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To cite this article: Jennie Henley (2017) How musical are primary generalist student teachers?, Music Education Research, 19:4, 470-484, DOI: [10.1080/14613808.2016.1204278](https://doi.org/10.1080/14613808.2016.1204278)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14613808.2016.1204278>



Published online: 12 Jul 2016.



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ABSTRACT

Current inclusive pedagogical thinking advocates that learning should begin with what the learner can already do. As children bring rich musical experiences with them into school, primary generalist student teachers also bring rich experiences of music and music-making into their initial teacher education programmes. Yet debate still continues as to whether primary generalists can teach music. The research reported in this paper originated from the reflective practice of a primary generalist teacher educator. Through anecdotal evidence in her teaching, she found that the musical profiles of students undertaking a one-year postgraduate primary teacher education programme were changing. Younger students were beginning to discuss experiences of widening participation opportunities when reflecting on their own musical learning journeys. Moreover, the richness of musical experiences reported by the primary generalist student teachers each year was consistent. The current research resulted from a desire to document these experiences, and also to find a way to gather this information prior to the students starting their course in order to improve teaching; by finding out what the students could already do, teaching could be planned so as to practise and model effective inclusive pedagogy and use the allocated time for music in the best possible way. The paper opens with a review of recent research, raising new research questions as a result of a potentially changing student musical profile. The integration of reflective practice and research to form a research methodology is discussed, and a theoretical framework of what is meant by *musical* is given. The initial findings of the research are presented and discussed; the paper closes with an overview of the next stages of the research project and the implications for initial teacher education are identified.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 27 September 2015
Accepted 14 June 2016

KEYWORDS

Primary music; generalist teacher; teacher education; student teacher; primary generalist confidence

Primary generalist music teaching

Current inclusive pedagogical thinking advocates that learning should begin with what the learner can already do (Florian and Spratt 2013). Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011) explain that everyday teaching decisions are too often ‘influenced by the assumptions of bell-curve thinking about ability’ (314). Furthermore, the vulnerability of children who fall outside the bell-curve ‘is compounded when teachers also believe that such children need specialist teaching that they have not been trained to provide’ (314). As a reaction to learning and teaching approaches based on bell-curve notions of ability that enable only the majority to achieve, inclusive pedagogy is an approach to teaching diverse groups of students together without marginalising some. Whilst this approach has been developed as a result of extensive research exploring the relationship between achievement and inclusion in the field of special education needs (Florian, Black-Hawkins, and Rouse 2017), it has recently been

conceptualised and applied as a framework to guide inclusive practice across the curriculum (Florian 2015). Practitioner enquiry undertaken by primary generalist student teachers as part of their initial teacher education programme has demonstrated how using an approach taken from inclusive pedagogy can open up musical learning for children (Henley 2015). On reviewing different curriculum reports from various countries, Jeanneret and Degraffenreid (2012) identified that amongst other things, many ‘supported the conclusion that classrooms should be student-centred’ (3). Furthermore, they acknowledged that primary generalist teachers should be empowered to engage in music as music learners. If we wish to engage primary generalist teachers in their own musical learning in a way that is student-centred, and both practise and promote effective inclusive pedagogy in teacher education, teacher educators need to know what student teachers can already do.

Differences in primary school music practice in schools across regions, countries, and continents; issues of a mis-match between policy rhetoric and practice; and the arguments for and against who should teach music in the primary school have been well documented (Hallam et al. 2009; Hewitt 2002; Holden and Button 2006; Russell-Bowie 2009, for example). These issues have been used to frame research that explores teacher confidence in music (Biasutti 2010; Hennessy 2000) and the ways pre-service and in-service primary generalist teachers develop self-efficacy in their musicality and teaching of music (Garvis 2013; de Vries 2013). Bremner (2013) gives an account of how she overcame her fears of teaching primary music as a generalist teacher through a partnership model of working. She highlights how, through the support of a more knowledgeable other, she was able to build on her own musical starting points and develop the confidence to teach primary music successfully.

Although largely related to the specific aims and content of each curriculum, there are some common threads in the various debates on who can teach primary music. Lack of musical subject knowledge is often cited as problematic for primary generalist teachers;

generalist teachers need to have the skills, knowledge and confidence to teach music if they are to do so in an authentic way. These teachers see themselves as not being musical – that is, not having a musical background and the skills required to teach music. (de Vries 2015, 211)

Although not necessarily explicitly linked (Jeanneret and Degraffenreid 2012), the relationship between personal musical experiences and teaching music is recognised (see Hewitt 2002). Being able to reflect on what a student teacher can already do is an important part of the process of learning to teach (Dogani 2008). There is disagreement though as to how far prior musical experience is related to confidence in primary music teaching. For example in England, previous research has found a significant link between musical qualifications and confidence (Holden and Button 2006), whereas other research has found that it does not necessarily follow that student teachers with music subject knowledge gained from learning an instrument are more confident at teaching music in the primary school than those without (Hennessy 2000).

Various interventions and training programmes have been designed and evaluated in order to find the best way to prepare both primary generalist student teachers and in-service teachers in the teaching of music, and many talk of a development in students’ musical skills as a result of a programme. The programme that Rogers et al. (2008) investigated was designed in response to worries that, despite the introduction of various government initiatives to increase musical opportunities in English primary schools, schools were not fully realising the full benefits of music education. They report that as a result of the training programme, teachers did develop their musical knowledge. However they did not report the musical starting points of the teachers and found that ‘where teachers already had considerable musical knowledge, the benefits were small’ (495). Seddon and Biasutti (2008) report on an Italian programme designed to help primary generalist student teachers to view their own musicality more objectively, and Biasutti (2010, 50) states that this programme was ‘undertaken by all participants without any prior musical skills’ as well as those who did have formal musical training. Given what we know about the way children develop musically (Welch 2005) and that understandings of the musical experiences that children bring into school have underpinned

music teacher education for a number of years (Glover and Ward 1998), it seems strange to assume that adults might enter higher education without any prior musical skills. Programmes that have adopted student-centred approaches and acknowledged that, as with children in school, adult students bring a rich variety of musical experiences with them have found that not only have students flourished as a result of the programme, but the value of such approaches in their own education has been recognised. Interestingly, this has been found in programmes with musical prerequisites (Bia-sutti, Hennessy, and de Vugt-Jansen 2015, for example) as well as those without (Welch and Henley 2014, for example).

The debate continues as to who should teach music in the primary school. Some research takes a deficit approach, focusing on the negative aspects of primary school music that have forced different countries into a situation where generalists have to teach music through lack of specialist teachers (Russell-Bowie 2009). Other research takes a more positive approach, seeking to find ways that schools can support generalist teaching (Garvis and Pendergast 2012). In the 1980s, citing a report published nearly 20 years earlier, Mills acknowledged that ‘generalist teachers, properly trained and supported, are capable of high standards of music teaching’ (1989, 126). However, questions are still being asked as to whether ‘the non-specialist teacher [has] the subject knowledge, confidence and expertise to develop and promote music to the ‘high standard’ required by the National Curriculum’ (Holden and Button 2006, 24). Whether you agree with policies that suggest specialists should teach music (de Vries 2013) or you believe that ‘most music is best taught by the class teacher – supported by intermittent specialist support of various kinds’ (Bremner 2013, 79), perhaps the question ought to be, *what* subject knowledge, confidence and expertise do non-specialist teachers have, and how can this be developed so that they can teach music to the high standard required by their specific curricula?

A changing student profile?

Mirroring the link between school music experiences and confidence in primary music teaching, research has identified that lack of positive experiences as a learner in school often translates into musical insecurities as an adult (Pitts 2009). Adults entering a teacher education programme may not have positive experiences of music as a child, or may not have been in a financial or social position to access musical learning (Garvis and Pendergast 2012). But opportunities for music education are changing, certainly within England. The widening participation programmes cited by Rogers et al. in 2008 have now been in place in English primary schools for over a decade. Initially government funded, these programmes were implemented across England following pilot programmes in 2002. The aim was to provide all children with the opportunity to learn an instrument, thus widening participation in music learning. The programmes comprised whole-class instrumental teaching and were initially free for a recommended amount of time, usually one year. Local authorities were tasked to design and develop the programmes so that they became sustainable once the funding ceased in 2012, but also so that they enabled children to continue their learning if they chose after the period of free tuition. Some local authorities were able to provide up to three years of free tuition, whereas others were only able to provide a term (three months) of free tuition. The programmes were taught by instrumental teachers who had traditionally taught individual and small group lessons rather than whole classes and continuing professional development to support teachers was also offered free of charge (Fautley, Coll, and Henley 2011). The impacts of these programmes on the children and schools that have participated have been evaluated and reported (Bamford and Glinkowski 2010; Lamont et al. 2009; Welch et al. 2011). Many of the children that participated in these early programmes have now become adults, and if these programmes continue it will become more common that younger adults will have experienced musical learning through a programme that sought to open access to music-making. This being the case, it is now fruitful to investigate the impact of these programmes on music in adulthood.

The implications for primary generalist student teacher education in England are that the musical starting points of younger primary generalist student teachers who have participated in these kinds of programmes may well be different to those of previous student teachers. Therefore, teacher education may see more students that have had musical experiences in primary school than ever before (Stunell 2010). It is also possible that those who participated in these kinds of programmes as a child are beginning to facilitate and/or teach similar programmes as an adult who has trained as a teacher. This puts initial teacher education in England in a unique position, and new research questions are arising:

- What is the legacy of these widening participation programmes in terms of the knowledge, skills, understanding, attitudes and beliefs of adults who participated as children?
- What is the legacy of these widening participation programmes in terms of influencing those who are entering teaching as a primary generalist teacher?
- Is there a second generation legacy in terms of improved opportunities for curriculum music in primary school as a result of generalist teachers participating in widening participation programmes as children?
- Is there a changing primary generalist student teacher musical profile and if so, in what ways do initial teacher education programmes need to adapt to these changes?

An understanding of the musical starting points of primary generalist student teachers would provide an insight into the musical experiences of incoming students at the point where students are becoming more likely to have participated in music in primary school than in previous years. This would then provide a starting point for future studies that can begin to address these research questions. Furthermore, in-depth research investigating what musical experiences students bring with them into their initial teacher education programme will add to understandings of the ways that primary generalist student teachers can be supported in their development as teachers of primary music, ultimately enabling teacher educators to practise and model effective inclusive pedagogy in their teaching. In other words we need to ask, *how musical are primary generalist student teachers?*

Reflective practice as research

The UCL Institute of Education (IOE) currently offers a one-year postgraduate programme for primary generalist student teachers. Student numbers are regulated by the Government but at present the programme takes in around 300 students each year. The Postgraduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) Primary programme comprises 125 days in school and 60 days at the IOE. Within those 60 days, the foundation subjects¹ are allocated just one 3-hour slot each. Students can elect for a specialism in music, which provides a further 35 hours of music; however, numbers are limited to less than 10% of the cohort.

Since 2011, the 3-hour Primary Music workshop for generalist student teachers has been designed to develop the students' own musicality as well as their understanding of primary generalist music teaching, combining musical activities, discussion, and reflection to begin to develop students' confidence and self-efficacy, and to provide practical experiences of activities that they might lead in the classroom. As part of my own reflective practice, I was looking for ways to include more time for musical activities in the 3-hour workshop but also increase the amount of thinking and reflection time that students had. Alongside this, I found that each year the richness of musical experiences reported in the session appeared to increase, and I wanted to find a way of officially documenting this. By chance, the PGCE programme introduced 'summer moodle'. Moodle is the IOE virtual learning environment and the idea of 'summer moodle' was to give incoming students the opportunity to engage in some tasks before they arrive so as to stimulate their thinking prior to starting their course. This provided an opportunity to conduct an online activity that would both stimulate the

students' thinking and reflection on their musical starting points as well as document their musical experiences.

An online survey comprising five questions was designed, with the opportunity to add any additional information at the end. The questions were designed using previous evaluation data (Welch and Henley 2014) and anecdotal evidence collected within previous music workshops. The questions were a mixture of closed questions comprising either Likert scales or lists of activities, and open questions provided an opportunity for detail to be reported. As the survey was designed in the summer vacation period, it was not possible to pilot the questions on students. Therefore, the questions were piloted on the most representative group available; the PGCE Primary staff. This group of people represents primary generalist teachers as they have a background in primary generalist teaching and a range of different subject specialisms. After the pilot, questions were amended and a final list of questions drawn up.

The survey was designed so as to collect quantitative data relating to musical activities that respondents either were currently or had previously engaged in, as well as collecting qualitative data providing more detail of their experiences, their perceptions of themselves as musicians, what they felt confident about, and what they were worried about in teaching primary music. The initial analyses comprised simple statistical analysis, cross-referencing data to provide a picture of how many respondents were currently engaged in music-making, had prior musical experiences, and what kinds of activities these were. This was followed by an analysis of the open-ended questions, firstly identifying common themes using NVivo software word frequency queries as a starting point, and then grouping data into the identified themes, adding new themes as they emerged through the analysis. The final stage of analysis is currently taking place and involves profiling the data to look at patterns in the relationships between reported musical activities, and reported self-perceptions related to teaching primary music.

The primary purpose of the survey was to establish what the musical starting points of the student teachers were at the point of entry to their teacher education programme, and what they felt most confident and most worried about in relation to teaching music in the primary school. This information was then used to plan the 3-hour Primary Music workshop. The survey also aimed to inspire student teachers to think about their own musicality in order to begin the process of self-reflection needed to develop their teacher identity (Walkington 2005). In other words, to enable the students to begin to construct an understanding of themselves as teachers of music.

In line with pedagogical thinking about the ways that student teachers construct understandings through experience within teacher education programmes (Loughran 2006), the current research acknowledged that the reality reported at the time of the survey will change over time and with experience. Moreover, the purpose of the teacher education programme was for students' skills, knowledge and understanding to be changed over time and with experience. This being the case, the research methodology needed to acknowledge that reality and related meanings are not fixed entities. Furthermore, as the professional knowledge, experience and understanding of any teacher within higher education are fundamental to interpreting how the prior experiences of their students impact upon learning and teaching, the professional knowledge, experience and understanding of the researcher are equally vital in the interpretation of the realities reported by the respondents. Thus, the methodology also needed to acknowledge that knowledge constructed through research is not disinterested nor do interpreted meanings exist independently of the interpreter (Schwandt 2000). A social constructionist stance enables the researcher to construct understandings and interpret data through an analytical frame using their own understandings as a reference point (Ragin and Amoroso 2010). In the same way that I, as a practitioner, was able to interpret the data to plan my teaching, my own position as a primary generalist teacher educator with professional knowledge, experience and understanding of teaching primary music was fundamental as a researcher in interpreting the data so as to understand the relationships between reported musical starting points and perceptions of teaching primary music.

What do I mean by musical?

In light of a methodology where the informed researcher as interpreter is fundamental in developing understandings, a brief exploration of what is meant by *musical* is needed. A theoretical framework supporting active music-making as the underlying quality of being musical can be created using six interlinked theoretical perspectives:

Being musically active: Based on the premise that ‘there is nothing exceptional about “being musical”, everyone is’ (1), Glover and Ward (1998) argue that music in the primary school requires children and adults to be musically active. The fundamental principles of music teaching are that work is practical, and music should be both seen and heard. In being musically active and using music in different ways, children are able to develop their understandings of music – understanding music involves ‘being able to use it, as makers, as listeners, workers, dancers, and worshippers’ (3).

Having musical experiences: Dewey (2005) argued that aesthetic experiences are active. When we engage in art, we have meaningful experiences that are significant to us in some way. Dewey describes aesthetic experiences as a fusion between practical, emotional and intellectual experience, and suggests that the practical, the emotional and the intellectual can never be separated out; they are interdependent. Furthermore, an aesthetic experience is a connection between past and present experiences, which implies the more different past experiences one has, the more connections one is able to make.

Doing music: For Elliott (1991), music education must acknowledge that music is something that we *do*. Music is both a form of knowledge and a source of knowledge. When we make music, our actions are intentional and thoughtful, and our knowledge manifests through our music-making. When we perform, we are engaging in musical thinking and action simultaneously, and we can display our musical knowledge far better than we could in words. Furthermore, through the process of making music we gain more knowledge about what we can do, the ways that we can interpret and assert music, and deepen our musical knowledge.

Feeling musical: In musical learning, Mills (2007) identifies performing as a fundamental activity of musicians, but argues that curricula focused solely on performance for the sake of performance can cease to be ‘creative, imaginative, or enjoyable’ (15). Performance should be integrated into music curricula in a way that enable children to feel that they are able to participate, not just to address technical challenges by using strategies that isolate specific aspects of the music to be performed. Ultimately, children should have the opportunity to join in performances that they feel proud of.

Musical contributions: Swanwick (1999) argues that respecting the musical contribution of the learner is one of the basic principles of music education. He criticises music education that is based on learning about music only, with no musical content. In doing so, he argues that music should respect the contribution of the learner. In line with Freire’s (2014) thinking, good music education is carried out *with* the learner, not *to* or *for* the learner.

Developing musical expertise: Hallam and Bautista (2012) explore the ways that students learning to play a musical instrument develop over time. Using the concept of developing expertise, they suggest that the more experience a student has within a particular domain, the more opportunity they have to develop their expertise in that domain. Learning is driven by the student’s conceptions of why they are learning, and within any learning there comes a point when students need to re-conceptualise their learning in order to move forward. This being the case, the crucial element is having the opportunity to engage in musical activity; in other words, the opportunity to be musically active.

This theoretical framework underpins the viewpoint taken in this paper that being musical means being engaged in active music-making.

At this point, it should be noted that the list of musical activities used in the survey derived from anecdotal evidence from teaching previous cohorts, and from a previous small-scale study, and was revised after being piloted. This being the case, there are activities such as composition that do not appear in the initial findings reported in this paper. This is due to these activities not appearing in the previous data or the pilot. Similarly, students were not asked to make a distinction between genres, ways of learning, digital or acoustic instruments, etc. The full lists of activities are given in [Appendix I](#), and have been revised as a result of this current research in order to survey the 2015/2016 cohort.

Musical starting points

Current musical activities

Table 1 shows the responses to the first question asking what activities the respondents were currently involved in. The most common activity was singing alone (30.1%; $n = 78$), closely followed by playing an instrument alone (28.9%; $n = 73$). It was interesting to note that in instrumental playing, singing and learning, the percentage of respondents taking part in these activities by themselves was always much greater than respondents taking part in music-making with others.

In order to find out what percentage of the respondents was actively engaged in music-making through singing, playing an instrument or learning to sing or play an instrument, data were cross-referenced and respondents grouped under the different activities so that they only appeared in one activity. The results were as follows:

- 73 respondents played an instrument on their own;
- a further 42 respondents sang on their own;
- a further 5 respondents were learning by themselves;
- 2 respondents reported learning to play an instrument or singing on their own, but not currently playing or singing on their own or in a group;
- no respondents reported playing or singing in a group but not playing or singing on their own;
- no respondents reported learning an instrument or singing with a teacher but not currently playing or singing either in a group or on their own; and
- no respondents reported teaching an instrument or singing but not currently playing or singing either in a group or on their own.

This totals 122 respondents (48.2%) actively making music at the starting point of their programme of study.

Previous musical activities

Table 2 shows the responses to the second question, asking what activities the respondents had previously been involved in. A high percentage of respondents reported that they had previously learnt to play an instrument or sing with a teacher (59.2%; $n = 150$). Out of these 150 respondents, 27 also reported having taught themselves to play an instrument or sing, which could imply that they learnt two different instruments or that they learnt the same instrument or voice two different ways. A further 10 respondents who did not report being taught by a teacher reported being self-taught. This raises the percentage of respondents who have learnt to play an instrument or sing either with or without a teacher to 63.2% ($n = 160$). Hennessy (2000) reported that 7 out of 10 students that participated in a programme to help develop confidence in teaching primary music had previously learnt to play an instrument. Although Hennessy's study involved a much smaller group, it is particularly interesting that a similar percentage was found in a study that surveyed 253 students at a different institution to Hennessy's 10 students.

Table 1. Responses to active music-making categories in question 1 ($n = 253$).

| Answer option | Response percentage | Response count |
|----------------------------------|---------------------|----------------|
| I play in a band | 2.8 | 7 |
| I play an instrument on my own | 28.9 | 73 |
| Play in an ensemble | 4.0 | 10 |
| I sing on my own | 30.1 | 78 |
| I sing with a group | 9.1 | 23 |
| Learning by myself | 14.7 | 37 |
| Learning with a teacher | 0.8 | 2 |
| I teach an instrument or singing | 3.9 | 10 |

Table 2. Responses to active music-making categories in question 2 ($n = 253$).

| Answer option | Response percentage | Response count |
|--|---------------------|----------------|
| Used to play in a band | 13.4 | 34 |
| Used to play on own | 41.5 | 105 |
| Used to play in an ensemble | 29.6 | 75 |
| Used to sing on own | 25.7 | 65 |
| Used to sing with a group | 26.5 | 67 |
| Taught myself to play an instrument | 14.6 | 37 |
| Learnt to play an instrument with a teacher | 59.2 | 150 |
| Taught music/an instrument/singing in the past | 7.1 | 18 |

Unlike the current musical activities reported, there was a more even distribution of responses related to respondents playing an instrument on their own (41.4%; $n = 105$) and playing in a group (34.7%; $n = 88$ in total made up of $n = 75$ playing within ensembles and a further $n = 13$ not playing in an ensemble but playing in a band). Similarly with singing: 26.5% ($n = 67$) previously sang in a group and 25.7% ($n = 65$) previously sang on their own. This pattern was not repeated in learning to play an instrument. There were also a greater number of students who reported previously having taught an instrument or singing (7.1%; $n = 18$) than were currently teaching an instrument or singing (3.9%; $n = 10$).

Again, cross-referencing data and grouping respondents so that they only appeared in one activity, the following results show the amount of respondents who had previously been engaged in active music-making through playing an instrument or singing:

- 105 respondents used to play an instrument on their own;
- a further 18 respondents played in a band;
- a further 22 respondents played in an ensemble;
- a further 16 respondents sang on their own;
- a further 7 respondents sang in a group;
- a further 8 respondents reported being self-taught (but did not appear in the previous categories); and
- a further 20 respondents reported being taught by a teacher (but did not appear in the previous categories).

This totals 196 respondents (77.5%) reporting that they have prior experience of active music-making.

Formal music education

Respondents were also asked about their formal musical qualifications. Table 3 shows the responses.

According to Government statistics (Ofsted 2012), in the 2012 examination period, 7% of the entire population of pupils entered for GCSE exams (taken at 16 years) took Music as a school examination subject. In the same year, 1% of the entire population of pupils entered for A-level exams (taken at 18 years) took Music. The number of respondents who reported holding these qualifications was higher than the national average. Furthermore, of the 100 students that reported having graded music qualifications, 54 gave details of the grades that they achieved. Graded music qualifications are embedded within the English music education system by the National Qualifications Framework where they are recognised as national qualifications (Department for Education 2012). The highest reported grade of each student mapped against the relevant National Qualifications Framework level (with equivalent qualification in parenthesis) is shown in Table 4.

Out of the 100 students that reported having graded music qualifications, 38 students reported that they also had GCSE Music. Of the 62 students who reported having graded music qualifications

Table 3. Responses to question 2 relating to formal musical qualifications ($n = 253$).

| Answer option | Response percentage | Response count |
|--|---------------------|----------------|
| GCSE music | 16.6 | 42 |
| A-level music | 5.5 | 14 |
| A-level music/music technology | 4.7 | 12 |
| I have a degree/postgraduate degree in music | 2.4 | 6 |
| Grades on an instrument/singing/theory | 39.5 | 100 |
| Other musical qualifications | 3.2 | 8 |

but not GCSE Music and who stated their highest grade achieved, 14 students reported holding grade 4 or above. Therefore, 14 students who did not hold GCSE Music reported holding qualifications equivalent to GCSE Music grades A*–C² or above. This means that 16.6% of respondents reported holding GCSE Music, and a further 5.5% of respondents reported holding an equivalent qualification. Other qualifications reported included Scottish Higher, Musical Theatre, and Music qualifications taken in other countries but not recognised by the National Qualifications Framework.

In order to be eligible to apply for a primary initial teacher education programme in England, candidates need to hold GCSE Mathematics and English at grade C or above (www.ucas.com). These qualifications demonstrate that candidates hold the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding required to enter a programme that will enable them to become teachers of primary mathematics and English. Applying the same principle to music, at least 22% of respondents hold the same qualifications as is required for mathematics and English for entry to an Initial Teacher Education programme. The significance of this is that if there is a strong link between music qualifications and confidence, as suggested by Holden and Button (2006), then it might be expected that a similar number of respondents reported feeling confident about teaching primary music.

Areas of confidence and concern

Table 5 shows the level of agreement to the statement, ‘I feel confident teaching Primary Music’.

The percentage of respondents who agreed in the strongest two categories was 21.2%, a similar percentage to those reporting musical qualifications. Looking at the data in more depth shows that it was not necessarily the case that those with music qualifications agreed more strongly with the statement relating to their confidence in teaching music. For example, out of the 42 respondents reporting holding GCSE music, the distribution of agreement/disagreement was as follows:

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|----|----|---|---|---|---|
| Level of agreement (1 = strongly agree) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| No. of respondents holding GCSE | 8 | 14 | 11 | 7 | 1 | 1 | 0 |

Even those with a degree or postgraduate degree in Music were not in total agreement that they were confident. Four out of the eight respondents reporting this level of qualification agreed strongly, but one agreed weakly (agreement level 3) and one neither agreed nor disagreed. This then is more in line with Jeanneret and Degraffenreid (2012) who suggest that there is not necessarily a relationship

Table 4. Highest report grades achieved.

| NQF level | Grade | Number of students |
|--------------------|-------|--------------------|
| Level 3 | 8 | 8 |
| (A-level) | 7 | 5 |
| | 6 | 5 |
| Level 2 | 5 | 12 |
| (GCSE grades A*–C) | 4 | 4 |
| Level 1 | 3 | 10 |
| (GCSE grades D–G) | 2 | 4 |
| | 1 | 6 |

Table 5. Level of confidence in teaching primary music ($n = 250$).

| I feel confident teaching primary music | | |
|---|-------------------------|----------------|
| Level of agreement | Response percentage (%) | Response count |
| 1 – Strongly agree | 6.4 | 16 |
| 2 | 14.8 | 31 |
| 3 | 21.6 | 54 |
| 4 – Neither agree nor disagree | 20.8 | 52 |
| 5 | 15.2 | 38 |
| 6 | 16 | 40 |
| 7 – Strongly disagree | 7.6 | 19 |

between music experience and teaching music, and supports Hennessy's (2000) findings that music subject knowledge is not necessarily linked to confidence in teaching primary music.

If the third, and weakest, level of agreement is added, the percentage of respondents who had some level of agreement to the statement, 'I feel confident teaching Primary Music', is raised to 42.8%. This is balanced by 38.8% of respondents with some level of disagreement, and 20.8% of respondents neither agreeing nor disagreeing. Finding a similar number of respondents in some level of agreement that they felt confident as those that were in some level of disagreement that they felt confident was surprising, particularly in the light of previous literature that reports significant lack of confidence in primary generalist student and in-service teachers (Stunell 2010).

At the IOE, students are allocated a teaching group that is related to the age phase that they are hoping to teach. As seen in Table 6, when confidence is viewed by teaching group, an interesting pattern emerges. The teaching groups containing respondents who are working within the Early Years (3–5 years old) had more respondents in disagreement than agreement that they felt confident. The teaching groups containing respondents who are working in Key Stage 1 and 2 (5–11 years old) also had more respondents in disagreement than agreement. However in teaching groups containing respondents who are working in Key Stage 2 only (7–11 years old), respondents with some level of agreement outweighed respondents with some level of disagreement. This would suggest that those training to teach the oldest primary age children felt more confident about teaching music than those training to teach the youngest children.

In the open-ended questions, the most frequent words used when describing what respondents felt confident in related to *singing*, *using classroom instruments* and *rhythm games*. Interestingly, these were similar to the areas where other respondents felt unconfident; *singing* and *instruments* being the most frequent words used in answer to the question, 'what aspects of primary music are you worried about teaching?' However, when reviewing the word frequency queries for the responses for this question, the words *able*, *know* and *knowledge* also appear. This was the only question where the word *knowledge* appeared in a word frequency query.

Table 6. Level of reported confidence by age phase.

| I feel confident teaching primary music | | 1, 2 and 3 (in agreement) | 4 (neither agree nor disagree) | 5, 6 and 7 (in disagreement) |
|---|---|---------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Group | Age phase | No. of responses | No. of responses | No. of responses |
| 1 | 3–5-year-olds | 8 | 8 | 11 |
| 2 | 3–5-year-olds | 10 | 3 | 15 |
| 3 | Mixed – special educational needs and disabilities specialist group | 6 | 4 | 14 |
| 4 | Mixed – maths specialist group | 7 | 4 | 6 |
| 5 | 5–11-year-olds | 7 | 5 | 14 |
| 6 | 5–11-year-olds | 18 | 3 | 2 |
| 7 | 5–11-year-olds | 11 | 6 | 8 |
| 8 | 7–11-year-olds | 14 | 5 | 11 |
| 9 | 7–11-year-olds | 11 | 4 | 6 |
| P1 | Mixed – part-time students | 9 | 8 | 4 |

Deeper analysis of the open-ended responses reveals an insight into the respondents' interpretation of musical knowledge.

I am not that knowledgeable about musical styles, and what I do know is mainly about classical music. I need to broaden my knowledge and listen to more different types of music to become an effective teacher. (Part time student, unknown age phase)

Although I once could read music fairly proficiently (reached up to Grade 4 Piano pieces), I worry that my lack of formal knowledge of musical structure and technical terms will hold me back. (Full time student, working with 6–11 year olds)

I worry about my lack of knowledge, I know I can learn terminology but I am worried as I have limited musical experiences. (Full time student, working with 6–11 year olds)

Lack of knowledge of music history. Lack of knowledge of music theory. (Full time student, maths specialist, unknown age phase)

Lack of knowledge/understanding of the place of music in the new curriculum. I have not observed music lessons during my school experience. (Full time student, working with 9–11 year olds)

I am worried about teaching music to upper KS1 and KS2. Whilst I enjoy listening to music, I currently have a limited knowledge of the history of music. I also only have limited knowledge of famous composers and their works. (Full time student, working with 6–11 year olds)

One example shows a concern about having a lack of musical experiences, and another shows a worry about the place of music in the curriculum. Four respondents refer to what Reimer (1991) describes as *knowing about* music and *knowing why* music is as it is, and are not explicitly related to the matrix of theoretical perspectives underpinning this research that suggests active music-making rather than knowledge about music is the underlying quality of being musical. Furthermore, contrary to previous research (de Vries 2015), the respondents tended to agree more than disagree that they would consider themselves to be musical, with 49.9% of respondents having some level of agreement with the statement, 'I would consider myself to be musical', whereas 31.2% of respondents had some level of disagreement and 19.6% of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed.

Implications for initial teacher education

The findings of this study are interesting. They appear to contradict previous studies that found primary generalist student teachers very under-confident in teaching music and in considering themselves as musical. Certainly this study found a level of lack of confidence, but this is balanced by a level of confidence. The richness of the musical experiences of the respondents is striking, and the openness with which respondents were prepared to discuss their musical experiences in a survey was surprising. The level of musical qualifications was found to be higher than the national average, and the range of learning experiences reported was wide. Moreover, the willingness to engage in reflection on their own musical starting points prior to starting their initial teacher education programme was higher than expected, as demonstrated by the number of responses. The survey responses enabled the 3-hour workshop that the students received to be designed so that it addressed some of the worries, and students were given an opportunity to think about what primary Music is, its place in the curriculum, what we mean by being musical and musical knowledge, and how they can draw on their resources in the classroom to provide musical opportunities for children.

Research has led to our understanding of the ways that children develop musically; that they are not fixed entities who arrive in school with an innate ability to either do or not do music; that being musical is part of our human design (Heriksson-Macaulay and Welch 2015). Moreover, the more opportunities children have to be musical, the more they can develop their musical expertise (Hallam and Bautista 2012). But this is not restricted to children. Although research has reported that primary generalist teachers see their musical ability as a fixed entity (Biasutti 2010), adults are as

able as children to develop musically through opportunities to participate in music-making (Henley 2009). Ultimately, systematic and robust research into the musical starting points of primary generalist student teachers can inform initial teacher education and in-service teacher development programmes on how best to support student teachers in their musical development and development as teachers.

In terms of our knowledge and understanding of how musical generalist primary student teachers are, this research points to some interesting possibilities. Firstly, it raises philosophical questions about the perceived nature of musical knowledge. The next stage of the analysis will unpick this further and investigate the links between respondents' perceptions of their own musical knowledge, their ability to teach music and their reported musical activities. By unpicking what primary generalist student teachers perceive musical knowledge to be, and mapping this across to curriculum requirements, we can deepen understandings of whether students entering generalist primary teaching have the knowledge needed to teach primary music. Secondly, the findings reported here appear contrary to previous research. This could imply that the incoming students have a musical profile different from those before them.

The second year of this research is currently underway and involves surveying the incoming cohort for 2015/2016 at the IOE, and repeated surveys are planned for the following three years so as to provide a 5-year picture of the musical profiles of incoming generalist primary student teachers at one institution. Furthermore, 21 respondents from the 2014/2015 cohort have agreed to be visited in school in the Summer of 2016. This will be an opportunity to follow the respondents from their student year into their first year of teaching, with plans to return each year for the next five years. Similarly, volunteers from each cohort will be also be visited to build up a picture of the transition from pre-service to in-service primary generalist music teaching over a period of five years. Finally, to gain an insight into whether this profile is institute and/or country specific, or whether a more general profile can be seen, the research is also being carried out at two further institutions, one in the US and one in Australia.

In short, the initial findings reported here are the starting point of research that aims to provide a much wider understanding of the musical profiles of incoming primary generalist student teachers at a time when primary music in many countries is undergoing considerable change. With a deepened understanding of student teachers' musical profiles, the relationship between reported musical profiles and reported perceptions of what primary music is and what is needed to teach it, together with an understanding of the impact of changing primary music opportunities on younger student teachers, initial teacher educators can respond positively to the various challenges presented by education policy so that they can support generalists in their development as musical teachers.

Notes

1. The English National Curriculum classifies subjects as either core or foundation subjects. The core subjects are English, Mathematics and Science. The foundation subjects are Art and Design, Computing, Citizenship, Design and Technology, Languages, Geography, History, Music and Physical Education.
2. The grade range for GCSE is currently A*–G with A being the highest and G being the lowest. An A* is awarded for exceptional performance. Grades A*–C are usually accepted as the required standard to progress to further study. For qualifications taken from 2018 onward, the A*–G grade range is being replaced with a numeric grade range where 9 will be the highest level of achievement and 1 will be the lowest level of achievement.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to Helen Coll for proof reading this article.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

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Jennie Henley is Area Leader for Music Education at the Royal College of Music, London. Jennie has worked in music education as a teacher, musical director and choir leader across primary, secondary and higher education. Jennie's doctoral research focused on learning within community ensembles. In her doctoral work she encountered primary generalist teachers learning in community settings in order to develop their own music teaching, and worked with a prison music program. Stemming from this, her research interests surround the development of musicianship in adulthood, with particular interests in music learning in criminal justice and the musical development of generalist primary teachers. Jennie joined the UCL Institute of Education in 2011 as Program Leader for the MA Music Education and Primary Music Subject Lead. She joined the Royal College of Music in 2015.

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Appendix I

What are your current main musical interests? Please tick which musical activities you participate in and give details below. You may tick as many as you like. Details could include examples of music that you listen to, bands that you see, concerts that you go to, instruments that you currently play.

Answer Options

- ☐ I listen to music on my own
- ☐ I listen to music with friends
- ☐ I like to watch bands
- ☐ I like to go to concerts
- ☐ I play in a band
- ☐ I play an instrument on my own
- ☐ I play in an amateur/professional ensemble
- ☐ I sing on my own
- ☐ I sing with a group
- ☐ I am learning an instrument myself
- ☐ I am learning an instrument with a teacher
- ☐ I teach music/an instrument/singing
- ☐ I lead a community music group
- ☐ I participate in music in a religious group
- ☐ I participate in music in a community group
- ☐ I dance
- ☐ Other activities (please outline below)

What musical activities have you previously participated in? Please tick which activities you have participated in, but no longer do so, and give details below. You may tick as many as you like. Details could include examples of music that you used to listen to, bands that you have seen, concerts that you have been to, instruments that you have played, grades/qualifications that you have achieved.

Answer Options

- ☐ I used to listen to a lot more music than I do now
- ☐ I used to watch a lot more bands than I do now
- ☐ I have been to concerts, but wouldn't describe myself as a concert goer now
- ☐ I used to play in a band
- ☐ I used play an instrument on my own
- ☐ I used play in a youth/school/university/amateur/professional ensemble
- ☐ I used to sing a lot more than I do now
- ☐ I used to sing with a group
- ☐ I taught myself to play an instrument
- ☐ I learnt to play an instrument with a teacher
- ☐ I have taught music/an instrument/singing in the past
- ☐ I used to lead a community music group
- ☐ I used to participate in music in a religious group
- ☐ I used to participate in music in a community group
- ☐ I used to dance
- ☐ I have GCSE Music
- ☐ I have AS level Music
- ☐ I have A Level Music
- ☐ I have a degree/postgraduate degree in Music
- ☐ I have achieved grades on an instrument/singing/theory
- ☐ I have other musical qualifications (please outline below)
- ☐ Other activities (please outline below)