Building Critically Reflective Practice in Higher Education Students: Employing Auto-ethnography and Educational Connoisseurship in Assessment

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Abstract: This study posed the question: Does using an educational connoisseurship framework applied to auto-ethnography assist in the development of reflective practice in teacher education? The design of authentic assessments that assist students in making meaningful links between theory and practice is a complex process. We created an assessment task that was directly linked to the lived experience of the students and specifically focused on their educational practice. Students were required to write an auto-ethnography that was shaped by educational connoisseurship and criticism. With ethical permission we retained the auto-ethnographic assignments by nineteen students. After independent thematic analysis we built a composite, thematic analysis and compiled tables of the content analysis. Our focus was how our students engaged with the task. We found that using an educational connoisseurship framework applied to auto-ethnographic writing has the potential to assist in the development of reflective practice in teacher education.

Keywords: educational connoisseurship and criticism; auto-ethnography; assessment in higher education; graduate music education; critically reflective practice

Introduction

Assessment whether formal or informal, is integral to all learning and teaching (Boyce-Tillman, 2002). Effective and engaging assessment can help individuals connect who they are to what they do (Savickas, 2011) which is essential in the development of critically reflective educators. Designing authentic assessments that offer meaningful links between theory and practice is complex and individual lecturers develop and employ non-traditional assessment items and modes to suit different student cohorts and educational contexts (Iannone & Simpson, 2012). In education and initial teacher education (ITE) courses the complexities of assessment design is complicated as students grapple with defining their teacher identity and developing personal pedagogical approaches to teaching and learning. At Monash University in Australia, graduate and ITE students enrolled in an advanced music education unit were asked to use a structured auto-ethnographic approach in a teaching and learning study for their final assessment. This article explores the efficacy of using this approach by analysing student assignments.

At the commencement of the unit students were instructed to select an aspect of their educational practice and begin a reflective journal to provide evidence and critical reflection for their auto-ethnography. Journaling supported the development of the ability to critically reflect on personal practice (Boyce-Tillman, 2002). Using a social constructivist framework, we devised assessment strategies that structured according to the tenets of educational connoisseurship (Eisner, 1976) in which descriptive vignettes provide the reader with a strong sense of the selected teaching and learning episode, their interpretation from the perspective of those taking part, and finally they were to be evaluated on two levels:

educational and personal. We have both taught units to graduate music education students and noticed the diversity of the group and a hesitancy to engage with critical reflection beyond the superficial. Further, as musicians we are aware of the importance of the development of skills and the opportunities to practice these new learnings. We decided to provide opportunities for the practice of critical reflection by superimposing connoisseurship on auto-ethnography to help our students focus their thinking and present their narratives in a structured way. Connoisseurship is a valuable affordance for teaching ability, musicianship and self-knowledge. We also felt that this would prepare students for their future practice as educators who must produce an evidence-based portfolio.

Most students chose to include three or four vignettes and reported that the assessment engaged them in considerable reflection which ultimately provided them with new understandings of their past and present practice (Lau, 2016) and allows for fine-grained critique (Hansen, 2017). For some students, this was not a new phenomenon – several already maintained teaching and learning journals – but others found this an innovative and potentially valuable activity. This strategy allows for the recognition of different learning and teaching styles and fostered agency among the students (Lammers & Murphy, 2002). The use of an auto-ethnographic approach was understood by all to support their own music teaching and learning, and although challenging, the practice was deemed to have the potential to support future critically reflective teaching and learning (Norton & Campbell, 2007). Providing students with this opportunity reflected our holistic approach "to teaching and learning that characterize our commitment to student-centred pedagogy" (Boyce-Tillman, 2002, pp. 48-49).

In designing our assessment, we chose to use student authored auto-ethnographies as an idiographic, rigorous, qualitative research method, which gives the subject a unique voice and window into their lived experiences (Nethsinghe & Southcott, 2015). Increasingly popular in music education, auto-ethnographic inquiry fosters self-reflection (Duncan, 2004; Ellis, 2009; Dhokai, 2012) and can possibly reshape envisaged futures if writers are open to their transformative potential (Custer, 2014). Auto-ethnographers seek to describe, interpret and systematically analyse personal experience to explore cultural (in this case educational) experiences within social context (Reed-Danahay, 1997). Auto-ethnographies recount lived epiphanic moments encountered in personal and cultural experience (Ellis & Bochner, 2009; Ellis, Adams & Bochner, 2011) and auto-ethnographers explore the "muddled idiosyncratic, florid eccentricities that make us unique as opposed to part of a population" (Muncey, 2010, p. xi). Autoethnographic self-study offers the researcher the opportunity to interrogate the attitudes, assumptions and beliefs that underpin personal experience, professional practice and educational values (Chang, 2008; de Bruin, 2016). Writing their own stories can motivate reflective practitioner-researchers "to consider what they have gained and what they have come to know, either about themselves or others" (Karpiak, 2010, p. 54). Auto-ethnographies explore educational processes, pedagogical practices, and shared music making (Hamilton, Smith & Worthington, 2008, p. 24). Auto-ethnographic writing is an effective component in higher degree research (Nethsinghe, 2012; de Bruin, 2016) that has the potential to promote reflection, critique and rigour in graduate music teacher education students. This paper articulates how this can be enacted via early career teachers' practice and reflexivity to support their ongoing professional development.

Educational Connoisseurship and Criticism

It is an often stated and desired outcome of educational engagement that students develop the skills and abilities to synthesize and/or integrate practice and theoretical

understandings (Gars, 2002). Eisner advocated for the legitimate role of artistic expression and knowledge in educational phenomena (Gardner, 2014). He explained that teaching requires artistry, that schooling is a cultural artefact and that the educational process varies between individuals and contexts (Eisner, 1976). Such individuality or 'productive idiosyncrasy' that affords students the opportunities to assume ownership of their work. This process recognises diverse beliefs, values, interests and abilities (Moroye, Flinders & Uhrmacher, 2014). The students involved in this research project are music educators. Being expressive and idiosyncratic is inherent in their practice as both musicians and teachers. In educational evaluation it is necessary "not to seek recipes to control and measure practice, but rather to enhance whatever artistry the teacher can achieve" (Eisner, 1976, p. 140) and educational connoisseurship and criticism offers a way to look deeply into teaching and learning while simultaneously fostering reflection, interpretation and the ability to express new understandings (Kramer, 2015). Through this process the individual can develop "a rich nuanced feeling for and understanding of a particular activity" (Hansen, 2017, p. 9).

Connoisseurship is the art of appreciation (Eisner, 2002) and connoisseurs are able to make finely tuned discriminations between complex qualities of phenomena (Gars, 2002) and notice what others may overlook (Eisner, 2002). Connoisseurs possess awareness and understanding of experience, which forms a basis for evaluation (Eisner, 1976). The connoisseur's appreciation and judgement is revealed "by the artful use of critical disclosure. Effective criticism requires the use of connoisseurship, but connoisseurship does not require the use of criticism" (Eisner, 1976, p. 141). Effective critics must be well-informed and able to make discriminating judgements based on their experience as expert professionals (Conrad & Wilson, 1985; Eisner, 1985). Connoisseurship can reveal the rich and complex engagements that occur in teaching and learning, which is disseminated through educational criticism (Eisner, 1976, 2002).

Educational criticism requires that researchers describe, interpret, evaluate, and discern themes (Eisner, 1976) and may improve the teaching and learning by offering fine-grained studies of what occurs. Description should allow readers to "participate vicariously in the educational situation, which points to the use of literary vignettes" (Moroye & Uhrmacher, 2009, p. 89). Deciding what to present in the vignettes is an interpretative act. Following vibrant, evocative vignettes that transport the reader, the next step is to interpret what is occurring to reveal the significance and meanings of situated actions in their social context (Eisner, 1976). Evaluation involves making value judgements concerning the educational significance of the phenomena (Eisner, 1976) and discerning themes can be understood as naturalistic generalizations that reveal lessons to be learned (Moroye & Uhrmacher, 2009).

The idiosyncratic nature of educational criticism raises questions of validity but Eisner explains that we frequently learn from single cases (Moroye & Uhrmacher, 2009). It is also assumed that the "best judge of worth is an expert in the area of the thing to be evaluated" (Gardner, 1977, p. 574). We acknowledge that our students may not yet be expert music educators but they have already spent many years learning and for some teaching their craft. Evaluation involves subjective judgments which are inevitable but regardless of the type of assessment, critically it is the individual who makes the judgement (Gars, 2002). Educational criticism begins with an artistic paradigm rather than a scientific one. This enables those engaged in education to develop their ability to see and reflect about what they do (Eisner, 1977). Educational criticism can reveal the complexities of educational phenomena and share understandings with others. Beginning with students' individual experiences has the potential to enhance motivation and deepen involvement in educational engagement (Gars, 2002). Developing the skills of educational criticism takes time possibly

more than was available to our students, but our hope was to introduce an approach that could become embedded in participants' future practice.

Designing the Assessment

In designing this assessment, a social constructivist model was adopted that positions the task as active and critically reflective social engagement (Boud et al., 2016). Employing such an approach enhances students' learning experience and allows assessment to be part of their active learning process (Rust, Price & O'Donovan, 2003). This task was positioned as a socially situated phenomenon (Boud et al., 2016), linked to the lived experience of the students and specifically focused on their educational practice. We sought to stimulate higher order thinking by asking students to describe, interpret and evaluate past teaching and learning experiences. Students were encouraged to explore, interrogate, articulate relationships (between self and others), and develop understandings of future self as teacher. This 'future-mindedness' or 'prospection' (Osman, 2014) relates to the students' increasing understanding of self as present and future practitioner who recognises that this assessment offers a useful tool for continuous critically reflective practice and teaching engagement. Prospection affords the opportunity to generate imagined future states of the participant's world (Osman, 2015). This assessment harnessed the learner's own endeavours and curiosities to engender transformative learning experiences to allow students to develop a self-assured understanding of their own learning (Lindgren & McDaniel, 2012). We sought to give them a sense of agency which enables "people to play a part in their self-development, adaptation, and self-renewal" (Bandura, 2001, p. 2). During their careers, musicians may undertake different roles including teaching and performing in multiple, concurrent and diverse musical genres and organisations (Bartleet et al., 2012; Bennett, 2008; Canham, 2016). This aligns with our constructivist understanding of self, wherein knowledge is constructed through experiential learning (Lindgren & McDaniel, 2012).

Assessment strategies for promoting student agency have found success in educational settings (Rust, Price & O'Donovan, 2003). By addressing their real-life experiences and challenges, students are able to make decisions about how to approach their autoethnographic constructions to build meaning and a sense of agency over personal performance. At the core of student agency is the belief that a person is responsible for their own learning and achievement (Fink, 2013) and it may be "easier for a learner to situate new learning within existing knowledge structures by making connections to previous experience" (Lindgren & McDaniel, 2012, p. 346). A sense of agency is either immediate or long term (Pacherie, 2008) and our assessment is the latter as students were asked to generate "a form of self-narrative where one's past actions and projected future actions are given a general coherence and unified" (Sadler, 2015, p. 12). Although an imposed assessment, this autoethnographic study was more like a task that a reflective practitioner might set for themselves. Several students commented that they had been maintaining reflective teaching journals for several years and this assessment offered a different lens through with to consider their reflections. Overall this assessment enabled flexible learning tailored to the individual's social context, prior experiences and motivations.

The Unit, the Assessment and Related Course Context

The unit that is the focus of this study is an expert teaching practice specialisation at master's level that can be taken within several course offerings in the Faculty of Education at

Monash University including the Masters of Teaching – Secondary or Primary-Secondary or Early Years-Primary (Graduate: 2 Years Initial Teacher Education), and the Masters of Education (Postgraduate: 2 Years). This subject occurs in the last semester of the pre-service Masters of Teaching programs and at some point in the Masters of Education programs. The unit is an enhanced professional learning unit available in the expert teaching practice specialisation that is designed to extend interest and deepen knowledge and expertise in teaching and learning. The aim is for students to address the complexity and artistry of teaching and learning and advance their understanding of curriculum areas and issues within a specific discipline area. This is considered across contexts such as schools, tertiary education, workplaces and in communities. The cohort that enrols in the unit is diverse, possessing a range of musical and educational expertise. For example, some students have music performance skills, others have complete music degrees; some students are pre-service while others are already established classroom and instrumental teachers. The unit encompasses a wide range of music education issues and approaches with the intention of advancing knowledge and skills in the discipline area overall and ensures that assessments are flexible enough to accommodate unique and varying educational contexts and histories.

In the unit 'Teaching music: Theory and practice' students are asked to challenge their thinking by questioning their values, beliefs and understandings about teaching and learning music. They investigate current theoretical understandings and practical approaches to music education in formal and informal settings and across the lifespan. Students become familiar with the historical and philosophical influences that have shaped music education policy and practice, and relate this to their own educational contexts. Students develop advanced skills in reflective practice through conducting a music teaching and learning study that requires a critical and creative autoethnography within a cultural context bounded by the tenets of connoisseurship as their summative assessment. The assessment asks students to select a specific approach to teaching music that they are interested in exploring as a music educator. They are required to source research literature about their chosen teaching approach, which should inform their practice. As this degree of reflection takes time, students are required to keep a detailed reflective journal where they document their experiences employing this chosen approach to teaching music throughout the 12-week semester. Students are specifically asked to reflect on how their experiences teaching music link to the relevant literature. This is a form of reflection on activity that occurs after completing a task (Lau, 2016). To support their autoethnography, students were asked to create descriptive narratives based on their journal extracts and artifacts from their own teaching and learning. Lecturers in the humanities and the arts are familiar with the use of "mind-maps, photographs, recorded narratives and other 'creative' forms of communicating ideas" in assessment items (Zemits, 2015, p. 2). Personal narratives are pivotal in exploring both identity and understandings of professional engagement (Maree, 2013; Canham, 2016).

It was recognised that students would require foundational skills and knowledge in how to approach a reflective practice study that required them to critically interpret their music methodology and pedagogy. Further, teaching artistry necessities the ability to understand pedagogical content knowledge in an objective and subjective way. Autoethnography would enable students to use rich data descriptions to systematically analyse personal experience to understand cultural experience (Hamilton, Smith & Worthington, 2008; Bartleet & Ellis, 2009). This more informal approach considers the process as important as the product. To teach students to do this well in a limited amount of time was a challenge. We decided to provide a framework for students' auto-ethnographic studies and selected Eisner's educational connoisseurship and criticism. This alternative approach to viewing the way that professionals 'think in action' is involves artistry (Schön, 1983) and entails a paradigm shift from a focus on technique to one situated around praxis was an appropriate frame for this

learning and teaching study. Once students have completed their description, interpretation and evaluation, they are required to thematically analyse their writing and discuss its import. Figure 1 outlines how the framework was used as a tool for reflective practice situated within an auto-ethnography.
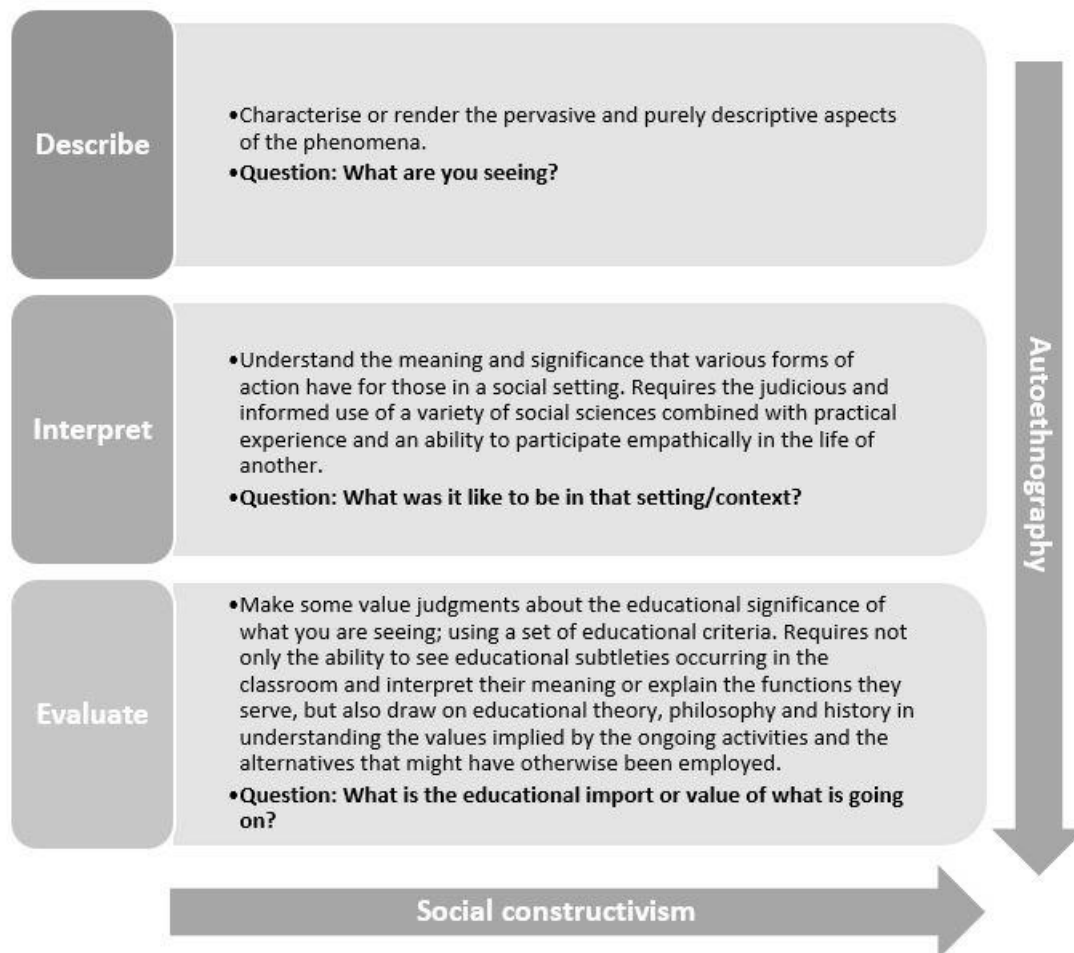

Figure 1. Educational connoisseurship framework applied to auto-ethnography as a tool for critically reflective practice.

This study sought to answer the question: Does using an educational connoisseurship framework applied to auto-ethnography assist in the development of reflective practice in teacher education?

Methodology

With ethical approval from the University, students were asked for permission to retain and analyse their auto-ethnographic assessment. Of the 24 students enrolled in the unit, 19 agreed. As stated earlier the participant cohort included students from a range of graduate education and ITE programs. Students had diverse experiences to draw from and were at different stages of their professional development. The auto-ethnographies were all rich in reflection and detail. We graded the assessments and returned them with evaluative comments. The students were then given their final grades. At that point, we addressed the assessments as data which were read and re-read (Smith & Osborn, 2009). We independently coded and analysed the auto-ethnographies thematically and then together co-constructed a

composite analysis building overarching themes in an inductive process. Independent analysis of the same transcripts has the potential to increase trustworthiness (Rodham, Fox & Doran, 2015). Thus rigour was applied to the analytic process, strengthening the credibility of the interpretation.

To maximise trustworthiness in this research, iterative strategies were applied to all stages of the research to establish credibility and dependability (Shenton, 2004). The auto-ethnographic writing collected captured the students' understandings of their lifeworld as music educators. The students knew the plausibility and trustworthiness of their own interpretation of their lived experience (Buckner, 2005). Although their choice of what to include was subjective, they were able to acknowledge and discuss their values, beliefs, prior understandings and assumptions (Cutcliffe, 2003). As researchers we brought to the analysis our shared understandings as school and university music educators who have been colleagues for some considerable time and who inhabit life-worlds comparable to those of the participants. All data were de-identified and participants given pseudonyms.

Findings

The results reveal a diversity of educational contexts and teaching and learning approaches used by class members and the inherent value of providing individualised opportunities for students to explore their teaching practices and contexts. We recognise our students' diversity of personal and cultural backgrounds which is complicated by their varied musical genres, pedagogical traditions, and performance practices. In both teaching and assessment, the "first challenge … is to consider the social context into which teaching is situated" (Hewitt, 2009, p. 332). Social contexts shape experiences, skills and knowledge that in turn shape pedagogical approaches. Our students reported a wide range of influences including: Bloom's higher order thinking, Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory, holistic learning, life-long learning, authentic and real-life learning, personal experiences as a learner (both individually and within family), the importance of balancing formal and informal education, practical and experiential learning, technology, kinesthetic learning, and popular culture. Artifacts and research tools that our student participants used to explore their pedagogy were reflective journals, music practice journals, their own students' work and progress data, photographs, ethnographic observations, semi-structured interviews and informal discussions.

We have selected three exemplars from students' writing that demonstrate their use of an educational connoisseurship frame for their auto-ethnographic writing. The references in the students' statements are retained to illustrate their inclusion of related literature, but we have not added these texts to our references. In the vignettes from Students 2 and 3 we have preceded their writing with a brief explanation of the music pedagogical approaches that they mention.

Student 1: Instrumental Music Teaching: Reflective Practice
Description

At the forefront of my instrumental teaching practice is engaging my students in reflection and self-regulated thinking … I began implementing reflective practice in my teaching at the beginning of this year, in the hope that my students would become more accountable for the sort of practise that they did. I have noticed a remarkable improvement in their ability to practise more effectively, to problem-solve and become self-sufficient learners … My reflective practice template integrates the components of reflection … For me, it is

important that my students establish clear aims of *what* they would like to achieve and *how* they are planning on achieving it. Once they have practised, they then need to reflect on how effective it was and evaluate what aspects worked well and what aspects could be improved upon. My aim is that eventually, reflective practice will become integrated as a natural part of their learning and their practising.

Interpretation

A large portion of professional musicians, either consciously or subconsciously, dedicate a significant amount of time planning their practice sessions … to ensure that they are making the most of their time and actively working on their weaknesses. Likewise, successful students are also more likely to be those who are methodical in their approaches to learning (Nielsen, 1999) … in education, and particularly in music, we focus too much on the final outcome and not enough on the learning process … Reflection and self-regulated thinking are important components not just in music but in a broader context of educational theories and learning strategies. Primarily, reflection falls under the constructivist approach, which suggests that 'everything a person learns is mediated by their prior experiences and understanding' (Moss, 2011, p. 12). Learning is not about simply absorbing what is said or being able to robotically recall information. Rather, it is based on students being engaged in "genuine learning problems or tasks that foster the opportunity for them to make connections between new material and prior knowledge" (Crawford, 2014, p. 57) … Reflective and self-regulated practice encourages students to engage in higher order thinking through planning their practice, selecting and incorporating strategies that enable them to improve their performance, and evaluating their effectiveness in order to determine if the set goal has been achieved.

Evaluation

My past musical experiences have taught me the value of approaching music practice in a holistic, systematic and organised manner, by incorporating a variety of exercises and practice strategies to improve particular aspects of my playing and my musical ability as a whole. As a teacher, these experiences have directly influenced and framed my approach to teaching and I hope to engage my students in meaningful practice by encouraging them to be reflective and self-regulated learners who enjoy learning and practising. Teachers are also life-long learners and I look forward to developing my ideas further and am determined to continue exploring and experimenting with new strategies that can benefit my students' learning and enjoyment of music. Teaching students how to practise effectively and how to get the most out of their learning should be a priority for all teachers, regardless of their teaching subject. Effective practice requires discipline, planning and thinking, and demonstrates to students the benefits and rewards of hard work. As a teacher, my aim is to provide my students with valuable skills and strategies that will enable them to be independent and life-long learners. Regardless of whether or not they continue to study music in the future, I hope that my students will all benefit from the skills that learning music has taught them and have a lasting appreciation for music.

Student 2: Primary School Music Teaching: The Kodály Approach

In the Kodály approach, inspired by Hungarian composer and educator, Zoltan Kodály the voice is central to musical instruction and, by focusing on learning through engaging with music, singing, playing, moving and enjoying, music becomes part of the natural learning process (Gault, 2016).

Description

I was informed by fellow staff and students that the previous program was based on music history, incorporated little in the areas of performance and students had no understanding of traditional western music notation, unless they received instrumental tuition … [Current] Year 6 students were asked to compose their own pentatonic piece and record their composition on the music staff. I expected students to accurately include clef, time signature, bar lines, rhythmic elements (crotchet, quavers, semiquavers and crotchet rests) and pentatonic pitches (doh, re, mi, soh and lah) in their 8 bar composition … The students who did not receive any additional instrumental lessons also completed well-crafted and musically literate compositions, one said "I don't know why, but I just 'got it'. Everything we did in class made sense to me … it wasn't easy but I knew what to do".

Interpretation

Singing is essential to developing music literacy skills in my students. As they progressed through the program, I was astounded that students as young as 6, were understanding and demonstrating skills in musical literacy. I began to question whether teachers are actually expecting enough of their music students and whether teachers recognise their students' true potential. Cuskelly (2012) notes "an increasing trend to patronise children and to diminish their potential for learning and intelligent engagement". Students are capable of developing such musical skills … children do not lack ability, but rather that our education systems fail to provide suitable opportunities for the students to achieve their potential.

Evaluation

I feel that the Kodály method can be successfully employed across a student's lifespan. It is a method that can be successfully employed across a teacher's career. The techniques, repertoire and skills offered by this approach, provides teachers with a means of catering for a variety of student abilities and needs, and provides students with a sequenced approach to learning music. The Kodály approach results in positive implications for the music education community including: an approach that caters to students' needs and abilities, creating a sense of belonging and creating life-long skills.

**Student 3: Secondary School Music Teaching (Final Pre-Service Practicum):
Technology and CLASP**

Keith Swanwick developed an influential model for music activities (CLASP) which involved Composing, Literature studies, Audition (audience listening), Skill acquisition, and Performance (Swanwick, 1979).

Description

This is an important aspect of my past teaching and is a valuable insight into future teaching contexts. Technology has already had a profound impact on education, with policy and curriculums integrating and demanding the presence of it within all subjects, and teachers being required to be familiar with ICT … This autoethnography will elucidate how important technology is to developing authentic learning, and ways in which it can (and will be) employed for lifelong learning. Swanwick's CLASP model that influences my pedagogy will be used as a frame for exploration. During my placement all my lessons featured an aspect of music technology. I realised that just because it is the twenty-first century and technology has such an impact on our lives doesn't mean that all of its implementation in lessons is authentic and effective. The question perpetually lingered in my mind: how can I make this learning authentic and useful, something the students can use to apply in real life, not just as a task they have to do to move on?

Interpretation

In my experience with technology in the music classroom, I examined both positive and challenging experiences, which assisted in eliciting observations of practices which generated authentic learning, so a greater understanding of authentic pedagogical contexts may be cultivated. It was interesting to see the variance in motivation, self-efficacy, and engagement between students who were the same age and gender, completing similar compositional tasks via ICT across different tasks. I devised a few key factors which I believe to be strong influences on the differences in final products resulting from this unit of work on composition:

1. Students had more scaffolding of musical terminology, concepts and characteristics.
2. Students had more direction (step-by-step instructions, guided planning workbooks).
3. Students were challenged to transcribe and record rather than using loops, developing more musical skills according to Swanwick's CLASP.
4. There was always a further step which the task could take (students needed further instruction on how to develop their songs).

The unit of work was well-received by teachers, students and fulfilled curriculum guidelines. I believe that this unit of work had … authentic learning experience opportunities and the compositions produced by students were of high quality.

Evaluation

I more firmly than ever believe that technology is the future of music education and will continue to play a large role in pedagogy. I have seen the benefits and engagement in truly authentic learning experiences, as well as the challenges in creating such environments that will develop lifelong learning of music in students. While many students may have

originally believed that they were not necessarily musically inclined as they couldn't play an instrument, most were able to find success and apply knowledge from other avenues into recording on Garage Band … The value of technology and authentic learning in education it will only increase. It seems that the *zeitgeist* is for students to develop their social skills and experiences through authentic music technology pedagogy, providing students with an enriched music education, a balance of informal and formal lesson styles and skills that are transferrable to multiple disciplines ... and allows for … age appropriate learning materials, and flexible, individualised teaching methodologies within music education.

These excerpts present an extremely condensed version of the ideas encompassed in the selected assessments. The three exemplars make visible the thinking about pedagogy as each participant moved through the reflective stages and engaged in higher order thinking. It highlights the value in providing a framework for their autoethnographies that supports developing reflective practice and pedagogical reasoning on macro and micro levels.

Discussion and Conclusion

Using an educational connoisseurship and criticism framework applied to autoethnography can assist in the development of reflective practice in teacher education. Autoethnographic writing in higher education has considerable value as an assessment task but can be a challenging, complex and far-reaching process (Wall, 2008). The elements of educational connoisseurship offered a structure in which students could select aspects of their professional practice as music educators for interrogation and reflection. Students described their experiences and understandings and placed them in their educational and social contexts, ultimately developing knowledge constructs from their reflective engagement with their own lived experiences. As one student confirmed, "autoethnography is so helpful; it validates your own personal experience [and] has provided me with greater links to my past, and stronger foundations for my future practice". Through this assessment we hoped to facilitate students' sense of agency in their construction of present and future self as teacher. Giving students the sense that they have control and the power to affect their own learning is one of the great challenges of contemporary education (Lindgren & McDaniel, 2012). Reflective practice is underpinned by multifaceted cognitive and affective processes that support and advance learning (Lau, 2016). As educators we facilitate learning in which "the outcomes go beyond subject knowledge and reach into the promotion of deeper-level learning capacities, which are transferable to new and less predictable areas" (Walters, 2007, p. 58). This approach helps "students discover the profession by preparing them to work in contexts of uncertainty and cope with complex situations" (Pallisera, Fullana, Palaudarias & Badosa, 2013, p. 587). Our diverse group of students are still forming themselves as independent professional educators and this assessment sought to increase their reflective and critical abilities to understand their own teaching practices. As experienced teachers and academics in music education we can formulate questions that challenge students and engender new thinking (Sadler, 2015).

This assessment item worked well for our students, providing them with the opportunity to reflect critically on an aspect of their music teaching. Music students find themselves in "fluctuating roles ... Learning to negotiate and smooth these transitions is part of developing a secure musical identity" (Pitts, 2013, p. 198). This was a complex challenge that offered a model for continuous reflective practice as teachers and learners. By centering this assignment on individuals, each student could explore their own educational context and link theory to practice. Adopting the position "inquirer-as-witness must bring to bear an experiential as well as scholarly intimacy with the dynamics of practice" (Hansen, 2017, p.

9). Students could explain their pedagogical practices and the socially mediated factors that impact who they are as people, musicians and educators. Students identified varied influences on their personal pedagogical understandings. Demonstrably it is unwise to assume a homogeneity in student cohorts. Each student used different constructs and evidence to inform their critical reflection. Two students might discuss the same pedagogy but their personal understandings and applications were quite different. For example, three people mentioned the Kodály approach but their pedagogical influences included lifelong learning, formal education, constructivism, Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory, and experiential learning. Many of the cohort identified the influence of their own learning experiences on their formation as teachers. Boyce-Tillman (2002) argues that before students exit higher education, they should have accepted responsibility for their ongoing formative assessment. The more we read, the more we realised how important it was to have an assessment that could cater for diversity and foster critical reflection. Even within the confines of this relatively constrained format, constructing a structured autoethnography based on educational connoisseurship was an effective assessment strategy to employ. We acknowledge that this study has reported data from a small cohort of students but we argue that the practices we have described can be used in a range of subjects and courses. The guidelines for such an assessment item should provide a writing approach, a structure, and encourage individualised self-reflection positioned in social and pedagogical contexts. This assessment was both guided and flexible, and fostered capacity building and critical understanding of self as teacher.

This research has revealed interesting avenues for future research that can both extend this study and explore unanswered issues. It would be interesting to follow our participants into their professional practice in a longitudinal study to identify the efficacy of connoisseurship and criticism in fostering reflective educational practice and support the collection of evidence for teaching portfolios. The combination of auto-ethnography and educational connoisseurship and criticism as a model for teacher practice (see Figure 1) may be applicable to other discipline areas, including but not limited to the arts. The construction of auto-ethnographies may be a means to share practice with others and could be factored into school-based professional learning.

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