through participation in youth orchestra. *El Sistema* has inspired similar instrumental music programmes throughout the world. The Venezuelan instrumental music education programme is outlined in detail in sub-section 2.8.2.

2.8.1.2 Scotland

As in the other constituent national regions of the United Kingdom, public provision of instrumental music education in Scotland, since 1945, was well integrated into the mainstream school music curriculum; but unlike England and Wales, the content and management of Scottish education, prior to and post devolution, was not subject to statute, therefore there were no specified 'core' areas of curriculum (Johnson 2001, p.135). Even so, the fact of having well-established and funded instrumental music services afforded local Education Authorities a measure of autonomy in establishing priorities for curricular content and structure. Music evolved as a core subject in curriculum; and instrumental music, although 'non-core', was provided in most Education Authority areas through visiting instrumental music teachers, as in England and Wales. Until the mid-1990s instrumental tuition in Scottish schools was provided free of charge to students who were assessed under the Scottish Qualification Authority (SQA) music examinations (Johnson 2001, p.134).

In 1996, a restructuring of local government, which multiplied regional Education Authorities from 12 to 32, caused a degree of disruption at administration level. This was accompanied by Central Government imposed financial constraints. At

individual school level, through the exercise of a 'hierarchy of priority', the new Education Authorities (EAs) sought to protect education services from the worst effects of financial stringency (Johnson 2001, p.133). However, due to falling budgets, instrumental tuition fees were introduced by most EAs. Official government department information on instrumental music services in Scotland, before devolution, is sparse due to the difficulty in disaggregating Scottish data from the wider United Kingdom, but a 1998 survey by the Times Educational Supplement (TES) found that prior to 1998 Instrumental Services in Scotland did not charge tuition fees (Hall 1999, p.1). According to the TES survey (1998), 16 percent of pupils were receiving weekly instrumental lessons – the highest proportion in the UK. Tuition charges were introduced in the previous year 1997, the average charge being £80 annually – lower than England, but higher than Wales. A quarter of pupils were eligible for partial remission of fees and more than one third of pupils paid no tuition fees, based on family income. At this timed, a 1999 review of provision by the University of Glasgow found that the number of Full-time Equivalent (FTE) instrumental teachers declined from 690 in 1993 to 570 in 1998 (Hall 1999, p.7-8).

Recognising the decline in instrumental music provision, in 2003 the *Youth Music Initiative* was launched with a pledge that by 2006 all pupils would have had access through the EA Music Services to one year of free instrumental music tuition by the end of primary school (Frith, 2008, p.172). This similar programme to the *Music Standards Fund* in England attempted to restore music to the level existing before curriculum reorganisation and resource cuts during the 1980s and 1990s. Youth Music Initiative was supported by £10m per year in funding. However, Frith cites two surveys by DES (2005) and Scottish Arts Council (2007), which revealed that, despite school-based instrumental music provision, in most of the EA areas, most

children learning instruments were accessing instrumental tuition by paying for out-of-school private lessons (Frith 2008, p.173).

Report by the Scottish Government's Instrumental Music Group (2013)

To date, the strength of official commitment to providing access to instrumental music in Scotland is evidenced in the willingness of the Scottish Government to hold a fact-finding review of instrumental music education. Recognising the high demand for instrumental music tuition in the context of shrinking cultural and education budgets and the increasing tuition charges, the Scottish Government commissioned a review of instrumental music education which produced *Instrumental Music Tuition in Scotland: A Report by the Scottish Government's Instrumental Music Group (2013).* The Report made a series of 16 recommendations, all of which were accepted by the Government. The main areas addressed were the extent of provision, the charging of tuition fees, collaboration with community groups, sponsorship and partnership with private and voluntary sectors, continued professional development for teachers, clarification of demarcation between instrumental music as part of school curriculum and the *Youth Music Initiative* programme; and an update of the official protocol, *Guidance for Instrumental Music Tuition in Schools,* in light of the latest curricular developments, in particular, *Curriculum for Excellence,* the national curriculum, which was adopted in 2004, but only implemented in 2011.

Regarding the charging of fees, the Report revealed that Local Authorities had ceased charging fees when students' tuition was associated with the SQA examination presentation Scottish Government 2013, p. 20). Otherwise, fees amounted to 20 percent of real cost (p.19) – interestingly, this is the same fee-level recommended in the O'Brien Report (2001) for VEC/ETB music services in Ireland.

Unlike in Ireland, English and Scottish education departments have made clear decisions regarding the public provision of instrumental music services. Both have recognised the benefit of funding a widely accessible entry level to instrumental music for children during school curriculum time. In England, the recently established Music Hubs, which partially replaced the LEA Music Centres have been criticised for a tendency towards privatisation of the service and the casualisation of instrumental music teachers' employment conditions.

Writing in the Guardian newspaper, Christopher Walters described the unease among teachers who have 'taken voluntary pay-cuts to preserve the music service and their jobs'; and a local authority that asked its 200 music service staff to 'reapply for their jobs or for voluntary redundancy' during a restructuring phase (Walters 2012). In his article, Walters restates a persistent criticism that

> ...by opening it up to charities and private providers, the government is, essentially, privatising music services. Comparisons have been drawn with its free schools and academies programme, which has allowed private providers to take responsibility for running schools, previously managed by – and accountable to – local authorities
>
> (Walters 2012)

Music Services in England have been obliged to bid for the right to continue their work in a competitive tendering process where the bidding is open to charities and private companies. Many Music Hubs comprising partnerships between schools, arts organisations, charities and private education bodies are now supplying what was hitherto provided by the LEA Music Services over the previous half-century or more. Opening up education services to private providers potentially renders the instrumental music services vulnerable to the considerations of business and the profit motive over providing a quality musical experience for children.

Scotland, on the other hand, has maintained the Music Services within a public service structure. While the debate in England has concerned itself with privatisation, quality and teachers' conditions, in Scotland the application of fee

charges for instrumental tuition has exercised local authorities. Emma Seith, writing in the Times Education Supplement (TES) notes the considerable success of Scottish music education due to the relative absence of funding restraints when compared with those affecting English local authorities, the Scottish councils spending twice as much as their English counterparts on average (Seith 2013). There is a sense that Scotland has evolved a national system of music education, which it has prioritised as an education service to be maintained as a well-funded public educational service despite difficult global financial conditions.

2.8.2 El Sistema Venezuela

Any study of instrumental music education, which takes social justice as a grounding principle must pay attention to developments in Venezuelan music education, where, since 1975, a transformational programme of instrumental music education has touched the lives of some two million of the poorest children in Venezuela (Booth 2011, p16). The mission of *el Sistema* is stated as follows:

> To systematize music education and to promote the collective practice of music through symphony orchestras and choruses in order to help children and young people in achieving their full potential and acquiring values that favour their growth and have a positive impact on their lives in society.
>
> (Fundación Musical Simon Bolivar, 2013)

While I instance the Venezuelan orchestral music initiative as a compelling example of social justice in action, I hesitate to advocate it as a model for instrumental music education to be replicated in an Irish context. Venezuela has its own socio-historical context, which made possible this very interesting and successful music education programme. The Venezuelan community music programme takes the form of intensive after-school group classes in orchestral instruments aimed at children from the age of two years and upwards who live in poverty and, as a consequence, are at real risk of being attracted into gang culture and violent crime (Majno 2012, p.57).

This youth music initiative derives from the vision of José Antonio Abreu, a musician and politician, and the effort of his colleagues to establish a far-reaching system of open access music education that is non-selective and non-elitist that would bring musical participation to the lives of poor people at no financial cost to their families (Majno 2011, p.57).

What became known as *el Sistema,* literally 'the System', is the outgrowth of this vision of personal growth through musical participation with the key objective of 'allowing people to integrate successfully into society' (Fundación Musical Simon Bolivar, 2013). The musical aims are equal to the social aims: an ever expanding network of approximately 300 learning centres or *núcleos* are in place throughout Venezuela to provide musical tuition and performance training to the poorest children. The country now has over 250 youth orchestras involving young people from the poorest neighbourhoods. Many of these orchestras are of international professional standard and tour the world and musicians from humble origins are making careers in orchestral music (Allen et al 2010). The programme is highly structured and is funded by Government from its Social Welfare budget – not Arts funding (Booth 2011, p16). It is interesting that this education programme is not operated by either Departments of Education or Culture but by the Venezuelan Department of Social Affairs – the Ministry of People's Power, indicating that it is officially regarded as a means of social action (Majno 2011, p.60). A measure of the high regard in which the programme is held is its endurance and expansion through almost four decades under several changes of government of distinctly different political philosophies. Indeed a critical note has been sounded that *el Sistema* has lately been subsumed by the state to become an overtly political and patriotic symbol – contrary to the founding aims of Abreu (Majnó 2012, p.60).

2.8.2.1 Sistema Scotland

The first European location of an *el Sistema* inspired initiative was established in Stirling, Central Scotland on the Raploch Estate, a severely disadvantaged post-industrial community experiencing long-term high unemployment, low educational achievement, poor health and housing quality, and lack of opportunity. Following its official designation as an urban regeneration area in 2004 along with new housing, environmental works and new training centre, a community music education programme closely based on the Venezuelan model was launched in 2008 (webpage: http://www.raploch.com/RaplochToday.aspx, accessed 19-October 2013).

The Venezuelan *el Sistema* has inspired initiatives worldwide as adaptations to different national contexts rather than simple transplantations (Majno 2011, p.58). In the U.S., more than fifty El Sistema-inspired instrumental music projects have been established under the organisation, *El Sistema USA*; and The British Government led charitable foundation, *In Harmony,* has established music projects in impoverished urban area in England. Similar social inclusion initiatives are being implemented in other European countries. The music-programme, which has been given the official title *Sistema Scotland,* is an intervention project that uses music as a means of fostering social transformation.

Sistema Scotland's aim, according to the Evaluation Report (2011), is to :

- Transform children's lives through music
- Empower communities
- Grow future inclusive orchestras
- Focus this work on communities in most need, in areas of deprivation.

Sistema Scotland maintains a close advisory partnership with the Venezuelan organisation. In 2008 Sistema Scotland established the Big Noise Youth Orchestra in Raploch as the focus for its musical activities. Children from pre-school to junior

cycle secondary school attend intensive age-appropriate after-school group-music sessions several times weekly. The annual cost per child is estimated at approximately £1800. The Big Noise programme is partially funded by Central and Local Government, which leaves a necessity for the organisation to attract additional finance from outside organisations and charitable trusts (Scottish Government 2011, p.20). The Big Noise programme being piloted in the local Raploch community is at an early stage of evaluation. The evaluation document states that, while there is strong evidence from parents that the programme is 'achieving a range of short term outcomes with the children it works with...it is too early to measure the long term impacts in these areas' (Scottish Government 2011, pp.45, 49).

2.9 Conclusion

Chapter 2 explored research questions which interrogated a perceived inequity of social access to the publicly funded instrumental music education provision in Ireland. Music education, participation and consumption were examined through the lens of the sociocultural perspective, socially constructed and grounded in human social life. Drawing on Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital and social class habitus, the study examined participation in publicly-funded instrumental music education as cultural assertion.

An examination of international research literature indicated a 'high art' approach to the formal learning of musical instruments, framed and underpinned by the structures and discursive practices of the Academy (Bennett et al 2009, Bourdieu 1985, Chan and Goldthorpe 2007, Hallam and Prince 2003, Lareau 2002, Miller 2003, Peterson and Simkus 1992, Sloboda 2005, Vincent and Ball 2007). Discourses of aesthetic taste linked to conceptions of ability and achievement present as boundary markers, which align instrumental music participation with sectors of society whose members

are socially and culturally best positioned to benefit from the publicly-funded provision (Bennett et al, 2009, Bourdieu, 1985, Green, 2002, van Eijck, 2001). Configured as an out-of-school enrichment activity subject to the payment of fees and isolated from the mainstream of first- and second-level education, the system of rationing applied to instrumental music education, renders it vulnerable to a form of quasi-privatisation (Gilborne and Youdell 2000, Langbeim 2004).

Throughout the literature review (Chapter 2), musical participation and consumption, and music education have been examined through the lens of the sociocultural perspective as socially constructed and grounded in human social life. Distinguishing characteristics of music in children's education emerged from the research literature.

Aesthetic taste as a correlating factor in musical participation

Conceptions of aesthetic value and taste privilege the status of the Western classical music genre. High-art aesthetic dispositions of performance music favour participation by members of those middle- and upper middle class sectors of society who would be socially and culturally best able to benefit. This poses a cultural boundary that members of disadvantaged social groups would find difficult to cross (Bennett et al, 2009, Bourdieu, 1985, Green, 2002, van Eijck, 2001).

Constructs of musical ability

Themes of cultural bias towards musical specialism can be found in constructs of musical ability and talent. Specialist one-to-one pedagogy is expensive to provide, and an emphasis on achievement in annual fixed-stage grade examinations construct a boundary, for which some learners might not have appropriate cultural capital to enable participation (Bennett et al 2009, Bourdieu 1985, Chan and Goldthorpe 2007, Hallam and Prince 2003, Lareau 2002, Miller 2003, Peterson and Simkus 1992, Sloboda 2005, Vincent and Ball 2007).

Social class as a correlating factor in musical participation

Social class bias correlates the classical canon with middle class cultural capital, which combined with the fee-paying basis for instrumental learning forms a barrier to wider social participation in music making. The narrow social participation in learning musical instruments is further compounded by the isolation of instrumental music-making from school music (Bourdieu 1986, Lareau 2002, Vincent and Ball 2007). Working equitable models of accessible instrumental music education programmes, which link specialist and generalist music education sectors, exist and are worthy of consideration in the Irish education context.

Gender as a correlating factor in musical participation

The gender stereotyping of what may be appropriate for boys and girls extends to musical activity to a significant extent. The formal learning of musical instruments is generally regarded as a feminine activity so that some classical musical instruments are perceived as having masculine or feminine attributes. These widely-shared perceptions are likely attitudinal boundaries for potential participants in instrumental music courses (Abeles and Porter 1978, Delzell and Leppla 1992, Green 1994, Hallam et al. 2008).

These themes are not presented as *a priori* hypotheses. Rather they adopt the role of *sensitising concepts* which provide interpretive starting points and guidelines for the study. 'A sensitising concept…gives the user a general sense of reference and guidance in approaching empirical instances' (Blumer 1954 in Bowen 2006, pp.12, 14). Sensitising concepts are never imposed on the data – they act as dynamic boundary-markers, which provide a theoretical orientation for the study of instrumental music education. They lay the foundation for data collection and preliminary data analysis.

The next chapter, Chapter 3, will detail the research methodology of the study. It will outline a theoretical framework for the research; and will provide a rationale for the selection of the research participant sample, data collection and analysis.

Chapter 3

Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology of the research study. The aim of the study is to examine the beliefs and the tacit knowledge, which form the professional practices of the publicly funded music services. Focusing on a perceived problem of access, the inquiry is conceptualised as a single case-study located in the instrumental music education sector. The study was guided by the following research questions:

> *To what extent is social class background a predictor of participation instrumental music education?*
>
> *To what extent does professional discourse contribute to socially inequitable musical participation?*
>
> *From what cultural context do these discourses this emanate?*

Research literature suggests that the socio-historical formations, within which instrumental music courses are conceptualised and presented, correlate musical participation with middle class cultural choices and values (Bourdieu, 1985; Green, 2003; Pitts, 2001; Regelski, 2009; Woodford, 2005). The personal significance of my research interest emerges from my sense of disquiet that publicly funded educational organisations are willing to provide an elite form of instrumental music education, which excludes members of disadvantaged social groups.

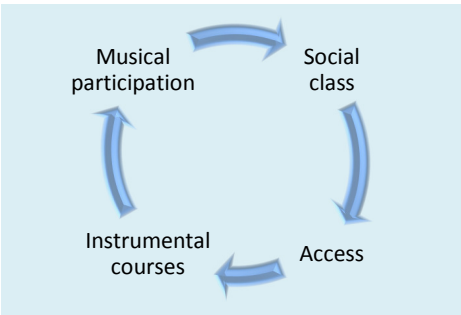


Figure 3.1: Social class formation of musical access

This case study is dispersed over seven VEC/ETB local music services. The main method of data collection was through a series of fourteen interviews. The study was piloted by an online questionnaire survey. The design of the study is discussed in section 3.4 of this chapter.

Analysis of the interview data followed a process of Grounded Theory, or the 'constant comparative method' featuring a recursive interplay between data collection and a line-by-line reading of the resultant interview transcripts to develop theory over the course of the research process (Bowen 2006, p.13).

3.2 Ethical considerations

Since my research questions derive from my experience as an instrumental music teacher, I regard my position as value-laden as I examine fellow practitioners' beliefs and understandings. Due to my close connection to the area of research, I must acknowledge that my subjective value-position might exert influence on my perspective as researcher, so heeding the advice of Miles and Huberman that researchers must make their preferences clear, I make my researcher positioning explicit from the outset (Miles and Huberman 1994, p.4).

3.2.1 Researcher positioning

At the inception of this research study, I took the decision to examine instrumental music education practices through researching the tacit knowledge and taken-for-granted assumptions of a 'culture sharing group', of which I am a member (Creswell and Miller, 1997, p. 37). Given the relatively small size of the Irish instrumental music education community, choosing interview as the main method of data collection introduced the prospect of involving colleagues in the study. This was an ethical dilemma, which I was forced to confront as the interview phase did involve a

small number of acquaintances. As a critical 'insider', I entered the research field with considerable prior knowledge of the cultural phenomena being studied (Ritchie et al, 2009, p. 107). Locating four of the interviews in my own institution necessitated vigilance lest a power asymmetry might constrain open dialogue (Kvale and Brinkmann 200p, p.33). A potential power-position as researcher derives from the fact that the study was designed by me; and the purpose and the questions were under my control (Brenner 2006, p.366). While I retained a constant vigilance in order to preclude interviewer dominance on my part, it would not be possible to have a full insight into a participant's subjective perception of the interview experience. As a means of evoking free flow, I directed the interviews with as light a touch as possible, adopting a naturalistic interpretive approach to the inquiry (Denzin and Lincoln 1994, p.2). I had a sense that the participants were interested and even intrigued by the topics under discussion and the interviews occasionally took on an atmosphere of 'shop-talk'.

A central ethical concern is in the area of researcher bias. As a means of offsetting the likelihood of researcher bias, I proceeded in a spirit of critical self-scrutiny, which I hoped would enable me to adopt an objective working reflexivity over the duration of the inquiry process (Hellawell 2006, p.483; Wellington 2000, p. 47). As an insider, albeit a critical insider, who has a place in the group activity under examination, I was obliged to be ever aware of the hazard of biased subjectivity; and to adopt a research methodology designed to ensure that evidence supporting my opinions is rigorously tested and balanced by counter-evidence (Ritchie et al 2009, p. 107; Kvale and Brinkmann 2009, p. 213). The conduct of the research in the researcher's own work setting and the process of interpreting phenomena through the probing of beliefs and perceptions bring an interpretative dilemma, which became

apparent as the inquiry progressed. Since the aim of inquiry is to interpret the understandings of participants, it was inevitable that new interpretations would emerge from the data over the course of the study (Guba and Lincoln 1994, p.113). As the study advanced, the evolving research focus moved from the study of cultural biases to a more precise mapping of discourses forming the operational structures and enactment of publicly-funded instrumental music education.

3.2.2 Gaining access

In preparation for the study, it was necessary to obtain written approval from the Social Research Ethics Committee (SREC) of the University. My application (Appendix 1) was straightforward as I did not propose to involve minors in the research and approval was granted in early November of 2010.

Permission from the SREC enabled me to send letters requesting access to the administrators of the seven music services, all of whom agreed to permit research in their organisations. Letters, in which the area of study was outlined, were addressed in November 2010 to the administrators of the seven music-services requesting access to the research sites (Appendix 2). These were in the form of an official introductory letter featuring the college letterhead to provide institutional legitimation. There followed personal phone calls in the following week. The letter sought agreement with the appropriate person in the organisation (the administrator) that research would be allowed to go ahead, and on who would participate in the research as participants (Mertens, 2005). Mutually suitable arrangements regarding interview time-frame and location were finalised well in advance of the launch of the research. Principles of informed consent and the right of participants to withdraw were explicitly emphasised in the text of the letters of access (Kilbourn, 2006).

Young persons under the age of eighteen years were not included in the sample, so parental permission was not a consideration.

The pilot phase of the research was the online survey (Appendix 4), which was emailed later in November to the music-service administrators. The administrators forwarded the URL link to the survey to approximately 150 instrument teachers, so that at no time was I in direct contact with potential respondents. Forty seven music-service staff-members eventually completed the survey. My follow-up interview request was by telephone conversation with the administrators in January 2011. All seven administrators agreed to participate as interview subjects; and the first phase of interviews took place in the month of February 2011.

The second phase of teacher interviews was initiated by a letter of request to the administrators (Appendix 3). I was scrupulous in not approaching potential participants personally, merely requesting that administrators make staff-members aware of my study. In actuality, I sat in staffrooms, letting it be known that any teacher who wished to participate in an interview was free to approach me.

My intention was to interview non-acquaintances outside of my own music-service organisation. However, three of my teaching colleagues expressed an interest in participating and I accepted their offers of interview. The instrumental teacher interviews took place during a six-week period in March and April 2011.

Interviews are described as sites of data co-construction or 'knowing through conversation' (Roulston et al 2003, p. 645; Kvale and Brinkmann, p. 18). Although based on a social relationship, the in-depth interview occurs at a remove from everyday social life. Located over seven separate organisations, the study examined a particular cultural group with a certain commonality of practice and knowledge. Taking care not to overly steer the conversations, apart from briefing each

participant on the aims of the research and the themes to be discussed, I avoided expressing my own opinions prior to interview. As a privileged insider, my familiarity with organisational culture and workplace scripts, would have afforded me a certain ease and familiarity in this research field (Mercer 2007, p. 6). Mercer, however, dubs insider privilege a 'double-edged sword':

> [I]nsider researchers usually have considerable credibility and rapport with the subjects of their studies, a fact that might engender a greater level of candour than would otherwise be the case...though the converse could also be argued, to the effect that people may not share certain information with an insider for fear of being judged (Mercer 2007, p. 7).

The integrity of the researcher is critical to 'soundness of ethical decisions in qualitative inquiry' (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009, p.74). Ethical issues to be addressed by the research interviewer are in the areas of informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity and potential consequences for participants of participating in interview.

3.2.3 Informed consent

In accordance with the SREC permission agreement, I undertook to present all participants with an information sheet (Appendix 5); and to obtain written consent (Appendix 6) from each of the participants. The Information Sheet took the form of question and answer, informing participants of

- the purpose of the study – issues surrounding equity of access to instrumental music education
- the form of the study – a series of one-hour interviews
- the reason for participation request – because of participant's particular experience
- the voluntary nature of participation and option of withdrawal at any stage; option for participant to withdraw the contribution within two weeks of the interview
- an assurance of participant anonymity and data confidentiality

- the treatment of the results and findings – inclusion in dissertation
- the consequences of participation – no disadvantages to the participant are envisaged

The information sheet (Appendix 5) briefly stated my research purpose in general terms as an examination of issues around equity of access to instrumental music education through probing the belief systems of instrumental music teachers and administrators. In the pre-interview briefing, participants were given a more detailed outline of the study and what I required from them: a discussion of various themed topics, which I had identified as pertinent to an examination of inequitable access to instrumental music courses provided by the VEC/ETB sector.

The Consent Form sought the signed permission of each participant that data derived from interview would be included in the study. The form provided clear information, which the participants sign, that determined they understood the voluntary nature of the contribution, freedom to withdraw, and that participant anonymity and confidentiality would be observed by the researcher. Thus far, the minimum ethical considerations were observed according to the SREC Guidelines.

It would be at best, naïve or at worst, cynical to regard the SREC approval and the observation of procedural correctness as the final fulfilment of good ethical practice. While full participant anonymity in the final writing of the data can be assured in the sense that a participant's identity will be heavily disguised, fully informed consent is a more problematic construct, when we frame the research in terms of qualitative inquiry (Malone 2003 p.800). The ethical dilemma outlined by Malone proposes that when research is conducted in the researcher's 'home' setting, or as Malone colloquially puts it, in the researcher's 'backyard', there are complications, which touch on questions of confidentiality, coercion and power relations, which may be at a personal as well as institutional level (Malone 2003, p.800).

As the focus of the inquiry changes, newly emerging constructions over the timeline of the study might mean that the initial informed consent could be less than adequate. Malone points out that, 'the inductive, emergent nature of qualitative design precludes researchers being able to predict where the study will take them' (Malone 2003, p.800). It is therefore incumbent on the researcher to remain faithful to the original aims of the study as outlined to the participants in obtaining informed consent in the first instance.

3.3 The characteristics of research perspectives

Researchers inquire in a multiplicity of ways using a variety of available qualitative or quantitative methods and techniques or, frequently, mixed methods combinations. Within the broad categories of quantitative and qualitative methods exists a variety of specific approaches, which educational researchers utilise in association with a diversity of inquiry techniques. (Siegal 2006, p. 4).

Two main theoretical perspectives generally characterise the social sciences. The first, positivism, owes its origins to the social thinkers of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, especially Saint-Simon (1760-1825), Auguste Comte (1798-1857) and Émile Durkheim (1858-1917), who were living in an era of rapid industrial progress and social change. They developed a social theory shaped by the natural sciences, which rejected philosophy as a means of social inquiry. This was crystallised in Durkheim's conception of sociology as descriptive of the *objective* facts of society (Morrison 1995. p. 3). Thus, the positivist and its successor, the post-positivist researcher seeks the objective facts and causes of social phenomena without reference to the subjectivity of individuals.

The second perspective grew from the work of Max Weber (1864-1920). Weber rejected the validity of adopting a methodology drawn exclusively from the natural

sciences. Weber drew a distinction between the social and natural sciences, leading him to deduce the 'social act' as being fundamentally different from the 'acts' of physical phenomena (Morrison 1995. p. 5).

> The key characteristic of phenomenology is the study of the way in which members of a group or community themselves interpret the world and life around them. The researcher does not make assumptions about an objective reality that exists apart from the individual. Rather, the focus is on how individuals create and understand their own life spaces (Mertens 2005, p. 240).

From this perspective, human behaviour is understood from the individual's own standpoint, whereby the role of values and judgements is foregrounded. In this manner, Weber shifted the research focus from external social rules to the integration of human inner states into social theory (Morrison 1995. p. 5; Kvale and Brinkmann 2009, p. 26). The two theoretical perspectives demand different methodologies. The positivist and the phenomenologist frame research problems in different ways. The positivist researcher values objectivity, adopts rigorous procedures in a search for facts and causes, in the manner of scientific research, utilising typically quantitative methods such as the questionnaire survey and statistical analysis, while the phenomenologist, on the other hand, adopts qualitative methods using multiple data sources in an interactive process, seeking to understand the world from the point of view of the participants. Interviews, observations and document review are methods of obtaining thick description, which are available to the phenomenologist researcher; and quantitative methods such as surveys are typically utilised in qualitative mixed method research (Mertens 2005, pp. 15, 16, 26).´

3.3.1 Theoretical orientation

Where does this study fit in the positivism – phenomenology spectrum? Locating the research within a particular paradigm affords me, as researcher, a clearly identifiable philosophical viewpoint with which to guide thinking and decision-making: the

conceptualising of the research questions, research design, the collection and analysis of data, and the interpretation of the findings. It is clear from the foregoing overview of the two research approaches that a qualitative perspective is more appropriate to addressing the research questions. In a process whereby questions are asked for which there are no pre-drawn conclusions, the researcher approaches the study in a spirit of genuine enquiry (Kilbourn, 2006, p.536). In equal measure, the social phenomena under investigation will call for an appropriate research design.

In qualitative enquiry, the researcher is the primary instrument of the research process (Patton 2002, p. 14). Bearing in mind the socio-cultural nature of human interactions, my mode of data collection must recognise that interpretation of events and phenomena are value-laden (Kilbourn, 2006, p. 545). The enquirer engages in an interactive mode of data collection supporting claims with multiple sources and multiple methods of collection. According to Mertens (p.15), methods will accord with the assumptions around the social construction of reality; and the problem to be researched will be framed in a manner that questions are addressed using qualitative methods (Kilbourn, 2006, p.536).

Table 3.1: Theoretical orientation of the study

	Ontology *(nature of reality)*	***Epistemology*** *(nature of knowledge)*	***Methodology*** *(approach to inquiry)*
Transformative paradigm	Reality is a human construction Multiple, socially-constructed realities, formed by social, political, cultural values	Interactive link between researcher and participants Knowledge is socially and historically constructed	Qualitative, quantitative and mixed method. Contextual and historical perspectives Data collection recognises value-laden interpretation of phenomena
Interpretive genre	Local meanings Insiders' perspectives	Teaching and learning take place in a complex socio-cultural context	Foregrounds participant voice Analysis recursive and simultaneous with data collection

Adapted from Borko et al 2007; Mertens 2005

In this study, the class-based exclusivity of instrumental music education is a political issue to be analysed and evaluated through confronting unjust practices and exposing the policies from which unjust practices derive (Mertens 2005, pp. 16, 17). This study seeks to examine reified constructs by exposing to view socio-historical taken-for-granted assumptions through an evaluation of their role in perpetuating unjust social structures and practices (Mertens 2005, p. 23).

I find myself drawn towards the potential for change afforded by the transformative paradigm as an epistemology in which political issues can be addressed through confronting social oppression or injustice in whatever forms they arise (Mertens 2005, p.17). Research theory, epistemologically positioned as socially constructionist and transformative, may adopt a further purposive orientation through consideration of an interpretive research genre, which is specifically related to empirical research in teacher education. (Borko et al 2007). The interpretive genre concerns itself with the search for local meanings through describing, analysing and interpreting processes and activities. It regards teaching and learning as taking place in a complex socio-cultural context, which features the 'privileging of insiders' perspectives... understanding socio-cultural processes in naturalistic settings' (Borko et al, 2007, p. 5). The adoption of an interpretive approach enables the foregrounding of participant voice emanating from spoken or written artefacts. Analysis is recursive and simultaneous with data collection; and criteria such as 'credibility, applicability, transferability, dependability and confirmability' define the quality of the study (Borko et al, 2007, p.5). The interpretive genre affords a directed and purposive research lens to the study of practitioner beliefs as a means of examining my own role and understandings as the study progresses.

3.3.2 Validity and reliability

Merriam states that 'all research is concerned with producing valid and reliable knowledge in an ethical manner' (Merriam 1988, p.163). However there is a degree of challenge in considering validity and reliability in quantitative social research (Creswell and Miller 2000, p.124). International literature in recent decades has debated diverse perspectives on validity and reliability when qualitative is compared with scientific research (for example Lincoln and Guba 1985, Maxwell 1996, Merriam 1988, Miles and Huberman 1994). What is generally accepted is that researchers in qualitative inquiry need to demonstrate the credibility of their research (Merriam 1988, p.124).

Qualitative inquiry begins with research questions, unlike quantitative inquiry, which seeks to prove or disprove a hypothesis. Validity for the scientific researcher rests on rigorous methods and systematic forms of investigation into cause-and-effect relationships, while educational researchers assume that reality is multidimensional and ever-changing (Merriam 1988, p.167). This study was guided by a procedural framework that that would demonstrate authenticity and persuasiveness and ultimately ensure the highest possible level of credibility.

Creswell and Miller suggest a validity procedure, which is governed by a framework of researchers' paradigm assumptions and the research lens chosen to validate the study (Creswell and Miller 2000, p.124). In this study a *transformative, interpretive* researcher position follows socially-constructed pluralist and, open-ended perspectives on reality. From the beginning, the researcher weaves reflexivity into the narrative account by self-disclosing his own assumptions, beliefs and biases, which initially formed the inquiry. This allows the reader to understand the position

of the researcher and to assess and balance researcher position with participant reflections on social, cultural and historic discourses as the study proceeds.

According to Merriam, achieving reliability in the manner of statistical analysis is impossible in qualitative research (p.172). The qualitative researcher's obligation is to present an honest rendition of how the study participants actually view themselves and their realities. An honest presentation contributes to the authenticity of the study. *Reliability* in the quantitative sense probably does not comfortably correlate with qualitative research. Instead, concepts of *dependability* and *consistency* might afford a better fit (Lincoln and Guba 1985, p.288). Adopting a clear and rigorous research procedure, the researcher can hope that 'given the data, the results make sense – they are consistent and dependable' (Merriam 1988, p.172).

3.4 Study design

3.4.1 Case study

Over a number of decades, case study has earned a status as a viable educational research method, which can get close to first-hand understandings in contrast to the deriving of data from secondary sources such as reports, statistics, test results or surveys (Yin 2006, p. 112). Its value as a research method lies in the way in which it can both describe and provide insights into the phenomenon being studied – how and why something happens (Merriam 1988, p. 21; Yin 2006, p. 112). Focusing on process, understanding and interpretation, the suitability of the method is its ability to study a case in-depth within its 'real life context (Yin, 2006, p. 111).

A case is a 'bounded system' (Stake 1978, p. 7). The researcher is obliged to be ever mindful of the bounded nature of the case under examination, as what happens within those boundaries is vital to the understanding of practices and processes. It

might be an individual, an institution, a programme, a population. The phenomenon, which this study seeks to examine, the public provision of instrumental music education in Ireland represents a cultural and pedagogic practice, which is distributed over seven regional music services. The descriptions, which are features of this case study, derive from the experiential understandings of practitioners within those music services. They are holistic and complex descriptions, which contribute to the existing experience and knowledge of this particular field of practice (Stake 1978, p. 7). According to Stake, 'because of the universality and importance of experiential understanding...case study... [has] epistemological advantage over other inquiry methods as a basis for naturalistic generalisation' (p. 7).

3.4.2 Piloting the study – the online questionnaire

The pilot phase of the research was the online survey (see Appendix 4), which was emailed to the music-service administrators in November 2010 *(N*= 155 sent out, *N*= 48 returned). The function of the pilot survey was threefold:

- to gain a level of prescience regarding the professional dispositions of the respondents in order to structure the interview protocol
- to acquaint potential interview participants with the topics to be discussed in the subsequent interviews
- to provide hard data to support the interview analysis.

Responses were sought under the themes of a) *organisation, b) access and equity, and c) culture* (see Appendix 8)

A covering letter containing the link to the online survey was emailed to the administrators of seven regional music-services. The administrators forwarded the URL link to the survey to approximately 150 instrument teachers, so that at no time was I in direct contact with potential respondents. Forty eight music-service staff-members eventually completed the survey. One hundred and twenty potential

participants received the survey link by email; and thirty-five teachers received photocopies of my original email, which provided a web-link to the online survey. Of the 155 who received the online survey link, forty eight responded. The main bulk of completed questionnaires returned during November and December and analysis began immediately. I received late arriving responses up to the month of April 2011. The survey data indicated professional and personal opinions that would later serve as hard data to support the interview findings.

The findings of the pilot questionnaire survey served as a data set with which the interview phase of the study could be planned. The topics, which formed the questionnaire, were derived from sensitising concepts emerging from the review of research literature presented in Chapter 2.

To prepare the interview study, a pilot interview based on sensitising concepts was tested on a colleague. In the subsequent debriefing, my colleague's feedback was that she felt comfortable with the immediately practical topics of instrumental teaching methodologies for which she had tacit knowledge, but she was uncomfortable when I introduced theoretical or philosophical questions to the conversation. This insight suggested to me the adoption of a cautious approach to interviewing and I adjusted the guide to afford a flexibility, which would respond to participant personality and individual worldview.

Table 3.2: Summary of data sources

Data source	*No. of participants (N =)*	*No of research sites*
Online questionnaire survey	Approximately 150 contacted *N* = 48 returned	7
Teacher interviews	*N* =7	2
Administrator interviews	*N* = 7	7

3.4.3 Interview as a qualitative method

For descriptive and analytic purpose, I chose the in-depth, semi- or minimally structured interview as a format associated with case study and favoured by qualitative researchers (Mertens 2005, p. 387). As a research method, the semi-structured interview has potential to give participants the space to express understandings and meanings, and to afford the researcher access to tacit knowledge residing in the mental world of individuals, strategic to the study, (Brenner 2006, p. 357). Interviews take a variety of forms and may range from casual conversation to formal highly structured protocol. Brenner suggests the open ended interview as a means of allowing the participant to speak expansively on the researcher's topics (Brenner 2006, p. 363).

My role as interviewer was to utilise the medium of conversation to encourage the respondents to open up and reveal opinions, attitudes and personal experiences relevant to the research problem (Brenner 2006, 363). The interviewer adopts a receptive rather than assertive demeanour (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009, p.36). In order to navigate a pathway through the research topics, I prepared an interview guide, consisting of a printed two-page sequence of prompts, which was constructed around themes emerging from my review of international research literature. The research themes were arranged sequentially, so that the conversation could smoothly move from topic to topic.

3.4.4 The interview process

The central part of the data collection comprises fourteen semi-structured interviews of 45 – 90 minutes duration, which took place between 14 January and 26 March 2011. I briefed participants on the nature of the research both verbally and by way of a printed information sheet assuring them of their anonymity and right to withdraw

at any stage. All participants gave written informed consent by signing the SREC stipulated interview consent form.

A sample of school principals (*N*=7) and instrumental teachers (*N*=7) were interviewed with the aim of obtaining an overview of what assumptions of musical value are most commonly held by music education professionals in the Irish context, and then co-relating these musical values to conceptions of musical ability and the pedagogies being employed by the institution. Subsequent discussion would identify attitudes to social equity in instrumental music education. Questions seeking to elicit the social profile of student enrolment probed practitioners' perception of the socio-economic status, gender patterns and instrumental choice of students. A discussion of curriculum indicating musical genre and instrumental choice sought to identify the aesthetic worldview of the institutions. Simultaneous data collection and interpretation was necessary to explore potential conflicts, which I might encounter in the information gathering (Yin 2006, p. 112).

3.4.5 The interview sites

The interviews were conducted in two phases. The first set of interviews comprised the administrators of the seven music-services, six of whom were interviewed in their own locale. The administrator of a music-service, which is situated in a distant county, kindly agreed to meet me in a mutually convenient location. The administrator phase of interviews took place in January and February if 2011.

The teacher interview phase, which took place in the following months of March and April, was located in two sites – County Music-Service and Urban District Music-Service – three participants in the former and five in the latter. The sites were chosen in recognition of their contrasting profiles. County Music-Service operates in dispersed local music-centres in towns throughout the county and Urban District

Music-Service is a centrally based in a second-level school building outside of school hours.

Table 3.3: The interview sites

Organisations	*Administrators (N=7)*	*Teachers (N=7)*
County Music Service	Claire	Brian Margaret Maura
Urban-District Music Service	John	Joanne Marcus Orla Paul
City Music Service	Frank	
County-District Music Service	Elaine	
Large-Town Music Service	Sarah	
Mid-County Music Service	Eoin	
Rural-County Music Service	Bríd	

3.4.5.1 County Music-Service

County Music-Service is a community-based instrumental music education scheme of provision. The structure is that of a constellation of music-centres in VEC/ETB administered community colleges, which operate after school hours and are dispersed throughout the county area. The music-centres are based in the local communities, which are a mix of rural and urban districts. Among the seven music-services, County Music-Service (CMS) is relatively well-resourced both in terms of staffing, instrumental choice and 'affordable fees' policy. The four smaller-scale services utilise the services of part-time teachers, but CMS is staffed by a large staff, approximately half of whom are whole-time. The enrolment comprises

approximately 2500 students distributed over Western classical and Irish traditional instrumental areas.

The pedagogic structure of the classical instrumental courses aligns with general practice over the seven music-services – the one-to-one instrumental lesson, which is supplemented by chamber music and orchestra. The typical enrolment of whole-time instrument teachers is thirty five individual students. The traditional music teachers, on the other hand, typically teach groups of between three and ten students and a small number of full-class groups in primary schools. Instrumental students are assessed through the graded examinations – classical instrument students annually; and traditional instrument students biennially. The largest instrumental demand is for violin and piano tuition.

3.4.5.2 Urban District Music-Service

Unlike CMS, Urban District Music-Service is located in a single school building, which principally accommodates a second-level community college with a large further education component. The music-service operates after school hours on weekdays and on Saturdays utilising the school classrooms after the local day-students have departed.

Urban District Music-Service (UDMS) is a scheme of provision under the local VEC/ETB and draws its enrolment from surrounding urban areas, but not from the immediately adjacent working-class estates. Although tuition fees are charged, they are subsidised under a policy of 'affordable fees' similar to that pertaining in County Music-Service. UDMS has a larger proportion of part-time teachers and a considerably smaller enrolment capacity (approx.700 students) than CMS (approx. 2500).

Table 3.4: Summary of County Music-Service and Urban-district Music-Service

	County Music-Service	***Urban-district Music-Service***
Student enrolment	2500 approx.	700 approx.
Staff	60	30
Examination board	In-house graded examinations Primary – Grade 8	Associated Board of Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM) Primary – Grade 8
Annual fee (individual)		
30-minute lesson	€300	€385
60 minute lesson	€540	€770
Instruments offered	Strings Brass Flute Woodwind Orchestral percussion Piano Keyboard Classical guitar Irish harp Traditional instruments Singing	Strings Brass Flute Woodwind Orchestral percussion Drums Piano Keyboard Accordion (classical) Classical guitar Irish harp Singing

3.4.6 The responses

The interviews typically began with a general descriptive question regarding the role and function of music schools in the general scheme of things. The questions worked down to ever more detailed enquiries that circled around the themed questions, often revisiting some topics from more than one point of view in the interest of obtaining clarity of meaning.

A digital audio recording of the interview freed me from note-taking, thus enabling unbroken discussion, which ensured that I would later have accurate interview transcripts. Aware of the heavily time consuming nature of the transcription process facing me, I tried to be strategic and economical with the interview itself, while allowing the participants to speak expansively.

Table 3.5: Sample of interview protocol

Sample themes	*Sample questions*
Role and function of music schools	'How do you see the function of music schools'? 'If an organisation has a public, who constitutes this school's public'? 'In your perception, what would be the main priorities of [this school]'?
Role of the instrumental music teacher	'Can you describe what you do as a music teacher – what do you think is expected of you by the school'? 'How much autonomy in making decisions do you have as a teacher'? 'To what extent do you see yourself as an educator in the broad sense'?
Links to mainstream education	'Do you have an input into first or second level music'? 'How are you regarded by the schools – what interaction do you have with staff'?
Access and participation	'Why do you think some parents send their children to learn musical instruments'? 'To what extent might instrumental music be regarded as an elite cultural activity'?
Musical ability	'How do you view musical ability – will every child respond to good teaching'? 'It's often said about talent – *you either have it or you don't* – how does this school view musical ability'? 'How do you see prodigies'?
Gender	'What is your perception of gender in music as a teacher'? 'To what extent Is there gender bias in who plays instruments'?

The interviews were conducted in two tranches – first the administrator interviews (*N*=7), which afforded me an overview of the organisational structures and dispositions of the music services, prior to an in-depth examination of the professional beliefs of teachers (*N*=7) drawn from the same organisations. Separate printed interview protocols of prepared prompts guided the researcher in the two interview tranches. A digital voice recorder captured the interviews, which I immediately uploaded to computer as mp3 sound files for subsequent transcription and analysis.

The interview period spanned the ten weeks between the Christmas and Easter breaks. As an instrumental music teacher, I was aware of the necessity to conclude interviewing before the final school term commenced, as the final term is always the

most intense part of the school year and would therefore be an unsuitable period in which to expect teachers to give freely of their time.

Listening to the recording of a previous pilot interview, I learned to frame questions in a manner that would not be likely to simply invoke a 'yes or no' response; and, importantly, I was careful to permit silences into the conversations to allow the participant to gather his/her thoughts and permit an uninterrupted flow. Rehearsal by pilot interview was a valuable learning tool in developing an interviewing technique.

The music-services under research, situated, as they are, in various regions of the country, required a considerable amount of time and travel on my part. However, these journeys provided opportunities for pre- and post- interview reflection. As the interviews progressed, I became familiar, assured with the interview technique, relying less on the protocol notes, which enabled a naturalistic style with minimal recourse to printed prompts.

Throughout, I was mindful of my potentially dominant status as interviewer and drew back from exerting pressure on the participants to better permit a relaxed encounter in which thoughts would be likely to flow freely. From the first interviews, it became clear to me that individual personalities influenced the style and pace of the interviews in different ways. Certain participants spoke freely with little prompting while others were reluctant to speak on some topics, which necessitated a more oblique approach on my part. I deliberately refrained from pre-interview discussions of the research topics, firstly to avoid losing potentially valuable data in chat; and secondly, to avoid revealing personal viewpoints beforehand (Mercer 2007, p. 10). In the case of two administrators, I had the impression that I was hearing 'PR speech'. For instance, one of the administrators was presenting, what I thought, was an overly 'rosy' picture of social equity in the

student enrolment, which prompted me to circle around this area more than once in order to get a more complete picture.

The next step in the data-gathering phase was the transcription of the recordings. Despite the advice proffered by research colleagues and my supervisor either to select significant passages for transcription or, to employ a professional typist, I opted to do my own transcribing. Having begun transcribing the first interviews myself, the opportunity of closely re-engaging with the data became apparent. Immediately listening back to the earliest conversations, I discovered details and nuances, which I missed during the original interviews. This outweighed the time-consuming and laborious element of the task and it was possible to simultaneously transcribe and begin an initial thematic coding of the data.

A contrast emerged between the responses of the administrators of comparatively well-funded services and those, which would be regarded as being severely underfunded, and were obliged to be self-financing. In two cases, I sensed a resistance on the part of the administrator-participants to engage beyond the practical challenges of running small-scale poorly funded operations, which restricted those interviews to general administrative matters. In contrast to this, the interviews with the administrators of the five relatively well-funded music services ranged expansively over all the themes, which I presented to them over the course of the interviews. My notebook records, *'it seems that expansive thinking is enabled or constricted in proportion to how well the service is funded.'* (24/02/2011). The contrast between the two groups was so striking that it gave me cause to label it as a theme worthy of further examination.

As the interview phase progressed, this initial impression coalesced with my perception that many of the administrators were proffering a certain degree of 'PR

puff'. My notes show, *'always advocating!'* and *'it was difficult to get participant beyond advocating'* (24/02/2011). Of course, I realised on reflection that advocating is precisely what administrators do for their music service organisations – it is their job: They advocate music education to the public and justify the music service to funders in Government. Consequently, the administrator interviews are considered in the light of this added layer of representational responsibility.

While the burden of organisational responsibility would, of necessity act as a filter for interpreting the data emerging from the administrator interviews, the teacher-participants gave the impression of being eager, frank and forthright in expressing their opinions. Several participants remarked that the interview process had brought them into interesting areas of discussion, and they expressed themselves with a minimal amount of prompting.

3.5 Data analysis

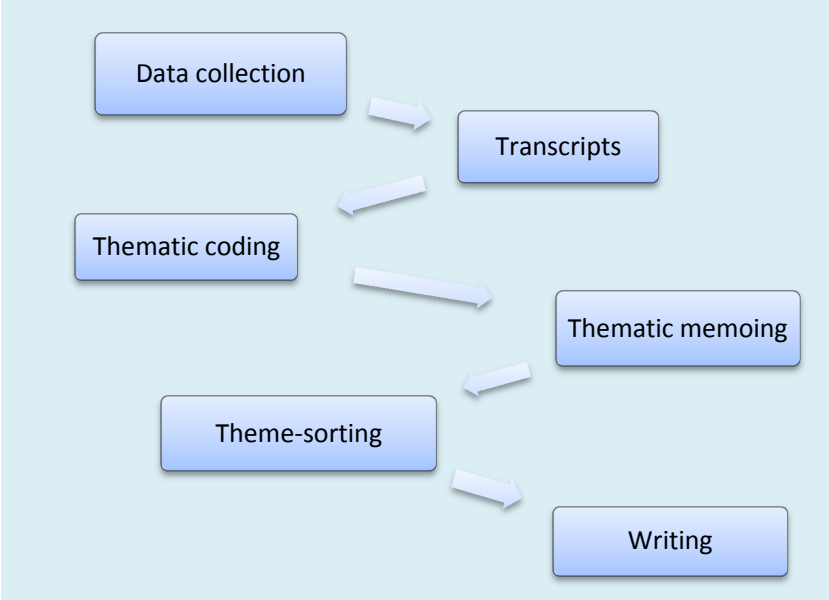


Figure 3.2: The grounded theory approach to data analysis

3.5.1 The grounded theory approach to analysis

While the study seeks to extract and map the organisational discourses of the instrumental music education sector, the study design utilises a *grounded theory* analytical approach rather than formal *critical discourse analysis*. Both techniques bear some similarities to one another - both are methods of analysis that apply a close reading of text in order to identify relevant themes, scrutinising language to examine the ways in which themes are discussed and the discursive implications of particular segments (Burck 2005, p.249).

As a strategy for data analysis, *grounded theory* provides a clearly laid out sequence of procedures for dealing with interview transcripts and field observations. It features recursive interplay between data collection and analysis to develop theory over the entire course of the research process (Bowen 2006, p.13). A grounded theory approach applies line-by-line interpretation of the transcript text, identifying

categories, which are iteratively compared, clustered, merged and separated out to form further conceptual analyses to generate theory (Burck 2005, p.245).

First developed by Glasser and Strauss during the nineteen-sixties, the authors advocate grounded theory procedures, based on qualitative data obtained from participants in the research field, as an effective means of arriving at theory 'suited to its supposed uses' (Glasser and Strauss 1967, p.3). During the process of analysis, the researcher tests emergent theory against systematically collected data to be interpreted based on statements expressed by the participants.

The process of analysis begins with qualitative data in the form of transcripts from which generalisations may be drawn. The early data provide cues to direct the subsequent interviews by alerting the researcher to issues relevant to the topic (Corbin and Strauss 1990, p.419). Emergent themes are compared and grouped, enabling interpretations from minute examination of participant responses. A cyclic process moving between data collection and analysis forms and reforms the problem as the research progresses – the *constant comparative* method (Glaser and Strauss 1967, p.102). Emergent theory is 'grounded' in the process of data collection and analysis; and in the participants themselves who experience the process (Creswell 2007, p.63).

Over the four decades since Glasser and Strauss first elaborated their ideas, grounded theory has been critiqued and challenged on grounds of oversimplification of complex meanings, an over-emphasis on procedure over interpretation and a questioning of induction in qualitative inquiry (Thomas and James 2006, p.769). Glaser himself moved his position and criticised the approach as too structured and prescriptive (Creswell 207, p.63). In recent years, grounded theorists such as Charmaz have evolved a *constructivist* grounded theory that acknowledges the role

of the researcher as integral to the process of analysis (Charmaz 2006, p.130). Constructivist grounded theorists regard both data collection and the analysis process as social constructions, situated in 'time, place and culture' (p.131). From this theoretical viewpoint, constructivism fosters the reflexivity of researchers in maintaining an awareness of their own interpretations as well as those of their study participants.

Thomas and James (2006) take issue with grounded theory procedures as an effective means of generating theory from data (Thomas and James 2006, p767). They contend that the high regard and popularity in which grounded theory is held by social researchers serves to conceal a methodological inflexibility. Thomas and James' argument comes close to a rejection of the grounded theory approach. They contend that the 'procedural machinery' sanitises the participant voice through over-focus on method (p.791). They question the central claim that grounded theory has the capacity to generate real theory; since its insistence on a strictly imposed form of patterning and axial coding conceals the original narrative and misses the direct import of participant and researcher accounts (p.790). The centrality of theory generation through *discovery* is treated as problematic by the authors. Discovery implies that phenomena are already in existence – a theory well-hidden, waiting to be discovered by the researcher (Thomas and James 2006, p786). The induction of theory from data through a strictly discovery method stands contrary to meaning construction through interpretative deduction from hypotheses and narrative description (p.780). For Thomas and James the most important issue is what may be missed or dismissed by an over-strict adherence to the epistemological and theoretical precepts of the grounded theory method (Thomas and James 2006, p790).

It is clear that grounded theory procedures must be followed with an open receptivity to participant voices and a full disclosure of researcher positioning.

This study is within the broad grounded theory tradition, adopting a dialectical and cumulative approach to analysis. A dialectic approach acknowledges the complexity of interpreting contexts; which may weave between the lived worlds of both researcher and the participants; and in which diverse points of view may be reconciled. In an imperfect analytical world, the foregrounding of narratives that are supported by careful adherence to underlying methodological coherence lends a level of genuineness and reliability to the presentation of research claims. This may mean that any theory generated from the research claims will present not as 'Grand Theory but as 'theory with a small 't''.

3.5.2 Coding the data

The coding process provides the 'pivotal link' between the data collection and the development of theory to explain the data (Charmaz 2006, p.46). During the coding process the researcher is afforded a close line-by-line engagement with the data, providing an 'analytic scaffolding' with which to synthesise data and build theory (Charmaz 2008, p.217). Charmaz draws on Blumer's (1954) notion of *sensitising concepts*, to foreground researchers' background perceptions, which 'alert them to look for certain possibilities and processes in their data' (Charmaz 2006, p.17). Corbin and Strauss (1990) indicate three phases in grounded theory research: *open, axial* and *selective* coding. The initial phase of *open coding* interprets broad categories in the participants' statements. By inducing a code from one participant's interview, the researcher, through multiple readings of the transcripts may find points of resonance with earlier and later interviews that solidify into new categories. Codes label segments of descriptive information as 'units of meaning' (Miles and

Huberman 1994, p.56). Conceptually similar codes are grouped together to form categories and sub-categories (Corbin and Strauss 1990, p.423).

The process of labelling made sense of the emerging data, whereby the application of codes separated out the data into distinct reference units from which inferences might be drawn. The first coding task was to categorise the raw data into data sets with which to initiate a preliminary analysis. Heeding the advice of Miles and Huberman, a 'start-list' was formed from the initial readings of the transcripts (Miles and Huberman 1994, P.58).

The start-list provided a preliminary data-set (C1) following the original concept-driven sensitising themes deriving from the literature review. They represent cultural boundaries, which educators, students and families negotiate and sometimes contest. This forms the main starting-point of the study, as it represents the first examination of the participants' personal accounts.

Table 3.6: Start-list based on *sensitising concepts*

Codes derived from *sensitising concepts* C.1	
Concepts *from literature*	***Developing codes*** *from data*
C1.1 Demography	a. Student socio-economic status b. Instrumental music as cultural capital c. Deficit perception of disadvantaged groups d. Middle-class cultural choice
C1.2 Musical genre	a. Western classical identity b. Questioning orthodoxy c. Practitioner agency d. Conservatory culture e. Diversity
C1.3 Musical ability	a. Inherent natural talent b. Agency and motivation c. Musical environment d. Influence of the teacher e. Contradictory understandings f. 'Prodigies' and family type g. Achievement criteria h. Conservatory culture
C1.4 Gender	a. Student enrolment gender breakdown b. Gender inscriptions of instrumental choice

The research themes emerging from the literature review provided a conceptual framework on which to base the interviews so that a coherent description could be constructed of what the worldview of instrumental music teachers might look like. Literature-derived themes thus far remained intact as separate domains, but as the study progressed through an initial process of open coding themes overlapped and coalesced as new significant themes emerged from the analysis of interview transcripts. For example, themes of social class, taste, conceptions of musical ability and gender formed *cultural boundary markers*, which learners negotiate as they engage with the structures and dispositions of instrumental music education. These themes, and, in particular, the manner in which they are viewed by the participants, afford a sense of corporate or sectoral identity.

Table 3.7: Example of code-development from *musical genre (C1.2)*

Code	***Participant statement***	***Logic of the statement***	***Theme***
C1.2a	It's very important to have a classical background... your technical skills are better (Marcus). Learn it with the classical pedagogy and technique and then you can play anything you want. (Claire) There has to be standard... specialising in one area and from that delving into others. (Brian) We're convinced of what we're doing ...we teach as we were trained. (John)	Classical instrumental pedagogy offers the most effective technical skills-training.	Western classical identity
C1.2b	We must get beyond Western art music or we'll never grow. We'll always stay the same... they don't want to do percussion – they want to do drum-kit (Claire) Nowadays with the likes of Glee and X-factor – em, are we being archaic in our teaching? (Margaret) Our core business here is in teaching classical music, but we do realise that we also have to move with changing times and changing genres (Frank)	Diversity of musical taste is impinging on the genre-identity of the music courses.	Questioning the orthodoxy

A second phase of *axial coding* made connections between categories to build a model of the phenomena that takes into account the practices and interactions; and the conditions and contexts in which these actions occur (Mertens 2005, p.424). Codes are reread from the transcripts, reordered and extended into further sub-categories. At this stage of the analysis, the categories extend out and become independent of the sensitising concepts, which initiated the coding process. For instance a theme, 'practitioner agency' emerged from the initial code, 'musical meaning' when teachers stated that they *'wouldn't feel happy teaching in a different style of music'* (Sarah), or *'our hands are tied – we have to stick to a certain syllabus'* (Maura).

Table 3.8: Example of theme development

Themes derived from interview data (C2)	
***Coding** from data*	***Theme***
Parental motivation Middle-class culture Cultural capital Enrichment activity Citizenship	**C2.1 Music and education**
Tradition and heritage Change	**C2.2 Role and function**
Teaching within music service sector Visiting instrumental specialists in primary schools	**C2.3 Professional status/identity**
Cost – fees – instruments Social disadvantage Taste	**C2.4 Barriers to participation**
References to parents and members of disadvantaged social groups	**C2.5 Deficit thinking**
Integration with mainstream education Moving towards community Broadening musical genres	**C2.6 Vision**

The third phase of *selective coding* is the process of data distillation by clustering categories around central phenomena or 'core categories', which integrate and unify the variations within the data (Corbin and Strauss 1990, p.424). The third phase crystallises data into a more abstract and conceptual thematic framework from which a thematic 'story-line' narrative may be constructed (Mertens 2005, p.424). This phase will be presented in *Chapter 4: Presentation of Claims.*

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter foregrounds the epistemic positioning of the researcher within the transformative paradigm conducting research as critical insider. A Grounded Theory approach to data analysis applied lie-by-line reading of interview transcripts to extract themes and categories in a system of thematic coding as an effective means of arriving at a comprehensive understanding of the phenomena under study.

The research sample was chosen for the purpose of ensuring the dependability of the emerging data. In choosing case-study as a research design I was mindful of its suitability for describing and analysing beliefs, attitudes, cultural norms and organisational values within a bounded entity – the social practice of teaching and learning musical instruments.

Chapter 4

Data analysis and presentation of claims

Chapter 4 presents the research claims emerging from the data analysis. The purpose of the data collection was to gain an understanding of the discourses, which animate practice and policy within the small number of publicly-provided Music Services in Ireland. A critically evaluated literature review provided a central resource for providing the rationale for the study. It informed the researcher in conducting the data collection; and provided a key reference source for interpreting the results of the study (Mertens 2005, p.89).

The data collection proceeded through two phases, a pilot survey and a series of semi-structured interviews. The study was piloted by an online questionnaire survey (see Appendix 5), which provided a general overview of the instrumental music education sector. Contextualised by sensitising concepts drawn from the review of research literature in Chapter 2, survey data contributed to the construction of an interview protocol with which to conduct the interview series (Appendix 7). The interview transcripts (N=14) comprise the qualitative data source – the 'beating heart' of the study. The analysis sought to evaluate the cultural world of the instrumental music education sector and to reveal the sectoral landscape in terms of the structure, policies, practices and the discourses that underpin them through the voices of an interview sample (N=14) of professionals from within the Music Services. The qualitative data was illustrated by quantitative data derived from the questionnaire survey (N=48).

Research claims are thematically presented in three sections, 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3. Section 4.1 is descriptive in form, drawing on qualitative data from the interviews,

supported by quantitative survey data of *organisational structure and practice,* to provide a context for understanding organisational dispositions. Section 4.2 draws on participant autobiography as a means of opening up the *cultural world* of the Music Services. Themes of *subject status in school curriculum, conceptions of musicality* and *orthodox/unorthodox learning approaches* emerged from three participant interviews. Section 4.3 analysed the implicit beliefs and shared values of instrumental music education practitioners in the public sector. Emergent themes, framed in terms of *bounded system, cultural boundaries, tradition and heritage,* and *identity and aims,* are presented and analysed in order to interpret and map the discourse of the instrumental music education sector.

4.1 Organisation, structure and practice

The location of the study is the small number of VEC/ETBs that provide local instrumental music education services. Taken collectively, the publicly-funded Music Services do not have a sufficient geographical spread to constitute a 'national system of instrumental music education'. To illustrate the isolation of Music Services from one another, during pre- and post- interview conversations, administrators revealed themselves as having little or no contact with other regions. On hearing that my research had brought me to another VEC/ETB region, one administrator enquired after his counterpart, *'well, how is J—? I haven't met him in years!'* Working in isolation from each other, administrators are solely concerned with running their own organisations.

Interview data reveal significant variations in provision among the seven music services. For example, the three largest Music Services are well staffed with permanent whole-time teachers across all the classical instrumental areas. By contrast, County-District Music Service covering two small county areas has never

provided more than forty weekly hours of part-time instrumental tuition over its thirty five year existence.

Throughout the interviews, administrator-participants from the better-funded Music Services spoke at length on all the main research themes. Conversations ranged from administrative matters to organisational culture to the role of music in social life. In contrast to this, the administrators of the two small self-financing Music Services were less thematically expansive, confining themselves to speaking of the challenges they encountered in maintaining instrumental music courses in the face of the high cost of tuition in difficult economic circumstances. For consistency, I use the general term, *Music Service* to represent the variety of organisation: *School of Music, Music Scheme, Music Partnership, Arts Partnership*. Similarly, I use the common title *administrator,* to represent the titles, *principal, director, development manager, teacher in charge, music organiser.*

4.1.1 Funding

The seven Music Services apply differing levels of tuition fees, which I have summarised as *well-funded, moderately funded* and *self-financing* for the purposes of the study. Four organisations operate a well-funded 'affordable fees' policy; one has partial funding, but two receive no funding and must charge full commercial fee-rates to cover teacher's salaries (Table 4.1, summarised from administrator interviews).

Table 4.1: The Music Services – fee levels

	Well subsidised ('Affordable' fees)	***Moderately subsidised***	***Self-financing (Full commercial fees)***
Small-scale music services	County-District	Rural-County Mid-County	Large-Town
Large-scale music services	City Urban-District County		

Four music services, *County-District, Rural-County,* and *Mid-County Large-Town Music Services* are small-scale in their scope of provision. The three larger-scale operations are well-funded, staffed by permanent whole-time teachers. *County Music Service, City Music Service* and *Urban-District Music Service* have large enrolments of between 1500 and 3000 students.

The survey sought data on the level of fees being charged across the seven organisations. Three quarters of respondents reported an 'affordable fees' policy (Table 4.2) [$x^2 = 34.715$, *df* =2, $P < 0.0001$].

Table 4.2: Level of tuition fees (survey)

(*N*=44)

	Response percentage	Response count
Affordable fees (well-subsidised)	**75.0%**	**33**
Fairly expensive (moderately-subsidised)	15.9%	7
Very expensive (full commercial rate)	9.1%	4

The question of fee-remission for low-income families (Table 4.3) shows, in the experience of almost 70% of respondents, fee-waivers are applied in cases of hardship [$x^2 = 4.568$, *df = 1, P = 0.0326].* It must be pointed out that some respondents might be unaware of their organisation's policy on fee-waivers and it is

likely that the underfunded Music Services are not in a financial position to offer fee-waivers.

Table 4.3: Fee-remission or fee-reduction for families of limited means

(*N*=37)

	Response percentage	Response count
Yes	**68%**	**25**
No	32%	12

Taking the well-funded organisations, City Music Service operates in a dedicated city-centre school building. Urban District Music Service is located in a large second-level VEC/ETB Community College on weekdays after normal school hours and all day on Saturdays. County Music Service is dispersed over a number of county towns, with music-centres situated in first- and second-level schools, also operating outside of school hours. County District Music Service, centred in two county towns, covers a small rural county area. Rural-County Music Service covers one medium-sized county, has a large enrolment, but has approximately half the funding-rate of the well-funded Music Services. It offers group-tuition in the beginning years to reduce the expense to families. The remaining two music services, one urban and one rural are small in size and scope. Both organisations have part-time teaching staff, limited administrative support, are self-financing, necessitating full commercial fee-rates. Fees are consequently multiples of those charged by the well-funded organisations to cover teacher salaries and other expenses.

The administrator of Mid-County Music Service, which receives partial VEC/ETB and County Council Arts funding, revealed how a combination of expensive tuition fees and funding cuts impact on an outreach scheme and on teacher pay.

> ... the bulk of our funds are from student fees... high enough – there's no doubt about that now. We'd love them to be a lot less than they are but – em – we just can't, because we have had cuts in public funding and... we had to do cost saving measures – like those outreach grants. We just had to forego them and teachers had to take a pay-cut... (Bríd)

The administrator of Large-Town Music Service made the observation that the requirement to be self-financing necessitated very high tuition fees for individual learners. Sarah initially referred to the Music Service catering to 'the better-off', but then checked herself, emphasising the sacrifices and struggles some families make to fund instrumental music lessons for their children.

> Our fees are very high because we're self-financing and our teachers...are fully qualified and paid at Secondary music teachers' rates so it being self-financing – that necessitates the fees being very high for individual tuition...
> ... well we do cater to the better off members of the community generally...you know, people tend to overstate the case and think that 'ah the parents are all very wealthy', but that's not the case – like in many cases, mothers are working specifically to pay the music fees. (Sarah)

Participants made a correlation between cost and participation. Contrasts between well-funded and poorly funded music services emphasise differences between 'affordable' and expensive self-financing fees resulting in divergences in levels of equitable social participation in performance music. Wide funding differentials, which range from well-funded (subsidised 'affordable' fee-rates) to non-funded (full commercial fee-rates), pose affordability implications for low-income families.

4.1.1.1 Uneven resourcing

The educational brief of the VEC/ETBs covers a wide educational field, from the second-level Community Colleges to further- and adult-education schemes of provision; and a small number operate music services. Eoin recalled the willingness of his local organisation to respond to the Benson Report (1979) into the position of the arts in education.

> The appointment of my predecessor … came about in 1980 as a result of a decision to do something after the Benson Report, The Place of the Arts in Irish Education, so the VECs and the Government …decided to have Arts Education Organisers around the same time they were setting up Adult Education Organisers in the different counties … (Eoin)

However, according to Eoin, the VEC was never willing to increase the allocation of teaching hours beyond forty hours per week over its thirty five-year existence.

As educational schemes of provision, the Music Services are subject to the general administrative structures of the larger VEC/ETB organisation. Administrators spoke of the position of the instrumental music provision within the larger bureaucratic structure. Elaine, the administrator of a medium-sized county Music Service, described the role of the local VEC/ETB in terms of its advisory capacity.

> It's the VEC ultimately run it. So the board is an advisory board to the [Music Service], so the stakeholders are on an advisory level – not a board of directors… the little pot of money that the Department gave, came straight into the VEC… It subsidised fees – it subsidised the instrumental tuition fees and other projects… (Elaine)

Sarah is based in a large county-town and administers a non-subsidised Music Service, which is obliged to fund itself through a fully economic fee-rate. She outlined the VEC/ETB's function as merely providing the premises and dealing with salaries and deductions.

> We're not publicly funded. The only support we have is that the VEC do provide financial services and – you know, the salaries – I do the salary claims. The teachers fill out their salary claims and I correct them and mark them off on the register and so on, and then send them on to the VEC and they eventually pay and deal with the tax and all that background – support… and they own the premises and we don't pay any rent… (Sarah)

Unlike Elaine's organisation which part-funds the Music Service, Sarah's organisation does not receive financial support, but for audit purposes the Music Service is bureaucratically justified under the self-financing adult education provision:

> We fall into adult education, which is self-financing. So we get put in that adult education category though we're not adult education… (Sarah)

Bríd administers Mid-county Music Service, which provides instrumental music tuition in the same way as the other six organisations – individual tuition in orchestral instruments, guitar and piano in the Western classical musical tradition – but unlike the other Music Services, it was recently privatised as a public limited company (plc).

> The year just gone by – 2010, the structure of the school changed. And now the push for this came interestingly from the VEC, because of the loose arrangement … the main issue being, who was the employer of the teachers. The VEC didn't want to be the employers of it. The County Council said 'we're not in the business of employing teachers… [we] set up as a limited company, but with the partners still involved. That's the way it's gone now. There's a board of directors – a nine-member board – three each from County Council and VEC, and then those six pick three 'A.N. Others' to make up the board. (Bríd)

The administrators of the smaller Music Services reveal varying levels of VEC/ETB support for instrumental music under their remit. In the case of Mid-County, the VEC/ETB was not committed to administering a specialist instrumental music programme and eventually divested itself of the Music Service. Bríd suggested that the VEC/ETB, as an education provider, did not value music either as a performance activity or as a school subject.

> I wouldn't say we've had much impact now or input from VEC from a governing point of view. We do stand quite apart – they have had no real influence on …I think, number one why, is that there's never been music up to last year in any VEC school in [the county]… there had been no music tuition, so I would feel they didn't know what to do with music …perhaps the VEC didn't have expertise, …she [County Council Arts Officer] got them on board to come on as a partner in it, but you know, they never took the lead… (Bríd)

The option of moving into the private sector was also suggested to Sarah, administrator of Large-town Music Service.

> …we were asked would we like to go private because really we're just a thorn in the side really over the years… well, the VEC is a committee and some people on the committee would be more supportive than others, you know… (Sarah)

The underfunding of the administrative running of the music services was echoed by Sarah, who felt that the Music Service was a 'thorn in the side' of the VEC/ETB. While pointing to the its function of providing the music-centre and paying the

teacher salaries, she revealed that although the VEC/ETB is willing to run a Music Service in the town, it does not receive the dedicated funding from central Government that would ensure financial viability. Sarah added that it was the lack of Government support that has resulted in the ebbing of goodwill between this particular VEC/ETB and its music service.

> …the VEC continually tried to apply for funding from the Department – they did put in an application every year and were refused every year... we operated on goodwill for all those years and now the goodwill is gone. (Sarah)

In the case of Rural-county music service, the VEC/ETB was supportive and pro-active in providing aspects of day-to-day practicalities.

> The CEO had to make sure obviously that the Principals of the schools were on board. The school has to open – in terms of practical logistics, the school has to open… (Elaine)

While Elaine acknowledged the VEC/ETB as generally supportive in actual performance music provision, she was critical of the low level of administrative support in her own role as Development Manager.

> I actually ended up doing, like – a lot of administrative stuff – menial administrative stuff – it took considerable amount of time away from development, when in actual fact, I tried to do both, which ended up I worked a lot of weekends – a lot of after-hours…. (Elaine)

As regards her contract, the employment grade of Development Manager is not at the same level as Principal of a second-level school, which applies in the larger Music Services.

> …they didn't want a school of music principal because they didn't want to get into the grading system of salaries… it's just that the administrative backup was not there when the system grew. (Elaine)

The main difficulties encountered by the administrators of smaller organisations are financial in nature. Elaine found an embargo on caretakers' overtime to have repercussion on the opening of school premises for evening instrument classes.

> … with the embargo on caretaker overtime – that was a major headache two or three years ago – a huge, huge headache – and you know, we had to reduce hours in some places… (Elaine)

During the interviews, it is notable that the administrators of the three largest, well-funded Music Services did not refer to funding restrictions or lack of goodwill. It is evident that the three Music Services reviewed in the O'Brien Report are relatively well provided with permanent whole-time staff allocations and structured administration posts resulting in the better-funded organisations having more security within their respective VEC/ETB organisations.

4.1.1.2 Public access to a scarce provision

In most organisations, long waiting-lists of prospective students are a reality as none of the seven Music Services have a sufficiency of teacher-allocation to adequately provide for public demand. A multiple of current funding would be required to provide affordable individual instrumental tuition, which would satisfy this public demand. Most interview participants expressed awareness of a large demand for instrument tuition and regretted that not all applicants can gain access to tuition places in the instrumental courses.

> …to be honest music schools are only answering a tiny proportion of the need that we have… like I said music should be available to all. Unfortunately, that's not the case with our music system in Ireland, so in the meantime we are getting to as many as we can, and that's not enough, but there's no question there is a need there... (Margaret)

> …students who didn't come back, their places were filled within about ten minutes…so there's huge demand – absolutely huge demand. (Frank)

Another administrator alluded to the inability of the mainstream education system to provide for the musical needs of people.

> …there is a community of music right across the population that is interested in – is passionate about music and wants to follow through that interest above and beyond what is available – or generally not available in primary and secondary education... (John)

Although operating under a finite and restricted teacher allocation, John referred to the even-handedness of the admission policy of the VEC/ETB.

> …the basic VEC premise I really like, which is that if you come in the door looking for a class, we'll get you a class. It doesn't matter what you are or where you come from. (John)

A fee-waiver system operated by Frank's organisation indicates a concern for equity of access.

> VEC has in operation a fee-waiver system for learners who may not afford – you know, particularly in these times – be able to afford a full fee, where we have a sliding scale of reductions – financially what they can afford… (Frank)

The funding-level differentials between the seven music services have consequences for the day-to-day administration of the Music Services as well as the affordability and access for families. While four well-funded services are assured of their status and are enabled to provide discretionary fee-waivers, the under-funding or non-funding of the others results in the barring of access to families of limited means. In recently established but unconnected initiatives, the two city-based services have initiated small outreach programmes aimed at communities who would not normally access performance music courses. These projects are in an early embryonic phase but there is a small dedicated allocation of tuition hours to these outreach schemes: City Music Service allocates 18 part-time teaching hours per week to outreach, which works out less than one teacher-equivalent (TE=22 hours per week), in a local primary school for group tuition in classical instruments; and Urban-district Music Service operates a similar-scale music outreach scheme providing popular music tuition in vocals, electric guitar, bass and drums.

Claire, who administers County Music Service, referred to insider knowledge among families who are 'in-the-know' already participating, the word-of-mouth awareness of the existence of the Music Service, and the necessity of publicising the service more widely.

> …it still amazes me that nobody really knows who we are, so it's really been a passing on from father to son to sister to brother situation…The public was the parents who knew each other and we'll say, the music teacher down at the local school teaching the violin and maybe the school in which the music teacher is in – but the wider public would only be those who knew about it, or passed on...by word of mouth… (Claire)

However the administrator of a small county area music service pragmatically avoided provoking an increase in demand for tuition places by deciding not to publicise the existence of the service as he would not be able to offer tuition places from his allocated forty tuition hours per week:

> …we have enough for the people coming. I really don't want to have a waiting list and having to tell people 'we have no place for you', d'you know? ... it's a small-scale thing. I mean there's no point in advertising if you haven't got the hours to give people, you know. I don't think there is anyway – it's creating another problem. (Eoin)

The Music Services are geographically restricted to a few insular unconnected VEC/ETB areas; and within those Music Services, a severely limited allocation of teaching hours means that instrumental music education is offered as a scarce educational resource. The scarcity of provision results in the reluctance of some administrators to publicise the music courses to avoid the formation of impossibly long waiting lists. All the Music Services charge significant fees that reflect widely varying public funding levels. The charging of full commercial fee-rates places instrumental tuition out of the financial reach of many average middle-class families; and those organisations operating 'affordable fee' policies present a cost-barrier to low-income families.

In relative terms, the three organisations reviewed in the O'Brien Report (2001) are prominent as well-funded large-scale operations, but the remaining four Music Services work under conditions of underfunding and miniscule teacher-allocation. From a funding viewpoint, the instrumental music education provision could not be regarded as a national system and given the geographically 'patchy' provision, each Music Service essentially functions as a stand-alone organisation.

Summary

- Publicly-funded performance music is provided in only seven out of the original thirty-two VEC areas, now reorganised as 16 ETBs.
- The Music Services operate separately from one another and could not be regarded collectively as a national system of instrumental music education.
- The seven Music Services operate in local contexts, and differ in scale of provision and funding.
- The level of public funding bears directly on level of tuition fee.
- Tuition fee-level is closely connected with access to the instrumental music courses.
- Underfunding engenders conflict between Music Service administration and the VEC/ETB administration.
- All Music Services, regardless of scale and funding, are unable to fully satisfy public demand for instrumental music tuition, which is provided as a scarce educational resource.

4.1.2 Social profile

4.1.2.1 Gender

Data from both the questionnaire survey and the interview study indicated that student enrolment in the instrumental courses tended towards a distinctly female participation. There was unanimity among those who participated in the interview study both regarding the gender breakdown of the performance music courses and gendered nature of musical instruments. Participants estimated an average student enrolment rate, which ranges from sixty to forty and seventy to thirty in favour of female participation in instrumental learning:

> I suppose it's mainly – mainly female – I think yeah, the last stats...it's sixty-forty anyway if not a bit more female – male. (Eoin)

> Probably about three to two girls to boys… (Sarah)
> We have two hundred and thirty two female pupils and one hundred and forty male pupils. Not too bad – two thirds… (Bríd)

Table 4.4: Gender-profile of student-enrolment

(*N*=44)

My student enrolment consists of:	Response Percentage	Response count
Predominantly female	**43.2%**	**19**
Slightly more female	29.5%	13
Slightly more male	11.4%	5
Equal male and female	9.1%	4
Predominantly male	6.8%	3

The online questionnaire asked participants to estimate the gender-breakdown of their enrolment by completing the statement: *My student enrolment consists of…* (Table 4.4). The result showed that 74% of respondents had a student enrolment of more female than male students; and 45.7% had an enrolment of predominantly female students. Only 8.7% of respondents reported an equal number of male and female students.

John is Administrator of a music service, which, unusually among the seven, has a small rock-music programme and also a small-scale outreach in a local Primary school.

> Violins would be girls, guitars mostly boys, singers mostly girls... pianos then – slightly more girls… and teachers, mostly women – is the other thing! ...the music school would be about seventy to thirty per cent boys to girls, I suppose and rock musicians would be eighty to twenty per cent the other way. The [outreach] scheme would be more boys possibly no, I'm not sure – that'd be kinda half-in-half. (John)

He confirmed the female to male ratio in the music-school, which refers to individual tuition on classical instruments, as well as the reverse gender ratio among those learning rock instruments. It is interesting to note that the primary school outreach scheme, which takes place during school hours, had a well-balanced female-male ratio. John's counterpart, Frank, the Administrator of a large urban

music service confirmed the gender balance of an outreach scheme taking place in a primary school, although, unlike John's primary school scheme, Frank's scheme takes place outside of school hours. Both outreach schemes are recent initiatives, which were established to bring performance music to residents of disadvantaged areas and Frank explained the gender balance by virtue of the fact that boys in the area would not have access to the range of sports that would be available to members of middle-class groups.

> …you have to bear in mind that … a lot of the students in these areas wouldn't have the same access to sports – with regard to the boys, you know…assuming they go on to secondary school… (Frank)
> Referring to the Music School itself, which is the main business of the Music Service, Frank described an intensification of the female to male gendering of musical participation as students progressed through the grading system.
> If we break it into beginners up to secondary school – 12 year-olds..... the gender would break down – sixty-five to thirty-five in favour of girls…and if we take secondary school level as being grade 5, and Leaving Cert level as being grade 8, if we get to leaving Cert level, it's about eighty to twenty in favour of girls… (Frank)

He offered an explanation for the fall-off in male participation as being attributable to the fact that boys have access to a greater range of sport in secondary school, which may imply issues of male identity, image and self-efficacy when it come to the point of choosing between playing a musical instrument and participating in sport:

> Fall-off tends to be higher [among boys]…It's the fact that the boys, when they go into Secondary school they have greater access to sports – and even now a greater access to a greater range of sports, you know – and they tend to go off to the area that they get more satisfaction out of. (Frank)

Referring to the popular perception of guitar as an instrument favoured mainly by boys, Frank and Sarah noted an increase in girls taking guitar lessons since programmes such as X-Factor began to appear on television.

> We've a lot of girls learning guitar – and again, this has happened in the last seven or eight years with the various programmes like X-Factor. The girls actually – they can see other girls up there accompanying themselves in singing live on TV and say to themselves, 'there's no reason I can't. (Frank)

> …it's changed in guitar. It's now fifty-fifty in guitar. It started off being all boys and now it's the little pink Barbie guitars – so it's lovely... (Sarah)

However in Bríd's Music Service, while boys are in the minority in the other instrumental areas, guitar remains a largely male musical instrument.

> …you'll see a gap in the boys aged eight to ten – they dwindle down. But then guitar-wise...that's mainly boys. (Bríd)

This sense of instrumental gender-ratio change was also evident from the other participants; and, with regard to instruments other than guitar, it is clear that the masculine-feminine instrument continuum (Abeles and Porter, 1972, Green 2003, p.270, Hallam et al 2008) still applies after four decades. Sarah characterised Irish people as 'old fashioned about gendered instruments'. Orla and Margaret – both flute teachers reinforced the perception of flute as a female instrument:

> …a girly instrument – yeah, yeah – but it baffles me – my flute teacher was a man, and I have so few boy-students – I don't know where it comes from, - I really don't… in [this school] now, I haven't got a single boy this year, and I have twnty-four students and they're all girls. (Orla)
> ...last year I had no boys – all girls – thirty-two girls. This year I have some new beginners – three boys now this year, but that's unusual for me. I had one boy for maybe nine years of teaching and one or two started and lasted for two or three years and gave up – so the majority of my students are girls. And I think the flute is seen as a girl's instrument. And I think brass instruments are seen as boy instruments – I think violin is seen as girl instrument. (Margaret)

The violin is the one of the two principal instruments offered in the music services – the other being the piano. Its location next to flute on the masculine-feminine continuum is confirmed in the interviews as a mainly female instrument. The significance of the violin is its position constituting the largest section of the orchestra.

> …it's mostly piano – yeah – yeah. But we've no - again, we've tried to start double basses this year as a project… one kid doing double bass, we've only ten cello students. We've one viola and then a lot of violins… We went of to Prague in May and it was only about four lads. (John)
> …just look at the violin section of the orchestras – now there's a few more lads in seconds this year but all the firsts are girls, you know… (Brian)

The sense among young people of the gendered instrument was summarised by Claire:

> ..boys don't sing, but more boys could play the bass! – you know, that's a man's instrument; that's a woman's instrument – that's very strong in young people… (Claire)

Most participants referred to discernible differences between boys and girls in their respective approaches to learning musical instruments. Girls were characterised as conscientious and co-operative, which made them easier to teach. Boys, on the other hand, were described as disengaged, easily distracted and prone to quitting; but participants thought the small number of boys who succeeded did so with less effort than will girls when their interest is stimulated.

> I find the girls more concentrated, more focused, more willing to go along with you than the boys. The boys won't go along with you at all – you have to pull them and push them – give out to them. (Paul)
> …the girls do tend to be more conscientious – the boys very often - well sometimes get better results with less work – and the girls do well on a cross-section of things – and the boys are more specialised and do well in more specialised areas. (Sarah)
>
> …girls are quicker to understand – I don't know why – boys are thinking about football. They are here to do something different, but I can see – especially music theory – girls are quicker to understand, you know. (Marcus)
> Those few [boys] who pursued it and really were passionate and then sometimes rose to the top as well, but I'd say there's an awful lot more boys who could be very good if they didn't feel embarrassed about playing classical music or be drawn so much towards football or whatever draws them from the practice, or whatever… (Eoin)

Margaret thought that young boys react well to a male teacher, describing a male colleague as a model of 'coolness':

> Boys react better to the man teachers … I know one of my colleagues – a guitar teacher – and he's seen as being cool – and a little boy went into him recently – I know the parent, and you know, the kid loves to go to his lesson because the teacher is so cool, and it's a role-model. Someone to look up to – and I can't imagine a female teacher would get the same response. (Margaret)

Brian also regarded the gender of the teacher as a major factor in influencing boys' participation in instrumental music education and pointed to the gender imbalance among string teachers in his own Music Service.

> I think there could be more of a dropout rate with the guys – well there mightn't be more of a dropout rate if they had a male teacher… I don't have any boys dropping out from me… in my lessons, I play rocky bluesy stuff for them and they light up – boys love speed as well and…fast violin playing – they love it when they get a bit older.....I mean, just look at our string meetings...laughs... a case in point! (Brian)

The disengagement of boys in the classical music classroom, described by most of the participants, is not at all evident when boys are involved with rock instruments (Hallam et al 2008, p.8). Eoin describes a group of teenagers attending a rock workshop where the boys showed a high level of engagement, while the girls stood back.

> I've gone along to some little workshops being done by the Songschool people in Dublin and you get the real feeling that the boys are so into it – the girls are standing back. We were a bit shocked actually – the boys actually sat down and the girls stood up in this room where there was a shortage of chairs. I just thought they were the gods of the rock music and the girls you know, were standing back. (Eoin)

Playing musical instruments as an educational activity emphasises gender differences both in terms of engagement and instrument choice. Gender is symbolised through instruments such as the flute and violin as predominantly female and rock instruments predominantly male (Abeles and Porter 1978, Delzell and Leppla 1992, Green 1994). Findings from the interview data precisely confirmed the international research into the perceptions of teachers with regard to the gendered nature of music education. In the conservative cultural context of classical music, boys are seen to be somewhat more disengaged than girls, although they engage enthusiastically with rock music where they are regarded as being spontaneous and

adept (Green 2003, p.270). These are assumptions that become self-fulfilling prophesies through labelling and expectations.

Some participants thought that boys needed male teachers as role-models if they were to engage long-term with classical musical instruments. A related debate exists in the primary education sector where the teacher profile has become increasingly feminine in recent years. An arts education provision that attracts an unbalanced proportion of either gender deserves to be regarded as dysfunctional. The fact that such distortion is accepted as normative suggests organisational policy blindness with regard to gender-participation.

Summary

- Gender-differences characterise the learning of musical instruments.
- Participation in learning musical instruments is estimated in the range of 60:40 rising to 70:30 in favour of girls as they proceed through secondary school.
- Given an apparently free choice, masculine and feminine stereotyping still determines instrument choice.
- Flute and violin are perceived as more feminine.
- Boys are less inclined to choose classical orchestral instruments, but engage enthusiastically with rock instruments.
- Girls are characterised as conscientious, co-operative and easier to teach than boys.
- Boys are characterised as disengaged, easily distracted and prone to quitting easily.
- The small proportion of boys who succeed are perceived to do so with less effort than girls when their interest is stimulated.
- The reduced male participation is attributed to the greater access to sports for boys.
- More girls are now playing guitar (a male instrument) since the appearance of shows such as X-Factor on television.

4.1.2.2 Social class

Interview questions regarding the social demographic availing of the respective music services drew responses, which suggested that middle-class families were the main beneficiaries of the publicly funded music provision. Most of the participants confirmed a middle-class student enrolment, and connected class with the cultural 'fit' of learning musical instruments. Responses included:

> ...middle-class by and large. (Bríd)
>
> ...predominantly middle-class territory. (Frank)
>
> ...catering for the better off members of the community. (Sarah)
>
> ...middle-class and working-class that want better for their children. (Claire)
>
> ...an elite hobby for middle-class children. (Eoin)
>
> ...fits with middle-class culture. (Brian)
>
> ...middle-class and upwards. (Joanne)

Margaret instanced tangible signs of wealth among some of her students' families.

> We don't aim at it, but we end up teaching middle- to upper-class kids…a few parents have thrown out €2000 for a new flute without batting an eyelid…a lot of my students go skiing. (Margaret)

Participants had a perception that middle-class parents were aware of extra-musical learning benefits deriving from a cognitive transfer of skills learned through playing an instrument.

> There's a huge tradition in Ireland of this sort of passion for education that my parents would have followed through with (John)
> To quote one parent, 'a person isn't educated – doesn't have a rounded education if they've not learnt music'…people who value education tend to value the music…people who are educated...or have a high level of education…send their children to us – and quite a few people had read reports that children that study music do better in school than children who don't study music. (Sarah)

> You have parents who are genuinely interested in education. A lot of those parents want their children to have every opportunity to develop all their talents... (Eoin)

These statements may be indicative of the participants' own middle-class habitus. The questionnaire survey (*N*=48) found an 87.5% majority of instrumental music teachers coming from middle-class backgrounds (see Appendix 5, Table 3), reflecting recent studies of Irish teacher social backgrounds that indicate teachers as an occupational group identified as mainly Social Class 1 and 2 – professional, employer and managerial groupings (Drudy, 2009, Lynch 1999, p.123).

Only one participant resisted being drawn on the subject of social class:

> The student is here for half an hour…they are here to enjoy…they take the trumpet and they are in a different world…there's no need to go into details. (Marcus)

However, Marcus's teaching colleagues at Urban-district Music Service described the location of the music-centre in a working-class area, where the local population was not participating in the instrumental courses. John, the administrator of the Urban-district Music Service characterised this phenomenon as *'a doughnut effect*', which was well-known to him. Paul, a teacher of woodwind, at the same music-centre situated in a second level Community College after school hours, described locked, covered pianos in the classrooms as symbols of middle-class exclusivity. According to Paul, those pianos were not open for the day students from the local working-class neighbourhood, but at 4 o'clock were unlocked for the fee-paying music students coming into the school for piano lessons.

> ... almost every room here has a piano and has a cover – a felt type cover – and that's in the classroom of the children of this area who never have access to music at all...it's very odd that the VEC would allow these young children to come into the classroom and this thing in the corner is not to be seen or to be touched – but at 4 o'clock as they walk out the door these other students walk in and suddenly it's available...what sort of message is that? ... 'you're not valuable, worth the effort'...and it must dislocate them in some way to feel that it's not our place. (Paul)

Participants were aware of the discomfort experienced by some members of disadvantaged communities in the formal setting of a music school. Maura spoke of the discomfort of a *'very working-class family'* who felt *'very intimidated in the building'* [a city centre music-school]. Music Service administrator, John understood the 'formality of music-schools' as a barrier to participation. In an attempt at addressing a perceived unevenness of participation, the school initiated a small outreach scheme of group instrumental tuition on a community-based model based in a neighbouring primary school. Frank, administrator of City Music Service, also referred to a similar outreach scheme in a disadvantaged city neighbourhood, speaking of the necessity to make music tuition available within walking distance of every student:

> Don't expect a disadvantaged community to come to a city centre music-school…some will not leave their one or two square miles. *(Frank)*

Fees were regarded as a significant barrier to wide social participation:

> Of course, it's the old thing – it's fee paying… (Claire)
> Fees are subsidised, but still too much for people on the periphery. (Eoin)
> Finding the fee is difficult for many families. (Elaine)

The position of instrumental music education as fee-paying and extra-curricular location poses an access barrier to low-income families, and there is a strong connection identifying the learning of classical musical instruments as a middle-class cultural activity (Lareau 2002, Vincent and Ball 2007). The connection between music service organisational dispositions and the class-based engagement with performance music may be deduced from the social and aesthetic make-up of instrumental music education itself. When considering structure, content and participation, musical genre and financial cost connect to correlate with social-class differentials with regard to participation in the instrumental music courses.

In discussing social-class participation in instrumental music education, many of the participants exhibited deficit views when speaking about the non-participation of poor working-class families. Paul had earlier expressed his unease at the presence of locked and covered pianos in the classrooms, which he regarded as conveying a message of middle-class exclusivity to working-class students. He explained the non-participation of the local children in simple terms of affordability.

> …the people of the area don't see it as advantage…to them it's just another cost. (Paul)

Suggesting that cost might not be the sole reason for working-class non-participation in the learning of musical instruments, Brian proffered an explanation in deficit terms of ignorance or lack of education on the part of poorer families.

> It wouldn't occur to the lower class maybe to go to violin lessons…ignorance on their part…a lack of education. (Brian).

Administrator-participant, Eoin, suggested that the VEC/ETB might share this deficit outlook on the educational and cultural choices of disadvantaged social groups when he spoke of

> ...mixed feelings within the VEC – the sense that …'we would want to give music services to poorer families – but they wouldn't want it anyway'! (Eoin)

John broadened the scope to explain the local non-participation as a general lack of tenacity connected to the local people's attitude to education.

> People from the area wouldn't have the same tenacity where access to education is concerned. (John)

An emerging deficit narrative regarding working-class people and education identified common assumptions of negative attitudes to education, lack of tenacity with regard to children's education, lack of care about education, or a general culture of unemployment.

> …there is a cultural divide in attitudes to learning instruments…people who don't care about education…a culture of unemployment. (Sarah)
> …they don't have an attitude for…it's a negative attitude. (Maura)

While speaking of the financial sacrifices that some middle-class parents make to fund music tuition, Elaine voiced a cliché common among some media commentators regarding people who rely on social welfare.

> People on social welfare are on more money than some on lower income'. (Elaine)

Research literature finds deficit discourses to be generally pervasive among teachers (Comber and Kamler 2004, p.293). Staffroom discourses regarding students and their families reflect a habitual deficit way of speaking about poor working-class families. It is widely asserted that low-income families do not value education, work, social mobility or economic progress (Valencia and Black 2002, p.82). A deficit discourse places the problems of achievement with the students and their low-income family rather than examining and questioning the fit between the student and the education system itself (Garcia and Guerra 2004, p.151). For example, a discourse of blame regarding literacy assumes that disadvantaged students enter school without the necessary skills and knowledge because uncaring parents do not support their children's learning. This reinforces complacency among teachers that there might be any further means of educating disadvantaged students more effectively (p.151).

The pervasiveness of deficit beliefs constitutes a filter that blocks educators from questioning their own assumptions. Garcia and Guerra suggest that there is little willingness on the part of educators to explore solutions to non-participation and problems of achievement within the education system itself because educators do not see themselves as being part of a problem. Rather, as Valencia and Black point out,

'the deficit model turns students into burdens and trades potential for risk' (Valencia and Black 2002, p.87).

Referring back to the opening vignette depicting the attempt of a low-income mother to access violin tuition for her daughter, we can detect an element of deficit thinking by the administrator who was not willing to grant a fee-waiver in the absence of a previous 'track record'. It amounted to a fear that a valuable individual lesson time-slot might be risked on an unproven, or even untrustworthy, family in an otherwise fee-paying context. The potential for a young person's well-being through musical participation was not considered in this case. Instead, the risk, or even expectation, of failure and wasted resources was the principle consideration. When this vignette is considered in the context of the deficit views of the participants regarding 'lower-class' families, it becomes clear that middle-class music teachers and their Music Service administrators have minimal understandings of low-income social groups. In reality, a mainly middle-class instrumental music education cohort with a tacit belief in dominant-class cultural conformity enact the instrumental music courses, so it is no surprise that the non-participation in performance music is construed as evidence of not valuing education by poor families. This would call into question the adequacy of third-level programmes in the preparation of largely female middle-class performance music teachers to work with members of poorer social groups (Garcia and Guerra 2004, p.152).

A commonly expressed opinion among the participants held that members of disadvantaged social groups would not have an interest in learning musical instruments and would not care about education in general. The public of the Music Services can therefore be understood as local middle-class families who wished to access instrumental lessons for their children. During the interviews, the participants

were invited to give their perceptions of what constituted the Music Service public. *How would they describe their public – or for whom do Music Services cater?* The typical reply was the Music Services were catering for the better-off or middle-class section of society, which aligned with international research findings (Kobacki et al 2007, p.17; Lareau 2002, p. 748; Vincent and Ball 2007, p. 1066). It is evident, that participants have little or no professional contact with members of lower social groups and display an indifferent, deficit view of working-class people.

Summary

1. Under a difficult supply-demand ratio, the children of middle-class families are the main beneficiaries of the instrumental music education provision.
2. The Music Services are a response to the cultural needs of middle-class families
3. Members of lower social classes are not participating instrumental tuition
4. Tuition fees and extra-curricular location act as access barriers to low-income families.
5. A perception of cultural elitism may intimidate members of lower social groups.
6. Instrumental music teachers have minimal professional interaction with members of disadvantaged social groups.
7. Deficit beliefs are widespread among instrumental music teachers regarding members of disadvantaged social groups.
8. Practitioners believe that members of disadvantaged social groups do not value education and would not want to learn musical instruments.
9. Dominant-class cultural belief and conformity construct and enact the publicly funded instrumental music education provision.
10. Instrumental music education operates in a narrow social and cultural context which isolates this education sector in a rarefied world – the 'Secret Garden'

4.1.3 The instrumental courses

4.1.3.1 Musical genre

Survey data identified Western classical music played on orchestral instruments, piano and classical guitar as the dominant musical genre of the VEC/ETB Music Services. Table 4.5 demonstrated the delineation of the instrumental courses as over ninety percent classical. Irish traditional music is the only alternative musical genre represented in the Music Services (4.3%). Popular and rock instruments are not represented in the sample.

Table 4.5: Professional areas of teacher-participants

(*N*=46)

	Response percentage	Response count
Strings-classical	**28.3%**	**13**
Piano	21.7%	10
Woodwind	17.4%	8
Classical guitar	6.5%	3
Brass	4.3%	2
Traditional instruments	4.3%	2
Voice	4.3%	2
Harp	2.2%	1
Percussion-orchestral	2.2%	1
Theory and musicianship	2.2%	1
Drums	0.0%	0
Pop/rock instruments	0.0%	0
[Administrator]	*[6.5%]*	*[3]*

Focusing on two large Music Services, data derived from interview (Table 4.6) confirms the range of instrumental choice at County and Urban-district Music Services as classical orchestral, piano and classical guitar.

Table 4.6: Instrument choice

County Music-Service	*Urban-district Music-Service*
Strings	Strings
Brass	Brass
Flute	Flute
Woodwind	Woodwind
Orchestral percussion	Orchestral percussion
Piano	Drums
Keyboard	Piano
Classical guitar	Keyboard
Irish harp	Accordion (classical)
Traditional instruments	Classical guitar
Singing	Irish harp
	Singing

Throughout the interviews, participants expressed a strong belief that learners are best served by classical pedagogy for the development of a high quality instrumental playing technique. The superiority of classical pedagogy in equipping the young musician to develop a standard of performance was proclaimed as being transferrable to other genres and styles.

> I think it's very important to have a classical background, because with classical music you will always try to find the perfection... there are more things to care about. I think if you come from the classical music, I think, your technical skills are better. (Marcus)
> I have heard people say 'learn it with the classical pedagogy and technique and then you can play anything you want'. (Claire)
> There has to be standard – it can't be a buffet, as I've heard it described before – there's no harm in specialising in one area and from that delving into others... (Brian)

Elaine asserted the superiority of classical technique by referring to the insistence of an experienced singing teacher that students, who originally wished to learn pop vocals, would be persuaded to develop classical vocal technique as the appropriate way to begin vocal training. Similarly, Órla insisted on the necessity of developing a classical guitar technique in order to play rock-guitar at the highest level.

> We've one very highly trained classical singing teacher with twenty years of teaching... You know, maybe they wanted to sing pop-music when they came in – but they were explained this was a good way for them to learn – and their parents. (Elaine)
> ...there's an awful lot of students coming in wanting to do guitar and drums – that style of instrument – whereas any guitar teacher will tell you, you have to learn classical guitar in order to play like Jimi Hendrix – to play scales to get round – otherwise you're wasting your time. (Órla)

For reasons of tradition and precedent, classical orchestral instrumental tuition was regarded as being the most effective. Eoin felt that using the existing classical orchestral resources of the Music Service was more appropriate as young people would easily gain access to rock instruments due to the pervasiveness of rock in the media.

> I'm not against rock music, but I just felt that in the context of what we had and where we've come from it was better to try and use the classical instruments, especially the orchestral instruments... I felt that a lot of the children were already motivated and stimulated enough by what they saw on the media that they would do rock music – they would find a way to get there... (Eoin)

Eoin would not envisage a broadening of musical genre, his use of the phrase *...in the context of what we had and where we've come from...* indicating a Music Service rooted in the heritage of the Western classical musical tradition.

Summary

- Teacher knowledge, methodologies and musical repertoire construct the instrumental courses – determined through the teaching contracts.
- Western classical music is the core musical genre of the Music Services.
- The broad taste-landscape of wider society is not represented in the Music Services.
- Many teachers have a growing awareness of a need to extend towards popular musical culture to acknowledge students' musical taste.

4.1.3.2 Individual tuition

The defining feature of the instrumental music courses is the individuated pedagogy, which is the typical context for student-teacher interaction within the Music Services. The one-to-one instrumental lesson sets instrumental music education apart from first- and second-level education sectors, which are based on group interaction. While some signature pedagogies, such as the Suzuki system of string teaching, have group-tuition in the beginner stage, mainstream instrumental tuition throughout the Western world is enacted in the form of the individual lesson (Davidson 2007, p.729).

Table 4.7: Class size

(*N*=39)

	Response percentage	Response count
Individuals only	**31.7%**	**13**
Mainly individuals (some small groups)	**58.5%**	**24**
Small groups of 3-5	4.9%	2
Medium-sized groups of 6-10	0.0%	0

Survey data (Table 4.7) found a system of mainly individual tuition being operated by Music Services in Ireland. The individuated feature of instrumental tuition renders the service expensive to provide with implying restricted access for a relatively small number of students.

Interview participants were asked to comment on the place of group instrumental learning in music schools and services. The consistency of responses to this question suggested a dominant orthodoxy throughout the sector, which regards the one-to-one instrumental lesson as the most effective method of delivering the instrumental courses. Few respondents had experience of group-teaching, but were moderately-

disposed to the proposition, providing group-learning was limited to the entry-level stage or as a supplement to the individual lesson.

Eoin instanced the violin as a technically complex instrument unsuited to group-learning pedagogy. He had been advised, presumably by violin teachers, of the 'trickiness' of teaching the violin beyond the initial stage, a professional judgement he does not contest. Sarah accepts the same general opinion of her teaching staff. Brian reiterates the belief that individual tuition is necessary after the beginner stage. Joanne is unequivocal in her belief in one-to-one tuition as a fast-track to technical excellence. Margaret reiterates the Conservatory instrumental learning model stating her allegiance to individual instrumental pedagogy supplemented by chamber-music ensemble classes.

> I mean obviously it's not ideal for teaching something like the violin – it can be for beginners, but once you get past a certain point – that's what I'm told – it's tricky to teach. (Eoin)
>
> We haven't got beyond the beginner stage…teachers said when they get more advanced they would have to have individual… (Sarah)
>
> I don't believe in it for every situation – there comes a time when the student is reaching a certain level where the one-to-one is more beneficial – I believe. (Brian)
>
> In the long-term, one-on-one is best really – you go furthest fastest – that's it. You can nip technical stuff in the bud. (Joanne)
>
> I'd still love to see the individual lessons – but alongside group lessons of chamber music of some description. (Margaret)

Two participants spoke of being fearful of the prospect of teaching groups. Margaret explains the reluctance of teachers to consider group-teaching as 'fear of the unknown', which she reported as sharing. She elaborated on the fear factor as a worry that a 'strong player' might be held back.

> I'd have no problem taking it on – I've just got a little bit of a fear factor about it. (Brian)
>
> From my point of view, I have no experience of group lessons and I would be fearful of teaching group lessons. And is it a fear of the unknown? – probably! ...where I would worry in group teaching would be say, if you had

> four students in the room, say one strong, three weak – is your strong player being held back? (Margaret)

Only two participants expressed a positive attitude to group learning. Marcus, a teacher of brass instruments is a national of another European country where it is common for brass-players to learn within the wind-band in group-learning context. Elaine has an arts management rather than an education or instrumental music background. Marcus regarded individual tuition as easy and relaxed, pointing out the complexity of the group tuition context in which a teacher must be alert to the interactions between group members. For Marcus, teaching groups is hard work. Similarly, the student is in a challenging social context during group lesson in comparison to an individual lesson. He further elaborated group-learning as a medium in which young instrumentalists participate with others finding self-expression and developing confidence in a social setting.

> [For the teacher] …individual is more relaxed because you have only one student – it's easier to find the problems – to sort them out. In groups you have to have thousands of eyes and ears as well – you have to watch and check – for example if you have three or four students you have to be able to understand what they are doing – otherwise it's messy.
>
> [For the student] …if you are in a group of students it's more challenging because you can see the level of other people. If you are in lesson on-to-one, you just work in the class, take your instrument and play for half an hour and of course you just follow what the teacher says and that's it.
>
> ...playing music together is a way to socialise and meet other people… sometimes it's a way to show the emotions – it's a way to express yourself – probably after two or three lessons you find yourself that you're more confident – so it's a way to improve your character as well. (Marcus)

Elaine, with a professional background in general arts management, had no pre-formed convictions around individual instrumental lessons. However she came to a realisation that one-to-one tuition was intense and serious and developed a policy that entry to individual tuition should be delayed for as long as possible. However, students do incrementally move into individual tuition.

> We felt it was better to try and keep the groups. We felt that if people moved too quickly onto individual that it did become very, very serious ... and where there was a situation where somebody's group was not coming back – we tried to see if we could put them in a new group – and we really felt that that was working…
> The system is group tuition initially – so if you came in the door, you're in a group lesson of three. Then you move on to two and then an individual when you're slightly down the road a bit. (Elaine)

The same consideration towards the introduction of young students to instrumental learning was expressed by Frank, the administrator of a city Music Service, who stated that one-to-one tuition was likely to be intimidating for very young children of four to six years of age. However, slightly older beginners entered directly to individual lessons:

> …it's a policy that we use…four to six-year-olds coming in to the school – we do certain groups, but never larger than three… I think that's a fantastic introduction because going to a school of music on a one-to-one basis for a 4-5-6 year-old can be quite intimidating…if you have a beginner who begins at 8 or 9 or 10, well then I think one-to-one is fine… (Frank)

There was a near-consensus among participants on the necessity of individual tuition, due to the high technical requirements involved in learning classical instruments. On the other hand there was an acceptance that, outside of the orchestral instruments and piano, group tuition was the usual learning context for traditional instruments and guitar.

> The [Music Service] gives one-to-one tuition and it also gives class tuition. It seems to have a big traditional music centre and that would be more class-based and then one-to-one on orchestral instruments… (Margaret)
>
> It's one-to-one here… the guitars might do groups. That's just numbers – they have so many wanting to play the guitar that they just have to put them together – whereas the likes of me it would be a lesser known one [clarinet] – it wouldn't be so popular. I just do one-to-one – that what I'm employed as. (Peter)

Peter explained that the large public demand for guitar lessons, rather than pedagogic policy, was the reason for considering group-tuition. The Music Service in which Peter is employed is well-funded by public subsidy, but two non-subsidised smaller

Music Services are obliged to charge full commercial fees to cover salaries and other expenses. Both administrators responded to families' constrained financial situations by offering more tuition places in paired and small-group instrumental lessons.

> It's cheaper on the parents paying for a paired lesson, and we generate more income from the paired lessons – and you're increasing your numbers at the same time… (Bríd)

…we are offering more group classes in order to lower the fees. (Sarah)

Some administrators, responding to high costs and poor funding, look to pairing and group tuition as a means of lowering costs and increasing tuition capacity. Some existing students whose families find themselves in reduced financial circumstances are opting for group tuition.

> It's been mostly people that have lost their jobs or reduced income now that have changed from individual to the group rather than new people that have never been before… (Sarah)

Viewed in terms of economy of scale, individual tuition is an expensive provision within a finite publicly funded teaching allocation; and because a finite number of individual instrumental learners can be accommodated within the allocated teaching capacity, it is not possible to satisfy demand for places in the music courses. As a consequence, two problems arise. At the level of student numbers and funding, fees are set, which many families cannot afford and for those who are in a position to pay for instrumental lessons for their children, there may not be adequate tuition places available. Sarah succeeded in obtaining qualified agreement on group tuition with the teaching staff, but, again, only for the beginner stages.

> I asked all the teachers individually would they be willing to take a group or two, and they all said yes… nobody was against it. We haven't got beyond the beginners stage…teachers said when they get more advanced they would have to have individual... (Sarah)

Although, according to Sarah, her teachers were well disposed towards teaching small groups of students, the habituated belief persisted among them that once they

moved beyond the initial stages, students need one-to-one tuition in order to advance. The same flexibility was not apparent among the teaching staff of Bríd's Music Service. She obtained only very limited agreement on pairing among her piano-teachers. She instanced one teacher who found she was unable to extend out of the teaching model in which she was trained.

> We've been really pushing the teachers to take more pairs, to take more groups… we have 82 piano students, but out of that there's only about four or five pairs, and [the teachers] haven't really been opened to coming along and learning how to take more than one at a time…to take one teacher I know…she tried and tried – it was actually not beneficial to anybody. She just didn't have the capability. Nobody benefitted really – neither the child nor herself. (Bríd)

In a sector where specialisation is the norm, the holding back of a potentially high achieving student is a commonly perceived dilemma. Claire, while stating her support for the idea of group instrumental classes, regarded group-learning in pragmatic terms as a temporary arrangement whereby weaker students will drop out leaving *'real interested ones in their place'* (Clare). In a system that is so subject to high achievement criteria tempered by enrolment restriction, it is not surprising that the projected dropping out of 'weaker' students is envisaged as acceptable, expected and even desirable.

It is significant that the only participants who believe in group learning came from outside the Irish instrumental music education context – Elaine coming to administration from a previous career in general arts-management; and Marcus, a citizen of another European country coming from a wind-band learning context. All other participants were formed as teachers through the same system in which they now administer or teach.

In piloting small-group tuition as an attempt to reduce expense for families, administrators of the two non-subsidised Music Services encountered various levels

of resistance from teachers. It is clear that group-learning is outside the pedagogic experience of vocal and instrumental music teachers in Ireland to any real extent; indeed it evokes a 'fear of the unknown'.

Participants do not professionally regard learning classical instruments in groups – even small groups – as viable beyond the beginner stage. Within the Music Services, individual pedagogy is known and trusted but group teaching is 'other' and untrustworthy in the minds of teachers. This is a belief that is shared by administrators of the Music Services who avoid making change to the one-to-one arrangement that might cause discomfort in teachers. The resistance of instrumental music teachers to change suggests conservatism within a bounded system, which has a low degree of permeability to pedagogic and cultural 'crossover' from other education sectors or learning settings.

Summary

- One-to-one, or individuated, pedagogy is the identifying pedagogy of all Music Services.
- Group-learning is perceived as non-viable beyond the initial stages of learning.
- Professionals fear group tuition might 'hold back' potential high achievers.
- Music Services which provide group- or paired-lessons to beginners rely on the eventual dropping-out of 'weaker' students to enable individual lessons for high-achieving students.
- The poorly-funded Music Services charging commercial fees have begun to offer group lessons to families who find themselves in reduced financial circumstances.
- Music Service professionals teach in the way they themselves were taught. They distrust and fear the changes that group-teaching might bring.
- Although participants have little or no experience outside of one-to-one tuition, group-learning as pedagogy is generally distrusted, regarded in deficit terms.

4.1.3.4 Conceptions of musical ability

The twin pillars of the formal structure of music education are the Western classical cannon and the 'innate talent' construct of musical ability (Green 2003, p.264; Sloboda 2005, p.275). Musical ability is traditionally conceptualised as 'talent' and the terms, *talent* and *ability,* are synonymous for many instrumental teachers. The talent construct regards children as either being in possession of inherited musical giftedness or not. Under this construct, talent is understood to be fixed and immutable; and 'talented' children are subjected to 'good teaching' in order to achieve the best result (Sloboda 2005, p.300). From a sociocultural perspective, the young musician is an active participant in his or her own learning, but traditional

talent constructs of musical ability persist in Western culture with regard to different levels of musical expertise (Hallam and Prince 2003, p.7).

To provide an overview of teacher belief in the area of musical ability, the online survey offered two statements, which represented the alternative conceptions of musical ability (Table 4.8).

Table 4.8: Perceptions of musical ability

(*N*=40)

	Response percentage	Response count
Musical ability is possessed by some individuals. It is an inherited talent. You either have it or you don't	17.5%	7
All individuals are potentially musical, given circumstance and opportunity. Musical ability can be developed by anyone.	**82.5%**	**33**

Offered a clear choice between two opposing models, a large majority of respondents (82.5%) rejected the proposition of innate talent possessed by few individuals, instead indicated that anyone can develop musical ability given the appropriate circumstance and opportunity [x^2 = 16.9000, *df = 1, P* <0.0001].

Mixed opinions emerged from the interview data between participants who regard giftedness as natural to some individuals; and those who believe that all individuals have potential to develop musically. The term 'talent' was commonly used among the participants to indicate both the conception of inherent giftedness, as well as that of developable ability; and it was necessary throughout to ascertain which sense of the word was meant in each case.

Paul, Brid and Maura held definite beliefs in innate special talent:

> It can be developed, but only confined to the child – its own natural ability – it can't be improved beyond that – it's a limit that everybody has – we all have a limit in all aspects of life. (Paul)
> some are talented regardless of background.(Brid)

Maura thought it was *'a privilege to teach a talented child'*, but added

> I also teach many, many kids that are not talented, but as long as they are making an effort and enjoying music... then that's fine (Maura)

Marcus asserted

> you are born with a talent and after that you can work to what you really are – but, I have to say, if you are not born [with a talent] you can reach the same level by working hard. (Marcus)

Eoin, an administrator believed that 'some people have a genetic predisposition to understanding the way sounds are ordered', but later in the interview he added:

> …others then were ordinary enough but then blossomed into something fantastic when they were older. (Eoin)

Elaine, an administrator did not enter into discussion regarding musical ability, but she used both the terms *'talent'* and *'ability'* synonymously throughout the interview, leading me to the conclusion that, like Eoin, she does conceptualise talent as an innate entity, but regarded motivation and commitment as effective in the musical development of young musicians. Margaret, a flute teacher, had a similar view:

> …there is a certain element of natural ability – but people, even if they don't have a lot of natural ability, it can be developed and can be taught. (Margaret)

She also linked general school academic and high achievement in sport with being good musicians. John referred to musical ability in terms of the responsibility of the teacher to avoid being negative and dismissive of apparent low musical ability, and instead engage the students by being positive and dynamic.

> …your challenge then is to make that class exciting and dynamic rather than it being 'you've no ability whatsoever – you're wasting your time. (John)

Comparing the learning styles of rock and classical musicians, John made the point:

> The issue for rock musicians isn't that they're proficient… if they were the equivalent classical player, they'd get up through their grades – the challenge for rock musicians is that they work with other people. (John)

Frank did 'not believe it's in the genes'. He called the inherited genetic construct the 'old-school thinking' of an older generation of music teachers, and added:

> With the younger generation teachers, they take every student as they come – they'll push them to achieve their potential. It doesn't really matter what their parents or their grandparents did or didn't do. They're just taking every student at face-value as they come in to them. (Frank)

The student's own agency and effort was more significant for Joanne than an overt musical responsiveness. She gave more importance to effort and time-input in developing the young musician.

> There's no short-cut around sweat – no matter how good your ear is – there's no short-cut around time input and energy input, so em....so the ones with, you know, a quick ear and a quick mind will get further, but the ones with, you know, a less quick mind, with hard work will surprise themselves and have a good experience. They mightn't be playing to the same level as another student, but for them they can achieve comparatively as much. (Joanne)

Brian was forthright in his rejection of the innate special talent construct, arguing that motivation is key to learning.

> You know, usually the students are good at any given subject, because they really like it and there's something that motivates them – and we all have different things motivate all of us... I think musical ability is the same more or less in everybody and some gravitate more towards doing better in it than others, because they put in more time... when you click with something and you have an interest and you want to understand more about it and you get a hunger and a thirst for it ...so you are going to get better at it if you try. (Brian)

It might be reasonable to assume that the gradations in beliefs about the nature and source of musical ability could be generalised over the whole instrumental teaching cohort. Most of the participants were slow to engage on the topic, giving an impression that they had not given it much critical consideration. In four of the interviews, while circling the topic, I was aware of a resistance or perhaps inability of the participants to engage and one participant, Sarah, refused outright to discuss the topic of musical ability:

> …you know talent and ability have become dirty words and I think we should avoid that, you know… no, no – I'm not going to answer that – nature and nurture and all that, you know. (Sarah).

I introduced 'prodigy' as an embodied means of engaging participants with the topic of musical ability in a personalised, tangible sense, in order to encouraging further discussion. The concept of the prodigy proved to be more readily identifiable by the participants – there was near consensus that prodigies emerge from a particular family context.

John referred to the 'prodigy parent' as a component part of the 'prodigy model'. He described a combination of teacher, parent and a particular type of child 'a musician with a racing-driver's mentality, that kind of fearlessness'.

He wondered if his teachers 'would be able to cope with a student like that'. (John)

Frank made the observation:

> The superstars, as I call them – what I have found that those superstars have been supported – strongly supported from a very early age – encouraged, and ... pushed by one or other of the parents – and that support and encouragement continues on... really until the superstar gets to university or gets to conservatoire level – but that can happen to the detriment of the other children within the family (Frank)

Margaret regarded prodigies as:

> a mixture of being in the right place at the right time, having the right family background and getting the lessons from a very good teacher, and having the interest to keep it going. (Margaret)

Marcus tended towards the natural talent view:

> It's Mother Nature. I think people with really high skills, eh, we can find them everywhere – music, sports – people who work in office – are quicker, know how to apply basic ideas than others – nowadays we see this – it's not only about music – it's in general – you see football – 20 , 22-years old is a great talent. You can work hard but you cannot get the talent, for example....you have it or you don't have it. (Marcus)

To provide a simple overview of teacher belief in the area of musical ability, the online survey offered two statements, which represented the alternative conceptions of musical ability. The result indicates that, when offered a clear choice between two

opposing models, a large majority of respondents (83.3%) rejected the proposition of innate talent possessed by few individuals, instead indicated that anyone can develop musical ability given the appropriate conditions.

Summary

- *Talent* is a term widely used by instrumental music professionals.
- The word *talent* is ambiguous in common usage, and can represent both the innate giftedness construct and the developable ability construct.
- Natural musical ability or *innate talent* is a widely-held belief, but when probed deeper, most believe that anyone can learn a musical instrument subject to appropriate conditions such as motivation to learn and social environmental factors.
- Although based on a common musical genre, pedagogic and assessment model, participants differentiate between the elite music-academies and the Music Services.
- While accepting variations in abilities, instrumental teachers expect effortful engagement and regular practice from the students.
- Natural ability such as a quick ear or good hands is less significant than pleasure, motivation, effortful engagement and time-input.
- Prodigies are the product of social conditions – high parental support and encouragement and good teaching.
- Many exceptional instrumental music students are also good at sport.
- Motivation and effort are regarded as equal to natural ability.

4.1.3.4 Achievement criteria and assessment

All the Music Services hold annual graded instrumental examinations as the standard method of assessment, with some organisations placing more or less importance than others on the examination. County Music Service has its own in-house examination and the other six utilise the external examinations of Royal Irish Academy of Music (RIAM) or the UK based Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM), popularly known as the 'Associated Board'. Those examining bodies are active in instrumental music examination since the nineteenth century and over time have influenced the musical canon of instrumental music education. The Associated Board has an approximately one hundred and twenty year history of providing examinations throughout the former British Empire (Wright 2005, pp.255-258). At County Music Service, traditional instrumental students are assessed through a similar sequence of fixed-stage graded examinations.

In several of the organisations, teachers have discretion over the choice of examination body. In the Music Services administered by Bríd and Eoin, teachers enter students for annual examination with one of the two examining bodies.

> We're divided in the whole exam system – there's one piano teacher and a singing teacher – and one of the guitar teachers go with Associated Board, but the other piano teachers go with Academy [Royal Irish Academy of Music RIAM]. And the other guitar teacher goes with RIAM. So it depends on who you get, what exam board you follow. (Bríd)
> Most of them do the Royal Irish Academy exams and there's one or two that do the Associated Board… (Eoin)

However, Eoin described the Music Service, which he administers as having a greater focus on orchestral playing. Elaine also placed less of an emphasis on annual examination.

> It's not [exam-driven] – a lot of them, their focus is on basic tuition and then playing in the orchestra. (Eoin)
> … we didn't suggest exams until a good few years in…Royal Irish Academy – but it wasn't an automatic thing… one of our teachers was an examiner for

> the Academy and she made us think – she would be the very one advocating not sending in the kids who were not ready or were stressed by it – or 'let's develop a performance model'. So there was no pressure on my teachers to put them in for exams – now there would have been pushy parents… (Elaine)

Elaine alluded to pressure coming from some parents regarding instrument examinations. Claire understood parental concern with examinations and grading as a method of measuring progress and defends expressing learning in terms of the achievement of a grade. She described a perceived expectation that teachers would enter students for annual grade examinations by referring to her own experience as a young teacher.

> Parents are driven by grades because that's what they understand to be the marker…I think there's no harm in having a marker... I used to think 'Oh my god, I'd better put them all in now because they're watching me, and I won't have a job and I won't be considered 'good'. And I can see that in other people because it was in me. It's gone from me now... (Claire)

Margaret experienced this expectation as a reality in her professional life. Her position regarding grade examinations might be understood as contradictory. While she objects to over-emphasis on examinations, her belief in the effectiveness of the assessment structures derives from the familiarity of her own musical up-bringing in the same system.

> …from what we're expected to do, it's exam-geared – just teaching the instrument…one thing that I object to greatly is the exam focus. I like the exams and I do focus on them – but they're not the be-all-and-the-end-all...I was born and reared on the system, so it's very comfortable, very familiar to me, and I'm very happy with how it works. (Margaret)

While the instrumental music education sector is distributed over seven independent unconnected Music Services, there is a common consistency in the system of assessment by annual graded examination.

Although both the VEC/ETB Music Services and the elite music academies and conservatories are rooted in the same Western classical tradition, participants distinguished between the Music Service organisations and the more prestigious

music academies in terms of student intake and the auditioning of new students. The non-selective admission and retention policy emerged as a key identifying characteristic of the Music Services.

The participants gave a clear sense of the distinction between the Music Services and other education sectors. They identified different roles for the VEC/ETB community-based model and that of the academies

> …the biggest thing is we don't have an audition process to come into our music-school – and we have the ethos of having it open to all, no matter of ability… we can cater for the high achievers and the run of the mill people. And then the people who have lower abilities but just enjoy playing, we have a facility to teach them, whereas somewhere I know like [named conservatory], if you don't reach a certain grade at a certain level, you're out – wasting space as such, so that would be a big difference. (Margaret)

> …it being the VEC you've got a sort of a patchwork of mentalities. Now, obviously, if you're auditioning for the [academy], there's an audition process…we wouldn't be like the academies that are, like, classical music conservatories. We would be preparatory or intermediate… (John)

> …it's very personal between each teacher and every student if it's one-to-one tuition. You're really depending on the skills and the understandings and the abilities of an individual teacher…I mean you can monitor and ask for, progression and results in exams… we leave that to the teachers to do that themselves…it's not [exam-driven] – a lot of [students] – their focus is on basic tuition and then playing in the orchestra. (Eoin)

Individuated pedagogy, which the Music Services have in common with the academies, requires teachers to personalise their teaching approach to the individual student. Frank, administrator of City Music Service differentiated between levels of learner musical ability to which a teacher would respond and appropriately adjust the pedagogic focus.

> …if a teacher recognises that a student has…a high level of talent, I think that the teacher will work to their utmost to help develop that child's potential – to bring it to an absolute maximum. That's not saying that a child that's showing less talent will not have the same input from the teacher, but the focus on the lessons may be in a different area… (Frank)

John, administrator of Urban-district Music Service, characterises the typical instrumental student in general terms as highly specialised following a closely

prescriptive and structured learning pathway based on specialised individual tuition, examinations and competitions.

> The music school type of student – this is generalization obviously – eh – is very highly trained, minutely trained on a one to one basis – is afraid of performance and will only perform in an exam situation, and occasionally in a competition situation. The exam situation will be measured in a number. The number will tell them whether they're good or bad, and the competition will tell them whether they are better than somebody else or not. Now, that's what I've been raised on and I'd defend a lot of that, to be honest with you, in terms of the methodologies behind it. (John)

In the experience of John, highly ambitious parents go directly to the music academy as they do not consider the VEC/ETB music courses as adequate to their needs. He questioned whether the Music Service would have the capacity to support a learning model, which would be required to escalate the technical and musical instrumental development of such a student. '…the prestige parent is automatically only thinking about the [academy]…' (John)

Frank spoke of the differing needs of the high-achieving student who would need a broad range of instrument technique to support learning in contrast to the average instrumental student. Both levels of learning, according to Frank, may be achieved in the Music Service with adjusted lesson-plans.

> … and I think if you take a talented student, that for them to achieve their full potential, that they need to learn in their lesson quite a cross section – scales – they need to do a lot more work on technique - and you know, they need quite a broad range of stuff – as against your average student who will learn an element of everything, but may struggle that bit more with technique, you know, so obviously you tailor the lesson plan to make it – do more popular pieces and that… (Frank)

While the Music Services are non-selective in their pupil-intake, teachers expect a high level of effortful engagement and commitment to regular instrumental practice on the part of learners. Margaret used a common colloquial term 'passenger' for those students who constantly come to lessons without practicing.

> To successfully learn an instrument you need to practice regularly. You need to be disciplined in your practice... I think we still have a lot of what I would call 'passengers', who take advantage... (Margaret)

Enabling instrumental students to fulfil a personal potential or 'personal best' was considered by Frank, administrator of City Music Service to be the 'mission' of instrumental music professionals.

> I believe that it's our mission...to encourage the student to reach their own maximum potential...so each of the teachers has a responsibility to maximise the potential of each student. (Frank)

Brian argues for a general level of instrumental musical participation for all school-goers, in the same way all pupils learn maths and science but few become mathematicians or scientists.

> ... everybody should be afforded the opportunity to learn music...everybody does maths in school – everybody does biology in school but they don't all go on to become biologists or astrophysicists – so everybody can do music in school as well, and learn an appreciation for the subject – just like the kids that learn an appreciation for maths and they might be B or C students, but they still know that the A students in maths are the ones that are really good at it and they can be good at something else... (Brian)

John, administrator of Urban-district Music Service referred to the auditioning of new applicants as 'cherry-picking', a practice which he resisted when it was suggest to him by staff-members.

> People have said to me – 'we should have auditions and we should cherry-pick who we get in' and I would say 'no', at the risk of losing a good student, I think that whether they're an adult who wants to learn, I think they should all be encouraged. (John)

The administrator of City Music Service spoke of a policy of not auditioning new applicants to offer all prospective instrumental students the opportunity to access the courses – providing there is a tuition place available.

> We have a policy where – there are no auditions to come to the school of music – really it's first come, first served. If there's a place there, it's yours, and after that then, it's up to yourself, you know to work with the teacher and it's up to the teacher to work with the student to continue the education. It's a completely open door policy. (Frank)

Elaine, the administrator of Rural-county Music Service also confirmed that auditioning of new applicants was not policy. However, auditions were held for a small number of scholarships aimed at attracting new applicants for cello, a minority instrument.

> …we had a cello scheme in the south of the county and we offered a number of scholarships to try and get people interested in cello…it was done more on talent and interest…our cello teacher tested them. (Elaine)

Since the Music Services do not generally select students through audition, there exists a broad range of learning abilities. Most participants acknowledged that instrumental pedagogy would need to be flexible in order to support each student's individual musical potential.

> I believe that it's our mission... to encourage the student to reach their own maximum potential... so each of the teachers has a responsibility to maximise the potential of each student… (Frank)

These participant observations recognise a range of ability presented by young people learning instruments in the Music Services. Most administrators maintained that, while the teachers expected effortful commitment from the students, they were flexible in supporting differential of ability. The developing of personal potential as voiced by Frank constitutes a significant aim of the Music Service sector. Given the students are not selected by ability and retention of tuition places is not dependent on high examination results, teachers see their mission as enabling children to reach their own 'personal best'. Participants distinguish between the non-selective Music Services and the academies where the students are auditioned and retained subject to achievement criteria in examination.

Summary

- Learning achievement outcomes are judged by the annual fixed-term grade examinations.
- All seven Music Services assess their students through grade examinations.
- Teachers feel obliged to enter students for grade examinations.
- All Music Services have examination systems based on the nineteenth century 'conservatory' model of assessing instrumental achievement.
- Although based on a common musical genre, pedagogic and assessment model, participants differentiate between the elite music-academies and the Music Services.
- Music Services are non-selective and do not audition students at entry stage.
- As a consequence of non-selectivity, Music Services recognise difference and support a broad range of student learning abilities with an emphasis on developing personal potential.
- While accepting variations in abilities, instrumental teachers expect effortful engagement and regular practice from the students.
- Natural ability such as a quick ear or good hands is less significant than pleasure, motivation, effortful engagement and time-input.
- Prodigies are the product of social conditions – high parental support and encouragement and good teaching.
- Many exceptional instrumental music students are also good at sport.
- Motivation and effort trump natural ability.

4.1.4 A general overview of instrumental music education provision

The separate music services operate in local contexts under widely contrasting levels of provision and funding and could not be collectively regarded in their present form as a national system of instrumental music education. All seven organisations charge tuition fees, which range from approximately twenty percent of real cost to full

commercial rates. Fee-level is the most contentious access factor, closely connecting family income-level with ability to participate in the instrumental music courses. The inadequacy in scale of provision, as a result of uneven, or sometimes non-existent, allocation of funding, means that, in the minority of VEC/ETB areas that provide instrumental music services, they are only partially capable of satisfying the high middle-class demand for instrumental music tuition.

Tuition fees and the extra-curricular location of music tuition centres present an access barrier to some low-income families. A perception of cultural 'dislocation' may intimidate members of disadvantaged social groups. Under a difficult supply-demand ratio, it is the children of middle-class families who are best positioned to benefit from the instrumental music education provision, which, as evidenced in the O'Brien Report (2001), is the officially accepted norm. Members of lower social groups are neither participating in instrumental tuition, nor is there an expectation by providers that they might actually have a wish to participate.

Gender-differences characterise the learning of musical instruments. Participation in learning musical instruments is estimated in the range of 60:40 in favour of girls rising to 70:30 as they proceed through secondary school. A diminishing male participation is commonly attributed to the greater access to sports for boys. Given an apparently free choice, masculine and feminine stereotyping still determines instrument choice. Flute and violin are perceived as more feminine. Boys are less inclined to choose classical orchestral instruments, but engage enthusiastically with rock instruments. However, more girls are now playing guitar (a male instrument) due to the influence of shows such as X-Factor on television. Girls are characterised as conscientious, co-operative and easy to teach, while boys are characterised as disengaged, easily distracted and prone to quitting. At the same time, boys who

succeed are perceived to do so with less effort than girls when their interest is stimulated.

Western classical music identifies the musical genre of the Music Services. Instrumental courses are defined by the structures of teacher knowledge, methodology, musical repertoire and teaching contracts. A technically demanding musical repertoire requiring effortful commitment to regular home practice is supported by the weekly one-to-one instrumental lesson.

Group-learning is distrusted as non-viable beyond the initial stages of learning, expressed as a fear that group tuition might 'hold back' potential high achievers. Although study participants have little or no experience outside of the one-to-one tuition context, group-learning as pedagogy is generally regarded in deficit terms throughout all the music services. Where a move towards group tuition has occurred, it has been in the poorly-funded Music Services charging high commercial fees that have begun to offer group lessons to families who find themselves in reduced financial circumstances. Teachers habituated to a one-to-one pedagogy are resistant to wide-scale implementation of group teaching and learning.

Learning achievement outcomes are judged by the annual grade examinations. While administrators maintain that exams are not compulsory, a pervasive 'exam culture' puts teachers under obligation to enter their students in the annual examinations as though it is they who are being assessed as teachers.

Participants differentiated between elite academies and conservatories and the non-selective music services that do not apply an entry stage audition policy. As a consequence of non-selectivity, music service instrumental teachers recognise ability difference and support a broad range of student learning abilities with an emphasis on developing personal potential.

4.2 The cultural world of the Music Services

> Cultural models assume that beliefs, values and ideologies are at the heart of organisations. Individuals hold certain ideas and value-preferences which influence how they behave and how they view the behaviour of other members. These norms become shared traditions which are communicated within the group and are reinforced by symbol and ritual. (Bush 1995, p.130)

Within the Music Services organisational culture binds people together in shared beliefs and values. The separate positioning of instrumental music as a specialist education area, at a remove from the education mainstream, allows sectoral practices to normalise and become distinct discursive practice. Interview data suggests Music Services operating on high-cultural, class-based and gendered dispositions. The group-sharing of organisational culture or, in Foucault's terms, organisational *discourse,* enables a simultaneous conscious awareness and implicit tolerance of the class- and gender-biases of the instrumental music education sector. Group-culture promotes the persistence over time of an educational activity which may represent a distortion of the cultural dispositions of wider society.

Positioned, even cocooned, outside of the mainstream education sector, instrumental music education is not subject to change. Nevertheless, many professionals, who are closely engaged in its administration and pedagogy, during interview, displayed some sense of the social distortion that lies at the core of the process.

4.2.1 Three musical narratives

Claire administers a large county area music service. She has multi-sectoral teaching experience, having taught music in both the second-level and instrumental music education sectors. I include Claire's narrative as her teaching background gives her a broad overview of music education and in particular she provides an insider's experience of the negotiations that the school music teacher is obliged to engage in due to the position of music in the competitive ranking of school subjects.

Órla comes from a nationally-known family of career classical musicians. Her teaching career to date is probably typical of any young instrumental music teacher. Since graduating a decade earlier, she does not have a permanent whole-time teaching position. She has built up a practice distributed over a number teaching contexts: public service, private practice, individualised formal classical pedagogy, small-group recorder and informal bodhrán class. I include Órla's narrative as her perspective encompasses the professional musical family as well as the typical career trajectory of a young instrumental music teacher.

Brian, a teacher of violin of more than ten years professional experience with a large county Music Service, responded to my question regarding the learning structure of performance music with an autobiographical narrative in which he characterised his experience as being somewhat at odds with the instrumental music education establishment. I include Brian's narrative as it highlights some characteristic practices and touches upon discourses and procedures, which learners and instrumental teachers are likely to encounter.

4.2.1.1 Claire, Music Service administrator

Claire recounted her experience of school music – first as a student and then as a teacher. Recalling her secondary school years, she described the music class as being in constant conflict with the academic subjects. Although a timetabled subject within the curriculum, as a school activity, music expanded beyond the boundaries of the subject schedule. The timetable seems to have been a difficult area for the students to navigate as choir and show rehearsals often clashed with other subjects.

> … it was the smallest class … but we were always getting out of other classes to get to practice for the choir. We were always getting into trouble with the other teachers for going out to choir, instead of them saying 'oh fantastic...' it was …'oh you're going to miss out on your history!' (Claire)

When Claire became a music teacher in a second-level school, she found the same conflict with colleagues when school musical activities encroached on the academic school day. She described the defensiveness of teachers against student absences from class during the rehearsals in preparation for the school musical show.

> …when I taught myself, it was constant payback.... as a secondary school teacher. And it's like, 'can you get out of the next class because we really have to practice the musical'? (Claire)

The significance of the school musical was widely recognised by the school community as a key part of the public face of the school, but Claire recalled having to negotiate with her teaching colleagues so that rehearsals could take place. Although the teaching colleagues actively supported the musical, subject boundaries were asserted during the school day.

> I was putting hundreds of hours into the school musical, and the school musical made the school look good… Then we'd have this agreement between ourselves – while keeping our colleagues happy – 'but she doesn't understand her theorems; she can't miss maths and yet I want to support the musical' – they're the very people …who'd be on the door collecting the money, backstage putting on the make-up – they were very supportive. But in the daytime they found it hard to support because there was so little time. (Claire)

While the school musical was enthusiastically promoted as a school activity, the core academic timetable remained non-negotiable. Although the school musical afforded a positive public image to the school, in effect it was a source of inter-subject conflict between teachers in the competition between school activities and school subjects. The rigidity of the timetable highlighted the relatively lower status of music within the hierarchy of subjects, where, in this case, mathematics has a subject status, which is widely accepted as inviolable, held in place by the power relations, which serve to legitimise boundaries between school subject areas (Goodson 1992, p.67; Jephcote and Davies 2007, p.213).

Claire's successor as music teacher in the school resolved the issue by refusing to work on school musicals; instead concentrating on developing the choirs during timetabled hours. The decision to withdraw from the school musical obliged the school management to consider its priorities.

> … from the present music teacher drawing in her horns and saying 'I'm not doing it any more – I want to do the choirs – that's my extra-curricular activity' …and because of that they brought in outsiders and are paying them for all the work we did unpaid. (Claire)

Recognising the annual school musical show as an essential facet of school culture, the management brought in outside expertise to produce the show as a timetabled Transition Year project.

> …the outcome of that is that … it became a Transition Year pursuit and now it is blocked on the timetable...it's evolved into something that has a status and a stature … (Claire)

Here Claire is highlighting the systemic inconsistency in the position of school music whereby the relatively lower status of music as an academic subject is overshadowed by the cultural significance of the school musical in the life of the school. The communal effort that surrounds the rehearing and performance draws in the whole school community as performers, front of house personnel and backstage hands. Communal extra-curricular activities provide structure and context for positive peer group interactions among students; and presents new dimension in the boundaries and relationships between students and teachers (Pitts 2007, p149).

The school musical contributes in a positive way to the public perception of the school organisation; and school staff, in particular the music teacher, contribute long hours of their personal time in the interest of furthering the positive experience for the students. Claire summarised the generosity of the music teacher who works long hours rehearsing with the students reaping a benefit in the classroom with the positive behaviour of the students.

> … it wasn't about payment for me – it was about something that I wanted to do – it was about generosity and giving. And what I got out of those kids afterwards in my classroom was just worth – they behaved differently to you if you give them something – they do.

Claire concluded this section of the interview by revelling in how the music teacher was afforded a new respect by school management – but only when refusal elicited a response.

> …this is so interesting that they did listen – but only when she said in the end, 'no – I'm not doing it!'… (Claire)

4.2.1.2 Órla – Teacher of flute, piano and music-theory

Órla is an early-career instrumental music teacher in her sixth year of teaching at an urban Music Service, specialising in flute, piano and music theory. In addition to her work in the public sector, she has a private home-based teaching practice. She also teaches recorder to small groups in a rural primary school, as a visiting music specialist supplementing the performance strand of the primary school music curriculum. As part of her teaching duties with the VEC/ETB, she teaches bodhrán to first-year students at a second-level community college in a disadvantaged urban area.

Órla traces her engagement with music right back to infancy – and even beyond – when her mother, a pianist, played classical music for her and practiced the piano with her young daughter at her side.

> I'm the eldest – my Mam when she was pregnant with me, she used to play music, classical music, every day after work. She used to lie down on the sofa and play classical music, and she didn't do it for the other two…

She revealed her maternal family to be a family of well-known performing musicians with a national profile. Continuing the family tradition, she and her siblings were sent to learn musical instruments as a natural feature of family life.

> My family is musical – my mother and all her siblings do music – always have, so it was never a choice for us – we were told – my mother taught me

> to play – I could read the treble clef before I could read or write. My mother sat me down at the piano at four and taught me the basics, so that's always been completely second nature to me. (Órla)

Approaching the question of musical ability and the 'nature-nurture' debate, Órla instanced herself and her two brothers, contrasting her own involvement in music with her brothers' musical ambivalence. While discussing the origins of musical ability, Órla offered her opinion that possession of inherent talent was not a satisfactory explanation for early overt signs of musical ability. She directly connected her early intense exposure to music with the musical trajectory of her life and claimed that because her brothers did not experience a similar early-childhood engagement with music, their interest in musical performance was minimal as a result, even though all three siblings were raised in the same family.

> …the other two never had any interest in music even though they were sent to music from a young age, they just never took to it – she absolutely insists that it's because she played me music all through her pregnancy. And she used to practice with me beside her – and that kind of thing makes a huge difference. (Órla)

Coming from a family of performing musicians might have implied that Órla naturally would follow in the family tradition. However, possessing a different surname to her mother and her mother's famous siblings, she was not readily identifiable as a member of this nationally-known musical family. As a result, she did not feel pressurised by virtue of a family name to conform to a prescribed career pathway, a circumstance which afforded her the freedom to develop as a teacher rather than as a performing musician.

> …coming from a musical family, people assume that you're as musical as the next person. I was fortunate enough not to have the same surname as the rest of my family. My mother – it's my mother's family that's all known around the country for being musicians and because I don't have the same name people don't associate me with them, which is such a relief – because people say you're so-and-so…but I'm a teacher. (Órla)

Órla takes a position which recognises that children who display overt musical behaviour come from families in which a musical culture is integrated in family interaction. This position accepts that musical outcome differences that may be perceived in children presenting for music lessons are due to prior musical experiences in early childhood rather than conceiving musical ability as the singular possession of musical talent – dubbed 'folk psychology' by Sloboda (Blacking 1976, Hallam and Prince 2003, Sloboda 2005).

4.2.1.3 Brian – teacher of violin

Brian recounted a musical journey from childhood in which he was constantly at odds with the music establishment but in his opinion, he is now regarded as a respected versatile musician, As a young child learning the violin, he had a facility in learning quickly 'by ear' and he recalled the encouragement of his parents and that of his first teacher.

> I was always told I had an ability for it – and I know myself I could bluff my way through things – but I was always from a young age able to play stuff by ear. My Dad and my Mum used to say 'have a listen to that now – could you learn that for me?' You know a lot of it was – and we talked about motivation a while ago - I wanted to please my parent and say 'look at what I can do now' – and they'd go 'that's great' – praise and encouragement go a long way. (Brian)

As a developing musician, his unorthodox approach to learning – playing by ear or 'bluffing my way through things' did not meet with approval by instrumental teachers. His first teacher moved abroad and he subsequently attended a teacher in a private music school which, for Brian, was not a positive experience.

> I drove him bananas, by all accounts – and after – I didn't get on with him. I mean it was nothing to do with him as a teacher, like – I didn't get on with him. (Brian)

At the age of nine he auditioned for the local publicly-funded music college, which has a national reputation for producing high-calibre vocal and instrumental

performers. At the audition an attempt was made to divert him towards learning the viola, which he resisted. Larger than the violin, the viola is a minority study, but as the alto voice of the string family, music schools find it necessary to divert some students into learning the viola in order to have viable orchestras and string ensembles.

> I remember going in – and I remember the head of the String Department of the school at the time examining my fingers.....and I went in there and they were trying to get me to move on to the viola, and I know myself, I have tiny hands – the viola would have been a disaster for me. You know, I can play the viola now and I can teach the viola – but as a 9-year old child or a 10-year old child, it wouldn't have been the best choice for me – in my own professional opinion now. (Brian)

The first teacher to whom Brian was assigned was a student teacher and she encouraged and supported his abilities on the violin. He also taught himself the guitar; and learning the piano, found that he had an ability to accompany singers.

> …but you know, none of my extra-curricular activities – the fact that I taught myself guitar to an exceptionally high level – the fact that I could go out and if somebody started singing I could find the key on the keyboard and busk along with them – I could improvise stuff on the violin that is beyond your average ability to improvise – and none of this was ever recognised... (Brian)

The implication was that due to an unorthodox learning style, he was not regarded as a potential high achiever. Subsequent teachers were not as sympathetic as his first teacher and he recalled a teacher discouraging him from entering a *Feis* competition.

> I remember being told by one of my teachers in there [when asked] – 'oh can I enter the Feis?' – 'Oh no, you wouldn't be good enough for the Feis'… and there was people in there who – who could run rings around me on the violin – but that was a lack of practice on my part – a lack of focused practice. I was a child – I didn't know what to do – d'you know what I mean? And what are you supposed to ....and then as I got older I realised what I had. (Brian)

Brian spoke of his 'love and understanding of music' which began to develop in his early teenage years and returned to his feelings of being outside of the main group of students 'insiders' who had grown up within the system of the music college.

> You know, I wasn't exactly the most disciplined when I was a teenager for practice. You know, we're all like that – but had I been put into the situation of a Feis – had I been told 'yeah, you're good enough for this', maybe I would have worked a little bit more – maybe it was that kick I needed. …em, but was always other people that were 'more talented' than me, you know. (Brian)

At the end of Intermediate Cycle (Grades 3 – 5), he failed to achieve the required 85% in the Grade 5 examination on the second attempt and lost his place in the music college. Due to high demand for places on the instrumental courses, a minimum examination mark selects those students who are considered the most likely to fulfil the achievement requirements of the college.

> I did my Grade 5 twice and the third time I got kicked out – but I was a teenaged boy – I remember I was working in the garden with my Dad the second time I did my Grade 5. I went into my Grade 5 for the second time in a dowdy pair of jeans, a ripped Iron Maiden tee-shirt, sweat pouring off me and played through my concerto like straight out of the garden digging like – you know ...grim laugh... I wasn't fit for what the School of Music were all about. (Brian)

He resumed private violin lessons with a former teacher for a year and as music was not offered at his school, he applied to the same music college for a place on the Leaving Certificate music course and serendipitously found himself with a violin teacher who brought him through the Senior Cycle up to Grade 8.

> I went to [my former teacher] privately for one year – and then I filled in this form to do their Leaving Cert music programme [at the music college] at the time because there wasn't available in the school…and I wanted to make sure – and I ticked off violin as well not realising that I was actually reapplying for violin. So I ended up doing an audition for violin and then I had a teacher – a different teacher…now, I'd have to say he was a brilliant teacher – and he inspired me an awful lot. (Brian)

Having re-entered the college at Senior Cycle, Brian went on to complete a degree in music and he now teaches violin. While readily acknowledging his informal approach to learning, he credited the scope of his wide musical experience during his formative years in developing him as musician and teacher. He observed the inflexibility of the music college in not recognising the informal musician or the

musician who excels in improvisation, but which can only work with those who follow the prescribed route through the graded system.

> I was in a box… you know, none of my extra-curricular activities …none of this was ever recognised – none of these talents were recognised. … but it's very funny – it's very ironic – somebody who's a lecturer in there now …said to me recently 'we really have to change the [music college] so that it recognises people of your ability'. And I think that to me is progress. (Brian)

Brian's biographical narrative touches on many of the discursive practices which underlie instrumental music education. Some of the concepts emerging form the research literature are echoed in Brian's personal account of his struggle to fulfil the approved fixed-stage 'benchmarks' that define progress and achievement in performance music. Brian occupied a 'middle ground' between the typical learning models of classical violin student and rock learner.

Young rock learners approach the acquisition of musical skills in a variety of complimentary ways, employing both solitary and group learning practices (Green 2002, p.10). Typically the beginner rock learner develops instrumental skill through listening and copying – playing along with a recording. This involves much solitary instrumental practice which is usually complimented by peer learning and the early formation of bands (Green 2002, pp.60, 61, 70). Playing by ear and facility in musical improvisation is characteristic of the rock musician. On the other hand, the 'conservatory culture' encountered by the young classical instrumentalist lays emphasis on the reproduction of classical musical works within the formal classical tradition represented by approved composers such as Mozart, Beethoven, Brahms, Stravinsky and so on (Sloboda 2005, p.278). Accurate reproduction of the printed score, a central musical repertoire of extreme difficulty, ability to perform musical works from a small approved core repertoire, and progression through fixed stage examinations and competitions, in which young learners are compared to one

another by examiners and adjudicators for their ability to perform a narrow range of closely similar musical works, are characteristic features of the conservatory system of learning (Bolliger and Reed 2008 p.2; Sloboda 2005, p.278).

Brian gives a vivid description of the 'master-apprentice' learning model (Jorgensen 2011), and the orthodoxy of the graded system that failed to recognise, support or affirm his unorthodox learning style. As a violin student, Brian believes that he was categorised, or 'put in a box', as unorthodox in his learning approach to the extent he was in danger of being 'filtered out' of the system. However a strong 'hybrid' musical identity formed from childhood sustained him on a musical path as musician (rock and classical) and teacher.

Table 4.9 Key themes emerging from three biographical narratives

	Theme	Finding/Claim	Theory
Claire	Status of music as school subject	Music is frequently in timetabling conflict with other curricular subject.	School curriculum is hierarchical and competitive (Goodson 1992)
		The music-teacher is obliged to assert the subject-position of music.	High-status subjects are widely accepted as being inviolable; positioned by power relations, which legitimise subject-boundaries (Jephcote and Davies2007)
		The school musical holds high status in school culture and is valued as a positive public face of the school.	Music learning takes place both inside and outside the curriculum. (Pitts 2007) Group music-making occupies a middle-ground between classroom and informal learning. (Pitts 2007)
Órla	The musical child	Children who display overt musical behaviour come from a background in which a musical culture is integrated in family interactions.	Observed musical outcome differentials are due to differences in prior musical experiences in early childhood. (Blacking 1976, Hallam and Prince 2003, Sloboda 2005)
		Inherent talent does not satisfactorily explain overt Musicality in young children.	The singular inherited talent construct is a form of 'folk psychology' (Sloboda 2005)
Brian	Approved approaches to musical learning	The conservatory system does not support unapproved or unorthodox learning approaches.	Conservatory culture values accurate reading and faithful reproduction of approved musical works. (Bolliger and Reed 2008; Sloboda 2005)
	Conservatory culture	Learners with unorthodox approaches are perceived as outsiders and may eventually find themselves 'filtered out' of the formal system.	Improvisation or 'learning by ear' is not supported in conservatory culture. (Bolliger and Reed 2008; Sloboda 2005)

The three biographical narratives afford living insights into the social formation of musical identities in the accounts of Órla and Brian and the first-hand experience of the low subject-status of school music in Claire's account. A number of themes that emerged from the literature are interwoven through the three narratives.

4.3 Analysing belief: interpreting discourse

The study seeks to gain access to implicit 'taken for granted' shared values residing in the minds and operationalised in the professional practices of the participants. The sensitising themes derived from the review of research literature in Chapter 2 provided an access point to the sectoral dispositions and professional discourses of instrumental music education. The verbal exchanges during the interviews may be regarded as occurring within a common professional discourse in which both the researcher and the participants shared position as organisational insiders.

Central to the discourse of instrumental music education is the tradition of the Academy or the Conservatory system. The Conservatory learning system aligns instrumental and vocal instrumental music education with the bourgeois aesthetic (Spruce 2001, p118; Wright 2005, p.225); and the approved teaching and learning interactions, which focus on practices, tradition and discipline – often likened to a master-apprentice relationship between student and teacher-musician, (Jorgensen 2011, p.58; Nerland 2007, p.399). The weight of tradition and heritage spanning more than a century makes for practices, repertoires and dispositions that are deeply inscribed as collective norms in the beliefs and practices of teachers and students (Nerland 2007, p.400).

In sections 4.1, the series of interviews with instrumental music professionals, supported by survey data, yielded an initial descriptive narrative that described organisation and practice. Section 4.2 focused on the biographical narratives of three

interview participants through their interview statements. Probing beneath narrative description, Section 4.3 seeks to focus on the professional beliefs in order to analyse discursive practices, which underlie and operationalise the publicly-funded instrumental music education provision.

4.3.1 A bounded system

The literature review indicated *constructs of musical ability, musical genre, taste and value, gender and social class* as identifying markers of instrumental music education. These overlapping themes emerged as cultural boundaries to be negotiated by prospective learners in order to gain access to long-term participation in instrumental music education. As key sensitising concepts with which to analyse the area, they provide a focus with which to approach data collection. A focus on boundary seeks to uncover theoretical insights into apparently rigid professional practices. Two key dispositions, which characterise instrumental music education, are *professional identity* and *specialism.*

4.3.1.1 Professional identity

Identities may be conceptualised as social products, as imaginings of self within active, dynamic social worlds of practice, developing over a person's lifetime (Holland et al 1998, p.5). Professional identities of instrumental music teachers, socialised within the professional community form cumulatively through early experience as learner, pedagogical training as music instrumental specialist and teaching experience in the classroom or studio (Triantafyllaki 2010, p.73).

How do instrumental music teachers see themselves – are they teachers who teach an instrument or musicians who can also teach? Órla unequivocally expressed a strong and positive identity as a teacher that extends into her musical persona. She regards musicians who can teach their instrument as holding a distinguished status in the

musical world. However she is well aware of the loneliness and isolation associated with instrumental music teaching.

> I'll always say I'm a teacher – I'd never specifically say I'm a music teacher…the combination of being a teacher and being a musician – it gives extra cause for delight and wonder…
>
> …as teachers ourselves, it's no problem to us – but you go out into the outside world and actually we're kind of unique. There's not too many of us, in the broader scheme of things that would be proficient enough to teach.
>
> …you wouldn't see an adult from one end of the day to the next – you wouldn't have an adult conversation unless some parent came in. (Orla)

She points to the mechanistic nature of instrumental music lessons and accepts that a level of tediousness exists, but her portrayal of both the wonder and the tediousness of teaching musical instruments is contextualised in terms of the salaried nature of teaching in the public service.

> …you should be used to it, having spent years on your own practicing as well – but I think when it's prolonged for four or five hours at a time....and you're breaking things down and you've spent three hours counting – you know, that can be quite tedious after a while. You get sick of counting to four – but it's the nature of it.
>
> …we just get handed our cheque at the end of the month. There are other places I work where you have to slog and hassle people to get the money out of them. (Orla)

As salaried public-service employees, rather than private practitioners, instrumental teachers have a more secure professional status in the Music Services as fee-collection is not the responsibility of the teacher. Paul, teacher of woodwind, expresses his professional status in simple terms of teaching duties.

> My job is to walk in, teach the students and walk straight back out again, d'you know what I mean? (Paul).

Being employed by the VEC/ETB, a large organisation, bestows a certain ease and security, which is unusual in the private sector. John, who administers Urban-district Music Service, acknowledges the benefit of being part of a large bureaucratic organisation.

> It's very enabling, within the dynamic of a large organisation, where obviously it's large, it's bureaucratic. I'm answerable to a principal who's answerable to an education officer answerable to the CEO – but the support – at least the support is there... (John)

Instrumental music teaching has been professionalised in the public sector during recent decades with requirements of minimum professional teaching qualifications – usually a music degree and a teaching licentiate or diploma in the relevant instrumental area of expertise. More recently the instrumental music teachers in the Public Service are bound by the rules and regulations of the Teaching Council for Post-primary teachers.

> A lot of teachers didn't have their degree – they had to go back and do their degree… (Orla)

Eoin contrasts the quality assurance of public-service vetting of teacher qualifications with the absence of regulation in the private sector.

> …unfortunately there's so many dreadful unqualified teachers you know, in the private sphere, that what happens is a lot of quite musical children are switched off music completely by going to the wrong teacher – and that's where publicly-funded music could – should serve the people better in the sense that teachers are vetted properly and they're performing to a certain level. (Eoin)

The quality of instrumental teaching qualifications, according to Frank, ensures a high standard in delivery of the instrumental courses.

> ...music teachers that come through the university system, you know – or traditionally go through the classical system where their qualifications are through diplomas – I mean there will be always a high standard... ...at the end of the day, a course is being delivered by a teacher...when we employ teachers, we employ teachers who we consider will deliver a very high-class quality course. (Frank)

However, John points to an anomaly in the qualification recognition of instrumental teachers, whereby general music degrees are foregrounded as a general music-teaching qualification but are not adequate for instrumental teaching, whereas the emphasis on instrumental teaching diplomas and licentiates has diminished in recent years. In John's experience many potential candidates are applying for instrumental

teaching posts only to find that without the relevant instrumental teaching licentiate or diploma a Bachelor of Music degree is inadequate, thus precluding them from employment with the Music Services.

> ...there's a problem with the instrumental training because we're getting too many… people who ... have done their leaving cert and then they're going into a degree and according to the Teaching Council that qualifies them to be teachers – so that's problem number one – they don't even get to interview stage because they're music teachers – they're not instrumental teachers…. getting the qualification specific needs to get an instrumental training is getting recessed a little bit. There isn't the same visibility to the licentiates [instrumental teaching diploma]. (John)

Professional identities of teachers in the instrumental music education sector centre on qualifications, which distinguish the publicly-employed instrumental music teacher from the private teacher. Teaching within the public service bestows a corporate identity as well as salary security. Positioned as a separate educational entity, the Music Service sector affords a high status to its teaching staff. Furthermore, participants differentiate between the VEC/ETB sector and the elite academies and conservatories. Taken together, professional status and sectoral positioning support a positive self-identity for instrumental music teachers. Membership of a corporate instrumental music education sector affords a high status-perception, which is not usually experienced by visiting instrumental music specialists in the primary school context. In the words of Paul:

> In the school context – [there is] no status whatsoever...it's the Cinderella subject. The music teacher is the dope – wouldn't be with us: '*I'm the maths teacher –English teacher – Irish teacher – that's the music teacher!'* You go, *'sure we can all sing those songs',* that sort of thing – certainly would be the odd one out. All they hear – '*the best they can get is a choir out of it'*. It's not seen as valuable whatever in the school system, I think. (Paul)

The disconnect between the instrumental music and mainstream education sectors was expressed in terms of a conflict of learning objectives and the low priority given to performance music, which leads to a clash between specialist and generalist

approaches to music education as presented particularly in the primary school. On the evidence of the participants' statements, the location of instrumental music education as a separate educational sector represents for them a safe haven assuring professional status and job security.

4.3.1.2 Specialism

The discourse of performance music lies in specialism (Jorgensen 2011, p.104). Specialist instrumental teachers follow schemes of progress mapped by syllabus documents, which indicate annual benchmarks to be achieved by teachers and students. These graded indicators afford a sequenced standardised pathway of progression to teachers and students, lending a high level of predictability to the learning outcomes of the instrumental courses. According to Jorgensen's critique, teaching to a standardised objective takes limited account of the needs of learners at both ends of the 'ability, achievement and interest spectra' (Jorgensen 2011, p105).

The learning model of the Music Services is embedded in the Western classical musical tradition. Although individual organisations offer a limited amount of instrumental tuition in other musical genres, teachers' contracts define the genre profile of the Music Services as primarily based on classical instruments. Administrator of County-district Music Service, Eoin, considered musical experience as essential to a person's development, with a heightened need of some to specialise on musical instruments.

> Music tuition is essential to the development of – some people – all people to some extent – and some people then – it's essential they get a chance to go deeper into it and be more specialised... (Eoin)

In the experience of John, administrator of Urban-district Music Service, teachers teach as they have been trained and are inclined towards inflexibility in their drive for specialist progression on their instrument.

> Sometimes you might need to – you know, not be so progress driven...you might need to be creative…and I'm always a little bit amazed at the extent, to which teachers say 'I'm not trained to do this differently, you know …this is what I do'. (John)

Grade examinations according to Claire, administrator of County Music Service, are of critical value in the understandings of parents who regard them as markers of achievement. Claire shares the same understanding.

> Parents are driven by grades because that's what they understand to be the marker, so there's value in all of that as well – I think there's no harm in having a marker... (Claire)

Enabling instrumental students to fulfil their personal potential was considered by Frank, administrator of City Music Service to be a key mission and duty of instrumental music professionals; and he emphasised the social aspect of music-making.

> I believe that it's our mission...to encourage the student to reach their own maximum potential...so each of the teachers has a responsibility to maximise the potential of each student. ...the experience should be first of all – it should be a happy experience, it should be an enjoyable experience. They should make friends here that they would probably have for the rest of their lives. (Frank)

Brian argued for a general level of instrumental musical participation for all school-goers, in the same way all pupils learn maths and science but few become mathematicians or scientists.

> ... everybody should be afforded the opportunity to learn music...everybody does maths in school – everybody does biology in school but they don't all go on to become biologists or astrophysicists – so everybody can do music in school as well, and learn an appreciation for the subject – just like the kids that learn an appreciation for maths and they might be B or C students, but they still know that the A students in maths are the ones that are really good at it and they can be good at something else... (Brian)

Many participants were supportive of the proposition of universal access to a mainstream level of musical participation, which currently does not exist in the public provision.

> I see musical development in children to be eh, critical and I think music education should be available to all children from primary school age upwards so they have the opportunity to play and the opportunity, I suppose, to do music regardless of age, gender, you know – money, that it should be available in schools. (Margaret)
>
> It should be compulsory in the school... there should be bands in the school... There could be an instrument they would use while they're at school with a small maintenance fee. (Paul)
>
> The Government should see this as a service to all people – all children. (Eoin)
>
> ...if they wanted to reach a music generation, we're not talking about six children learning a violin – you're talking about 600 children learning something that will stimulate them to learn something else... (Claire)
>
> ...we're not going to make inroads in terms of social inclusion in music education if it's not done during the school day – we're just not... we're not going to – not going to crack that nut unless those lessons are done during school. (Elaine)

Findings reveal participant awareness of tensions between what Music Services offer and what people expect of the instrumental music courses in terms of instrumental choice and musical genre. Despite the instrumental specialisms of the teachers and the specialised nature of the instrumental courses themselves, practitioners are supportive of a broadening of the instrumental music provision. While recognising that teaching contracts bind teachers to instrumental pedagogy, genre and syllabus, most participants considered the prospect of adapting to cultural change but simultaneously held firm to a belief in the superiority of classical instrumental technique. In Sub-section 4.1.3.2, participants showed a strong disinclination towards teaching instrumental groups, two of them expressing a 'fear of the unknown' in this regard. Participants advocate instrumental music for all school children, but seem to exclude themselves from participation in such a scenario.

In Chapter 2, I traced the form in which publicly-funded instrumental music education is currently operationalised to the establishment of the nineteenth century municipal schools and colleges of music as the approved model of instrumental music training (Wright 2005). Beginning in childhood and extending into young

adulthood, instrumental music education is characterised by specialised individual tuition on orchestral instruments, piano and theory of music, the annual grade examination and the Western classical musical canon. The approved learning model relies on a process that is individual engagement with the instrument rather than a social and spontaneous process.

While mapping the learning pathway for well-motivated instrumental students, the demands of instrumental specialism may work to the disadvantage of learners who may be 'hobbyist' rather than specialist. Many learners might not have the motivation or tenacity to work to the achievement levels required by the grade system, but nevertheless might wish to enjoy some level of musical participation. The 'hobbyist' learner is not supported in the discourse of performance music in its current configuration; and dropping out is a common phenomenon, particularly at the transition from primary to secondary school (Sloboda 2005, p.364). The emphasis on ability, achievement and approved classical masterworks may pose barriers to learners who might be more at home in a mainstream level of musical participation rather than on a pyramidal scheme of specialism. Although there was support in principle for a broadening of access, it is likely that administrators would encounter practical difficulty in simultaneously maintaining both main- and specialist streams of learners, given the constraints of limited teaching allocation and the 'bottle-neck' effect on access to instrumental tuition.

4.3.1.3 Traditions challenged in a time of change

The interview participants showed a level of awareness of the tensions that exist between the Western classical identity of the Music Services and the musical preferences of young people in the wider society. An awareness of a broadening out

of middle-class musical taste is evident from the participants' contributions, particularly from the administrator interviews.

The two large urban music services, in recent years have initiated small outreach programmes, adapting instrumental courses to popular culture in these new programmes by providing keyboard rather than piano tuition, and popular guitar for accompanying singing rather than classical guitar. John spoke of *'the overwhelming weight of popular culture'*, and several of the participants referred to the influence of television talent shows such as X-Factor and American Idol on applicants for the music courses. However, administrators John and Frank strongly advocated classical instrumental technique as the core pedagogy of the Music Services. Claire, administrator of County Music-Service, considered instrumental teacher's thinking to be embedded in the conservatory system. John expressed this in terms of teachers' conservatism and conviction in the effectiveness of their tried and trusted teaching methods.

> ...the classical conservatory system in our way of thinking is still very strong (Claire)
>
> ...a lot of teachers are naturally conservative people. We don't change. We have our ways of teaching. We're convinced of what we're doing...we teach as we were trained... the battleground for us all as music teachers is always methodology and repertoire. (John)

Participants were aware of being limited by instrument and syllabus requirements, and stylistically confined to the dominant genre of their instrumental specialisms and. Maura expressed regret at not being able to teach jazz due to syllabus requirements. Joanne thought that her instrument, the harp, confined her to the classical genre, which she characterised as being *elite.*

> ...I'll be very honest here. I'd love to be able to teach jazz...bending notes and doing all sort of...our hands are tied – we have to stick to a certain syllabus. (Maura)

> ...harp's a bit elite, isn't it?...I'm probably more classically orientated than some of my colleagues. (Joanne)

The theme of the conservatism of instrumental music teachers was taken up by many other participants. Margaret spoke of the comfort-zone, which she thought teachers would be unwilling to abandon, and she included herself in this. For Sarah, administrator of Large-Town Music-Service, it was appropriate to support and facilitate teachers in pedagogic practices with which they are happy and comfortable.

> ...the biggest drawback to change will be teachers stepping outside their comfort zone and trying new things – and I know teachers, particularly who've been teaching for many years in the one way will find it very difficult to change, to adapt – particularly teachers who are out of touch with modern music – I'm the first person to say I definitely am – I don't know half these pop-stars whatever... (Margaret)

> ...most of the teachers would have a classical approach themselves and wouldn't feel happy to teach in a different style of music… we work on a basis that we're facilitating the teachers rather than dictating to them. And the person before me had that approach and I continued that approach and I found that – on the basis that teachers use the methods which they are comfortable with – that they do the best job. (Sarah)

While the unchanging core of the Music Services lies in classical instrumental music tuition, there is recognition among professionals that young people's musical taste has the potential to challenge the profile of the provision.

> … our core business here is in teaching classical music, but we do realise that we also have to move with changing times and changing genres… because of the evolution of media and X-Factor and American Idol – and all these programmes on television, and the kids have far more easier access to worldwide – and you know, too, the worldwide web too – the kids are beginning to come forward and express – say to their parents 'I'd like to learn the guitar' (Frank)

Participants have some degree of awareness that young people are asserting their musical taste, and that the instrumental music provision will have to change in order to be relevant.

> We must get beyond Western art music or we'll never grow. We'll always stay the same... they don't want to do percussion – they want to do drum-kit... and we're losing them... (Claire)

Administrator, Bríd thinks that the young rock musicians being left out of the Music Service provision, but she points to her guitar teacher who can teach rock-guitar as well as classical.

> I'd say, as with any big town or city or county, whatever, there is this young band scene, isn't there? They're not really getting tuition, I feel... my guitar teacher is also a very good bass teacher, so he could teach a day in the new Rockschool instead, and you're still utilising your talents there but mixing the genres – spreading it out a lot more. (Brid)

The changing profile of instrumental teaching has the potential to alter the employability of the classical instrumental teacher. John envisages a future in which he compares the employment prospects of classical instrumental music teachers to the demise of teachers of Latin.

> A big challenge for us is where we're going to generate the students, even to fill teachers' contracts…I'd use the analogy of Latin teachers, you know what I mean? Latin teachers evaporated, literally within the space of three to five years. (John)

John pointed to the increasing demand or electronic keyboard tuition as a symbol of change but piano teachers have a professional unwillingness to teach keyboard as the instrumental technique and its popular musical repertoire is regarded as conflicting with piano's classical musical canon.

> The big issue is in the piano-keyboard department where not only is that flexibility not there, but the technical proficiency for eh – it's a different instrument, so this is where we've a lot of discussion to do over the next five years, you know? And it's a serious one. Should a piano teacher re-grade herself as a keyboard teacher if it's not the same instrument, if we don't have the equipment – and if it's, you know, the touch on a keyboard is completely – eh – eroding everything you're trying to teach as a piano teacher, so the instruments and the repertoire issues are – are – going to become very interesting'? (John)

When we consider the curriculum of the music schools and services, it is evident that a broad taste landscape is not being represented in the syllabus content of the music schools and services. While there are embryonic popular music courses in a two music services, and another has a significant traditional music department, Western

art music is the core activity of all the Music Services. This suggests that performance music-teaching is bounded in a circular mechanism whereby teachers construct the organisations through teacher knowledge, methodologies and musical repertoire, but are, as a result, constrained by those same curricular structures.

Instrumental music education in the Music Services is based on the Western art musical canon in terms of both instrumentation and genre. However, the interview data supports international research findings that indicate a common taste landscape, which tends to bypass Western classical music in favour of popular musical forms (for example, Green, 2003; Lamont, 1992). While the musical preferences of people extend to a broad taste-palette, the musical profile of the Music Services reflects a Western art-music disposition, reinforced by the contracts of the instrumental teachers. Yet many teachers do recognise that the instrumental courses may need to give some level of acknowledgement of popular musical culture in order to respond to the musical expectations of young people and their families.

4.3.1.4 The autonomy of the teacher

The findings of this study highlighted the strong inclination of instrumental music teachers towards autonomy in their teaching practice. This would appear to be particularly the case with instrumental music teachers, who, on the evidence of their interview statements, certainly are not comfortable with parental intervention and expect parents to remain at a distance.

A level of deficit thinking emerged regarding references to parents and, in particular, to mothers, which ranged from disapproval to irritation. A significant proportion of the participants (N=8) characterised students' mothers as frivolous, ignorant, 'pushy', socially competitive or consumerist and transactional. High-pitched vocal mimicry of a stereotypically middle-class mother features in the following sample of

deficit references. Initially I was puzzled by the vocal mimicry emerging from some of the participants when speaking about parents.

> ...maybe some people view it as it makes them higher up on the social ladder They send them because they want them to be like Johnny next door – sometimes like that, – *'my little Mary can play the violin',* like... (Brian)
>
> There are a lot sending their children to lessons because they have the money to do it and it's the thing to do….'*oh Sinéad is playing the piano – it's wonderful'*, you know... (Bríd)
>
> ...particularly in Ireland there's these clichés that exist, you know. *'oh aren't they lovely? Don't they play lovely? They're from a very musical family'.* That's the old favourite. (Margaret)
>
> People go, *'oh that one's got great talent'.* They do bollocks got great talent! It's shite, you know! Just because she sounds – she has a nice tone in her voice – she has nice tone playing – she actually has no musicality. (Orla)
>
> Now there would have been pushy parents who... It was, *'no no no – she's been doing it for a year and how come she's not doing Grade whatever? – no we'll have to think about it – you'll have to change her – we'll have to think about a different teacher'* – and this kind of nonsense. (Elaine)
>
> ...what we used to call the yummy mummy types ...who would come in in their 4x4s, gigantic things and little kid in the back, who'd hop out... and up like a light to the door [mimics upper-class mother]*'why's he not doing this exam – and is he not doing this exam this year?- because Mrs so-and-so's son is!'*... They wouldn't be behind in walking into the class and telling you what they want done – *'I want them to play quicker music – all this slow stuff...'.* (Paul)

The tone of the vocalisations was a common tendency to dramatise the subject in a high-pitched upper middle-class accent. It was noteworthy that exclusively mothers, as the usual point of contact, were being imitated in this fashion. I was given the impression that the participants experienced frustration or threat by parental interventions as instanced by Paul and Elaine, whereby they may have felt their professionalism was being challenged. The characterisation of mothers as 'pushy', or denigrating them as 'yummy-mummy types', has the effect of transforming perceived parental challenge to non-threatening stereotype. Similarly, Brian and Bríd expressed their disapproval of the perceived ignoble motivations of climbing the 'social ladder' and a perception of transactional consumerism as they vocalised a

stereotypically frivolous mother to make their points. Another glimpse of lay/expert conflict opens up in the naïve parental references to musicality and talent expressed in respectively angry and deprecatory tones by Órla and Margaret.

On the evidence of this research sample, practitioners show themselves as favouring a low-involvement relationship with parents, wishing to distance themselves from parents ideologically as well as in time and space (Creech and Hallam 2003, p.34).

Research in general education points to the high-valuing of parental involvement (Creech and Hallam 2003, p.31; Creech and Hallam 2009, p.95; Crozier 2002, p. 221). Indeed the Education Act (1998) promotes 'effective liaison and consultation between schools...teachers, parents, local communities...' (Section 6), that 'parents of a student... have access... to records kept by that school relating to the progress of that student in his or her education (Section 9), and in Section 25, the Act promotes 'contact between the school, parents of students in that school and the community...' (Government Publications 1998). In the United Kingdom, the value of parental involvement has been promoted at least since the 1967 Plowden Report (Crozier 1999, p.221).

While parental involvement in education is promoted in official discourse, teachers may have less specified expectations and perceptions. In a study of parental involvement, Crozier (1999) made some key findings regarding the divergent interests of teachers and parents. Her study found that 'parents were primarily concerned about the progress and well-being of their own child rather than having a commitment to all of the children' (p.224). Of concern for schools was the management of 'powerful and influential parents...and their criticism' (p.225). The importance to teachers of a sense of their own professionalism, and the need to defend it, was recognised in the study findings. Respect by parents for teachers'

professionalism was regarded by teachers as being very important. A common response from teachers was that parents should keep their distance and know their place, just as they themselves did with regard to other professionals. (Crozier 1999, p.225). Crozier's study found that in circumstances where parent's and teachers' values were in alignment, 'harmony prevailed', but when parents questioned lesson content or pedagogy it was perceived by teachers as 'infringing academic judgement' (Crozier 1999, p.226).

While teachers working in general education may be disinclined towards parental involvement, they are governed by the 1998 Education Act, under which parent-teacher interaction is promoted and facilitated. Instrumental music teachers in the public Music Services are not bound by the Act and may choose to engage with parents at whatever distance or approachability they might regard as appropriate. A pattern of conflict is discernible on the part of instrumental music professionals when speaking of students' parents, which may indicate a mismatch of value systems, power relations or role expectations. The deficit discourse expressed by the vehemence with which many participants characterised the opinions and approaches of parents indicates a level of professional autonomy that instrumental music teachers wish to maintain in their dealings with non-experts.

Summary

- Employment in the Music Services affords a sense of professional security, by being part of the larger VEC/ETB bureaucratic organisation.
- Instrumental teaching is professionalised in the three main Music Services through professional qualifications and salaried teaching contracts.
- Teachers have a positive professional identity due to the quality assurance of minimum qualification requirements.
- The pedagogy of instrumental music is closely in alignment with teacher professional identity, which is specialist rather than generalist, and individualistic rather than social.
- Practitioners recognise the benefits of learning a musical instrument, and advocate a broadening of access to instrumental music education provision for all school children.
- While advocating the proposition of providing a broad access to musical instrumental tuition, teachers do not necessarily envision themselves as having a role.
- The Music-Services are not subject to provisions of the Education Act (1998) and thus are not statutorily obliged to involve parents in educational matters.
- Instrumental music teachers value their professional autonomy and do not welcome interventions from parents in their children's learning.
- Instrumental music teachers display defensiveness to challenge from those they regard as non-experts.

4.3.2 Perception of parental motivation

The research literature shows that parental support and involvement in the practicalities of instrumental practice are a critical factor in sustaining a child's musical learning (Creech 2010, p.15; Dai and Schader 2002, p.135; McPherson 2009, p.93). Family relationships and dynamics are found to have a profound bearing on the musical development and behaviours of children (Davidson et al 1996, p.399; Davidson and Borthwick 2002, p.125; Hallam 2002, p234). Participants were asked what, in their opinion, might motivate parents in seeking instrumental lessons for their children. Their responses were expressed in terms of *personal enrichment, educational value, family culture, social aspiration or cultural consumption* as the main motivations of parents. It must be borne in mind that most participants are themselves parents.

4.3.2.1 'Another skill they'd have for life'

Claire based her opinion both on her experience of parents of instrumental students and on her own parents. She understood a wish for an absorbing activity, a new skill or a socially admirable accomplishment as strong parental motivations in sending their children to music lessons.

> ..if you're a parent of a certain sort of experience, you would want your child to have a very absorbing hobby – you like the idea of them playing a musical instrument because you might – this is based again on my own experience of the parents that I have met throughout my life…and of my own parents as well – that you think it's something very nice for a child as well to do. You think of it as a new skill for them to have – and also maybe you think it looks good for them – d'you know what I mean? – that it's a thing that they have – a kind of a 'string to their bow'. (Claire)

The provision of an opportunity that the parents themselves never had, or even the nostalgia for an unfulfilled ambition, was Brian's response to the question.

> …some parents want them to have an opportunity that they never had – so, just to give them another skill they'd have for life… sometimes some of them

> are living their own dreams through their children, but I think there's always the genuine reason most of the time and this is underlying it all, but they want to give them an opportunity they never had themselves, and there's nothing wrong with that. (Brian)

Órla suggested that a perception of a child's musical responsiveness might inspire parents to seek specialised music tuition.

> I think some people think that if – if their child is talented, they should send them to music...it might be an important notion the parents might have... (Orla)

A keen interest and desire for their children's involvement in the social aspect of music-making was seen by Eoin as a motivational factor for parental commitment.

> The [named orchestra] is the inhouse VEC orchestra and eh – so there's a good bit of support. The parents see the value of that type of activity for their children and they're willing to put a lot of extra time into it – whereas the individual tuition is ferrying them around – a kind of a lonely task – you'll see the car on a freezing night and the parents sitting outside waiting for the lesson to be over again and off home again. I mean, parents are great – they care a lot – suffer a lot for their kids to get these opportunities... I think most parents would want to give their children the chance to develop any talent they might have. It's one way of finding out maybe by sending them... (Eoin)

4.3.2.2 'Children that study music do better in school'

The secondary extra-musical benefits of music were strongly suggested as motivation for parents to instigate a child's music tuition. Participants had a perception that parents were aware of the potential educational benefits deriving from a cognitive transfer of skills learned through playing an instrument.

> … because they're middle-class or whatever – people who are educated – or have a high level of education…send their children to us – and quite a few people had read reports that children that study music do better in school than children who don't study music... (Sarah)
>
> There's a huge tradition in Ireland of this sort of passion for education that my parents would have followed through with. (John)
>
> You have parents who are genuinely interested in education. A lot of those parents want their children to have every opportunity to develop all their talents and a small percentage probably have that... (Eoin)

The extrinsic benefits of participating in arts education such as learning a musical instrument are well documented in the research literature as featuring in the belief

systems of parents (for example Bresler 1998; Dai and Schader 2000; Hofmann-Davis 2008; Koopman 2005; Kubacki et al 2007; Winner and Hetland 2000). Music study is seen as a means of developing personal attributes of diligence and increased academic performance as well as an enhanced work ethic and increased general intelligence (Dai and Schrader 2000, p.23; Kubacki et al 2007, pp.12,13,16) or good citizenship (Bresler 1998, p.11; Hofmann-Davis 2008, p.46). Sarah is aware of these beliefs and summed it up as follows:

> ... there are enough reports and statistics that I think does bear out that music does improve people's concentration, motivation, and general education attainment... so people that know those facts will want their children to study music – not out of their own love of music but because they want their children to do well – so we do get that as well. (Sarah)

Margaret shares the belief that learning a musical instrument develops discipline and organisational ability, but she considers parents' reasons for accessing music tuition as somewhat frivolous.

> ...and I think that people think '*wouldn't that be a lovely thing to do?'* That's why they send them along. I don't think they understand the...like I spoke earlier about the discipline of practice and how it does develop a child for their discipline and organisational things – they don't even realise that until it's pointed out at a later stage. (Margaret)

4.3.2.3 'It's to do with your background'

Parents who themselves are musicians, or have played instruments in the past, were seen as highly likely to be motivated to give the same opportunity to their own children.

> ...a lot of parents send their kids to learn instruments because the parents themselves have learnt – and they want to give the kids the same opportunities and enjoyment they got from music. (Frank)
>
> Now some parents would have a bit of musical ability themselves – I notice if a parent plays the guitar or whatever the case may be, they'd be much more likely to send their children to music. (Orla)

Joanne touched on the musical family explanation of pre-exposure to music and already having an instrument at home and utilises mimicry in her commentary on families in which the children pursue multiple extra-curricular activities. She referred to the child who has been exposed to music seeking tuition for 'the best reasons'.

> ...a variety of reasons – eh, there's one [an instrument] at home, or *'Johnny's going to do a language a sport and a musical instrument',* or there's the child fortunate enough to have been exposed – you know, looking for the lessons…for the best reason, you know....because it always comes out in the wash… (Joanne)

In Margaret's opinion, there is a 'type of family' who will choose instrumental tuition for their children. She implied a class-status connected to learning a musical instrument by mimicking an upper-class accent. Occurrences of mimicry of middle-class mothers are a notable feature of the interviews.

> There's a type of family go for it – a type of student goes for it - *'My daughter's learning...' (exaggerated upper-class accent)* you know – and then other families wouldn't touch it with a barge-pole. (Margaret)

However in Margaret's experience musician-parents were an exception. Her parent cohort, apart from two, had no musical experience.

> I have to say the majority of my students, their parents did not learn a musical instrument growing up; or don't know what's involved and really have to be told what's involved with practice. And there's two of my students, em, their mums learned the flute and that's why they sent their daughter along – but that's the exception rather than the rule. (Margaret)

Claire cited family background as significant in determining musical participation, but she alluded to the social change in family configuration, which might have implications for musical participation.

> ...it's to do with your background...there's no more of this Mom helping you with your maths in the evening – it's a babysitter doing it with you. The family thing is all different now in every house... the violin lessons and there's no '*play that now for Auntie Mary*'... (Claire)

4.3.2.4 'To be like Johnny next door'

There was a general understanding among the participants that parents were to some extent motivated by a perception of playing musical instruments as a high status activity. Eoin echoed Bourdieu's depiction of the piano as 'a noble instrument' (Bourdieu 1986, p.75).

> ...mixed with a social aspiration, they want – you know, it's like another acquisition. Their children are doing the piano – usually the piano is the instrumental choice in that case – it's the drawing-room...*(laughs)*... there's nothing wrong with it – in one way there's nothing wrong with that really. (Eoin)

Brian used expressions, *'keeping up with the Joneses'* and *'to be like Johnny next door',* to express a perception of social competition on the part of some parents. Brian concludes his statement with a high-pitched vocal imitation of an upper middle-class mother.

> Em, probably fits with middle-class culture maybe – I don't know....but it, em – sometimes their motivation for sending them is wrong sometimes. They send them because they want them to be like Johnny next door – sometimes like that, there's an element of competition – I see no harm in that, you know – at the end of the day, they're sending their kids and be it for the right or wrong reason, their kids are going to benefit from it anyway – so that – I don't think there's any harm in that – you're always going to have social competition between people as well, you know – and this whole element of keeping up with the Joneses… maybe some people view it as it makes them higher up on the social ladder ...*(high-pitched mimicking of a mother's voice)... 'my little Mary can play the violin'.....* (Brian)

Similarly, Marcus saw a correlation between playing an instrument and social aspirations.

> For example, in a posh school, students are coming to play trumpet to show off that they play different instruments – it's not piano, but it's cool to play trumpet or trombone – something particular to show off when they have guests - *'my son is able to play trombone'.* (Marcus)

4.3.2.5 'Because they have the money to do it'

The participants demonstrated a level of irritation as they spoke of the perception on the part of parents of social aspiration attaching to playing a musical instrument. Irritation and disapproval marked the tone of many participants as they decried the cultural consumption of some parents who send children to music lessons simply because they can afford it.

> You know, probably for a lot there, there are a lot sending their children to lessons because they have the money to do it and it's the thing to do…. '*oh Sinéad is playing the piano – it's wonderful'...(high-pitched vocal imitation)...* you know now? Whether progress or practice is like, it's a bit hit and miss. (Bríd)
>
> I think during the Celtic Tiger period, you got a lot of parents who sent their kids to learn music because they also sent them to learn ballet and swimming and they sent them to everything else – because financially they could send them to anything that they liked. (Frank)

An air of defensiveness comes through John's characterising of some parents' transactional approach to music tuition as cultural consumption.

> ...we very often get the other side of it, like *'I'm paying your wages'*, sort of mentality. We do have to remind people that actually, no, this is not fully paid for by your fees. This isn't a shop, or if you don't like your teacher, you can't pick another one, so part of our brief is just to educate people who might think that this is something that they can just buy, you know what I mean, you know? (John)

While there is a large body of research literature examining the role of parents and teachers in supporting the musical learning of children, the question of the importance of the initiation stage is relatively unresearched. Two studies, Dai and Schader (2001) in the US and Kobacki et al (2007) in the UK, which examined parental motivation found parents to be the most likely initiators of their children's instrumental tuition, often at the instigation of the children themselves. Both studies found that the overwhelming majority of parents were motivated by perceived intrinsic musical benefits to their children of playing musical instruments. A lesser

but significant parental motivation was identified as extrinsic benefits, such as the development of personal attributes of diligence, work-ethic or increased academic performance (Dai and Schader 2000, p.23; Kubacki et al 2007, pp.12, 13).

In this study of performance music professional beliefs, the participant teachers and administrators held similar perceptions of varied parental motivation in seeking instrumental music tuition for their children. However, most of the participants went beyond proffering an opinion and expressed irritation and disapproval of some parents' motivation. Parental attitudes were often denigrated through vocal mimicry of mothers, depicting them as frivolous, socially competitive or transactional in their approach to instrumental tuition. A pattern of conflict is discernible on the part of instrumental music professionals when speaking of students' parents, which may indicate a mismatch of value systems, power relations or role expectations.

Summary

Participants perceive parental motivation in terms of

- personal enrichment
- educational value
- family culture
- social aspiration
- cultural consumption

4.3.4 Crossing boundaries

In Chapter 2, international research literature described performance music and school music as inhabiting separate worlds of practice. Expressed in terms of the specialist instrument teacher in the music-schools and services and the generalist class teacher in the Primary school (Hewitt 2002, p. 26; O'Callaghan 2003, p. 50; Wiggins 2008, p. 2), the worlds do not often overlap, as specialist and generalist teachers are prepared with differing educational objectives.

The primary teacher's responsibility lies in children's general learning in the social setting of the school classroom. Music is one area of school curriculum and the quality of its delivery would reflect the teacher's prior musical experience of learning music, which might range from general school music to specialised vocal or instrumental proficiency. However, most primary teachers do not have experience of studying the elements and interactions of music and so may not fully understand how to provide the 'aural framework' for sequenced musical learning in the classroom (Wiggins 2008, p. 22). Furthermore, it is likely that the priority of literacy and numeracy would marginalise music on the school timetable as a once-a-week class activity.

4.3.4.1 Educational aims in conflict

Many participants referred to past or current experience as visiting instrumental specialists in primary schools. A level of dissatisfaction was voiced by participants in terms of a generalised perception of lack of co-operation, conflict of objectives, feelings of low status-perception or loneliness.

> ...you know people look at the [instrument] teachers coming in after school and they have one impression of who those people are and what those people do – but they don't see them as equivalents... (Claire)
> ...we were second class citizens – we weren't allowed into the staffroom ...we weren't welcome. (Maura)

> I was going into the classroom and the teacher was going off for a cup of tea for half an hour, and I'd take the class – and after having junior infants, second class, third class etc... you wouldn't see an adult from one end of the day to the next – you wouldn't have an adult conversation ...in an entire day I'd ring people for the sake of having an adult conversation (Orla)

One administrator explained the conflict of objectives in terms of class-teachers' unwillingness to take on additional duties coupled with a perception of an official disapproval of specialist teachers in the Primary school.

> It's hard to go to them because the teachers – the Primary teachers' response is they have enough on their plate and they don't want to take on anything else – the Department don't want specialist teachers in the Primary schools. (Sarah)

Another administrator spoke with irony when he referred to a perceived official opinion that existing music provision in the schools is 'more than adequate'.

> ...they firmly believe that the Department's provision of music at primary school level, and to some degree at post-primary school level, is more than adequate – so there's no reason for schools of music to exist... (Frank)

While Western art music holds association of high culture, discussion of 'status' perception in relation to instrumental music education demonstrates that there is more than one context to be considered. While discussing the teaching and learning of musical instruments, the interview participants strongly advocate it as an activity that impacts positively on students' academic development and the enriching of community life; and they are aware of the high cultural status of Western art music. However, when the context shifts to music in school curriculum or visiting instrumental music specialists in primary- or second-level schools, the participants expressed a shift in status perception of themselves as professionals and of instrumental music education as an educational sector. John spoke of young music teachers' negative experiences in outreach music projects in some primary schools in which the structure of the school does not adequately support instrumental music tuition.

> ...the Principal wants them for the Holy Communion, not just for music. The [class] teacher ... wants a break and leaves them at the mercy of the kids – or the teacher resents somebody else being in her classroom and makes life hell for them ... go into the staffroom and nowhere to sit. They arrive at the school and there's a staff meeting and 'no, we don't want you this week. (John)

A participant who had worked for several years as a second-level music teacher described the musical activities clashing with other subjects. First she described her experience as a pupil as she recalled choir-practice clashing with subject timetables. Then, from the perspective of class music teacher, despite the value of the school musical to the public profile of the school, the same subject clashes arose.

> [As pupil] ...it was the smallest class... we were always getting out of other classes to get to practice for the choir. We were always getting into trouble with the other teachers for going out to choir... it was constant payback...'
> [As teacher] ...I was putting hundreds of hours into the school musical, but the school musical made the school look good... but the kids were almost pawns in our game and they'd say 'oh Miss, I'd love to, I want to but I'll fall really far behind. I'm not good at maths and I can't miss maths'... (Claire)

Claire administers a large Music Service, which utilises schools throughout the county as music-centres where the day-to-day running of the music courses depends on the goodwill of the host school Principals and staff. From her attendance at Principals meetings, she has first-hand knowledge of the less than positive perception accorded the Music Service.

> ...I've heard it discussed at meetings, [school] principals are saying, 'oh the heating and the lighting, they are just a cost factor'. They see us as – for want of a better word, like – riding on the backs of their budget. They don't see what it brings to the school... (Claire)

In Claire's experience there was an unspoken professional snobbery with regard to the host school's perception of the instrumental teachers.

> [As Music Service administrator] ...you know people look at the [instrument] teachers coming in after school and they have one impression of who those people are and what those people do – but they don't see them as equivalents.... (Claire)

Although instrumental teachers and subject teacher have equal parity of qualifications accreditation and teacher-contracts, according to Claire's account,

school staff-members did not regard the 'after-school' instrumental teachers as professional equals. All participants were aware of the anomalous and problematic status of school music curriculum, proffering descriptions that ranged from a general observation of the official attitude to instrumental music, the personal experiences of visiting instrumental teachers doing outreach work in primary schools to those of second level music teachers within the school curriculum. Perceptions of music's marginality as a school activity emerges from the interviews, indicating the lower status that music occupies within the competitive curriculum of school subjects (Drury 2003, p. 7, Goodson, 1992, p. 67).

4.3.4.2 Converging paths: specialist music teachers in primary school

The two musical domains of instrumental specialist and classroom generalist successfully intersect in partnership contexts where some primary schools supplement the music curriculum utilising specialist instrumental music resources in unofficial arrangements with private instrumental teachers or, in a small number of areas, with teachers from the local VEC/ETB Music Service provision.

Órla described a primary school instrumental music project in a small county town. The project, part-funded by the County Council Arts Office, demonstrates how a partnership involving school, instrumental specialist and local authority can benefit a school community

> I go into a primary school in [County...] and I go in for a day and four students will come out of the class at a time to me and I teach them recorder and flute depending on what standard they were at and it's a co-operation between the school and the County Council – a subsidised thing. It's partly subsidised by the Council and the students pay a bit, because there is no music in the schools – it's an optional thing in Primary schools.
>
> ...we have maybe thirty to thirty five or six. Four at a time, just doing recorder – obviously, basic musical skills and then after a year doing recorder if they're a) big enough and b) talented enough – if they have the ability they'll go on to the flute. So, it's a kind of a step-up programme and the idea would be that they would eventually join the orchestra.

> The teachers are great because they allow the three or four students in their class to leave and they don't seem to have any problem with them missing the half an hour. The Principal is fantastic – he runs the whole show – and then of course there's an extra lady who runs it – and the parents are great, I mean, it's very unusual you come in and the student forgets her flute. It's a great system – I hope it keeps going – the funding might get cut... (Órla)

The instrumental music scheme described by Órla works successfully due to the vision of the Principal and the active support and co-operation of the class teachers. This arrangement could potentially be vulnerable to official scrutiny due to the fee-paying element and the circumstance where students are called out during class time, thereby differentiating between families who can afford fees and low-income families who might not perceive learning an instrument as an option for their child.

4.3.4.3 Opening access

What is of significance in this study is a consistency in the participants' vision of a future direction of instrumental music education, when socially equitable participation is considered. Almost all the study participants recognised the necessity of partnership with the primary schools in ensuring that all social classes can be included in a mainstream of instrumental music participation, even though there is a consistent participant perception of a dysfunctional relationship between specialist and generalist approaches to the learning of musical instruments. Because instrumental teacher identity lies within a specialist worldview, the emergence of a new learning paradigm would provide the means to the end of universal performance music participation beginning with the primary sector. Most of the participants regarded the schools during school hours as the setting in which truly equitable musical participation was most likely to be achieved.

> I think music education should be available to all children from primary school age upwards so they have the opportunity to play and the opportunity, I suppose, to do music regardless of age, gender and money – that it should be available in schools. (Margaret)

Margaret exemplified the band-system in the United States as an equitable model for instrumental music education.

> I would love to see the students coming out of school to have their lessons in a room in the school and for music to be, em, a normal part of their daily lives. For example in America with the band system, they are all in the band – they all have it actually scheduled and timetabled so that would be an ideal from my point of view' (Margaret)

The band-system was also the favoured model cited by Paul. He acknowledged that expense might be involved and raises ability as an unknowable factor. Paul, who teaches in an exclusively one-to-one context, is of the belief that the day-school presents the appropriate setting for equitable musical participation.

> It should be compulsory in the school... there should be bands in the school where, if you're able to do it – of course there's always the ability factor as well. But all music should be for everybody... There could be an instrument they would use while they're at school with a small maintenance fee. (Paul)

John expressed awareness that an alternative paradigm for instrumental music education would be necessary for new learning settings beyond the strictures of the on-to-one setting.

> I think in future we're going to need – I won't say more generic teachers, but teachers who are capable of working right across the spectrum….multi-skilled….and also well able to deal with a range of musical settings. I mean the one-to-one thing is great but that's a sort of – that's – you know quite limited – quite limiting… (John)

Elaine stated her conviction that social inclusion in music education is dependent on instrumental musical activity taking place in a school setting during school hours.

> I think there could be more integration – but there's a reluctance – and I used to say this all the time – we're not going to make inroads in terms of social inclusion in music education if it's not done during the school day – we're just not... we're not going to – not going to crack that nut unless those lessons are done during school. (Elaine)

Eoin was strongly in favour of extra-curricular instrumental music courses as currently provided by the Music Services being universally extended. The model of provision advocated by Eoin comprises specialised instrumental tuition extended to

all children under a conservatory type system, which would differentiate between instrumental tuition and school music.

> I think the best way to do it would be to provide proper access through a publicly funded or subsidised service in the community – in each town. Every town should have – every town of say fifteen to twenty thousand should have a small music conservatory.
>
> ...instrumental tuition can be a completely different thing from what you learn about music in school – and that's a sense people need to have access to tuition either privately or in a separate music institution, which I think really should be provided by the Government. (Eoin)

Eoin rejects a community-generated approach to instrumental music provision in favour of a general music service, arguing that a community that did not value arts would be unlikely to promote the right to an arts education.

> ...the sense it's in the community – but like, it's not this idea that the community generates the music service. It's really not, because then you're depending on the community to give people the right, so if you live in a community that don't care about the arts, you don't get educated properly. That's not the way – that shouldn't happen. The Government should see this as a service to all people – all children. (Eoin)

Making a comparison between Ireland and Finland, which has a similar population, Eoin presents a model of instrumental music education which extends instrumental tuition to communities through a national network of adult education centres.

> I know in Finland they do it through these adult education centres. They have – like they have a population about the same as Ireland maybe a little bit more. They have fifty two, I think, adult education centres... (Eoin)

Many participants regarded extending access-level instrumental music into the primary schools as the most effective means of providing equitable pathways to music-making. In Chapter 2, section 2.8, the development of Local Education Authority Music Services in the UK, but particularly in Scotland, was examined as an effective model of a national system of access-level instrumental music education. Study participants presented an awareness of the necessity of extending instrumental music education into mainstream primary education in achieving an equitable access,

but simultaneously expressed personal unwillingness to change pedagogic practice by the implications of partnership between the specialist and generalist educational spheres.

A viable access-level instrumental music provision is exemplified in the whole-class group instrumental music initiatives being piloted in a small number of Irish primary schools. Whole-class instrumental music links specialist and generalist teachers in a team-teaching pedagogic model within the primary school music curriculum to give all students in participating schools a practical experience of engaging with instrumental music-making. These whole-class music projects have the potential to maintain a mainstream of instrumental learners at primary school level and beyond at minimal cost to families.

Summary

- Specialist instrumental music teachers and primary school class teachers have differing educational objectives, which may be in conflict when instrumental teachers visit primary schools.
- Visiting instrumental teachers report a perception of the marginal status of music in school curriculum.
- Instrumental music teachers feel a lower professional status perception when working as visiting instrumental music specialists in primary schools.
- Instrumental music lessons often come into conflict with the day-to-day school structure.
- At second level, musical activities often conflict with high-status school subjects.
- Specialist instrumental music in primary school is successful when it is structurally integrated into the school curriculum.

4.4 Conclusion

The main title of the work, *Who pays and who plays?* represents the first research question, in terms of boundaries and constraints to access and participation.

> *Why does social class determine who may learn to play a musical instrument in the publicly-funded music-services?*

The subheading, *Mapping the discourse of instrumental education in Ireland* prefigures further questions, which hypothesise a correlation of cultural forces, sectoral discourse and demonstrably inequitable practice.

> *What cultural forces might be responsible for this social inequity?*
>
> *To what extent does sectoral discourse create conditions for socially inequitable musical participation?*

This study sought to interpret and reveal discourses underpinning publicly-provided instrumental music education in Ireland, which shape and influence professional practice as high-cultural, gendered and class-based. In Chapter 4, the research data was presented in the form of a multi-layered narrative arc, introducing a primary layer of data from the questionnaire survey describing the day-to-day organisational structures of the VEC/ETB music services. The main data-set of themes emerging from the interviews, brought the real-life organisational, social and cultural context of the instrumental music education sector to the study through the words of the study-participants.

4.4.1 Exclusionary boundaries

The organisational profile of the music services, emerging from the data, reveals cultural, social and financial boundaries, which confront aspirant young musicians and their families. The analysis of both interview and survey data supported a perception that, within the geographically restricted VEC/ETB areas wherever

instrumental music tuition is provided, a difficult supply-demand ratio ensures that access is dependent on ability to negotiate the boundaries of social class, musical taste and fee-payment. The main beneficiaries of the public music provision are middle- and upper middle-class families. The most tangibly effective barriers to participation for members of lower income groups are tuition fees and the extra-curricular location of the instrumental courses. Since all music-services charge fees, an obvious financial barrier is presented to low-income families; and the necessity to access instrumental music as a separate learning activity from general education makes the participation of lower-class families less likely.

The broad taste-landscape characteristic of wider society is unrepresented in the music-services. In addition to this, the classical instrumental profile of the music courses exerts a taste emphasis that appears to discourage male participation to a significant extent. The gender profile of student enrolment precisely mirrors the staff-profile as approximately two thirds female.

The privileged social class background of instrumental music teachers ensures that conformity with dominant cultural norms constructs the instrumental music education provision. Music teachers do not interact with members of disadvantaged social groups and deficit thinking with regard to disadvantaged social groups is characteristic of the music-service sector. Music-service professionals share a common perception that working-class families do not value education and, consequently, would not have a desire to learn classical musical instruments. The corollary of this is that class bias is active but invisible within a homogeneous middle-class social participation.

4.4.2 Sectoral isolation: constrained autonomy

As a high-cultural, class-based educational participation, the publicly-funded music-services sector stands apart from general education. Instrumental music education operates in a narrow social and cultural context, isolated from other education sectors in a rarefied world, which I characterise a 'Secret Garden'. Positioned in isolation from both general education and the broad musical tastes of the wider society, the instrumental music education sector is largely unaffected by the ongoing social changes of the last five decades. Most teachers teach as they themselves were taught and would be fearful of change, preferring the curricular predictability of the graded syllabus, individual tuition and the classical genre. Instrumental music teachers are, thus, simultaneously autonomous and constrained.

Teacher professional identity is largely positive, professionalised through minimum qualification requirements and salaried teaching contracts. A sense of professional security is afforded by virtue of being part of the larger bureaucratic VEC/ETB organisation. At the same time, as a separate educational entity, the positioning of the music-services in isolation from general education affords an autonomy and professional status within its own sectoral context.

The pedagogy of instrumental music is in close alignment with teacher professional identity, which is specialist rather than generalist, and individualistic rather than social. Professional training and subject knowledge of practitioners construct the instrumental courses linked to specialist teaching contracts, which tie teachers to a historically 'tried-and-trusted' learning model based on the approved Western art music canon.

4.4.3 Divergent objectives

Autonomy from general education enables a distinct sectoral identity based on the classical instrumental specialisms. While high achievement and a high-cultural aesthetic suffuse the instrumental learning process, access to the instrumental courses is by way of a bureaucratic application process rather than by audition; and tuition place-retention is not dependent on minimum achievement requirements in annual grade examination. The Music-Services sector diverges from the elite academies and conservatories in their policy of non-selectivity.

The study shows that many teachers, brought up in the conservatory system, favour ability-testing of applicants to the instrumental courses, but administrators are resistant to any form of auditioning and, instead, favour a policy of non-selectivity. The policy of non-selectivity implies that Music Services conceptualise musical ability as a developable potentiality rather than a fixed inherited giftedness featuring differential pedagogic approaches, which support a range of abilities and maximise personal musical potential.

In circumstances where the instrumental music sector occasionally intersects with general education, the educational objectives of specialist instrumental music and generalist primary education may be in conflict. A low-status perception of music in general education persists among instrumental music teachers who often feel their instrumental specialism is misunderstood and undervalued in the primary school setting. From the primary school perspective, music may be highly valued as a group activity or as an accompaniment to religious, school and community occasions, but may otherwise compete for its place on the weekly timetable at a disadvantage with core academic areas of literacy and mathematical numeracy.

4.4.4 Concerted cultivation and the privatisation of public goods

Parents and teachers hold divergent, or even conflicting, objectives with regard to children's musical learning. Teachers approach instrumental tuition as a complex, concentrated process of developing a child's aesthetic perception and musicality through instrumental musical skills-training. A sense of professional autonomy is of high value to teachers and they do not welcome what they may regard as outside interference. Parent who intervene in their children's instrumental tuition are frequently perceived by the teacher as challenging the expertise of the teacher, who may resent interference from those they regard as non-experts. Parents, on the other hand, have a more generalised motivation based on considerations as diverse as personal enrichment, educational value, family culture, social aspiration or cultural consumption.

Turning to sociological theory, middle- and upper-middle-class parents, by a strategy of *concerted cultivation,* are able to gain access to extra-curricular educational resources as a means of transferring social-class status to their children by ensuring early school success (Lareau 2002, p.748; McCoy et al 2010, p.4; McCoy et al 2013, p.60; Vincent and Ball 2007, p.1066). Approaching the learning of musical instruments in terms of concerted cultivation affords an analytical perspective of middle-class parenting as highly structured in fostering their children's skills and interests.

Even though the larger Music Services are well subsidised from central government, in reality, a narrow demographic of society is capable of cornering the public resource for individual benefit. The public resourcing of instrumental music is effectively privatised for the benefit of those with sufficient cultural capital to realise its value as a scarce cultural 'add-on'. Resources that are provided at public expense

are usually presented as a public good, funded from taxes levied from the entire population. In contrast to public transport and the police service, education as a public good is vulnerable to a quasi-privatisation and instrumental music education is particularly susceptible in this regard.

4.4.5 Summary

Chapter 4 presented the findings of the interviews conducted with fourteen instrumental music practitioners. A large amount of data was generated as the participants discussed understandings of their professional practices both within the VEC/ETB Music Services and in the wider context of the Irish education system. The participants were presented with three themes for discussion (see Appendix 8). The first theme *'Organisation, structure and practice'* examined the function of the music services, the role of the professionals and links to mainstream education. The second theme *'Access and equity'* probed the participants' perceptions of the social class composition of student enrolment in learning musical instruments, discussing both the potential access barriers, which might confront members of disadvantaged social groups and the motivation of some middle-class parents in accessing instrumental music for their children. The third theme *'Culture of instrumental music education'* explored the participants' implicit beliefs and understandings of musical ability, musical value, musical genre and the gendered nature of participation in learning musical instruments in the publicly-funded Music Services.

The concluding Chapter 5 of this study will discuss the findings of *exclusionary boundaries, sectoral isolation, divergent objectives, concerted cultivation and the privatisation of public goods* under the four themes of 'culture', 'structure', 'aims' and 'agency'.

Chapter 5

Conclusions

5.1 Introduction

The final chapter reviews and synthesises key claims and findings, highlighting the contribution of the study to policy development. As a case-study into the sociology of music education, the research intent was the mapping of discourses that shape the public instrumental music education provision. In keeping with the sociocultural framework on which the study is constructed, the final chapter theorises publicly-funded instrumental music education under four thematic headings: *Culture, Structure, Aims, Agency.*

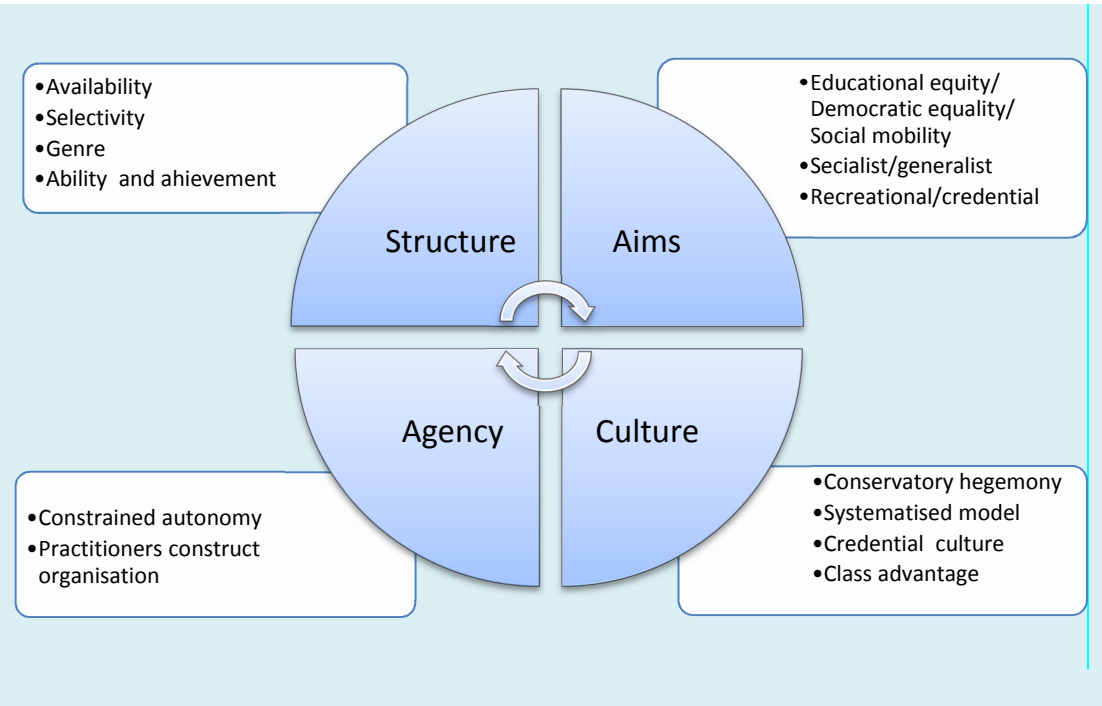


Figure 5.1: Case study: instrumental music education

The analysis drew on both survey and interview to highlight key perceptions and beliefs of instrumental music education professionals. Foucault's concept of *discourse, text* and *archive* provided a theoretical framework to connect participant statements with dominant 'truths' in order to induce an interpretation of belief systems and power structures (Foucault 1989, pp.142-145). Drawing on Bourdieu's concepts of *field, habitus and cultural capital,* the learning of musical instruments was theorised as an out-of-school enrichment activity closely aligned with middle- and upper-middle class cultural aspiration and taste (Bennett et al 2009, p.75; Bourdieu 1986, pp.6-7).

A mixed-methods case-study, questionnaire survey (*N*=48) and a series of in-depth semi-structured interviews (*N*=14), was chosen as an effective data-gathering technique to examine access to the publicly-funded instrumental music education provision in terms of social equity. My researcher position as a critical 'insider' was made explicit from the outset, given my professional involvement as teacher of violin with a VEC/ETB Music-Service, which meant that I entered the research field with prior knowledge of the social and cultural phenomena being studied (Ritchie et al, 2009, p. 107). While my close connection with the area of research implied a value-laden position, I was, at all stages, mindful of the ethical hazard of biased subjectivity and open to encountering counter-intuitive data (Corbin and Strauss 1990, p.423; Creswell and Miller 2000, p.127; Ritchie et al 2009, p. 107; Kvale and Brinkmann 2009, p. 213).

In this chapter, I will adopt a theoretical approach in order to synthesise claims and findings in the light of key research literature. The main thematic areas to be discussed are:

5.2 The cultural hegemony of the Conservatory.

5.3 Exclusionary structure: invisible boundaries.

5.4 Conflicting educational aims: reconciling the irreconcilable?

5.5 Constrained autonomy: where stands teacher agency?

The overarching theme is the historically reproduced traditional system of passing on the musical and pedagogic heritage of instrumental music through the institutionalised structures and professional practices of instrumental teachers. The culture and structures of the nineteenth century conservatory continue to inform and underpin pedagogic practice in the Music Services. Linked themes of *middle-class concerted cultivation* and *the privatisation of public goods* characterise the learning of musical instruments in the public provision whereby a privileged section of society colonises a publicly-funded elite cultural enrichment activity. Social class suffuses formal instrumental music education, copper-fastening middle-class possession of this educational resource. *Exclusionary boundaries* make access to instrumental music education less likely for children of lower-class families. Fees, restricted availability, a perception of high-culture and the out-of-school location of the music-courses place participation out of the reach of many families. *Sectoral isolation* is the theme which positions the learning of musical instruments apart from general education. The isolated position of instrumental music shelters the sector from potential outside pressures for change. Whereas general education since the 1960s has transformed from a domain of privilege to an area of free access and relative, if imperfect, equity of participation, the instrumental music education sector retains most of the same elite cultural and pedagogic features, which characterised it in the nineteenth century. Conflicting educational aims place Conservatory culture at odds with the objectives of general education. The *constrained autonomy* of teachers poses a contradiction. While instrumental teaching is a solitary, sometimes lonely

activity, in which professionals maintain a significant autonomy in their teaching practices, they are constrained by the shared professional discourses deriving from the Conservatory system that underpin common practice throughout the Music Services.

5.2 Culture: the hegemony of the Conservatory

The Academy or 'Conservatory system' lies at the core of instrumental music education. This system endures largely unchanging since the inception of the nineteenth century music schools, conservatories and academies. While society, general education and musical taste are undergoing a process of ongoing change, formal instrumental music education reproduces and maintains the time-honoured, tried-and-trusted system inherited from another era. Analysis of the interviews revealed that the signature learning model of individuated tuition, fixed-stage grade examinations and the Western classical musical canon construct the pedagogy of instrumental teaching.

5.2.1 A systematised workable model

The systematisation of instrumental music teaching in the nineteenth century as an 'industrialisation' of the cultural process of musical achievement rationalised the learning of instruments as a model of mass production (Wright 2005, p.257). The appeal of the Conservatory System lies in its efficient workable learning model laid down on an incremental graded pathway to instrumental competence. The system features *simplification, step-by-step progression, mechanical learning, isolation of technical problems, achievement hierarchies by exam and competition* supported by a vast music-publishing industry (Bolliger and Reed 2008, p.2). At the core of the learning model is the effortful work ethic of the individual learner and in recent

decades the sociocultural dimension of music-making is acknowledged in the proliferation of youth orchestras, wind-bands and smaller group music configurations, which support the one-to-one instrumental tuition.

According to study participants, the key factors in ensuring long-term success are the individual lessons, regular home-based instrumental practice and the achievement and competency criteria of the annual examinations. Most of the teacher-participants indicated they would fear changes that might diverge from the individuated pedagogy and grade examination culture in which they were trained; and administrator-participants expressed the belief that teachers must be facilitated in teaching in a manner with which they feel most comfortable. Under this cyclical system, teacher training, qualifications and instrument-specific teaching contracts ensure that the pedagogic and musical canons are reproduced unchanged from one generation of teachers and learners to the next.

This is a canonical model of formal musical learning, common in general acceptance and practice. The aim of this study is to shine a critical light on this collective professional practice, which is implicitly accepted as having the ultimate validity and value.

5.2.2 Examination culture

The graded system of assessing musical achievement can be perceived as existing within a *credentialing culture,* which is exceptionally strong in Ireland, especially among the middle-class (Smyth et al 2011, pp. *xiv,* 1, 3, 6, 10, 224, 225). The NCCA Longitudinal Study (2011) shows, that a credentialing or examination tradition forms a cultural backdrop to Irish education. In such a culture, the effect of 'high stakes' examinations – the 'looming presence' of the Leaving Certificate – has an impact on students' learning, in particular the need for achieving 'points' for entry to higher

education courses shapes students' learning approaches in the final years of secondary school (Smyth et al 2011, p.224).

> Middle-class and high-aspiring students expressed impatience with, and were critical of, teachers who did not focus on 'what would come up in the exam'...focusing precisely on the kinds of knowledge and skills they needed to do well in the exam (Smyth et al, p.225)

In my professional life, I have occasionally encountered ambitious parents of prospective violin students, who have clear ideas of their child's future progress through the grades. Even before the child has laid a hand on a musical instrument at the age of six or seven years, ambitious parents can project that, all going well, the child will complete Grade 8 violin in fifth year of secondary school, to allow unhindered study for the Leaving Cert year. In conversation, many of my colleagues have anecdotally reported the same phenomenon. At enrolment, many parents enquire if the grade-levels in my institution are the equivalent of the 'Royal Irish Academy' or the 'Associated Board', and will the child be qualified to teach having completed Grade 8. These examples of parental ambition are relatively uncommon, but have occurred often enough over my teaching career to merit attention. What I have consistently encountered is the pressure from the student him- or herself to move ahead from grade to grade in an atmosphere of peer 'grade rivalry' especially in the secondary school years. Examination or 'credentialing' culture characterises the Conservatory system.

5.2.3 Middle-class advantage

This study presented instrumental music education as a cultural activity based on socially inequitable access and participation. Survey and interview data found a homogenous middle-class teaching staff mirroring the middle-class student participation. The isolated positioning of this highly systematised learning activity as

a separate educational sector, underpinned by high-cultural aesthetic criteria, facilitates middle-class advantage in instrumental music participation.

Middle-class parents seeking age-appropriate organised activities, such as team field sports, ballet, Irish dancing, tennis, music, gymnastics, invest time and finance in providing a range of rich learning experiences for their children. In contrast, working-class parents in providing material and emotional security and happiness, generally do not seek out organised out-of school activities with which to develop special abilities in their children (Lareau 2002, p.749; Vincent and Ball 2007, p.1069). Structured out-of-school learning opportunities are found to have long-term consequences for children's learning. The recent ESRI report, *Growing up in Ireland* (2013), found that children participating in structured out-of-school activities achieved higher reading and mathematical scores than those participating in unstructured activities. Structured extra-curricular learning opportunities were found to 'reinforce their within-school learning' (McCoy et al 2013, p. 61). The opportunity differentials for accessing high quality out-of-school learning activities are likely to amplify and reinforce inequality in young people's general education outcomes over time.

5.3 Structure: a bounded cultural practice

An illusion of choice, represented by the offering of instrumental music courses on a basis of apparent non-selectivity implies that applicants may access their desired instrument if a vacancy exists, rather than being selected for overt prior musical ability by way of audition. Study participants asserted that any child may access an instrumental tuition place providing a suitable vacancy arises. In actuality, this is an intensely bounded cultural practice. A family wishing to enrol a child in an instrumental music course is confronted by a complex of boundaries, both visible

and invisible. The visible boundaries are the severely restricted availability of publicly-funded affordable instrumental music tuition and the necessity to pay tuition fees, but the presence of invisible cultural boundaries renders this a difficult area to negotiate for those families who lack a middle-class habitus (Bourdieu 1986). Music as cultural consumption is affirmative of social class and playing a classical instrument is an efficacious mode of acquiring cultural capital (Bennett et al, 2009, Bourdieu, 1986). Elite visions of music present implicit boundaries for prospective learners, whereby divergence in musical taste preferences presents an anomaly, in which the musical values of the young learner are generally not aligned with the Western classical canon on which instrumental music education is founded (Green 2006, Lamont 2003, Woodford 2005).

5.3.1 Restricted availability

Within the three larger-scale music-services, limited tuition time, determined by Governmental allocation, can only partially address demand for music tuition. Outside of Dublin, Limerick and Cork, a handful of small-scale publicly-funded music-services reach a limited public, but the greater part of the country remains without any affordable instrumental music provision. Families who live at a distance from music centres encounter the problem of transporting children to lessons but for many distance presents a prohibitive barrier to access.

While developments in general education during the past fifty years ensures a basis of equity in apportioning the benefits of primary and second-level schooling, the study found the instrumental music education sector to be protected from public scrutiny by a complex of cultural boundary markers, which effectively conceal a process of social and cultural selectivity. The scarcity of provision has significant implications for access and participation, primarily in the manner that the music

education resource is made available or, indeed, rationed. Gillborn and Youdell argue that even within the general education system, a process of educational rationing is a reality as 'inequalities are reproduced, extended and legitimised' through everyday routine practices – 'a culmination of many factors, the full effects of which often remain hidden from public scrutiny' (Gillborn and Youdell 2000, p.1).

5.3.2 Concealed selectivity

Looking beneath the surface of instrumental music education, far from being non-selective, music-services present financial, social and cultural boundaries, which many families may be unable or unwilling to negotiate. Per-term enrolment fees, which range from a nominal registration fee rate to full unsubsidised commercial fees, puts the possibility of learning musical instruments beyond the financial reach of many families. While lower-income middle-class families might make financial sacrifices in order to afford instrument lessons (participants referred to mothers taking on part-time work to fund music lessons), fee-payment presents a solid access barrier to the low-income working-class family. Thus, fees serve as a selection tool by filtering out families who are unable or unwilling to pay. A nominal music tuition registration fee for one family would be unthinkable financial commitment in another family's worldview.

An equally impervious boundary is that of the social class structures that present out-of-school music as a high-status leisure activity for the children of middle- and upper middle-class families (Bodovski and Farkas 2008, pp.904-5; McCoy et al 2013, p.6; Vincent and Ball 2007, pp.1073-4). While young people of all social classes are generally far more attracted to rock and pop than to classical music, a value-ideology of superiority attaching to Western classical music canon of the Music Service

instrumental courses connects with middle-class aspiration to affirm cultural differentials between social classes (Green 2002, p.267).

5.3.3 Taste as boundary

It is generally taken as a given that the formal learning of musical instruments is synonymous with the Western classical musical canon. Equally, when we refer to informal musical learning, contemporary popular musical genres and styles along with self- and peer-learning come to mind. If the publicly-funded instrumental music-service were to be truly democratic, it would accommodate a wider range of musical preferences. The configuration of the Western classical musical canon as the approved musical genre by which the learning of musical instruments can be approached musically disenfranchises large demographics of young people by way of musical taste identity. Most young people would not place a taste preference on classical music, especially if from a working-class background (Green 2003, p.267).

Participants in the study justified classical pedagogy as being superior to any other because, as one teacher put it, 'it brings you farthest fastest'. There was strong belief in the superiority of classical instrumental technique on the grounds that developing a classical technique a musician is primed to play in any other genre. This may be a self-serving position as no consideration is given to the alternative learning styles entailed in approaches such as improvisation and learning music 'by ear' through playing along with recordings. Only one participant (John) gave consideration to different learning styles as he compared the minutely trained classical musician, 'afraid of performance...who will only perform in an exam situation, and occasionally in competition', and the rock guitarist who is 'absolutely fearless of getting up on stage' despite not having 'the technical ability to play the guitar'. John revealed that his Music Service had hundreds of children looking for tuition in

guitar, voice and keyboard, who cannot be facilitated, despite there being a very small waiting list for the classical instruments. The *taste boundary* represents an effective means of addressing the restricted availability of tuition places by presenting applicants with a restricted musical choice.

Musical taste has already been analysed in terms of *distinction* as a classificatory signifier of social position (Bourdieu 1986, pp.6-7). However musical taste may be less significant than the contingencies of the instrument-specific teaching contracts. The current teaching cohort, configured as classical instrumental teachers, is probably incapable of accommodating a broadening out of musical genre. Taking public taste preference for pop and rock instruments into consideration, John dramatically likened the outcome of free musical choice to the disappearance of Latin as a school subject suggesting the possible demise of the classical instrumental teacher if a broader range of tuition were to be offered. This is hardly a likely outcome as, in the event of a music-service offering a range of musical genres, a well-designed quota policy would easily balance the instrumental areas. However, the reality is, that under present conditions, those who wish to learn popular instruments are obliged to access instrumental tuition in the private sector or alternatively through self- and peer-learning, in solitary or group contexts, which is the typical manner in which most popular musicians learn (Green 2002, p.10). The exclusion of 'pop instruments' as well as wider popular culture from the publicly-provided instrumental music education provision, in effect, directs the offering of a narrow genre of instrumental courses towards a narrow social demographic of the population.

5.3.4 Achievement and ability

Conceptions of musical ability in the form of *inherent talent* or *developable ability* and the markers of achievement through the grade exams pose boundaries, which students will encounter post-enrolment. The approved method of achieving musical success is to spend several hours per week alone with the instrument practicing the prescribed scales, technical exercises and musical works chosen by the teacher from the syllabus lists (Davidson and Scutt 1999, p.81). The graded syllabus documents an achievement pathway of step-by-step progression through nine or ten grade-levels, formally assessed through annual examinations. The student is minutely trained in instrumental technique during the weekly individual lesson backed up by effortful daily practice. Achievement is measured and expressed as a number percent. While learners of orchestral instruments are encouraged to participate in youth orchestra and wind-band, the marker of instrumental achievement is the examination result rather than musical participation itself. The teaching approach values skills training over musical participation with peers. As a learning perspective, the training of instrumental skills is regarded as a collection of units that can be broken down into manageable tasks. The basics are initially laid down and observable progress is reinforced (Conway 2002, p.72).

Throughout the interviews, participants used the term 'talent' to denote ability with the implication that ability looms large in the discourse of instrumental music education. However, most participants, when engaged further on the topic by the researcher, professed a belief in 'hard work' as the key factor in developing musical ability, acknowledging that learners must actively engage in their own learning. Nevertheless there exists a discourse around special giftedness in the musical sphere. Participants, who expressed a belief in the efficacy of hard work as the key factor in

musical success, spoke of the musical giftedness of prodigies as arising from a family type, which nurtures high achievement in its children. The majority of participants conveyed a sense of ambivalence in expressing their understandings of musical ability. Many teachers spoke of 'talented children', but in the next breath declared that 'there's no alternative to hard work'. Study participants used the common term 'talent' ambiguously and interchangeably to represent both 'innate' and 'developable' ability constructs. A common understanding of 'talent' was presented as a genetic inheritance combined with musical family environment, activated through motivation and effortful engagement with the learning process.

During interview, participants expressed a range of ability understandings, reflecting a spectrum from inborn musical 'talent' through to a common human potential for developing musical ability, providing suitable conditions, such as motivation or family culture. Participants placed high value on instrumental learners fulfilling a personal musical potential

5.4 Agency: a constrained autonomy

Instrumental music teachers in the publicly-funded music services have a measure of autonomy in how they model their teaching practices. This was reflected in administrator-participant evidence that their role was to facilitate instrumental teachers in approaching their teaching in a manner with which they would be most comfortable. Given this flexible 'hands-off' attitude of administrators, there might be an expectation that instrumental music courses would be characterised by a wide variety of teaching approaches and styles. However, the opposite is the case.

The data gathered from the participants' contributions in this study clearly reveals that a highly standardised pedagogy based on an epistemology of individualistic endeavour and achievement is entrenched in the publicly-funded music services. I

am reminded of the phrase 'legendary autonomy', which might be applied to teaching practices in Irish instrumental music education. The 'legendary autonomy' of Irish teachers, was a phrase coined in an OECD review of Irish education (OECD 1991). It referred to the dearth of research, at the time, into classroom teaching practices, and indicated the dominance of the transmission teaching and learning model in Irish schools (Conway 2002, p.64). A legendary autonomy equally applies to instrumental music teaching as currently practiced in the public instrumental music education sector. The positioning of instrumental music education in isolation from general schooling affords the specialist music education sector a considerable autonomy in determining policy and practice. This sectoral autonomy has allowed the consolidation of a distinct identity that is out of alignment with political and social developments, which have transformed equity of participation in general education over the past half-century. Sheltered from social change, the learning of musical instruments exists in a world of high-culture, as an out-of-school enrichment activity, mainly accessed by a demographic of society that possesses the necessary level of cultural capital (Bourdieu 1986, Lareau 2002, Vincent and Ball 2007).

Although the instrumental music education sector as a whole is autonomous of the wider education sector, at the individual teacher-level, it is a constrained autonomy. The autonomy of the instrumental music teacher is subject to a number of key factors, which determine teaching practices and shape the instrumental music courses. Foremost among constraining factors are the epistemology of individualism and the constructs of ability and achievement, which characterise a pervasive examination culture.

5.4.1 Where stands teacher agency?

Teacher autonomy is best conceptualised in the context of *agency.* In this final chapter I refer back to the opening quotes, which initiated the dissertation, to re-quote Jerome Bruner:

> It is through our own narratives that we principally construct a version of ourselves in the world, and it is through its narrative that a culture provides models of identity and agency to its members.
>
> What does it take to create a nurturing school culture that empowers the young effectively to use the resources and opportunities of the broader culture?
>
> (Bruner 1996, *The culture of education,* p.*xiv*)

The narrative of instrumental music education in Ireland is a narrative of shared meanings, of accepted ways of 'doing' music, originating in the nineteenth century music academies (Weber 1979, Wright 2005). While Irish education has undergone cultural, social and political change, the narrative of instrumental music education in this country remains detached from the broadening of access and participation, which has transformed first- second- and third-level education. In response to Bruner's question, the culture of formal instrumental music education has shown itself as impervious to the broader culture, precluding a self-generated intentional teacher agency (Bruner 1996, p.16). The sectoring of instrumental music in isolation from general education amounts to a form of cultural 'sensory deprivation', which serves to constrict teacher agency to a limited and self-limiting world bounded by familiar norms, and shared values and goals.

The consensus among study participants described a narrative of one-to-one tuition that denied the effectiveness of any alternative learning context. An amalgam of fear-of-the-unknown with regard to group-learning, and an outright conviction with regard to the efficacy of individuated pedagogy, is what emerged from the interview data. The high value placed on achievement criteria of the grade examinations

permeates the beliefs of the participants. An emphasis on individual performativity achievement rather than on musical participation defines the culture of the music services within a broader examination culture.

Teacher agency in the instrumental music education sector presents as the ability to successfully navigate the durable structures that value the highly institutionalised skills, attitudes and modes of thinking that maintain and reproduce unjust patterns of access.

5.5 Aims: reconciling the irreconcilable?

This study has uncovered a complex world of competing and conflicting aims, goals and objectives. In general education, a hierarchical curriculum has subjects vying with each other for status recognition (Ballantyne 2001, Bresler 1998, Gillborn and Youdell 2000, Goodson 1992). In music education, specialist and generalist teachers seem destined to be at perpetual loggerheads in their learning goals (Ballantyne 2001, Wiggins 2008). Instrumental music teachers, their students, and students' parents appear to have differential musical objectives that somehow are reconciled, whether by compromise or perhaps by a pragmatic convergence of long-term learning goals (Dai and Schader 2000, Kubacki et al 2007, Lareau 2002, Vincent and Ball 2007). Advocates of music education emphasise cognitive transference that extends beyond the intrinsic qualities of the musical activity itself (Bresler 1998, Hofmann-Davis 2008, Koopman 2005).

5.5.1 Competing educational goals

In attempting to reconcile this far-from-simple educational landscape, I draw on Labaree's three goals of education in a liberal democracy: *democratic equality, social efficiency* and *social mobility* (Labaree 1997)

> ...education has come to be defined in an arena that simultaneously promotes equality and adapts to inequality...schools, it seems, occupy an awkward position at the intersection between what we hope society will become and what we think it really is – between political ideals and economic realities. (Labaree 1997, p.41)

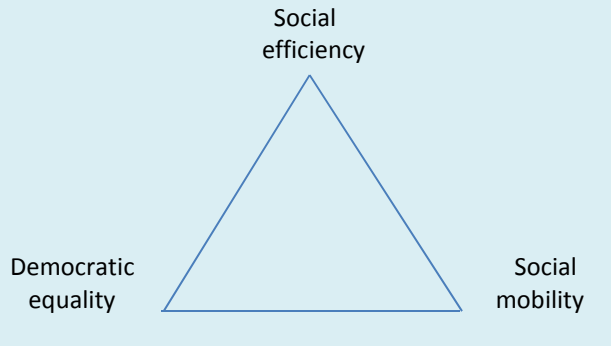


Figure 5.2: Competing educational goals

Under a *democratic equality* approach, young people are prepared with equal care in a democratic society to become competent citizens, but this goal will be undermined in conditions of excessive inequality. The *social efficiency* goal prepares young people to efficiently and competently perform economic tasks; and invests in the productivity of an entire workforce. The third goal of *social mobility* shapes education as a commodity whose purpose is to provide individuals with *individual* competitive advantage in the struggle for social position (Labaree 1997, p.42).

Labaree argues that education has been reshaped into a commodity, whereby the original goal of *democratic equality* has been overtaken by the goal of *social mobility* (Labaree 1997, p.43). In a liberal economy, the educational goal of social mobility trumps the other two goals, in the process, benefitting those members of already advantaged social classes. As a commodity, education is rendered a private

good designed to prepare individuals for 'successful social competition for the more desirable market roles' (Labaree 1997, p.42).

Applying Labaree's model to instrumental music education, while learning a musical instrument might not be immediately obvious as a preparation for market roles, the fit of *social mobility* suggests that the publicly provided music services amount to a quasi-public good subject to privatisation as an individualised enrichment activity. Participants in the study spoke of parental awareness of the claims of the beneficial effects of cognitive transfer from learning musical instruments to directly influence positive academic outcomes as a strong motivation for seeking music tuition for their children (Hofmann-Davis 2008, pp.1-3; Koopman 2005, p.86; Langbeim 2004, p.84). Arts education in general is subject to a utilitarian pragmatic view that engagement during school years with a fine art-form enhances creativity, concentration and motivation, enhancing students' social skills and self-image (Hofmann-Davis 2008, pp.2, 46; Bresler, 1998, p.11; Koopman 2005, p86). Learning a musical instrument fits this scenario and there is strong evidence to show that it is a belief shared by parents and educators alike. In the specific case of instrumental music education in Ireland, the access point as an out-of-school educational activity precludes universal participation.

5.5.2 Specialist and generalist: parallel educational discourses

Instrumental and school music occupy separate educational sectors. At primary-level, all young people participate in music as a school activity, led by the generalist class teacher. The Primary School Music Curriculum document outlines the role of the generalist teacher in school music as 'the most appropriate person to present rounded musical experiences in listening and responding, performing and composing in most circumstances' (DES 1999b, p.29). Primary teachers are not required to have

practical musical skills, or indeed, to have any background at all in instrumental music practice, so teachers draw on whatever prior musical experience or understanding they may possess. Schools music is subject to the precariousness of chance circumstance in having a musically competent member on the teaching staff (Wiggins 2008, p.9). The curriculum document, while specifically prescribing the *listening and responding, performing and composing* strands of the music curriculum, is vague regarding its implementation.

Two problems present with regard to implementing the primary music curriculum: teacher knowledge and the marginal position of music in general education. While individual staff-members may be enthusiastic for music and have the best of intentions, in most cases they are unlikely to have the subject knowledge or musical understanding to incrementally 'follow through' as they would in the areas of literacy and numeracy (Byo 1999, p.113; Holden and Button 2006, pp.29-30; Wiggins 2008, pp.4, 10; Hallam et al 2009, pp.14-15). The primary teacher's role lies in the general learning of all children in the social setting of the school classroom and it is likely that the twin priority areas of literacy and numeracy marginalise music on the school timetable as a once-a-week class activity.

By contrast, the formal learning of musical instruments must be accessed by some children as an elective, fee-paying out-of-school cultural enrichment activity (Vincent and Ball 2007, p. 1066). A small number of learners can potentially achieve a high level of proficiency on their instrument as they progress through a specialised, minutely-structured system of tuition in a one-to-one pedagogic setting, in which the learner is given individual attention by the instrumental teacher. In the public instrumental music education sector, the instrumental music teacher's specialism focuses on a single instrumental area, often supported with theory classes, groups

and orchestras, all taking place extra-curricular of general education. Unlike the primary school sector, 'working towards the exam' is a common ethos in the instrumental music sector, where the annual grade examination is utilised as an external motivational strategy (Davison and Scutt 1999, p.93; Sloboda 2005, p.280). The central part played by the examination in the formal learning of musical instruments may be characterised as both a gateway to further progress and a cultural scaffold for validating learning achievement to 'qualify' musicians to play (Frith 1998, p.36). By the end of primary school age, an average twelve-year-old instrumental music student will have been initiated into 'examination culture' through four or five annual grade examinations.

Participants in the study, who taught as visiting instrumental music teachers in primary school outreach, found themselves at odds with the expectations of the primary schools. The musical aims of many primary schools might not extend much beyond school celebration, religious ceremony or community occasions, while the specialist music teacher holds an incremental long-term overview on the learning process of each individual instrumental student. Participants reported dissatisfaction with their encounters with primary school personnel, which was expressed in terms of lack of co-operation and perception of low-status. It is clear from the participants that instrumental music outreach in primary schools frequently operates as ad hoc 'under-the-radar' musical initiatives in which both parties may fail to set clear terms of reference. The visiting specialist teacher finds him- or herself in a dysfunctional relation to the expectations of the host school. Indeed the concept of 'visiting specialist' and 'host school' indicates the vulnerability of the instrumental teacher bringing specialist skills into a generalist educational context with the likelihood that the two worldviews may be in conflict.

Drawing on my own experience as a visiting specialist violin teacher in a primary school, I have found that at least three essential conditions must be present for a successful long-term instrumental programme to function: the educational vision of the Principal, an agreed policy aligning the specialist and generalist learning aims and goals, and the enthusiastic co-operation of the class teachers, not alone in equal partnering the instrumental teacher, but backing up the instrumental music lesson within the weekly class curriculum. While the Principal's educational vision may be in evidence, the other two conditions of learning aims and class teacher partnership may not always be present. Ideally, the class teacher and the specialist instrumental teacher work in a team-teaching context within the Primary School Music Curriculum: 'seeking the support of organisations outside the school and working in collaboration with them in a spirit of involvement and inclusiveness' (DES 1999b, p.28).

This was highlighted in Dorothy Conaghan's 2014 report into the *NCH Primary Strings Project,* outlined in detail in Sub-section 2.7.7 (Conaghan 2014, p.5). To re-quote John, Administrator of an urban Music Service (see Section 4.3.4),

> I think in future we're going to need – I won't say more generic teachers, but teachers who are capable of working right across the spectrum….multi-skilled….and also well able to deal with a range of musical settings. (John)

Siting the point of access to instrumental music education in the primary school settings joins up a number of loose ends and, at the same time, poses new questions. The *Primary Strings Project* suggests a means of embedding an instrumental music programme into the existing music curriculum of the primary school to bring group-musical participation to all school children. Similar to the *Youth Music Initiative (Scotland)* and the *Music Standards Fund (England),* the *Primary Strings Project* provides instrumental music tuition at low, or no, cost to participants. While the UK

programmes provide one year of guaranteed free instrumental music tuition to K2 pupils and subsequently to a self-selecting cohort of those who opt to continue, the *Primary Strings Project* is a programme of instrumental tuition, in which all pupils progress incrementally through structured tuition levels in their primary school years.

How to fund access-level instrumental music in the primary schools is the major question. The *Primary Strings Project* so far takes place in twenty three primary schools mainly in the Dublin area, all but one depending on school funds to employ private instrumental teachers as government funding does not financially support the employment of visiting teaching specialists. In the case of one of the participating schools, tuition is provided by an instrumental music teacher employed by the local VEC/ETB Music Centre within the teacher's weekly timetable, and at a nominal cost to the school. Funding instrumental music programmes through the regional VEC/ETB organisations aligning Music Services with local primary schools, potentially presents a coherent model for further research. Inevitably, for government, the question of funding will take precedence to the educational considerations. Scotland, which has a similar population to the Republic of Ireland, as a working model, government, through the local Education Authorities supports the *Youth Music Initiative* with £10m in annual funding (Frith 2008, p.172). There is a real likelihood that the funding issue would prove to be the insurmountable barrier to rolling out a truly equitable access-level instrumental music provision.

5.6 Coda: closing notes

This study has its origin in my sense of unease, or 'felt difficulty' (Dewey 1910), that all was not well in the secret garden of instrumental music education. It had been clear to me over an extended period that the learning of musical instruments was an exclusively middle-class activity; and the dilemma, narrated in the first vignette, crystallised for me the unjust distribution of this public educational resource. Both vignettes touched on some of the main themes that have concerned me in the course of unfolding the story of instrumental music education in Ireland. The girl in *Vignette 1* did not get the opportunity to learn a musical instrument, but the boy in *Vignette 2* continues to not alone enjoy his music-making with the rest of his class-mates, but has moved into a specialised course of violin tuition. The two vignettes serve to highlight in lived terms the research problem, which initiated this study – the problem of access to publicly provided instrumental music education.

Writing the final pages of the dissertation, I reflect upon my journey of discovery, which began with an initial framing of the problem, critical engagement with research literature and developing a familiarity with the field of study. My critique was not of Western classical music itself, but of the pedagogies, policies and practices that mediate this high-cultural musical form as the approved musical genre of instrumental music education.

Beginning with the problem of social class access to music-making in the primary school years, the study evolved into a critical analysis of the instrumental music education canon. Over the five years of reading, research, analysis and writing, professional life and academic life merged into a complex changing trajectory. By questioning the foundational principles of my own profession, the context in which I was teaching began to shift, providing new insights. Engaging with education theory

within a sociocultural perspective, my understandings of learning, musical meaning and culture deepen my identity as musician and teacher - a new 'hybrid' identity, bringing new perspectives as practitioner-researcher.

Drawing on Foucault's concept of *discourse,* the study approached the subject-matter of the research as a dynamic network of individuals, practices and beliefs held together in a uniting framework, as a lens with which to examine implicitly shared meanings and 'truths' (Olsson 1999, p.137). Framed as a mixed-methods case study of survey and interview, a process of 'constant comparative method' or Grounded Theory provided an analytical technique with which to interpret data in order to generate theory (Corbin and Strauss, 1990, p.419). The constant comparison of themes in a system of open coding enabled the continuous forming, reforming and subdivision of the emerging concepts to afford precision and guard against researcher bias (Corbin and Strauss, 1990, p. 421). From the outset I was mindful that the research would take place in my home setting, what Malone refers to as 'backyard research' (Malone 2003, p.800).

5.6.1 Contribution of the study

This study of access to the learning of musical instruments makes an original contribution to education studies by opening up to scrutiny a hitherto unresearched area of educational practice in Ireland. The study found that children of low-income families are not participating in out-of-school instrumental music learning activities, especially if fees are involved; but when low-cost instrumental tuition was directly provided in a targeted way in two disadvantaged communities it was availed of enthusiastically by local families. As an investigation into access to the publicly-funded instrumental music education provision, the study revealed cultural discourses of taste, ability, achievement criteria, specialism and sectoral isolation

that construct potentially exclusionary boundaries for families who may not possess a cultural habitus appropriate to accessing music tuition. The study challenges policy-makers to broaden the means of access to instrumental music.

Placing the problem of access to the public instrumental music education resource in the broader educational context highlighted an isolated out-of-school position with only minimal points of contact with mainstream education. Specialist instrumental music pedagogy occasionally intersects, but does not integrate with the generalist mainstream of primary education in circumstances where a school-initiated music programme utilises the services of a visiting instrumental music teacher.

The study identified an interesting point of divergence whereby the pedagogic aims of the instrumental teacher and the musical needs of the primary school frequently yields a sense of culture-clash when the high-skills instrumental training approach encounters the generalised approach to school curricular activities. Probing the emotional world of the specialist practitioner, the study highlighted the low status perception of the visiting instrumental music specialist. From the situated analysis of this juxtaposition of pedagogic traditions emerges the differential status of subjects and activities within a hierarchical and competitive school curriculum.

Throughout the analysis of findings and claims, this study was framed by the sociocultural approach of the researcher to music-making, contextualising the problem of access in terms of social justice. The exposition of the study findings draw on Bourdieu's theories of social and cultural capital reproduction to reveal teachers and families as one, sharing a habitus that occupies a field of middle-class cultural practice, in which individuals acquire cultural competence through high-status extra-curricular enrichment activities. The understandings of instrumental music educational practitioners converge as a middle-class assertion of professional

practitioners and participating families combining in a powerful shared discourse that enacts a socio-historical *text* based in the practices of the Conservatory.

Theorising the policies, practices and pedagogies of the Music Services existing within a socio-historical cultural reproduction of the European high-art musical heritage within an examination culture, the study identifies a point of departure for research in the field of instrumental music education.

If instrumental music education is to be democratised and distributed as an equitable education provision, paradigm-shift is required. Discourses that construct pedagogy, conceptions of ability and achievement, musical genre and even musical instrument choice will be subject to review and re-conception. High-stakes graded testing may not be appropriate to the generalist education context of the primary school. A classical strings project might not be appropriate in every local situation – indeed, a traditional music instrumental project would probably work better in a locale with a strong folk music tradition. Are there workable pedagogies, curricula and assessment processes appropriate to the primary school context? Is there a place for assessment at primary-level? Should emphasis be placed on reading notation, playing 'by ear', or perhaps a combination of both? Can musical genre diversity be applied in school curriculum? What pathways can lead from access-level whole-class instrumental music into specialised tuition? Where does instrumental music education go after primary school?

The study and, in particular, these big questions present starting points for education research; and present prompts to curriculum planners of instrumental pedagogy modules in the third-level music teacher preparation programmes within a landscape of changing musical and music educational perceptions.

References

Abeles, H., F., & Porter, S., Y. (1978). The sex-stereotyping of musical instruments. *Journal of research in music education, 26*(2), 65-75.

Alan, J., Moran, N., Duffy, C., & Loening, G. (2010). Knowledge exchange with Sistema Scotland. *Journal of Education Policy, 25*(3), 335-347.

Albert, D., J. (2006). Socioeconomic status and instrumental music: what does the research say about the relationship and its implications? *Applications of research in music education, 25*(1).

Akkerman, S., F., & Bakker, A. (2011). Boundary crossing and boundary objects. *Review of Educational Research, 81*(2), 132-169.

Anderson, J. R., Greeno, J. G., Reder, L. M., & Simon, H. A. (2000). Perspectives on learning, thinking, and activity. *Educational Researcher, 29*(4), 11-13.

Annual Reports of the Department of Education (1924-1964) Dublin: An Roinn Oideachais.

Ballantyne, Julie (2001) The Distinctive Nature of Music Education and Music Teacher Education. In Singh, P & McWilliam, E (Eds.) *Designing Educational Research theories, Methods And Practices.* Post Pressed, Flaxton, Queensland, pp. 1-12.

Barab, S., & Plucker, J. (2002). Smart people or smart contexts? Cognition, ability and talent development in an age of situated approaches to knowledge and learning. *Education Psychologist 37*(3).

Bennett, T., Savage, M., Silva, E., Warde, A., Gayo-Gil, M., & Wright, D. (2009). *Culture, class, distinction*. Oxford: Routledge.

Bergstrom, T., Blume, L., & Varian, H. (1986). On the private provision of public goods. *Journal of public economics, 29*(1), 25-49.

Bergstrom, T. C., & Goodman, R. P. (1973). Private demands for public goods. *The American Economic Review*, 280-296.

Bernstein, B. B. (2000). *Pedagogy, symbolic control, and identity: Theory, research, critique*: Rowman & Littlefield.

Bernstein, B. (2001). Symbolic control: issues of empirical description of agencies and agents. *International journal of social research methodology, 4*(1), 21-33.

Blacking, J. (1976). *How musical is man?* London: Faber.

Bodovski, K., & Farkas, G. (2008). "Concerted cultivation" and unequal achievement in elementary school. *Social Science Research, 37*(3), 903-919.

Bolliger, T., & Reed, G. (2008). *Context: One-to-one tuition*. Paper presented at the INVITE Conference. Helsinki.

Booth, E. El Sistema's Open Secrets. *Teaching Artist Journal, 9*(1), 16-25.

Borko, H., Liston, D., & Whitcomb, J., A. (2007). Genres of empirical research in teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Education, 58*(1), 9.

Bourdieu, P. (1977). *Outline of a theory of practice* (R. Nice, Trans.).

Bourdieu, P. (1985). *Distinction: A critique of the judgement of taste* (R. Nice, Trans.): Cambridge University Press.

Bourdieu, P., & Passeron, J. (1977). *Reproduction in education, society and culture.* London: Sage.

Bowen, G. (2006). Grounded theory and sensitizing concepts. *International journal of qualitative methods, 5*(3), 12-23.

Brenner, M. (2006). Interviewing in educational research. In L. Green, Camilli, G., Elmore, P. B. (Ed.), *Handbook of Complementary Methods in Educational Research* (pp. pp.357 - 370). Washington D.C.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates for AERA.

Bresler, L. (1993). Music in a double bind: instruction by non-specialists in elementary schools. *Bulletin of the council for research in music education, 115*, 1-13.

Bresler, L. (1998). Research, policy and practice in arts education: meeting points for conversation. *Arts Education Policy Review, 99*(5), 9-15.

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

Bryson, B. (1996). "Anything but heavy metal": symbolic exclusion and musical dislikes. *American Sociological Review, 61*(October), 884-899.

Bulmer, M. (1979). Concepts in the analysis of qualitative data. *The Sociological Review, 27*(4), 651-677.

Burck, C. (2005). Comparing qualitative research methodologies for systemic research: The use of grounded theory, discourse analysis and narrative analysis. *Journal of Family Therapy, 27*(3), 237-262.

Byo, S., J. (1999). Classroom teachers' and music specialists' perceived ability to implement the national standards for music education. *Journal of research in music education, 47*(2), 111-128.

Chan, A. S., Ho, Y.-C., & Cheung, M.-C. (1998). Music training improves verbal memory. *Nature, 396*(6707), 128-128.

Chan, T. W., & Goldthorpe, J. (2007). Social stratification and cultural consumption: music in England. *European Sociological Review, 23*(1), 1 - 19.

Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing grounded theory: a practical guide through qualitative analysis*. Thousand Oaks: Sage publications.

Chosky, L. (1988). *The Kodaly method*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-hall.

Cleave, S. (1989). A study of LEA instrumental music provision. *Educational Research, 31*(2), 113-124.

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2011). *Research methods in education*. London and New York: Routledge.

Comber, B. (2006). Literacy curriculum for 'at-risk children: discursive practices and material effects. Retrieved 17/11/2013 from http://w3.unisa.edu.au/eds/documents/foratriskchildren.pdf

Comber, B., & Kamler, B. (2004). Getting out of deficit: pedagogies of reconnection. *Teaching Education, 15*(3), 293-310.

Conaghan, D. (2014). *National Concert Hall Primary Strings Project 2007-2013: Report*. Dublin: National Concert Hall.

Connelly, F., & Clandinin, D. (2006). Narrative Enquiry. In J. Green, G. Camilli & P. Elmore (Eds.), *Handbook of complementary methods in education research* Washington DC: Lawrence Erlbaum Assiciates Inc. for AERA.

Conway, C. (2000). Gender and musical instrument choice: a phenomenological investigation. *Bulletin of the council for research in music education, 146*, 1-17.

Conway, P. F. (2002). Learning in communities of practice: Rethinking teaching and learning in disadvantaged contexts. *Irish Educational Studies, 21*(3), 61-91.

Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. (1990). Grounded theory research: procedures, canons and evaluative criteria. *Zeitschrift für Soziologie, 19*(6), 418-427.

Costley, K. C. (2012). An overview of the life, central concepts, including classroom applications of Lev Vygotsky. *Online submission*. Retrieved 6-January 2013.

Creech, A. (2010). Learning a musical instrument: The case for parental support. *Music Education Research, 12*(1), 13-32.

Creech, A., & Hallam, S. (2003). Parent-teacher-pupil interactions in instrumental music tuition: a literature review. *British Journal of Music Education, 20*(1), 29-44.

Creswell, J. W. *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*: Sage publications.

Creswell, J. W., & Miller, G. A. (1997). Research methodologies and doctoral process. *New directions for higher education, 99*, 33-46.

Cross, I. (2009). The evolutionary nature of musical meaning. *Musicae Scientiae, 13*(2 suppl), 179-200.

Crozier, G. (1999). Parental involvement: who wants it? *International Studies in Sociology of Education, 9*(3), 219-238.

Curtis, B. (1952) Music in the Vocational Schools in *Music in Ireland, A Symposium,* Fleischmann, A. (ed) Cork: Cork University Press. 45-47.

Dai, D. Y., & Schader, R. (2001). Parents' reasons and motivations for supporting their child's music training. *Roeper Review, 24*(1), 23-26.

Dai, D. Y., & Schader, R. M. (2002). Decisions regarding music training: Parental beliefs and values. *Gifted child quarterly, 46*(2), 135-144.

Dane, C., & Laing, D. (1998). The UK music industry: Some recent developments. *Cultural Trends, 8*(31), 3-23.

Davidson, J. W., & Borthwick, S. J. (2002). Family dynamics and family scripts: A case study of musical development. *Psychology of Music, 30*(1), 121-136.

Davidson, J. W., Howe, M. J., Moore, D. G., & Sloboda, J. A. (1996). The role of parental influences in the development of musical performance. *British Journal of Developmental Psychology, 14*(4), 399-412.

Davidson, J., & Jordan, N. (2007). Private Teaching, Private Learning: An Exploration of Music Instrument Learning in the Private Studio, Junior and Senior Conservatories. In L. Bresler (Ed.), *International Handbook of Research in Arts Education* (pp. 729-754).

Davidson, J., & Scutt, S. (1999). Instrumental learning with exams in mind: a case study investigating teacher, student and parent interactions before, during and after a music examination. *British Journal of Music Education, 16*(1), 79-95.

Delzell, J., & Leppla, D. (1992). Gender association of musical instruments and preferences of fourth-grade students for selected instruments. *Journal of research in music education, 40*(2), 93-103.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). Strategies of inquiry. *Handbook of qualitative research*, 199-208.

Dewey, J. (1910). *How we think*. New York: Heath and Co.

DfE (2011). *The importance of music: A national plan for music education* Retrieved 20/11/14. from https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/DFE-00086-2011.pdf

DiMaggio, P. (1979). On Pierre Bourdieu. *American Journal of Sociology, 84*(6), 1460-1474.

DiMaggio, P. (1992). Cultural Boundaries and Structural Change: The Extension of the High Culture Model to Theater, Opera, and the Dance, 1900-1940. In M. Lamont & M. Fournier (Eds.), *Cultivating Differences: Symbolic boundaries and the making of inequality* (pp. 21-57). Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

DiMaggio, P., Useem, M. (1976). Social class and arts consumption: the origins and consequences of class differences in exposure to the arts in America. *Theory and Society, 5*(2), 141-161.

Downey, J. (2007). A Response to "Specialist vs. Non-Specialist Music Teachers: Creating a Space for Conversation" (Shelley Griffin and Amanda Montgomery). In K.Veblen & C. Beynon (Eds.), *From sea to sea: Perspectives on music education in Canada.* Retrieved 17-August 2012, from http://ir.lib.uwo.ca/musiceducationE-books/1/

Drudy, S. (Ed.). (2009). *Education in Ireland. Challenge and Change*. Dublin: Gill and Macmillan.

Drudy, S., & Lynch, K. (1992). *Schools and Society in Ireland*. Dublin: Gill and MacMillan.

Drury, M. (2003). *A National System of Local Music Education Services: Report of a feasibility study* Dublin.

Elliott, D. J. (1995). *Music matters: A new philosophy of music education*. Oxford: Oxford university press.

Elliott, D.J. (2005). *Praxial Musical Education: reflexions and dialogues*: Oxfor University Press.

Elwood, J. (2005). Gender and achievement: what have exams got to do with it? *Oxford Review of Education, 31*(3), pp.373-393.

Fairclough, N. (2003). *Analysing discourse: Textual analysis for social research.* Routledge: London and New York.

Fleischmann, A (1952) Music in Cork in *Music in Ireland, A Symposium,* Fleischmann, A. (ed) Cork: Cork University Press.

Flynn, P. (2013). The Encyclopedia of Music in Ireland. In H. White & B. Boydell (Eds.). Dublin: University College Dublin Press.

Forgeard, M., Winner, E., Norton, A., & Schlaug, G. (2008). Practicing a musical instrument in childhood is associated with enhanced verbal ability and nonverbal reasoning. *PloS one, 3*(10).

Fraser, N. (2001). Recognition without ethics? *Theory, Culture and Society, 18*(2-3), 21-42.

Frith, S. (1996). *Performing rites: on the value of popular music*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Foucault, M. (1989). *The archaeology of knowledge* (A. M. Sheridan Smith, Trans.). Oxford: Routledge.

Franklin, M. S., Moore, K. S., Yip, C.-Y., Jonides, J., Rattray, K., & Moher, J. (2008). The effects of musical training on verbal memory. *Psychology of Music*.

Frith, S. (1996). *Performing rites: on the value of popular music*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Fundación Musical Simon Bolivar. Retrieved 19-October, 2013, from http://www.fesnojiv.gob.ve/en/el-sistema.html

Garcia, S., & Guerra, P. (2004). Deconstructing deficit thinking: Working with educators to create more equitable learning environments. *Education and Urban Society, 36*(2), 150-168.

Gewertz, C. (2003). Hand in hand. *Education Week, 23*(1), 38-42.

Gewirtz, S. (1998). Conceptualizing social justice in education: mapping the territory. *Journal of Education Policy, 13*(4), 469-383.Gillborn, D., & Youdell, D. (2000). *Rationing Education: Politicy, Practice, Reform and Equity*: Open University Press.

Gillborn, D., & Youdell, D. (2000). *Rationing Education: Politicy, Practice, Reform and Equity*: Open University Press.

Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. (1967). The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research. *Chicago: Aldine*.

Goodson, I. (1992). On curriculum form: notes toward a theory of curriculum. *Sociology of Education, 65*, 66-75.

Government Publications (1998), *Education Act.*

Government Publications (1999). *Primary School Curriculum: Music - Teacher Guidelines.*

Green, L. (1994). Gender, musical meaning, and education. *Philosophy of Music Education Review*, 99-105.

Green, L. (2002). *How popular musicians learn: A way ahead for music education*. Aldershot: Ashgate.

Green, L. (2003). Music Education, Cultural Capital and Social Group Identity

In M. Clayton, Herbert, T. and Middleton, R. (Ed.), *The Cultural Study of Music: a critical introduction*. London: Routledge.

Green, L. (2006). Popular music education in and for itself, and for 'other' music: current research in the classroom. *International Journal of Music Education*, 1 - 26.

Green, L. (2009). *Music, informal learning and the school: A new classroom pedagogy*: Ashgate Publishing, Ltd.

Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). Competing paradigms in qualitative research. In Denzin N.K. and Lincoln Y.S. (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research*, *2*, 163-194. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Hall, J. (1999). *A review of musical instrument instruction in Scotland*: Edinburgh: Scottish Council for Research in Education.

Hallam, S. (1998). *Instrumental teaching : a practical guide to better teaching and learning*. Oxford: Heinemann Educational.

Hallam, S. (2001). The Power of Music *London, Performing Rights Society*. www.thepowerofmusic.co.

Hallam, S. (2002). Musical motivation: Towards a model synthesising the research. *Music Education Research, 4*(2), 225-244.

Hallam, S. (2010). The power of music: Its impact on the intellectual, social and personal development of children and young people *International Journal of Music Education, 28*(3), 269-289.

Hallam, S., Burnard, P., Robertson, A., Saleh, C., Davies, V. and Rogers, L., (2009). Trainee primary school teachers' perceptions of their effectiveness in teaching music. *Music Education Research, 11*(2), 221-240.

Hallam, S., & Prince, V. (2000). *Research into instrumental music services*: Department for Education and Employment.

Hallam, & Prince (2003). Conceptions of musical ability. *Research Studies in Music Education 26*(1).

Hallam, S., Rogers, L., & Creech, A. (2005). *Survey of local authority music services 2005* Department of Education and Skills, London, UK.

Hallam, S., Rogers, L. and Creech, A. (2008). Gender differences in musical instrument choice. *International Journal of Music Education, 26*(1).

Hargreaves, D. J., & North, A. C. (1999). The functions of music in everyday life: Redefining the social in music psychology. *Psychology of Music, 27*(1), 71-83.

Hellawell, D. (2006). Inside-out: analysis of the insider-outsider concept as a heuristic device to develop reflexivity in students doing qualitative research. *Teaching in higher education, 11*(4), 483-494.

Heneghan, F. (2002). *MEND Report* Dublin Institute of Technology.

Henley, D. (2011). Music education in England. *London: Department for Education and Department for Culture, Media & Sport*.

Herron, D. (1985). *Deaf Ears?* Dublin The Arts Council.

Hetland, L. (2000). Learning to make music enhances spatial reasoning. *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, 179-238.

Hewitt, A. (2002). A comparative analysis of process and product with specialist and generalist pre-service teachers involved in a group composition activity. *Music Education Research, 4*(1), 25-36.

Hille, A., & Schupp, J. (Eds.). (2013) (Vols. 591). Berlin: SOEPpaper.

Ho, Y.-C., Cheung, M.-C., & Chan, A. S. (2003). Music training improves verbal but not visual memory: cross-sectional and longitudinal explorations in children. *Neuropsychology, 17*(3), 439.

Hodder, I. (1994). The interpretation of documents and material culture. In Denzin N.K. and
Lincoln Y.S. (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research*, *2*, 155-175.

Hoffmann Davis, J. (2008). *Why our schools need the arts* New York: Teachers College Press.

Holden, H., & Button, S. (2006). The teaching of music in the primary school by the non-music specialist. *The British Journal of Music Education, 23*(1), 23-38.

Holland, D., Lachicotte, W., & Skinner, D. D., & Cain, C.(1998). Identity and agency in cultural worlds: Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Jephcote, M., & Davies, B. (2007). School subjects, subject communities and curriculum change: the social construction of economics in the school curriculum. *Cambridge journal of education, 37*(2), 207-227.

Johnston, D. (2001). Scottish Local Government Reform and Instrumental Music Instruction. *Scottish Educational Review, 33*(2), 133-141.

Jorgensen, E. R. (2011). Pictures of music education, Indiana University Press.

Kagan, D., A. (1992). Implications of research on teachers Belief. *Educational Psychologist, 27*(1), 65-90.

Kaufman, P. (2005). Middle-class social reproduction: the activation and negotiation of structural advantages. *Sociological Forum, 20*(*2*), *p.249*.

Kelly, S., N. (2002). A sociological basis for music education. *International Journal of Music Education, 39*, 40-49.

Kendall, G., & Wickam, G. (1999). *Using Foucault's methods*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Kenny, A. (2010). Too cool for school? Musicians as partners in education. *Irish Educational Studies, 29*(2), 153-166.

Kilbourn, B. (2006). The qualitative doctoral dissertation proposal. *Teachers College Record, 108*(4).

Kingsbury, H. (1988). *Music, talent, and performance : a conservatory cultural system*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Koopman, C. (2005). Arts as fulfilment: on the justification of education in the arts. *Journal of philosophy of education, 39*(1), 85-97.

Kubacki, K., Moss, G., & Parkes, E. L. (2007). Purchases in provider mode: the case of children's music education. *The Marketing Review, 7*(1), 3-22.

Kvale, S., & Brinkmann, S. (2009). *Interviews: Learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing*. London: Sage.

Labaree, D. F. (1997). Public goods, private goods: The American struggle over educational goals. *American Educational Research Journal, 34*(1), 39-81.

Lamont, A., Hargreaves, D.J., Marshall, N.A.,Tarrant, M. (2003). Young people's music in and out of school. *British Journal of Music Education, 20*(3).

Lamont, A., & Molnar, V. (2002). The study of boundaries in the social sciences. *Annual Review of Sociology, 28*(167-195).

Lamont, M. (1992). *Money, Morals & Manners. The Culture of the French and American Upper-Middle Class.* Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press.

Langbeim, L. (2004). Public school music: Notes on the public provision of a quasi-private good. *Public Choice, 121*(1-2), 83-98.

Langer, S. K. (1973). Feeling and Form: A Theory of Art. Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Larchet, John (1952) Music in the Secondary School in *Music in Ireland, A Symposium,* Fleischmann, A. (ed) Cork: Cork University Press. pp.32-36

Lareau, A. (2002). Invisible inequality: Social class and childrearing in black families and white families. *American sociological review*, 747-776.

Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated Learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*: Cambridge University Press.

Lee, Joseph (1989) *Ireland 1912-1985*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lincoln, Y., & Guba, E. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Newbury Park, California: Sage.

Lynch, K., & Moran, M. (2006). Markets, schools and the convertibility of economic capital: the complex dynamics of class choice. *British Journal of Sociology of Education, 27*(2), 221-235.

Majnó, M. (2012). From the model of *El Sistema* in Venezuela to current applications: learning and integration through collective music education. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences 1252*, 56-64.

Malone, S. (2003). Ethics at home: informed consent in your own backyard. *Qualitative studies in education, 16*(6), 797-815.

Maxwell, J.A. (1996). Qualitative research design: An interactive approach. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

McCarthy, M. (1999). *Passing it on: the transmission of music in Irish culture*. Cork: Cork University Press.

McCoy, S., Byrne, D., & Banks, J. (2010) Too much of a good thing? Gender,'Concerted cultivation'and unequal achievement in primary education. ESRI Working Paper No. 362.

McCoy, S., Quail, A., & Smyth, E. (2013). *Growing Up in Ireland - Influences on 9-year-old's learning: Home, School and Community*. ESRI: Government Publications, Dublin

McPherson, G. E. (2009). The role of parents in children's musical development. *Psychology of Music, 37*(1), 91-110.

McPherson, G., & McCormick, J. (2000). The contribution of motivational factors to instrumental performance in a music examination. *Research Studies in Music Education, 15*(31), 31-39.

Mercer, J. (2007). The challenges of insider research in educational institutions: wielding a double-edged sword and resolving delicate dilemmas. *Oxford review of education, 33*(1), 1-17.

Merriam, S. B. (1988). *Case study research in education*. San Francisco, London: Jossey-Bass.

Mertens, D. (2005). *Research and Evaluation in Education and Psychology: Integrating Diversity with Quantitative, Qualitative and Mixed Methods* San Francisco/London: Sage Publications.

Middleton, R. (2003). In M. Clayton, Herbert, T. and Middleton, R. (Ed.), *The cultural study of music: a critical introduction* (pp. 1-15). New York, London: Routledge.

Miles, M., B.,, & Huberman, A., Michael, (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: an expanded sourcebook*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Miller, D. (1999). *Principles of social justice*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Morrison, K. (1995). *Marx, Durkheim, Weber: Formations of modern thought*. London: Sage.

Music Generation: Performance Music Education (2010). *National Music Education Programme* Retrieved 27/01/2012, from http://www.musicgeneration.ie/content/files/Performance%20Music%20Education.pdf

National Strategy for Music (2006). KS3 music: A professional development programme. Available at http://www3.hants.gov.uk/music. Accessed 27/11/14.

Nerland, M. (2007). One-to-one teaching as cultural practice: two case studies from an academy of music. *Music Education Research, 9*(3), 399-416.

O'Brien, J. (2001). *Review of Music Provision in the City of Dublin, City of Limerick and County Cork Vocational Education Committee Schemes*. Unpublished report, DES.

O'Callaghan, E. (2003). On implementing the new music curriculum in primary schools. *Irish Educational Studies, 22*(3).

O'Flynn, J. (2005). Re-appraising ideas of musicality in intercultural contexts of music education. *International Journal of Music Education, 23*(3), 191-203.

O'Reilly, B. (1989) Issues in the Development of Vocational Education, *Administration 37*(2), 152-168.

O'Shea, H. (2008). 'Good man Mary!' Women musicians and the fraternity of Irish traditional music. *Journal of gender studies, 17*(1), 55-70.

Olsson, M. (1999). Discourse: a new theoretical framework for examining information behaviour in its social context. In T. Wilson & D. Allen (Eds.), *Exploring the contexts of information behaviour* (pp. 136-149). London: Taylor Graham Publishing.

Ostrom, V., & Ostrom, E. (1999). *Public goods and public choices.* Paper presented at the Polycentricity and Local Public Economies. Readings from the Workshop in Political Theory and Policy Analysis.

Pajares, M., F. (1992). Teachers' beliefs and educational research: cleaning up a messy construct. *Review of Educational Research, 62*(3), 307-332.

Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Peterson, R., A., & Kern, R., M. (1996). Changing highbrow taste: from snob to omnivore. *American Sociological Review, 61*, 900-907.

Peterson, R., A., & Simkus, A. (1992). How musical tastes mark occupational status groups. In M. Lamont & M. Fournier (Eds.), *Cultivating differences: sysmbolic boundaries and the making of inequality* (pp. 152-186). Chicago: The Unuversity of Chicago Press.

Philpott, C. (2001). Equality of opportunity and instrumental tuition. In C. Philpott & C. Plummeridge (Eds.), *Issues in music teaching* (pp. 156-169). London: Routledge Falmer.

Philpott, C., & Spruce, G. (2012). *Debates in music teaching*: Routledge.

Pitts (2001). Whose aesthetics? Public, professional and pupil perceptions of music education. *Research Studies in Music Education, 17*, 54 - 60.

Pitts (2007). Anything goes: a case study of extra-curricular musical participation in an English secondary school *Music Education Research, 9*(1).

Rabinow, P. (1984). *The Foucault Reader: An introduction to Foucault's thought*. London: Penguin.

Rawls, J. (1971). *A Theory of Justice*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Regelski, T., A. (2009). Curriculum reform: reclaiming 'music' as social practice. *Action, criticism and theory for music education, 8*(1), 66 - 84.

Reimer, B. (2003). *A philosophy of music education: advancing the vision* (3rd ed.). Upper Saddle River NJ: Prentice Hall.

Report of the Instrumental Music Group: Scottish Government's response to recommendations (2013). from www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0043/00439812.pdf

Ritchie, J., Zwi, A. B., Blignault, I., Bunde-Birouste, A., & Silove, D. (2009). Insider-outsider positions in health-development research: reflections for practice. *Development in practice, 19*(1), 106-112.

Roulston, K., deMarrais, K., & Lewis, J., B. (2003). Learning to interview in the social sciences. *Qualitative Inquiry, 9*(4).

Roulston, K., & Misawa, M. (2011). Music teachers' construction of gender in elementary education. *Music Education Research, 13*(1), 3-28.

Russell-Bowie, D. (2009). What me? Teach music to my primary class? Challenges to teaching music in primary schools in five countries. *Music Education Research, 11*(1), 23-36.

Sadovnik, A. R. (1991). Basil Bernstein's theory of pedagogic practice: a structuralist approach. *Sociology of education*, 48-63.

Sawyer, R., K., (2002). Unresolved tensions in sociocultural theory:analogies with contemporary sociological debates. *Culture and psychology, 8*(3), 283-305.

Schein, E. (1984). Coming to a new awareness of organizational culture. *Sloan management review, 25*(2), 3-16.

Scottish Executive (2004). A curriculum for excellence: Edinburgh: Scottish Executive.

Scottish Government Social Research: Evaluation of Big Noise, Sistema Scotland (2011).

Seidman, I. (2006). *Interviewing as qualitative research: a guide for researchers in education and the social sciences.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Seith, E. (2013). Notes of caution follow Scotland's musical success. *TES*. Retrieved 20/11/14, from https://www.tes.co.uk/article.aspx?storycode=6343961.

Shepherd, J. (2003). Music and social categories. In M. Clayton, Herbert, T. and Middleton, R. (Ed.), *The cultural study of music* (pp. 69-78). London: Routledge.

Siegal, H. (2006). Epistemological diversity and educational research: Much ado about nothing much? *Educational Researcher, 35*(2), 3 - 12.

Skeggs, B. (2004). Exchange, value and affect: Bourdieu and 'the self'. *The Sociological Review, 52*, 75–95.

Sloboda, J. (2005). *Exploring the musical mind* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Smyth, E., Banks, J., & Calvert, E. (2011). *From Leaving Certificate to Leaving School: A Longitudinal Study of Sixth Year Students*: The Economic and Social Research Institute.

Sonnett, J. (2004). Musical boundaries: intersections of frm and content. *Poetics, 32*, 247-264.

Spruce, G. (2001). Music assessment and the hegemony of musical heritage. In C. Philpott & C. Plummeridge (Eds.), *Issues in music teaching*. London: Routledge Falmer.

Spruce, G. (2013). The National Music Plan and the Taming of English Music Education. *Arts Education Policy Review, 114*(3), 112-118.

Stake, R. E. (1978). The case study method in social enquiry. *Educational Researcher, 7*(2), 5-8.

Stakelum, M. (2008). Primary music education: The misrepresentation of the ideals of curricula in research. *Irish Educational Studies, 27*(3), 281-293.

Statutes of the Oireachtas, No. 29 of Vocational Education Act (1930)

Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1990). Grounded theory research: Procedures, canons and evaluative criteria. *Qualitative Sociology, 13*(1), 3 - 21.

Thomas, G., & James, D. (2006). Reinventing grounded theory: Some questions about theory, ground and discovery. *British Educational Research Journal, 32*(6), 767-795.

Tolbert, E. (2001). Music and meaning: an evolutionary story. *Psychology of Music, 29*, 84-94.

Trehub, S. (2003). The developmental origins of musicality. *Nature neuroscience, 6*(7), 669-673.

Ua Braoin, D. (1952) Music in the Primary Schools in *Music in Ireland, A Symposium,* Fleischmann, A. (ed) Cork: Cork University Press. 37-44.

Unicef (1989). Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Vajda, C. (1981). *The Kodaly Way to Music*. London: Boosey and Hawkes.

Valencia, R., & Black, M. (2002). "Mexican Americans don't value education" - on the basis of the myth, mythmaking, and debunking. *Journal of Latinos and Education, 1*(2), 81-103.

Van Eijck, K. (2001). Social differenciation in musical taste patters. *Social Forces, 79*(3).

Vincent, C., & Ball, S., J. (2007). 'Making up' the middle-class child: families, activities and class dispositions. *Sociology 41*(6), 1061-1077.

Walters, C. (2012, 16 April 2012). School music under threat. *The Guardian*. Retrieved 20/11/14, from http://www.theguardian.com/education/2012/apr/16/school-music-services-hubsprivatisation

Weber, W. (1979). The muddle of the middle classes. *19th-century music, 3*(2), 175-185.

Wellington, J. (2000). *Educational research: contemporary issues and practical approaches*. London, New York: Continuum.

Wiggins, R. A., & Wiggins, J. (2008). Primary music education in the absence of specialists. *International journal of education and the arts, 9(12)*. Retrieved from http://www.ijea.org/v9n19/.

Winner, E., & Hetland, L. (2000). The Arts in education. *Journal of Aesthetic Education, 34*(3/4 Special Issue), 3-10.

Woodford, P., G. (2005). *Democracy and music education: liberalism, ethics and politics of practice*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Wright, D. (2005). The South Kensington Music Schools and the development of the British Conservatoire in the late nineteenth century *Journal of the Royal Musical Association, 130*(2), 236-282.

Wright, R. (2010). *Sociology and Music Education*. Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate.

Yin, R. (2006). Case study methods
In L. Green, G. Camilli & P. Elmore (Eds.), *Handbook of Complementary Methods in Educational Research.* (pp. 111-122). Washington D.C.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates for AERA.

Appendix 1

Application to Social Research Ethics Committee

ETHICS APPROVAL FORM

		YES	NO
1	Do you consider that this project has significant ethical implications?		/
2	Will you describe the main research procedures to participants in advance, so that they are informed about what to expect?	/	
3	Will participation be voluntary?	/	
4	Will you obtain informed consent in writing from participants?	/	
5	Will you tell participants that they may withdraw from the research at any time and for any reason, and (where relevant) omit questionnaire items to which they do not wish to respond?	/	
6	Will data be treated with full confidentiality / anonymity (as appropriate)?	/	
7	If results are published, will anonymity be maintained and participants not identified?	/	
8	Will you debrief participants at the end of their participation (i.e. give them a brief explanation of the study)?	/	
9	Will your project involve deliberately misleading participants in any way?		/
10	Will your participants include schoolchildren (under 18 years of age)?		/
11	Will your participants include people with learning or communication difficulties?		/
12	Will your participants include patients?		/
13	Will your participants include people in custody?		/
14	Will your participants include people engaged in illegal activities (e.g. drug taking; illegal Internet behaviour)?		/
15	Is there a realistic risk of participants experiencing either physical or psychological distress?		/
16	If yes to 15, has a proposed procedure, including the name of a contact person, been given? (see no 23)		

Appendix 2

Letter requesting access to research site



UCC
Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh, Éire
University College Cork, Ireland

Coláiste na nEalaíon, an Léinn Cheiltigh agus na nEolaíochtaí Sóisialta
College of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences

12-November 2010

Dear Principal,

I am writing to requesting access to your VEC music school/service for the purpose of educational research. I am carrying out a research study as part of the requirements for PhD at University College, Cork. My study is generally concerned with social equity and access to publicly funded instrumental music education.

The structure of the study is in two parts. The first part is an online questionnaire which I propose to email to your school to be forwarded to all members of staff. Each staff member then will have the option of participating by answering questions and emailing the finished questionnaire back to me.

The second part of the study will examine the opinions and beliefs of instrumental music educators utilising a series of interviews with teachers and administrators of VEC music schools. These interviews will be of approximately 1 hour durations and will be digitally recorded. The recordings will be transcribed and analysed by me for inclusion in a thesis.

Participation is voluntary. I will provide a Consent Form for each participant to sign. Participants have the option of withdrawal at any stage. Confidentiality and anonymity will be observed at every stage and I will ensure that no clues to participants' identities appear in the thesis. Any extracts quoted in the thesis will be entirely anonymous.

The data will be kept confidential for the duration of the study. On completion of the thesis, data will be retained for a further six months and then destroyed. The results will be presented in the thesis. They will be seen by my supervisor, a second marker and the external examiner. The thesis may be read by future students on the course and the study may be published in an academic journal.

I would be very grateful to be granted access to your music school. If you do agree to include your school in my research study, I will need to make some practical arrangements regarding the time-frame and the selection of teacher-participants.

Yours Sincerely,

_____

Ciaran Deloughry, PhD candidate.

Appendix 3

Letter to principals requesting interview volunteers



UCC
Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh, Éire
University College Cork, Ireland

Coláiste na nEalaíon, an Léinn Cheiltigh agus na nEolaíochtaí Sóisialta
College of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences

5-February 2011

Dear Principal,

I would be grateful if you would bring this request to the attention of your teaching staff. I am looking for between 3 and 5 volunteers who would be willing to participate in an interview study. As you know, I am conducting a series of interviews with instrument teachers of VEC music schools as part of doctoral research in the general area of ***social equity and access to publicly funded instrumental music education.*** Interviews would be of approximately 1 hour duration. They would be digitally recorded, transcribed and analysed for inclusion as part of my thesis.

Participation is voluntary and participants have the option of withdrawal at any stage. Confidentiality and anonymity will be observed and I will ensure that no clues to participants' identities appear in the thesis. Any extracts quoted in the thesis will be entirely anonymous.

Participants must be personally unknown to me. The only particulars I need are:

- Name of participant
- Instrument
- Length of time as instrumental teacher
- Contact email address

Yours Sincerely,

_____

Ciaran Deloughry

Appendix 4

Online survey

Survey: Teachers' perceptions – equity of access to instrumental music education

---

Participant profile

1) Male ☐ *Female* ☐

2) Age group: 22-35☐ 36-50☐ 51-65☐

3) Which of the following do you think best describes your family background?

Middle-class ☐ *Working-class* ☐

4) Which of the following best describes your professional area(s)?

1. Brasswind
2. Guitar – classical
3. Guitar – other
4. Harp – concert
5. Harp – Irish
6. Keyboard instrument
7. Orchestral instrument – strings
8. Orchestral instrument – wind
9. Percussion – orchestral
10. Percussion – other
11. School Principal
12. Theory/musicianship
13. Traditional instrument
14. Voice
15. Woodwind – orchestral
16. Teacher – individuals
17. Teacher – smaller group (3-6)
18. Teacher – larger group (7+)
19. Teacher – orchestra/band/traditional music group
20. Other – *specify*

5) Which of the following categories (or category combinations) describes your work location?

a) Centralised music school/college
b) Local music centre
c) Primary school outreach – individual or small group (withdrawn from class)
d) Primary school outreach –whole class group
e) Other location – *specify*
f) In-school during school hours (9am – 2.30pm)
g) After school (2.30 – 9pm)

6) My student enrolment consists of:

a) Equal numbers of male and female students
b) Slightly more male than female students
c) Slightly more female than male students
d) Predominantly male students
e) Predominantly female students

Musical ability

7) Students' musical development depends on (On a scale of 1-7, 1=lowest and 7=highest):

a) Musical talent
b) Opportunity.
c) Family support.
d) Family musical background
e) Personal motivation/commitment/individual effort.
f) Participation in music-making with others
g) Effective teaching

8) Which of the following statements do you most agree with:

a) Musical talent is something inherent from birth. You either have it or you don't. ☐

b) All individuals are naturally musical. High-level musical ability can be successfully developed by anyone, given suitable environment, circumstance and opportunity. ☐

9) Publicly funded instrumental music tuition is a scarce resource which must be targeted at those who will play to the highest level.	Disagree 1	2	3	Agree 4
10) Selection by musical aptitude testing at entry level is necessary in order to maintain high standards.	Disagree 1	2	3	Agree 4
11) Individual tuition is tried and trusted as the most effective form of instrumental tuition.	Disagree 1	2	3	Agree 4
12) Group tuition is a socially desirable alternative to the individual instrumental lesson.	Disagree 1	2	3	Agree 4
13) Children learn best in each other's company	Disagree 1	2	3	Agree 4
14) Group tuition lowers standards	Disagree 1	2	3	Agree 4

Access and Participation

15) Publicly funded music services benefit:	Disagree			Agree
Members of all social groups equally.	1	2	3	4
Mainly middle-class families.	1	2	3	4
Families across all social groups who can afford fees	1	2	3	4
Families across all social groups who prioritise instrumental music for their children	1	2	3	4
16) Locating instrumental music in the music school is likely to pose a barrier to participation for some social groups.	Disagree 1	2	3	Agree 4
17) Locating music lessons in primary school during school hours might open wider access to instrumental music.	Disagree 1	2	3	Agree 4
18) The Classical musical genre is likely to pose a cultural barrier for some social groups.	Disagree 1	2	3	Agree 4
19) The charging of fees precludes access to instrumental music for some families.	Disagree 1	2	3	Agree 4

Appendix 5

Survey results

Survey: Teachers' perceptions – equity of access to instrumental music education

Table 1: Professional areas of participants
(*N*=46)

	Response percentage	Response count
Administrator	6.5%	3
Brass	4.3%	2
Classical guitar	6.5%	3
Drums	0.0%	0
Harp	2.2%	1
Percussion-orchestral	2.2%	1
Piano	21.7%	10
Pop/rock instruments	0.0%	0
Strings-classical	**28.3%**	**13**
Theory and musicianship	2.2%	1
Traditional instruments	4.3%	2
Voice	4.3%	2
Woodwind	17.4%	8

Table 2: Teaching locations
(*N*=39)

	Response percentage	Response count
Central music-school (extra-curricular)	**53%**	**21**
Local music-centre (extra-curricular)	**25.6%**	**10**
Central music school (extra-curricular) with some primary school outreach (school hours)	10.3%	4
Local music-centre (extra-curricular) with some primary school outreach (school hours)	10.3%	4
Primary school outreach during school hours	0.0%	0

Table 3: Gender, age, career-stage, and social-class of teachers

(*N*=48)

Gender of participants	Male 33.3% (16)	**Female** **66.7% (32)**		
Age-profile of participants	20-35 27.1% (13)	**36-49** **39.6% (19)**	50-65 33.3% (16)	
Career-stage	1-3 years 0% (0)	4-10 years 26.1% (12)	10-15 years 30.4% (14)	**>15 years** **43.5% (20)**
Social background	**Middle-class** **87.5% (42)**	Working-class 12.5% (6)		

Table 4: Gender-profile of student-enrolment

(*N*=44)

My student enrolment consists of:	Response Percentage	Response count
Predominantly male	6.8%	3
Slightly more male	11.4%	5
Equal male and female	9.1%	4
Slightly more female	29.5%	13
Predominantly female	**43.2%**	**19**

Table 5: Class size

(*N*=41)

	Response percentage	Response count
Individuals only	**31.7%**	**13**
Mainly individuals (some small groups)	**58.5%**	**24**
Small groups of 3-5	4.9%	2
Medium-sized groups of 6-10	0.0%	0

Table 6: Individual or group tuition

(*N*=41)

	Agree	Disagree
a) Individual instrumental tuition is necessary for maintaining high standards	**80.5% (**33)	19.5% (8)
b) Group instrumental tuition lowers standards	**75.6% (31)**	24.4% (10)
c) Group tuition might increase access to instrumental music courses.	**67.5% (27)**	32.5% (13)

Table 7: Level of tuition fees

(*N*=44)

	Response percentage	Response count
Affordable fees (well-subsidised)	**75.0%**	**33**
Fairly expensive (moderately-subsidised)	15.9%	7
Very expensive (full commercial rate)	9.1%	4

Table 8: Fee-waiver or fee-reduction for families of limited means

(*N*=37)

	Response percentage	Response count
Yes	**68%**	**25**
No	32%	12

Table 9: Position of the Western classical musical genre

(*N*=41)

	Agree	Disagree
The Western classical genre holds a privileged position in music schools/services.	**80.5% (33)**	19.5% (8)
Western Classical music pedagogy is the most effective system of instrumental tuition.	39.5% (15)	**60.5% (23)**
Tuition in traditional, jazz, rock, pop, metal etc would enrich the musical life of music schools/services.	**92.7% (38)**	7.3% **(**3)
Offering a broad range of musical styles, genres and instrument types would decrease the demand for classical instrumental tuition	50% (20)	50% (20)

Table 10: Perceptions of musical ability

(*N*=40)

	Response percentage	Response count
Musical ability is possessed by some individuals. It is an inherited talent. You either have it or you don't	17.5%	7
All individuals are potentially musical, given circumstance and opportunity. Musical ability can be developed by anyone.	**82.5%**	**33**

Table 11: Applicant testing policy in my organisation

(*N*=26)

	Yes	No
Musical aptitude testing is required in my organisation for new applicants.	15.4% (4)	**84.6% (22)**

Table 12: Aptitude-testing and musical potential

	Agree	Disagree
Musical aptitude testing of applicants is necessary for maintaining high standards	34% (14)	**66% (27)**
Publicly funded music tuition should be targeted at those who show most potential.	22% (9)	**78% (32)**

Table 13: What has most influence on musical learning?

(*N*=40)
(Scale of 1 – 9, where 9 is rated highest)

	Response Average
i) Effective teaching	6.8
ii) Musical family background	4.95
iii) Personal motivation and effort	**6.95**
iv) Music-making with others	5
v) Following the graded syllabus	2.6
vi) Parental support	6.1
vii) Exams and competitions	2.95
viii) Enjoyment and fun	6.17
ix) Possession of a musical talent	4.67

Table 14: Examination and testing policy in my organisation

(*N*=40)

	Yes	No	Response Count
Requires annual examination	**83.3% (30)**	16.7% (6)	36
Requires minimum mark to retain tuition place	18.5% (5)	**81.5% (22)**	27

Table 15: Functions of the end-of-year grade examination.

(*N*=41) (Scale of 1 – 6, where 6 is rated highest)

	Response Average
i) an indicator of progress	4.7
ii) a standard to be upheld by the teacher	3.33
iii) an incentive for the student	**5.13**
iv) a means of 'weeding out' weaker students	1.92
v) essential for student assessment	3.28
vi) a constraint on creative teaching	2.65

Table 16: Possible barriers to participation

(*N*=40)

	Agree	Disagree
The Classical musical genre might pose a cultural barrier to some social groups.	**60% (24)**	40% (16)
The charging of fees (including 'affordable' fees) might pose a barrier for some social groups.	**80% (32)**	20% (8)
Locating performance music in an extra-curricular setting might pose a barrier to participation for members of disadvantaged social groups.	**67.5% (27)**	32.5% (13}
Group tuition might increase access to instrumental music courses.	**67.5% (27)**	32.5% (13)
Locating music lessons in primary schools during School hours might give wider social access to the learning of musical instruments.	**97.5% (40)**	2.5% (1)

Appendix 6

Information Sheet – Interview Participant

Purpose of the Study. As part of the requirements for PhD at UCC, I have to carry out a research study. This study is generally concerned with issues surrounding equity of access to instrumental music education. The study will examine the opinions and beliefs of instrumental music educators.

What will the study involve? This part of the study will involve a series of interviews with teachers and administrators of VEC music schools. These interviews will be of approximately 1.5 hour durations and will be digitally recorded. The recordings will be transcribed and analysed by the researcher for inclusion in a thesis.

Why have you been asked to take part? You have been asked because your experience as an instrumental music educator in a VEC music school is specifically suitable to provide data for the study.

Do you have to take part? No. Participation is voluntary. You will be given a Consent Form to sign. You have the option of withdrawing at any stage. You may withdraw your contribution within two weeks of participation and have your data destroyed.

Will your participation in the study be kept confidential? Yes. I will ensure that no clues to your identity appear in the thesis. Any extracts from what you say that are quoted in the thesis will be entirely anonymous.

What will happen to the information which you give? The data will be kept confidential for the duration of the study. On completion of the thesis, they will be retained for a further six months and then destroyed.

What will happen to the results? The results will be presented in the thesis. They will be seen by my supervisor, a second marker and the external examiner. The thesis may be read by future students on the course. The study may be published in an academic journal.

What are the possible disadvantages of taking part? I don't envisage any negative consequences for you in taking part.

What if there is a problem? I don't envisage any problems arising in the course of this study.

Who has reviewed this study? Approval must be given by the Social Research Ethics Committee of UCC before studies like this can take place.

Any further queries? If you need any further information, you can contact me:

Ciaran Deloughry
[Home address]
[Telephone number]
[Email address]

Appendix 7

Consent Form

I……agree to participate in *Ciaran Deloughry*'s research study.

The purpose and nature of the study has been explained to me in writing.

I am participating voluntarily.

I give permission for my interview with *Ciaran Deloughry* to be digitally recorded

I understand that I can withdraw from the study, without repercussions, at any time, whether before it starts or while I am participating.

I understand that I can withdraw permission to use the data within two weeks of the interview, in which case the material will be deleted.

I understand that anonymity will be ensured in the write-up by disguising my identity.

I understand that disguised extracts from my interview may be quoted in the thesis and any subsequent publications if I give permission below:

(Please tick one box:)

I agree to quotation/publication of extracts from my interview □

I do not agree to quotation/publication of extracts from my interview □

Signed……. Date…….

Appendix 8

Interview protocol

Theme 1	***Organisation, structure and practice***
Function of the music services	Broadly speaking, how do you see the function of music schools? What part do music schools play in the scheme ofthings? How do they fit in? In community– a social function? Does it have a social context? Do you think music schools are answering a need? If an organisation has a public, who constitutes this school's public? Do you have a means of knowing what the cultural needs of people are? How would you describe what your music school does? To what extent would you describe it in terms of the traditional music school? – the conservatory learning model? In your perception what would be the main priorities of your organisation? – does it have a philosophy? Do they align with your own priorities? Are high technical instrumental standards a school priority? Is there a responsibility for music schools to uphold high standards of music-making? To what extent do you prioritise high standards? What kind of standards? How does instrumental music link in with mainstream education? Or is it separate? How has the music school responded to change? Compared to mainstream schooling?
Role of professionals	Can you describe what it is you do as a music teacher? What do you think is expected of you by the school? How much autonomy in making decisions do you have as a teacher? To what extent are you an administrator of received policy? How far (if at all) can you depart from the constraints of policy? How would you characterise the content of the music courses – the learning model?

	–skills training – intensive tuition – escalated learning - a leisure activity
Links to mainstream education	You are an instrumental music teacher – do you see yourself as and educator in any broader sense?
	Do you have any input into Primary or Second level music ?
	Do you go into mainstream schools?
	How are you regarded by the schools? What interactions with staff?
	Status of instrumental teaching in comparison with mainstream – if different, why different? How is instrumental ed regarded by mainstream colleagues.
	career path for music teachers - travel to work – part time for so many – pay and conditions – need to supplement income.
Theme 2	***Access and equity***
	Are there equal opportunities for all young people to participate?
	Do you think that membership of a particular social class will predict whether you will learn a musical instrument or not?
	To the best of your knowledge, what would be the social class composition of your student enrolment?
	Why do you think parents send their children to learn instruments?
	Where is the demand for instrumental tuition coming from? Is it across community or a narrower sector or sectors?
	Is there something in the set-up of music schools that might form a barrier to wider social participation?
	Curriculum – Western classical musical genre – individual tuition – annual testing – cultural identity
	Graded system ....or what alternative.....?
	Does equity sacrifice quality?
	Is there a tension between perception of learning instruments and the traditional role of VECs in working class education? To what extent might instrumental music be regarded as an elite cultural activity.
Theme 3	***The culture of instrumental music education***
Musical ability	It's often said about talent, you either have it or you don't.
	How does your institution view musical ability?

	How do you view musical ability?
	Do you see it as giftedness or does everyone have musical ability?
	Will every child respond to good teaching?
	Is inherited talent an explanation of musical ability or are there other factors?
	How do you rate family background - parental support - personal commitment in the young musician's development?
	Is musical ability improvable?
	Do all individuals have potentiality for musical ability?
	To what extent does the 'born talent' idea still underly instrumental music education?
	How do you see prodigies –is there such a thing as a 'prodigy producing family?
	Learning model of your organisation – get through grades / escalate the learning
	Effectiveness of group-learning for traditionally one-to-one contexts
	Are there equal opportunities for young people to develop musical ability?
Gender	Gender and the playing of instruments – what's the gender breakdown of your student enrolment
	What is your perception of gender in music as a music teacher?
	Is there a gender bias in who plays instruments and in who plays what instrument?
	Are instruments gendered?
	In your experience do boys drop out of instrumental music more easily than girls? Or do boys not take up instruments to the same extent as girls?
	do boys drop out of instrumental music more easily than girls?
	Is it the musical genre, instrument choice, pedagogy, or something else that seems to enable girls' music but not boys'? Do you think boys have a different style of learning to girls?
	Might an alternative pedagogy work for boys?
	Think how teenage boys learn guitar, often to a virtuosic playing standard, and often over a short space of time. In your opinion, are there different (gendered) musical values at play here?
Musical value	There's a perception out there that sees learning musical instruments an elite activity?

Would you agree with this?

Does musical genre matter in learning instruments? Are musics equal?

Is making music (any music) the important thing; or is maintaining the status quo of classical music and the playing of classical instruments of greater importance?

Are there tensions between the privileged status of classical music in the music school and the musical values of music students?

Can you see a time when classical, traditional, rock, pop, jazz, metal, etc might have equal status in music schools?

Does music school curriculum address the musical needs of all students?

Does school curriculum clash in any way with your own musical values? Do you ever feel professionally or personally constrained by curricular policy?

How does instrumental teacher training fit with modern day cultural needs?

How does underfunding impact on the enactment of instrumental music education?

Does group instrument learning have a place in music schools?

How might the teachers regard teaching groups?

How might the teachers regard a change to alternative forms of assessment?