Leiper, Tara (2012) *The impact of critical reflection on a private practice singing teacher's thinking.* Ed.D thesis.

http://theses.gla.ac.uk/3417/

The impact of critical reflection on a private practice singing teacher's thinking

Tara E Leiper

MA, BEdMus

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the

Degree of Doctor of Education (EdD)

University of Glasgow

Faculty of Education

Department of Educational Studies

March 2012

Abstract

This situated self-as-researched investigation explores the impact of critical reflection on a private practice singing teacher's thinking. The project is based upon the use of five 'vehicles' through which to develop the skills of critical reflection, these being journal writing, personal writing, critical incident technique, narrative inquiry and ideology critique. Each of these vehicles is used to undertake critical reflection of singing teaching practices whereby values and assumptions are interrogated. Each of the vehicles of critical reflection used in this inquiry is evaluated for their ease of use and effectiveness in enabling critical reflection processes to be developed in the participant. Engaging in critical reflection presents the possibility for transformative learning (Mezirow 1990) whereby frames of reference are challenged and altered as a result of the processes undertaken and examples of this in action are included in this research report. This dissertation contributes to the small but growing body of research in the area of private professional music education. The private instrumental and vocal teacher often works in an isolated environment with limited development opportunities available. This research proposes that critical reflection may be a viable tool for professional development and practice improvement.

Contents

Acknowledgements

There are many people to whom I am indebted for their help, support and patience as I have worked through this doctorate of education degree. I wish to acknowledge the tremendous support of my peer group as they provided a like-minded community of learners with whom to share the experiences of the research journey. I would also like to thank all the educators, past and present, who have worked with me and for all the hundreds of students that I have been fortunate to work with and learn from over the years. Working with people is truly inspirational. Several of my current students were kind enough to read through drafts of this dissertation and I thank them for their time and helpful comments. Finally I must thank my family, especially my husband, for all they have endured as I have worked on this project.

Chapter one: Introduction

As I set out upon this research journey I am beset by many questions; why am I studying the impact of critical reflection upon my singing teaching practice? Why this piece of research and not another? What does it mean to reflect critically? How will I assess the impact of critical reflection upon my thinking? How do I intend to critically reflect? Will my research be relevant, and of interest, to others? I can only hope that this text, in completion, shows some attempt at responding to these issues and that it demonstrates effort to explore in some depth the possibilities that critical reflection may hold for the private practising instrumental and vocal teacher.

In order to try and make this inquiry accessible to the reader I need to clarify several things about the inquiry itself and about me and my teaching practice. In chapter two I unravel the term 'critical reflection' and provide a working definition for the purpose of this inquiry, followed in chapter three by an examination of the vehicles and processes used to explore and develop critical reflection skills. The main section of the dissertation is presented in chapter four where the products of critical reflection are presented and analysed. Discussion of their impact upon my thinking and other issues that arose during the research process will be deliberated here also. Finally, the issue of the professional relevance of critical reflection will be explored, creating some form of closure to the research document. I will also look ahead to future applications of critical reflection, considering where this research journey has taken me from, and to, and where it may continue to take me in the future.

Context and reasons for undertaking this research

So why have I chosen to study the impact of critical reflection upon my singing teaching practice? The first reason is because one of the most long-lived and penetrating influences that has been with me during the five year Doctorate of Education (DEd) journey is my concern for the quality of private instrumental and vocal teaching provision. Through my experience of working with prospective instrumental and vocal teachers in a large further education (FE) establishment for over fifteen years, I have often been shocked and dismayed by

reports read and anecdotal evidence received relating to the quality of private tuition. Anecdotally I have heard fewer stories of effective teaching and learning than of uninspiring and ineffectual teaching but this may be simply due to negative experiences having a greater impact on memory than positive ones. It remains that the driving force behind this project is one of quality improvement and an exploration of the potential that critical reflection may have to improve practice through changes in thinking.

At this stage it is worth pointing out differences in the definitions of the terms 'instrumental' and 'technical'. Within music education we refer to 'instrumental' teachers as those who teach instruments (as opposed to voice or singing, but often the term is used to cover both instruments and voice). Music teachers teach 'technique' or work 'technically' with students. 'Technique' means we are working on the physical skills of sound production – anything requiring physical manipulation is technical. Technique, therefore, is integral to the development of physical skills on/with an instrument, and this ability is then applied to the creation of 'musical' and interpretive elements of performing. Within educational theorising the terms 'technical rationality' and 'instrumental' often refer to specific perspectives of knowledge. They represent aspects of knowing that can be reduced to how something is done, the most efficient means used to achieve a specific end, and the manipulating of people as 'objects' rather than beings. I shall attempt to be clear with which of these meanings I am referring to throughout the text; it is just unfortunate that these two terms have quite different meanings in the music and educational worlds.

Before revealing further reasons for undertaking this investigation I wish to turn to a consideration of the nature of the work of a private music teacher. I will use the terms 'instrumental' and 'vocal' interchangeably to refer to those teachers who are working mostly with individuals or small groups teaching instruments and/or voice. While there is much valuable informal music learning taking place within communities this research focuses solely on the traditional formal practices of learning music. There are two main areas to be examined here; firstly an exploration of the history, traditions and culture of instrumental teaching, and secondly the more practical issues of what it means to be a freelance private teacher covering such aspects as professional and ethical

matters, support mechanisms and organisations, and the role and function of the instrumental teacher.

Historical and cultural traditions of instrumental and voice teachers

This section provides the reader with some historical and cultural background to the traditions of instrumental and vocal teaching. The influence of practices that are disclosed here are still extremely pervasive in the individual music lesson today even though centuries have passed. Later in this report there will be extracts from my research journal that critically reflect upon many of my practices, some of which resonate strongly with traditions exemplified here, and so I have provided a detailed account of the early beginnings of instrumental tuition in this chapter.

> In the sixteenth century, instrumental playing was to some extent kept a mystery. The town musicians in both Germany and Italy protected their interests by guild organizations which ensured them a virtual monopoly of teaching the future professional player. While it is true that the amateur learned his lute, viol or domestic keyboard from his court musicians or in his musical academy, really skilled instrumentalists were relatively scarce. (Arnold 1965 p. 72)

Denis Arnold continues in his article to tell of the changes to music education during the mid-seventeenth to mid-eighteenth centuries. Previously, father taught son or apprentice who took his place among the *piffari* who provided a whole range of performing and entertainment services within the community. From the 1650s, orphanages and hospitals were set up, first receiving financial support from patrons, and as this declined, the talents of the orphans became saleable.   Either the children went out to the community providing the musical services required, or the audience came to them and contributed monetary donations to the upkeep of the establishment. Most of the performing work was based upon religious repertoire, but over time, the proportion of secular performances was increasing. Vivaldi is quoted as being one of the 'officially-paid' teachers in Venice and he only taught the best pupils. His best pupils would be expected to teach the younger pupils too. What is clear from reports of these times is that musicians were all round musicians – composer, performer and teacher. Today, the term musician is rather loosely used, and we often have to clarify in which area someone is working – as performer, composer or

teacher. These 'conservatoires' started to decline in the 1770s due to the lack of charitable finance, and the concentration on the production of singers. It is left unclear from Arnold's article whether the tuition was solely individual or in groups.

Harry Hall (1981) provides a review of Moravian music education in America from the mid-eighteenth century to 1830. He describes the religious communes using music as a form of worship and vehicle for maintaining traditions, as a means of spiritual uplift, and also as a vital component of their basic education. They did not employ specialists to teach, but rather used those with apparent talents in music to direct groups and individuals in music making. Everyone sang, mostly songs of a religious nature, but many were tutored in secular instrumental music too. While not 'music conservatoires', these communes were using music-making as part of a rounded education and individuals were expected to practise and perform to high standards, so developing their musical potential so that their 'students became sensitive to artistic excellence, regardless of the level of performance'. This aim is still prevalent today in the work of some music educators such as Isaac Stern (Blandford 2004). Hall (1981 p. 233) states that all instrumental instruction was on an individual basis and was initially free. It then became financed to an extent as part of the curriculum and from about 1785 'students were charged fees for musical instruction to cover increasing expenses for instruments, accessories, music, and eventual remuneration for teachers.'

There are several important points to emerge from these two reports: most tuition is individual, students practise and perform regularly as soloists and in ensembles, finance (or lack of it) is a continuing issue, specific sets of skills are expected to be learned, and most teachers are 'musicians' with the best of musicians working with the best of the students. Many of these practices still prevail today, or at least their impact can still be felt in the way that much instrumental teaching is perceived and delivered.

There are many class instrumental/band teaching programmes in operation today, many of which have developed in the USA during the last century (Fay 1924, Maddy 1929, Morgan 1923, Shore 1949, Smith 1932). Financial assistance is often only provided to those who are not only in financial need but who also

demonstrate 'talent' or are considered 'worthy' recipients (Fay 1924, Maddy 1929, Morgan 1923). Until fairly recently there was an assumption, for example, that learning to play an instrument (or sing) was concerned with learning a set of skills such as the mastery of an instrument, the ability to read notation fluently, the increased acuity of aural skills, the performance of mostly 'classical' or western art repertoire, and other such 'high-brow', 'elitist' or 'artistic' musical skills (Sharp 1995, Shore 1949, Zhukov 2008). It is questionable that this list of skills encompasses a rounded musical education, and this issue will be dealt with indirectly throughout this research text. However, it is clear that there is much more to music making and music learning than simply following the traditions of the past but, many of these values and beliefs still penetrate practices of instrumental teachers today.   This is primarily due to a perceived (and perpetuated) lack of (and uptake of) specific training for instrumental and vocal teachers (Baker 2005, Haddon 2009, Mills et al. 2007), the fact that instrumental teachers tend to teach the way they were taught (Baker 2005, Haddon 2009, Woodford 2002), and that many teachers employ the master-apprentice model (Collyer 2010, Haddon 2009, Hallam 1998, Sleith no date, Young et al. 2003).

Janice Chapman (2006) reminds us that the current system of teaching is based on a past model, one that has 'not yet sufficiently changed to meet today's needs.' Gordon Stewart, quoted in Chapman's work (p. 254), tells of the practices of the singing teachers in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Singers sometimes lived with their teachers, were often put under apprenticeship contract, were subjected to a life of discipline and were controlled by the teacher in terms of what and how to sing. Jerome Hines (1982) interviewed many performing (and mostly famous) singers to find out how they go about singing, the training they received and to ask them to verbalize what they do when they sing, and an earlier text from 1920 by Brower (1996) also included interviews with opera singers asking similar questions about preparation for a performing career. While a wide age group of performers was interviewed, almost all seemed to have had a very similar kind of vocal upbringing. For example, many received tuition everyday of the week, and some twice a day; the teachers were often performers themselves, or if not, they were able demonstrators of what was required of their apprentices and were often referred to as the 'maestro/a'; several had a restricted diet of scales and

studies in the first part of their training (Pavarotti spent six months just vocalizing to learn how to open his jaw!), and then perhaps progressing to Italian 'aries antiches'. In Hines' text, Magda Olivero tells of having lessons with a respected mezzo-soprano who had her singing scales and many arias, but this teacher taught her nothing of how to sing, and Birgit Nilsson tells of working with a teacher/performer with whom she felt unhappy in terms of the direction that the vocal technique was taking but was still attending lessons three years later until someone else stepped in and put a stop to it. The power and influence of the performer-teacher is immense, especially if the performer is very well known and respected. There are many performers teaching advanced singers in conservatoires and universities, but not all are qualified as teachers as defined by national standards. Janice Chapman (2006) alerts us that those performers who take up teaching have undergone a change in profession and as such require training to become a pedagogue. I take this to mean that the term 'musician' is insufficient for those wishing to guide others in the art of learning to sing. Performers regularly participate in workshops and master classes in educational institutions – and this is surely to be encouraged as they are practitioners and have much to teach the prospective performer – but this is not the same thing as being solely responsible for the vocal and musical welfare and development of a student.

In educational institutions during the twentieth century there has been much use made of group instrumental learning. For example, the Suzuki method has been used very successfully for string teaching and learning (and also expanded into learning to play piano), and both Orff and Kodaly created learning methods that have been equally effective for classroom music and group singing work. While there has always been the opportunity for group music making as an extra-curricular activity, the instrumental lesson itself has remained a one-to-one endeavour. In the 1980s in the UK many local education authorities had to make budget cuts for instrumental provision in schools and some authorities used this as an opportunity to commence group tuition in addition to commencing charging school pupils for their lessons (Hall 1999, Sharp 1995). In the private teaching sphere there has been no such financial squeeze, and so most teachers still teach individuals rather than groups. Little research has been undertaken to find out how the delivery of group tuition in schools now differs from that of

the individual tuition that was provided previously. My experience, from speaking with delivering teachers in schools and their pupils, is that there is little difference; pupils are taught to play the same things at the same time in unison, even if of differing abilities, rather than utilising the possibilities of multi-level ability ensemble materials and some pupils may be left behind as those who pick up the instrument more quickly storm ahead in their tutor books. This is likely to be due to lack of training in how to teach group instrumental lessons, although there are several effective textbooks to help with delivering group instrumental and vocal tuition (Crozier and Scaife 2004, Hallam 1998, Harris and Crozier 2000, Stringer 2005).

The training and qualifications of instrumental and vocal teachers

Now that a brief overview of the history of the music lesson and nature of the individual lesson has been given, I wish to look at the training of instrumental and vocal teachers and provide a brief overview of the nature of their work before returning to reasons for undertaking this specific research project.

There is no requirement by law to have any qualifications, or disclosure (enhanced or otherwise), or to be held accountable for the quality of provision in this country (UK) for any private instrumental or vocal teachers. However, the Incorporated Society of Musicians (ISM) and other professional organisations such as the British Voice Association (BVA), National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS) and the Musicians Union (MU) do publish guidelines to support private instrumental teachers and they also require practitioners to possess appropriate qualifications and references for admittance to membership. The best feedback that a private music teacher may have as to the success or not of their practice may be simply whether students enjoy their lessons and find them productive and so keep coming back for more.

The training for instrumental and vocal teachers in the UK, and many European countries, is either minimal or non-existent. In the USA there is a very positive approach taken to the training of singing teachers with many graduate and postgraduate vocal pedagogy degrees available for study. The National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS) co-funds an annual ten-day training

course. Twelve interns (of less than five years' teaching experience) work with four master teachers and undergraduate voice students. They receive feedback on their teaching which is done in front of a small peer group, attend lectures and participate in group discussions and it has received positive feedback from participants (Dillard 2005, Strempel 2000). Here in the UK the Association of Teachers of Singing (AOTOS) runs a similar course based upon the NATS Intern Program model. Eileen Price, director of the AOTOS teacher training course says that she 'saw how the intimacy of the NATS system encourages greater confidence and understanding in a supportive and sharing atmosphere to teachers of all levels' (AOTOS website). It runs for six days and participants (limited to fourteen teachers) are required to fund the event themselves. Four or five master teachers are available, and the participants teach in private while a master teacher observes, unlike the American system where teaching is done before a small peer group.

There are many American universities and music colleges that offer Master and Doctoral programmes specifically in singing pedagogy (Arneson and Hardenbergh 2009, Wiley and Peterson 2008). The UK currently has three educational establishments offering specific instrumental/vocal teaching courses at foundation (University of Chichester), diploma (Aberdeen College) and postgraduate (University of Reading) levels. Most of the music teacher training courses in this country are aimed at those wishing to work as classroom teachers in primary and/or secondary schools (Baker 2005). This represents not only a shortage of courses, but also portrays the instrumental teaching career as being of less status than classroom teaching, and yet, Czaja (2006) tells us that NATS was founded to 'support and validate the private music teacher' and that almost all members of NATS are 'either teaching or have taught at one time, students in a private studio setting.'   There has been an increase in continuing professional development opportunities for the instrumental/vocal teacher, often being provided by instrument-specific associations such as the singing ones cited above, or other music organisations such as the ISM or the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM), but many of these are for the practising instrumental teacher of some experience, rather than for the prospective instrumental teacher, and can be costly.

Instrumental teaching can be isolating and lonely (Baker 2005, Gaunt 2008, Mills 2007, Mills et al. 2007, Young et al. 2003). Those who work in a private studio all week are unlikely to have occasion to bump into like minded professionals as one does when working within an educational institution. Without these encounters, one is left to deal with the problems of the week alone or perhaps a good friend will be willing to share the load. When attached to an institution one hears of recent educational research and initiatives, consciously (and subconsciously) picks up remedies and ideas, and is able to off-load issues. I think that Czaja (2006 p. 457) sums this up excellently by saying that '[t]he easy part about having your own private studio is that *you are the boss.* The difficult part about having your own private studio is that *you are the boss.*' While this also has implications concerning the responsibilities of the private educator, it really does encapsulate what it means to work in this field. Some teachers may also work in a freelance capacity in related areas such as performing, composing and directing, and as such are afforded the opportunity at least to mingle with practising professionals in related fields.

It can be concluded that most instrumental and vocal private teachers are working within a culturally-received tradition rooted within a nineteenth-century model of individual lessons based on the master-apprentice model. They may be working in quite prescriptive ways, may possibly have not undertaken any training and are working in an isolated environment. Haddon (2009) suggests that due to lack of training opportunities, many teachers have 'restricted awareness of other possible means of delivering tuition', and so resort to teaching as one was taught (Baker 2005, Booth 2009). Instrumental and vocal teaching is stuck in a self-perpetuating rut and there are, unfortunately, many other pressures bearing down on these professionals.

Firstly, from a positive perspective, several of the music examination boards in the UK have accredited, graded examinations, and the successful achievement of upper grade music performing examinations now count towards university entry (UCAS points) and this has greatly raised the profile of instrumental and vocal music study. It also provides the occasion, however, that some students will wish to work solely on the successful completion of examinations perhaps at the expense of developing as rounded musicians. Secondly, in this era of life-

long learning there is more likelihood of having adult and not just young child beginners and some adults may be returning to learning, picking up an instrument they had played as a child. In addition, the music industry is continually growing, with huge corporate recording labels dictating the look and sound of performing artists, while simultaneously there has been the growth in on-line (and free) distribution of performances and compositions. Add to this, the upsurge in interest in the 'local musician turns famous' television programmes such as Pop Idol, Britain's Got Talent, and The X Factor, and it is not surprising that there are many different kinds of expectations that learners may have about why and how they intend to go about learning an instrument. There is such a diverse range of styles and qualities of music available for consumption these days, with many cross-over styles continually appearing in various media. This begs the question, what is good music?; is there criteria for what constitutes good music?; is quality in music just about personal taste? The instrumental and vocal teacher needs to consider these issues; diversity, multiculturalism and equal opportunities need to be considered and young people especially seem to want to achieve success, perhaps with little effort, as they see music as being easily achievable by these 'amateurs' entering media competitions. It is clear from reading the autobiography of any performing musician that it takes discipline and hard work to improve on an instrument, but the wish to succeed with little effort has always been prevalent in society; even one hundred years ago, teachers were lamenting the lack of commitment and work from their students (Brower 1996). The needs and desires of clients has greatly changed and if we wish, as Richard Miller (2005) proposes, to contribute to maintaining the cultural traditions of the past and contributing to the present and future cultural activities then a reconsideration is required concerning the purpose and methods of instrumental teaching.

The training and qualifications then of instrumental teachers in the UK are sparse and there are many related pressures and issues that the instrumental teacher needs to be in a position to respond to. It comes as little surprise, then, than many teachers teach as they have been taught and that the foundations of much private practice is still rooted in the traditions of the nineteenth century.

Now that a brief overview has been provided of the historical and cultural traditions of instrumental music learning, and an examination of the qualifications and training of teachers and the pressures and issues they face, I wish to return to reasons for engaging with this specific research topic.

Professional learning

My first reason for embarking on this research project was my concern for the quality of private instrumental and vocal teaching provision. A second reason is that I want to understand my practice and my thinking about my practice more, to attempt to make meaning from reflecting critically upon my actions, reactions, behaviours and attitudes. The nature of education is complex as educators juggle priorities, initiatives, needs and problems all within a complex set of social and cultural practices. We, as teachers, settle into a routine of 'what works' and each has their own bag of favourite tools and strategies that we rely on to get us through the working day. We are not often afforded the opportunity to critically reflect upon the work we do, the values and assumptions that underpin practice. I feel privileged to undertake this study and at the outset was excited by the learning opportunity being presented to me. It is my belief that increased understanding of my practices will lead to the possibility of practice improvement. If this is the case then ongoing use of critical reflection will allow for continuing professional and personal development and act as a quality improvement tool. In order for a teacher to have confidence in her practices she needs to be able to justify choices and decisions. Teachers are in the position of requiring to continually learn from their professional activities in order to respond to varied needs and practise the art of teaching in a robust manner. I am hoping that critical reflection provides me this opportunity.

Learning from one's professional activities will hopefully include an inclination towards improvement in practices and the consideration of quality issues. I have met several teachers who are extremely competent and remain unqualified and also several who are qualified and are not terribly effective. However, there are as many successful teachers as there are kinds of students – what works well for one student/teacher working relationship may not work well for

another – there are no absolutes. Quality assurance can take many forms. There may be formal reviewing of work, progress and achievement, an appraisal based upon performance indicators or direct observation, and there may be less formal reviewing of the quality of one's work. In the private music teaching sphere it is possible to receive feedback about the quality of provision through the results of student examinations, festivals and competitions; some teachers arrange concerts for their pupils to perform in and feedback may be picked up from these too. Attending conferences and reading research and other relevant articles may instigate within the teacher a desire (or need) to assess her own practice, and it is certainly beneficial to ask for feedback from the students with whom one works. Currently the private singing teacher is working in a 'totally non-regulated profession' (Anderson 2008). Critical reflection may provide a means of regulating and monitoring quality by learning from one's experience and analysing and interpreting the premises and assumptions that underpin practice. Mezirow (1990 p. 13) reminds us that '[c]ritical reflection is not concerned with the how and or the how-to of action but the why, the reasons for and consequences of what we do.' It is hoped that by interrogating presuppositions my thinking will be altered so I will create new meaning schemes and the quality of the teaching and learning in my practice will improve.

What constitutes a quality instrumental teaching/learning provision? Support and guidance are supplied by professional organisations such as the ISM, MU, BVA, NATS and AOTOS. Information on codes of ethics, legal obligations and responsibilities are set out by these organisations. However, the ultimate responsibility rests with the individual teacher. To whom is the teacher responsible, why and for what reasons? What kind of a role is the teacher playing out in her practice – is it one of music educator or singing teacher? Is this teaching practice running for the teacher's benefit or for those of her learners? How might quality be monitored, evaluated and improved upon? It is my hope that critical reflection will provide one tool through which to engage in an evaluation of my teaching practices.

My education and practice context

It is necessary to know a little of my background and training as a music educator as this self-as-researched investigation is based in and around me and my practice. I have been formally studying music and learning how to play instruments and sing from about the age of eight. I received individual tuition in piano, violin, music theory, clarsach and singing from various teachers in the private sector and within state education from primary through secondary school and into tertiary education. While studying for a Bachelor of Education undergraduate degree I also worked towards gaining two qualifications in piano teaching in my own time. After starting teaching employment I continued studying working on a postgraduate instrumental teaching diploma which led towards a Master of Arts degree in instrumental and vocal teaching. During the late 1990s I came to singing in a serious way and so studied for a performing and teaching diploma in that discipline. Singing has since dominated my teaching interests.

The EdD is studied on a part-time basis and spans several years of my life. The dissertation phase alone has covered three years and so there have been significant changes in my professional (and personal) life. Some are a direct consequence of what has been learned on the doctoral journey, while others have been in response to changing personal and family circumstances. I feel it is important that you, the reader, have some knowledge of my professional situation as it likely will help you to follow my progress as I detail it throughout this report.

I have taught in a large Further Education (FE) college for fifteen years. This was my first and only full-time teaching post that I have held in my teaching career. I was privileged to work with prospective instrumental and voice teachers during my years working there and found my work with them inspirational and thought provoking, allowing me to continually refine my own thoughts on instrumental teaching. In addition to working full-time in FE I also participated in other music activities such as conducting, composing, performing and private teaching. During the last four years of my time in FE I reduced my hours gradually so that I could work on increasing the time I committed to

private teaching. As the sole wage earner in my family I took the risk of leaving FE completely about eighteen months ago and am now a full-time freelance teacher and musician.

This research project, while illuminated by my time in FE, is firmly situated within my private teaching practice. As such it is necessary for the reader to know a little of what my teaching practice is like. At the outset of this research I had about fourteen students and now have more than fifty. This does not include ensemble and choir teaching, just individual or small group singing tuition students. Almost all my practice involves working with individuals, but I have and do work with small groups of two to eight students. Lessons usually last for an hour and students pay for each lesson as they attend, unlike many other full-time private teachers who work on a monthly fee, or even a school term fee, paid in advance for lessons. I run a flexible booking system where students may attend as often or as infrequently as they wish but the majority attend once every two to three weeks. For those students who wish to come regularly (weekly/fortnightly) the same time is allocated them, but for others the booking is on a first come first served basis and many students book in advance to ensure getting suitable times that fit their schedules. Most of the people I work with are adults with approximately one sixth being students of school age and parents are welcome to sit in on lessons. During the research phase of this dissertation all tuition took place in my home. This has since changed where almost all the tuition I do is from locally rented accommodation or in students' homes.

I encourage students to participate in music examinations every eighteen months or so and also provide the opportunity for students to perform to, and learn from, each other at informal concert events twice a year. As most students are having individual tuition I feel it is important to develop a support network for learners where students can meet each other and feel part of a singing learning community. The concerts contribute to this and workshops take place a few times in the year and a newsletter is sent out by email on a regular basis. There is also a website where students can keep in touch with what is happening in and around the teaching studio and find out what other students are involved with.

All students are encouraged to keep in touch with me between lessons by email, text or telephone, whichever is their preferred mode of communication.

In cooperation with students we decide what is to be learned and improved upon. Some students wish to simply gain confidence in using their voice as they possibly sing with a choir, others wish to pursue a performing path, and others are simply curious to see what might happen! No two students are the same. I am a strong believer in providing opportunities, and so almost all students follow a broad curriculum. The curriculum includes studying voice and body use, performing skills, experimenting with different genres, studying music theory and developing listening skills. When working towards examinations the curriculum becomes more restricted to those skills as stipulated by the exam board that will be examined.

Like many musicians and music teachers I am a member of several professional organisations that provide legal support as well as professional advice and training, and I also have enhanced disclosure. These endorsements provide some assurance to learners that their safety and welfare is looked after and that I have achieved some level of professional rigour.

I would regard myself as typical of the teaching profession. Once qualified as a teacher, I tried to learn the skills of the trade, learning the traditions of how 'to do' and 'be' an effective teacher. With the guidance of professional organisations (and where possible of colleagues) I learned to follow the codes and good practices within my employ so that I behaved in ways that were expected, so I gradually merged into the brickwork of the traditions of my profession. I strived to become an effective cog in the machine of education. I used to consider that achieving this state of 'fitting-in-ness' was the aim of successful teachers. I now know, however, that this is the phenomenon known as hegemony, when we willingly participate in practices that we believe to be right, just and true, but are actually just fuelling the traditions and knowledge of those in power (Apple 2004, Brookfield 2000). Before commencing this research I considered myself a 'good' teacher; I was diligent and hardworking, worked well with students and colleagues, was committed to continuing professional development, loved my work and found great satisfaction in what I did. I felt

effective. However, much of that has now become suspect, or at least my perception of these things have changed as a result of participating in this research, and this report will disclose how my thinking about my practices has altered.

Teacher as researcher

A third reason for undertaking this research is that it promotes the value of practitioner knowledge; knowledge that is often described as 'knowing in action' (Berliner 1986), tacit knowledge (Polanyi 1966), or 'knowing how' (Eraut 1994, Schön 1987). It has been acknowledged in recent years that practitioners can contribute to the growing body of education research. Shepherd (2006) provides an example of this kind of work using critical reflection as the main research vehicle. The term 'teacher-as-researcher' was established in the late 1960s by the educational thinker, Lawrence Stenhouse. In his 1975 text, *An introduction to curriculum research and development,* he devotes a complete chapter to the teacher as researcher in which he proposes that teachers develop 'a research stance…a disposition to examine one's own practice critically and systematically' (p. 156) in order to understand better one's own classroom. He recommends the development within teachers of heightened awareness of 'illusion, assumption and habit' through a self-critical subjective examination of classroom practices (p. 157). The teacher participates in conscious self-monitoring so as to cultivate habits that can be defended and justified. He suggests using observers in the classroom to help collect data for self-critical analysis and also the use of audio and visual recording, in addition to asking pupils for feedback. I would propose that participating in critical reflection is also a way of achieving much that he considered integral to the teacher as researcher.

The researcher-practitioner came about as a result of teachers' dissatisfaction with educational research being undertaken in academic circles that was considered irrelevant and removed from the actual concerns of teachers (Berliner 1986, Hargreaves 1996a and 1996b, Kincheloe 2003, Scott 2000). Initially much teacher research was considered weak, lacking in rigour and 'un-academic'. There are many examples of educational practitioner based research (Casey et al. 2009, Postholm 2009, Tobery-Nystrom 2011). It is now considered

an accepted aspect of teachers' continuing professional development and guidance in how to get started in the field is widely available (Campbell et al. 2004, Fox et al. 2007).

Teacher-as-researcher places the teacher (and by implication the learners) and her practices, beliefs and assumptions at the heart of the research endeavour, so ensuring personal professional relevance. It encourages the teacher to engage in current debates, theories and dilemmas in education as a means to enlighten practices or to explain phenomena encountered in the research investigation. This also allows for contextualising practices. As such, it may contribute to bridging the apparent gap between theory and practice, bringing the worlds of practitioner and academic ever closer. Bowman (2009 p. 5) says of research that it 'needs to become a habit for all music educators.' This can only be a good thing for the whole educational community. Many practitioners lack the necessary academic knowledge to participate in research effectively, and likewise many academics lack recent practical experience of educational encounters at different levels and so there is much that each can learn from the other. The ideal scenario is for team research to take place where academics and practitioners work together on projects forging a reciprocal working relationship that benefits all (Kincheloe 2003 p. 18). By implication this includes benefiting not just those actively involved in the team research but also the various stakeholders, institutions and society. This research project, however, is not a team endeavour, but an individual investigation.

This research is clearly situational in that it is embedded within a unique set of variables that is me and my practice. The uniqueness of the research situation means that one is not able to make normative claims or generalisations from any findings that may emerge (Cranton 1996). The complexities of my practice are individual to me, and while the reader may resonate with issues discussed, the research remains situational. There is support in the education community for participating in and producing situational research as there is much that can be learned from the unique experiences of individuals (Ellis and Bochner 2003, Richardson 2003).

Guba and Lincoln (2000) present a table of inquiry paradigms showing values and beliefs in relation to inquiry epistemology, methodology and practices and from this it is apparent that my research project is firmly situated within the critical constructivist paradigms and is clearly of a qualitative nature. More will be said of these issues later, but Guba and Lincoln acknowledge that there is controversy concerning situated research:

> Classical social scientists would like to see "human phenomena" limited to those social experiences from which (scientific) generalizations may be drawn. New-paradigm inquirers, however, are increasingly concerned with the single experience, the individual crisis, the epiphany or moment of discovery, with that most powerful of all threats to conventional objectivity, feeling and emotion. Social scientists concerned with the expansion of what counts as social data rely increasingly on the experiential, the embodied, the emotive qualities of human experience that contribute the narrative quality to a life. (Guba and Lincoln 2000 p. 179)

As this practitioner-as-researcher investigation is situational dealing with my thinking, perceptions and perspectives within my professional private practice I am clearly within the non-traditional group mentioned above concerned with the 'expansion of what counts as social data'. There is much than can be learned from an examination of unique human experience.

Researcher as subject, the self-as-researched

There has been much qualitative research that places the self-as-researched as the being and object of study and much will be said of this again in chapter three. Although the concept has only been around for twenty or so years, there is an increasing amount of research that is based upon the experience of the researcher, especially from writers from a feminist or critical paradigm wishing to identify and action injustices (Bogdan 2003, Richardson 2003). Such writers state that one of the 'tenets of feminist education is the legitimacy of life experience as a subject of analysis' (Lamb et al. 2002). This research project examines my teaching practices by using different ways of working with critical reflection processes. Critical reflection processes are based upon an examination of experience, assumptions and values. Critical reflection is a way of working with experience with the intention of knowledge creation. As such, working with critical reflection requires the examination of one's experiences,

and places the researcher as the subject of the research; the self is researched. Much more will be said of this in chapter 3.

There are many terms associated with the practice of self-as-researched such as autobiography, autoethnography, personal narrative and self-narrative. The terms differ in order to try and describe the kind of research being undertaken and to allow for differences between different ways of working in the medium. While my research has elements in common with these forms of research I am unable to use one of these labels to describe my research method as it does not exactly fit any of these terms of ways of working. Autoethnography may be considered the one that is closest to my research method but its emphasis is upon using 'your life experience to generalize to a larger group or culture' and is often based upon the exploration of a single experience and frequently presented to others through narrative form (Ellis and Bochner 2003, p. 206). I prefer to stick with the term 'situated self-as-researched' as the method used within this research dissertation. Although it was once termed 'experimental or alternative', Richardson (2003 p. 511) regards this form of research as fully legitimate now. Critics of this form of research claim that the research writing produced is at times narcissistic, self-justificatory and therapeutic (Bolton 2005). There is always the possibility that researching the self may become such things and so one needs to be alert to this at all times, unless of course the aim of the research is to demonstrate these aspects of the writing for some educational purpose. By engaging in critical reflection processes it is hoped that the possibility of this happening will be lessened in this type of investigation; as Mezirow suggests 'our greatest assurance of objectivity comes from exposing an expressed idea to rational and reflective discourse' (1990 p. 10).

But what can researching the self offer the knowledge community? As long ago as the late nineteen eighties it was recognised by some, including Calderhead (1988), that the education community is interested in seeing teachers' views of their work and listening to individual accounts as a mode of knowledge sharing. It is now common practice to undertake situated research:

> ...a new approach has evolved that inquires into the personal, experiential, narratively constructed world of professional educators...research in this...vein is written from an insider perspective and situates teachers' identities and their knowledge in their professional contexts. (Pembrook and Craig 2002 p. 786)

The criteria for assessing the 'goodness' of this kind of qualitative inquiry seems to be flexible but supporters of this form of research agree that it is futile to apply positivist or postpositivist science based criteria to the endeavour. Richardson (2003 p. 522) says that within the contemporary postmodernist context we are provided more freedom in the writing forms utilised and in the criteria upon which its effectiveness is judged. I have summarised below the criteria she uses when reviewing papers submitted for social scientific publication:

- Substantive contribution: Does this piece contribute to our understanding of social life?
- Aesthetic merit: Does this piece succeed aesthetically?
- Reflexivity: Is the author cognisant of the epistemology of postmodernism? How has the author's subjectivity been both a producer and a product of this text?
- Impact: Does this affect me? Emotionally? Intellectually?
- Expression of a reality: Does this text embody a fleshed out, embodied sense of lived experience?

Other theorists have their own perceptions on how to merit self-as-researched research. Ellis and Bochner (2003 p. 223) acknowledge that there is a 'renewed appreciation for emotion, intuition, personal experience, embodiment, and spirituality' within the work of postmodernist and feminist writers. They propose that the aims of self narrative include the exploration and construction of meaning rather than a portrayal of facts, and that it seeks to achieve verisimilitude. Verisimilitude 'evokes in readers a feeling that the experience described is lifelike, believable, and possible' (Ellis and Bochner 2003 p. 229). Scott (2000) reviews a range of criteria that may be suitable for qualitative education research that includes those proposed by Hammersley (1992) of relevance, credibility, coherence and intentionality. More will be said of many of these issues later in this dissertation in relation to this specific investigation and the methods used to develop critical reflection skills.

Throughout this report I mix tenses in order to allow the reader access to temporal issues; there are times when I need to place something in the past

tense in order to demonstrate the way I used to think prior to a change occurring. It is hoped this will not detract from the reading of the text as I have found that other researchers have used the technique successfully in their report writing (Armstrong and Hipp 2006). Likewise, I have chosen to mix first person and third person neutral throughout. It is hoped that this allows the reader access to the personal-professional voice when I am attempting to disclose something particular to me and my experience, and I will use the neutral voice to convey that which is of a less personal nature. I also hope that using first person voice allows the reader to become more actively engaged in the issues and makes the report more accessible. Lutz (1995 p. 259) acknowledges that we no longer have to perpetuate the practices whereby 'most graduate students learn early on…to transform personal issues into theoretical forms, to erase authorship and context.' The report is written in a way that attempts to allow the reader to engage with the processes and problems encountered in this investigation by me and in this I am following the lead of educator researchers such as Brookfield (1995 p. xv) who says of his own writing that he has 'tried to write the book in an accessible and personal way…partly because I want to connect viscerally as well as intellectually.' I would like to say something of the order in which the chapters were written in relation to the undertaking of the research project. This first chapter was written at the conclusion of the research and chapter two was written before it was begun. After I had chosen a completion date to stop collecting critical reflection evidence I then continued and wrote chapters three through to five.

In summary, the aims for this research are:
- To explore processes of critical reflection through several different vehicles and apply these to an examination of my practice in an attempt to make meaning and increase my knowledge and understanding of what I do. Increased meaning provides the possibility for practice improvement.
- To evaluate the processes of critical reflection, the meanings made and their impact upon my singing teaching practice.
- To contribute to the growing body of educational 'self as researched' research and specifically to the private practising vocal and instrumental teacher research.

Chapter 2: What is critical reflection?

This chapter reports on the varied uses of the term 'critical reflection' and outlines some of the main disciplines and practices associated with it. After an exploration of the concepts of 'reflection' and 'critical' I propose a working definition of the term 'critical reflection' for the purpose of this research project.

In the earliest stages of this investigation it was necessary to consider the different meanings of, processes used, and contexts in which, critical reflection is used and applied in practice and theory in order for this inquiry to benefit from, and build upon the work of others. The terms themselves appear together and individually, often paired with another word, for example, reflective practice (Bolton 2005, Brown et al. 2005, Ghaye and Ghaye 1998, Swanwick 2008), reflective learning (Boyd and Fales 1983), critical theory (Kincheloe no date), critical thinking (Brookfield 2005, Moon 2008) and critical pedagogy (Freire 1970/1993, hooks 1994, Lamb 1996). These varied uses of the terms demonstrate their prevalence in academic literature and practices but also indicate the wide range of contexts, processes, theories and purposes to which they are applied. Critical reflection may be found in such divergent disciplines as psychology, sociology and philosophy and within a range of employs from, for example, engineering and nursing, to counselling, theology, business management and the expressive arts; equally the terms may be found to permeate everyday language. Critical reflection is often cited in relation to teacher training, theories of learning, and as being an important element of learning from experience. It is used to illuminate professional practice by making practices explicit and is linked with effective continuing professional and self development. It is necessary to examine this assorted range of uses in order to establish how and why 'critical reflection' is applied and used by others so that a working definition and set of practices may be established for this inquiry.

Reflection

For the sake of clarity I will deal with each individual term in the phrase 'critical reflection' separately. The most common use of the term reflection may be

found when referring to looking upon a reflective surface and seeing an image reflected back. Most often we look at ourselves in a mirror, but we may also view other objects and beings in the reflection, and what is perceived will change depending on where we stand in relation to the mirror and how closely we examine what is there. Gillian Bolton (2005) explores the metaphor of the mirror and returns on several occasions to the story of Alice as she journeys into the looking glass. Not happy with simply looking at the surface reflection, Alice commits herself to travelling through to see what is really happening on the other side. I found the mirror metaphor useful as an initial exploration of the concept of reflection. Often when we talk of 'seeing' ourselves in the mirror it is the face that is the defining feature of 'selfness', but we may well go for a whole day without actually 'seeing' ourselves at all, except for those peripheral parts of our body that often pass before our eyes as we proceed with our daily routines. It is often when confronted by a mirror image of ourselves that we are awoken to our sense of 'being in the world'. This sense of self-awareness is a fundamental aspect of critical reflection for many authors.

Continuing with the mirror metaphor, the mirror inverts what we see. This effect becomes obvious when viewing photographs or recorded moving images of ourselves when we are often surprised by seeing the self as 'unfamiliar'. We often become aware as never before of every contour, colour and shape of what we are observing, as if looking at a strange phenomenon for the first time. Sometimes we are surprised by what we see and may take a closer look or perhaps check on the progress of a blemish. Not only do we inhabit the body in a sensory capacity, but we also have affective connections responding to the reflection in terms of how we are feeling, and how we feel about what we see. As we analytically examine the image of ourselves (and others) we not only take in the visual and other sensory parameters of the image under investigation, but we are also likely to create value judgements concerning what is seen or not seen, how much it is liked or not, and so the affective domain comes into operation and may impact and complicate what is observed. There is much support for the inclusion of the affective domain in processes of critical reflection (Bolton 2005, Boud et al. 1985). The Cartesian split of mind and body, the separation of theory from practice and of the emotions from the intellect, is

a lingering influence of positivism and no longer has a place in education research (Small 1998, Smith 1998).

The condition of the mirror, its cleanliness, shape and size will have an impact upon the reflection created, and this reminds us that the 'vehicle' (Moon 1999) of critical reflection is likely to impact upon the results; it may provide a limited scope for reflection, or be suited to the creation of a specific way of seeing things, or start from a specific focus point. I have adopted the term 'vehicle' throughout this report to define and designate ways of working with critical reflection. Brookfield (1995) proposes the use of alternative 'lenses' as a method to appreciate aspects from different perspectives. The taking up of different positions while undertaking an examination of a reflection will certainly provide different data and may reveal things that were hidden from a previous standpoint. Observing through a visual impairment may be likened to being limited to seeing through one's own habitual biases. This is referred to as one's frame of reference or perspective and is affected by one's social, cultural, economic and political autobiography. More will be said of this later.

So what is one doing when one reflects?

When engaging in reflection one might be weighing up possibilities, comparing, negotiating problems, considering alternatives or just simply 'thinking'. It is an activity during which there may be some 'working out' to be done, problem solving and recalling of previous knowledge in the process. Often the term reflection is used interchangeably in everyday discourse with the term thinking. Moon (1999 p. viii) alerts us to the lack of clarity in how reflection 'might be distinguished from cognition or, more precisely, how it coincides with, or differs from, the process of thinking.' She continues stating that 'Dewey and Habermas both have in common the notion that reflection serves to generate knowledge', and Mezirow (1990) also concurs that reflection helps us to create meaning and learn from experience. Reflection, then, involves the undertaking of some mental activity aimed at knowledge creation and many sources agree that reflection is carried out deliberately rather simply being stumbled upon (Boud et al. 1985, Moon 1999, Bolton 2005).

An alternative approach to the activity of reflection is that it may well rather be the description of a way of being. Moon (1999 p. 5) notes that the phrase 'being reflective' has 'broader connotations as it is more like a long-term characteristic of a person's behaviour, rather than the description of a mental activity.' The clichéd image of the sage or wise person comes to mind; calm, thoughtful, at one with the world around her. I am sure we all know someone whom we may describe as having a reflective nature or manner. 'Reflective' is a term I use often within my own teaching of singing as it can be quite commonplace for the text of a song to be reminiscent of the thoughts of an individual and as such has a reflective quality. The music itself, even, may present what may be described as sounds that flow in a motion that mirrors reflective action in the atmosphere it creates. Music of this sort is often lyrical, slower and sustained. Taking this view of reflective music into consideration with reference to the mental activity of reflection one could perhaps surmise that one may reflect in a purposeful and meaningful manner, allowing thoughts, memories and feelings to mingle freely without aggressive interruption or upset and permitting time and opportunity for the flow and recording of these. 'Being reflective' suggests we are dealing with the 'whole person' whereby reflection permeates all aspects of a person's being from the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual. Mezirow (1990, 2000) developed a theory of the transformative potential of critical reflection for the whole person within learning and I will return to his theories throughout this report.

Reflection as mental activity suggests a considering and examination of an issue or event after it has taken place which perhaps caused some discomfort or doubt in one's mind – one reflects upon something that happened. Dewey (1910) refers to this as the 'perplexity' that guides the process and is the fundamental supposition for Schön's (1983) reflection-on-action. In other words, there is a 'something' upon which one takes time to reflect so as to provide the reflection process with content and substance. As temporal beings we are able to think in terms of past, present and future. Reflecting on issues that are in our memories gained from past experience appears from the literature to be the most common, and the solutions or possibilities that are created as a result of reflection may be considered for application in the future: this is a premise of action research (Esposito and Evans-Winters 2007, Jaruszewicz 2006). It is possible, however, to

critically reflect upon that which has not yet happened (Galbraith 1990, Ghaye and Ghaye 1998). This provides a method for exploring possible futures and consequences, and provides possibilities of how one might wish the world to be, rather than being limited only to an examination of what it currently is. This has clear links with critical theory where the desire to change current practices for the better is of prime concern. The processes of reflection are similar whether one is reflecting on the past, present or future. While one may rely more heavily on imagination and creativity in order to view that which does not yet exist, these attributes are also required when examining aspects of one's past. De Bono (1971, 1982/2009) reinforces the importance of creativity and imagination in effective critical thinking as tools through which to escape the confines of one's established thinking patterns. His work has been influential within this research project as he has provided many avenues for exploration with regard to considering possibilities, establishing a wide and varied question base, maintaining openness to possibilities, and avoiding being overly judgemental too soon. The role of creativity and imagination cannot be ignored in the processes of reflection and Gillie Bolton (2005) and Jennifer Moon (1999) provide many examples of ways to allow these to be strengthened, nurtured and developed so they may contribute in a constructive way to the activity of reflection.

The ability to reflect in a way that works both within, and transcends, temporal confines may account for its use in a diverse range of disciplines, professions and human activities, and also explain its rather slippery nature as far as definition and usage is concerned. Lack of a single definition does not mean that the activity of reflection, or its state of being, is valueless or redundant, but rather reinforces its continued usefulness. Readers are directed to the work of Hatton and Smith (1995) and Moon (1999) for further exploration of the term reflection.

The uses of reflection

There is support that use of reflection may enhance the type of learning taking place having the potential to progress it from surface to deep learning. Surface learning is often linked with propositional knowledge such as the memorising of information, while deep learning involves the understanding and application of

knowledge in a way that has significance for the learner. Moon (1999, 2008) endorses this concept with her map of learning whereby use of reflection 'upgrades' learning to a higher and deeper level. Kolb (1984) developed a theory of learning based upon experience in which reflection constitutes one of four stages in a cycle of learning and Boud et al. (1985) also focus upon reflection as a constitutive aspect of experiential learning. Several authors whose interests lie in the teaching of adults and adult education also endorse the utilisation of reflection within experience-based learning (Boud et al. 1985, Brookfield 1995, Claxton 1999, Galbraith 1990, Jeffs and Smith 2005, Mezirow 1990 and 2000, Moon 2004, Rogers 2002, Tait and Knight 1996) and still others assert that one cannot learn from experience without reflection (Boyd and Fales 1983, Burnard 1991). While using reflection to learn from experience is not solely within the realm of adulthood, several writers do suggest that it is a characteristic more often found in adults than children, and so explains its more prevalent use and investigation within adult education (Brookfield 2005).

This idea of a developing ability to critically reflect as we mature into adulthood is partly based upon the work of William Perry (1970). His research involved the formulation of a graded model of college students' (mostly males) intellectual and ethical development, and has been used as a basis for researchers' work on the development of reflective capabilities (King and Kitchener 1994). There are several theories and proposed models of levels or stages of reflection linked to personal and/or cognitive development; Mezirow (1981) suggests four levels of reflectivity, these being the affective, judgemental, conceptual and the psychic; Van Manen (1977) proposes three: technical, practical and critical reflection based upon the work of Habermas; Griffin (2003) has a framework containing four dimensions, and Boud et al. (1985) suggest a three stage process for reflection. Theorists and practitioners have established that there are many kinds of reflective activity in terms of the degree or depth of reflection undertaken.

Reflection is closely linked then with making sense of, or learning from, experiences and several researchers mentioned previously have examined the nature of experience and how reflection may contribute to understanding and meaning-making in learning from the study of experience. My research is firmly

within the constructivist paradigm, whereby learning is 'constructed' by each learner and so experiences are not simply 'had', they are both undergone and created simultaneously. Schön (1987 p. 95-96) gives an effective example of this constructing of meaning as communication ensues between student and studio master:

> ...each participant must construct for himself the meaning of the other's messages and must design messages whose meanings the other can decipher. When the process works well, it is a kind of reciprocal construction that results in convergence of meaning. So much the studio shares with all human communication.

This process of mediation, whereby a learner intentionally problem solves and reflects upon experiences and environment as a way to create meaning and understanding, is a core tenet of Vygotsky's theory of social constructivism. I will return to the processes of mediation in learning through reflection on experience in the final chapter of this report.

Reflection is frequently linked with professional education, both the training of professionals and in continuing professional development (CPD) (Eraut 1994, Fook and Gardner 2007, Moon 1999). Much of this work was instigated by the theories of Argyris and Schön (1974) and by the later research of Schön (1983) where he developed the concept of reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action where he focuses on providing an alternative perspective to understanding professional competence that is not solely limited to that of technical rationality. Reflection-in-action describes a kind of knowing we all demonstrate in actions performed routinely, and is often referred to as tacit knowledge (Polanyi 1966); practitioners rely upon this tacit knowledge to undertake their practice effectively, a kind of 'thinking on one's feet'. Reflection-on-action suggests a different kind of knowing, one that is created after the action or experience (although the exact time difference between these two types of reflection is a cause of confusion in Schön's work) and is based in inquiry that involves a unique or uncertain situation. In his later work, Schön (1987) further developed his argument for distancing practice-based professions from the technical and instrumental foundations upon which they had been based and proposed moving towards considering these professions as working within a 'reflective practicum' based in 'indeterminate zones of practice':

> When practitioners respond to the indeterminate zones of practice by holding a reflective conversation with the materials of their situations, they remake a part of their practice world and thereby reveal the usually tacit processes of world making that underlie all of their practice. (Schön 1987 p. 36)

It is perhaps this possibility of making known that which is unknown in one's practice that has led to reflection being adopted within the education of professionals and as a CPD tool as it allows practitioners to develop increased understanding of their actions and thoughts and how these may impact their own learning and that of the learners they are working with. It is often a skill development area within teacher training courses, whereby it is anticipated that prospective teachers need to develop their capacity to consider and analyse what they do through a process of guided reflective activities. If one does not reflect upon thinking and practices one is simply participating in 'non-reflective learning' described by Habermas as learning that 'takes place in action contexts in which implicitly raised theoretical and practical validity claims are naively taken for granted and accepted or rejected without discursive consideration' (1976 p. 16), in other words, simply going through the motions of one's practice context. What this research project is based upon is the possibility of moving away from non-reflective learning to learning that is based in and of critical reflection based around my private practice and the thinking upon which it is built.

There seems to be some agreement between practitioners and theorists of critical reflection processes that there are three main stages involved regardless of the specific purpose or method of reflecting being used (Fook and Gardner 2007). These are 1) bringing about an awareness of some aspect of practice that may have been hidden or unrecognised prior to the critical reflection (this may be a habit, action, assumption or perspective, for example); 2) an evaluation and interrogation of that which has been uncovered, examining possible consequences and viewing from various perspectives; and 3) action is called for as a result of that which has been discovered from the interrogation. This is likely to involve change to some degree as practices are adjusted to accommodate the new learning that has taken place.

Reflective practice

The term 'reflective practice' developed within the care professions (Bolton 2005, Moon 1999) as a way of making sense of problematic practice and has also been employed within the teaching profession. Participating in reflective practice is considered contributing to continuing professional development. Ghaye and Ghaye (1998 p. 10) consider 'reflection-on-practice' as a method for improving the quality of teaching and learning and provide ten principles as a summary of reflective practice which include its being: a discourse, a disposition to inquiry, interest serving and at the interface between practice and theory (Ghaye and Ghaye 1998 p. 19). While they demonstrate that the term 'reflection-on-practice' means many different things to many teachers, they emphasise the importance of it being an examination of, amongst other thing, values and assumptions which is a fundamental aspect of this research project. Moon (1999 p. 66) proposes that users of the term 'reflective practice' need to 'negotiate and agree the meaning of the term for themselves.' Practical suggestions for how reflection may be practised and developed will be dealt with in a later section, but it is often a shared and sharing experience (Baguley and Brown 2009). I would propose that the use of critical reflection in reflective practice contexts may follow a slightly different course to that of critical reflection in more general terms. Frequently reflective practice is based upon an examination of the past and is often event explicit, and specifically used to help practitioners make sense of upsetting, emotional, complex dilemmas that are encountered in the workplace. It would appear that reflective practice is considered a vital aspect of a health and social care professional's well-being as it allows practitioners to negotiate and manage the ethical and moral complexities that they encounter each day. I have encountered the term reflective practice mostly within the health and social care disciplines (Bolton 2005, Fook and Gardner 2007), and while it has elements in common with the processes of critical reflection, they differ in their specific purposes, aims and outcomes.

I turn now to an exploration of the term critical and how it contributes to the concept of critical reflection. While participating in reflective acts may bring about critical thinking, it is not always an outcome of the process (Mezirow 1990,

Wang et al. 2009). It is by focusing on the 'critical' aspects of critical reflection that one may bring about transformation, emancipation and practice change (Brookfield 2005, Mezirow 1990, 2000). A concept that links 'critical' and 'reflection' is that of reflexivity. Reflexivity involves awareness of one's frames of reference, how they have been formed by political, social and cultural influences and how this impacts upon voice and perspective (Delany and Watkin 2009, Ellis and Bochner 2003, Esposito and Evans-Winters 2007, Lyle 2009). Fook and Gardner (2007 p. 28) say the following concerning how reflexivity can inform us of our own impact upon knowledge creation:

> How do we actually participate in the creation of our own knowledge? In this sense, the idea of reflexivity alerts us to the fact that knowledge does not necessarily exist in some independent form, separate from our experiences and own sense of who we are. We are often responsible for interpreting, selecting, prioritizing, sometimes seeing and not seeing, and using knowledge in particular ways that are to do with a myriad of things about ourselves and our social and historical situations.

They further state that reflexivity can be seen to be one way of being critically reflective. Readers are directed to the writings of Hertz (1997) and Macbeth (2001) for further information concerning reflexivity in research.

Critical

> [T]rue dialogue cannot exist unless the dialoguers engage in critical thinking – thinking which does not separate itself from action, but constantly immerses itself in temporality without fear of the risks involved. (Freire 1970/1993 p. 73)

> We can readily submit our ideas to critical examination and begin to build, not only a critical theory of education, but also a critically informed practice. Some of our 'knowledge' will crumble as soon as we begin to think about it seriously as a guide to action; some will be modified, deepened and improved through analysis and active testing. (Carr and Kemmis 1986 p. 44)

> Criticism…is crucial to any endeavour designed to develop knowledge and improve practice. Our task as learners…is to discover and eliminate our mistaken ideas, and modify and develop those which are inadequate. (Swann and Pratt 1999 p. 8)

De Bono (1982/2009 p. 15) tells us that 'the term critical comes from the Greek word *kritikos* which means judge'. It may be found in connection with many endeavours: critical thinking, critical pedagogy, critical teaching, critical theory

and critical self-analysis. Being critical, or undertaking a critique, suggests various concepts and actions such as: explanation, judgement, perspective, value, assessment, bringing knowledge to bear upon, analysis, investigation, examination and interrogation. A critic may comment upon the form, design and structure; the delivery, communication and impact; subject matter, skills and abilities, or the artistry and technique of the object or process under scrutiny.

Dawn Freshwater and Mark Avis (2004 p. 9) liken the process of critical reflection to analysis and interpretation in the context of qualitative research. Rather than associating reflective practices with such metaphors as revelation and discovery, which suggests an accidental encounter with the knowledge making processes, they propose considering them as similar to reductive and inductive analysis processes whereby meaning is created through application; 'the understanding to be achieved through critical reflection is constructed through dialogue with the data rather than received from the data.' This reinforces that critical reflection involves more than simply remembering past experiences and passively awaiting enlightenment; it is pro-active, driven by a questioning mind, it is an engaging and purposeful task that requires active involvement by the researcher - the meaning that may be constructed from such processes is directly linked to the varied and creative exploration of issues.

There are limits, of course, to what may be learned from critical reflection, especially if working alone, as I will be. While we may be as imaginative and creative as possible with the exploration of an issue, we are always tethered to our beliefs, knowledge and conceptual framework, and cannot escape these; you cannot leave your frames of reference at the research door, as they will always be replaced by some other framework or paradigm from which to construct meaning. Johansson et al. (2007) acknowledge the limits of bases of knowledge and indicate how these affect the formulation of questions within critical reflection processes. While it may be impossible to 'escape' our frames of reference, it is still a step in the right direction towards progress and improvement to at least state and recognise the limitations of one's perspective and to attempt to view things from different angles (Mezirow 1990). If it is remembered that all knowledge is contingent then a mindset of openness to possibilities is established and under these conditions progress may still be made.

Brookfield (2000) acknowledges the complexity of defining the term critical reflection and proposes that the 'critical' aspect for him originates in the Frankfurt School of Critical Social Theory from which he focuses upon two main activities; ideology critique and analysis of hegemony:

> The first is to understand how considerations of power undergird, frame, and distort so many adult educational processes and interactions. The second is to question assumptions and practices that seem to make our lives easier but that actually end up working against our own best long-term interests – in other words, those that are hegemonic. (Brookfield 2000 p. 130)

He further suggests that critical reflection focuses on 'making explicit and analyzing that which was previously implicit and uncritically accepted.' This statement is a clear connection to the task of attempting to reveal the tacit knowledge of education practitioners in addition to using critical thinking as a way to interrogate belief structures that permeate our work and ways of being, which is one of the purposes of this research project.

Other practitioners who have built upon the Frankfurt School's critical theory include such educationalists as Paulo Freire (1970/93, 1990), Myles Horton, and bell hooks (1994). Their priorities lie in allowing education to come from, and be of, the people, using communal discourse to examine practices and unearth inequalities and to use constructed knowledge and meaning-making to inform action. This critical teaching, or critical pedagogy, provides learners with the opportunity of improved control of their lives, to understand some of the incongruities of their experience and to explore socially and culturally constructed belief systems. This is what I would describe as learning of life and learning for life. Action is an expected outcome of critical teaching/learning – the learning that occurs as a result of critical pedagogy is to provide an avenue for action by the learners; no longer satisfied as mere passive recipients of life, they move into a more active state. This may be evidenced in campaigning for rights, responding to community needs, establishing support networks, or in more individual and private spheres simply taking more control over their own person and actions.

Ira Shor (1980) pursues the transformative and liberating possibilities of critical teaching and suggests we examine 'familiar situations in an unfamiliar way':

> Such an animation of consciousness can be formulated as *extraordinarily re-experiencing the ordinary*. This key rubric locates an empowering theory of knowledge in the re-perception of reality. (Shor 1980 p. 93)

I especially like his use of the term 're-perception of reality' with its implications of reflecting in and of one's practice and the taking of a second and third look at what is taking place. Shor also refers to the importance of developing critical consciousness through an 'empowering pedagogy' and much of his work is built upon the philosophies of Freire. Other research-educationalists who are active in developing critical consciousness in the teaching profession include Jeff Claus (1999) and Brookfield (2005). Talking in conversation with Myles Horton, Freire (1990) speaks of thinking 'outside the conventional frameworks' and questioning the conventions of schooling systems. His educational ideas are not only liberatory but also participatory; 'while no one liberates himself by his own efforts alone, neither is he liberated by others.' (Freire 1970 p. 48)

A most influential theorist within critical theory is Jürgen Habermas. Van Manen (1977 p. 222) alerts educators concerning the writing style of Habermas, saying:

> Because his writings are steeped in philosophical and social scientific traditions, and his style, at times, is both academic and convoluted, Habermas's works are not easily accessible to educators less familiar with the literature relevant to critical theory.

His theories of communication and emancipation are often the foundation of other educators' theories and practices. Mezirow (1990, 2000) acknowledges the deep impact of Habermas's thinking upon the development of his own theory of transformative learning. The transformation theory is based upon critical examination of the self in order to change 'frames of reference' and to gain a 'greater degree of insight and agency'. Clear links can be seen here with critical teaching and critical pedagogy. While Mezirow recognises the importance of ideology critique he also supports the examination and analysis of 'a more generic range of assumptions in psychological, epistemic, moral and ethical, philosophical, aesthetic, and instrumental frames of reference as well' (Mezirow 2000 p. xvi). Becoming alert to one's ideological frameworks, gaining

insight and agency (personal and professional) may be referred to as 'emancipation' and is often an expected outcome of critical reflection (Bolton 2005 and 2006, Cranton 1996). Mezirow's theories of transformative learning have come to resonate very strongly with me. Through engaging in critical reflection he makes it clear that one is undergoing a learning experience and this experience has the potential to transform meaning perspectives; how I view my practice will be interrogated, the presuppositions upon which my practice is built will be questioned, and there is a possibility that if I engage effectively in critical reflection a large swing will occur in my meaning perspective. Where I am at the start of this research project in terms of my meaning perspective, and where I may end up could be poles apart. This possibility excites me. I return to his theories throughout this report.

Fromm (1993 p. 57) refers to the theories of Sigmund Freud as being 'critical' in as much as he 'questioned all conscious thought, intentions, and virtues' and proposes that as such Freud's psychoanalysis method transcends the merely therapeutic and may achieve 'inner liberation by an awareness of repressed conflicts.' Fromm often uses the term awareness as implication of critical reflection and discusses ideology critique as being part of the process. His work focuses upon the concept of liberation and what it means to be free and the responsibility of freedom, so creating links with the educational concept of emancipation. By analysing inner and outer conflicts one may see through the illusions of social reality:

> The question of whether shedding one's blindness is desirable is more difficult to answer. There will be considerable agreement that it is desirable, provided the insight into the hidden conflicts leads to a constructive solution and hence to greater well-being.' (Fromm 1993 p. 41)

Fromm is indicating a form of emancipation and questions the desirability of undertaking critical reflection and what may be uncovered as a result. As with anything, if the results are positive we tend to support them, but what if the results are negative? It is unlikely that all that is uncovered through critical reflection will be easily digested and what of the effect of the knowledge upon the discoverer? The learner may be unready to hear some things, or simply not be in the 'right frame of mind', or the results may be so contrary to what was expected that they are negated immediately as 'wrong', or at least as

incomprehensible. bell hooks (1994) also acknowledges that paradigms can shift as a result of an engaged and progressive pedagogy and this may cause some discomfort as 'there can be, and usually is, some degree of pain involved in giving up old ways of thinking and knowing and learning new approaches' (hooks 1994 p. 43). Mezirow (1990 p. 12) also alerts the critical reflector to this possibility, stating '[t]o question the validity of a long-taken-for-granted meaning perspective predicated on a presupposition about oneself can involve the negation of values that have been very close to the center of one's self concept.' So while it is accepted that critical reflection may be highly beneficial, there are certainly drawbacks within the process too that need to be considered and more will be said of this later.

It would appear already from only a few references to individual theorists' work that criticality has the potential to refer to any aspect of one's thinking, beliefs, practices and assumptions; there is no area of the self that can escape being critiqued. Critical reflection can be rooted within the political, social, economic, philosophical, ethical, and cultural. It is perhaps due to the wide ranging breadth of the processes and purposes of critical reflection that it is indeed one of the most commonly met terms in educational circles.

Terminology: A working definition of critical reflection

Linda Evans (2002) advocates the use of reflection within research itself as an avenue for raising standards in terms of rigour and quality. One aspect of research she focuses on is that of conceptual clarity:

> Conceptual clarity, for the most part, seems to be being disdainfully relegated to the status of outmoded pedantry: an attention to detail that is now considered irrelevant. (Evans 2002 p. 59)

Being clear with key terms within research is imperative if one wishes not only to be rigorous and avoid misunderstanding, but also to enable continued discourse concerning the research issues and the place of the inquiry within the research continuum. It can be equally argued, however, that all discourse is open to interpretation and terminology is only useful at best.   There are supporters of using language in a more expressive and individual way which may not always be understood by the reader of such writings:

> At a lecture where I might use Southern black vernacular, the particular patois of my region…responding to a diverse audience, I suggest that we do not necessarily need to hear and know what is stated in its entirety, that we do not need to "master" or conquer the narrative as a whole, that we may know in fragments. (hooks 1994 p. 174)

While I admit that hooks is referring to the teaching and learning process instead of inquiry in this quote, it is nonetheless interesting that it is possible to support either or both of these writers' views depending on the context and purpose of the use of language. There is certainly much to be gained from listening to someone conversing in a foreign language as it allows one to tune into other ways of 'listening' and understanding, and alerts us that there is more to communication than knowledge of vocabulary. Andalzua (1987/1999) takes this concept one step further by composing the text of her innovative book from three different languages so there is much that may be missing from a reading of her text for the reader who is unfamiliar with the languages she writes in, but there is also the added dimension of meaning that she creates by writing it in such a way; it tells us of her splintered background and uniqueness.

Ann Smith (1998 p. 891) proposes a definition of reflection based upon the work of authors as consisting of 'the awareness of uncomfortable feelings or thoughts, followed by critical analysis of those feelings, leading to the uncovering of new perspectives.' I am always a little uncomfortable at the suggestion that we only reflect upon the things that cause consternation, and she acknowledges that this is often the case in research – the negative is dwelt upon a little too much to the detriment of the positive. Much can be learned from reflecting upon positive feelings and actions too. While Smith is focusing more on the reflective practice processes, she also reminds us that the affective and conceptual can sit comfortably together in the act of reflection and that the Cartesian split of mind and body is redundant. Mezirow (1990 p. 13) provides a definition of critical reflection as 'reassessing the way we have posed problems and reassessing our own orientation to perceiving, knowing, believing, feeling, and acting.' He suggests here that we look back on ourselves critically and also endorses the role of the affective within this learning process.

It is possible to be conceptually clear without being overly complex or unnecessarily long-winded, so with this in mind, I propose for the purpose of this inquiry that the following is my working definition of critical reflection:

Critical reflection is a purposeful thinking and/or feeling activity, instigated deliberately to examine, analyse, interrogate and reconstruct practices, theory, thinking, knowledge and ways of being.

I wish to remind the reader that this report is written in a way that charts my progress through the research process and that the above definition was established before the critical reflection processes for this research project were started.

Theoretical foundations

At this stage I wish to clarify the main theories that have become the foundation for this research project and to make clear their link with the purposes of this investigation. The following three quotes sum up several of the key drivers within this research project:

> Argyris and Schön (1974) have noted how divergence between comment and action still persists when commentator and actor are the same person. They argue that professional actions are based on implicit 'theories in use' which differ from the 'espoused theories' used to explain them to external audiences or even to the actor himself. Self-knowledge of performance is difficult to acquire, and self-comment tends to be justificatory rather than critical in intent...Argyris and Schön regard making such theories explicit and thereby open to criticism as the key to professional learning. (Eraut 1994 p. 43)

> Transformative learning has both individual and social dimensions and implications. It demands that we be aware of how we come to our knowledge and as aware as we can be about the values that lead us to our perspectives. Cultural canon, socio-economic structures, ideologies and beliefs about ourselves, and the practices they support often conspire to foster conformity and impede development of a sense of responsible agency. (Mezirow 2000 p. 8)

> ...we transform frames of reference – our own and those of others – by becoming critically reflective of their assumptions and aware of their context – the source, nature, and consequences of taken-for-granted beliefs. Assumptions on which habits of mind and related points of

view are predicated may be epistemological, logical, ethical, psychological, ideological, social, cultural, economic, political, ecological, scientific, or spiritual, or may pertain to other aspects of experience. (Mezirow 2000 p. 19)

These references highlight outcomes and issues encountered when engaging in critical reflection including professional learning and the establishment of social responsibility, and point towards its ability to link theory with practice and to transform meaning perspectives. This research project has been undertaken with the explicit aim of attempting to understand and create meaning from and within my private teaching practice. I have wanted to ascertain the motivations behind, beneath and within my singing teaching practices, to interrogate assumptions and beliefs, to document the processes that I have undertaken and to create a report that allows the reader some participation in all of this. While it has been a personal and professional journey for me it is hoped that the reader may gain some insight into how an educator may attempt to participate in critical reflection as a way of coming to know more about the complexity of the education endeavour, and demonstrate continuing professional learning in action. The aspects of theories concerning critical reflection that have had most resonance with me as a researcher educator are those that refer to the ability to change one's perspective (and practices) as a result of critically examining assumptions, beliefs and practices; the ability to learn from an interrogation of thinking and practices. Educators know that effective learning takes place when some change occurs within the individual participating in the learning activity. My undertaking this doctoral journey was motivated by a need to continue my learning, and improve and contextualise my teaching practice and by influence, the practices of others; this research project is based upon the premise (and hope) that a transformation in my thinking will be achieved as a result of engaging in the processes of critical reflection.

One cannot escape the pervasive nature of critical theory when working with critical reflection as a learning process, and further more, I would state that one must engage with aspects of critical theory if one wishes to claim that critical reflection has occurred. The theorists that I most closely base my work on are Mezirow and Brookfield. They both apply critical theory to education and adult learning and Mezirow in particular demonstrates in his theories the potential transformative possibilities of engaging with critical reflection. Their writing is

accessible to the novice researcher and is rooted within the practices and contexts that I, as educator researcher, am familiar with. In addition I have been very influenced by the writings of several feminists and those who practice critical pedagogy such as hooks and Freire.

Critical reflection is grounded in practice and the examination of practice; it is a continuous process of looking out and looking in (reflexive), of questioning and validating, and a critically reflective dialogue is pursued. There are different models of how the individual practitioner might relate to the bigger issues of critical theory that influence practice such as frames of reference, socio-political influences and so on, and these models are often circular in nature (Eisler 2002, Holly 1989) with the practitioner in the middle with ripples moving outward from the self towards the 'bigger' issues, or alternatively viewing the outer as impacting upon and influencing inwards. The process of critical reflection and how the 'outer' issues link with the inner is much more complex than this though. I would propose that a metaphor for the relationship is something more of an overlapping, interweaving structure like a woven fabric or rope, one that avoids hierarchy but that demonstrates the intertwining of all areas that influence and are influenced by educational practice. The strands in the rope represent my training, education, upbringing, assumptions, habits and other strands represent these same things but for those learners I engage with, others for political and economic influences and so on. Ronald Barnett (1997 p. 141) says of the complexity of professional practice that '[a]ctions and interpretations, therefore, are intertwined, the professional weaving her way in thought and action through the multiple discourses that confront her.' It looks at first sight that the rope is a solid object made of two or three thick chords, but at closer inspection it is seen to be created from multiple smaller fibres that cannot be extracted from the whole, so integrated are they.

The purpose of this research investigation is to attempt to dismantle some of the 'rope' of my practice in an attempt to gain new meaning, clarity and understanding and have perspectives transformed. How this will take place is examined in the following chapter where the 'vehicles' or tools for critical reflection that I have employed in this research project are introduced and discussed.

Chapter 3: Ways of working with critical reflection

This chapter establishes the discreet processes that I have used within this research project to develop my critical reflection skills through which to interrogate my practice. Each of the five 'vehicles' for critical reflection work are introduced and discussed. Throughout this chapter I have tried to allow the reader access to some of my worries and concerns about each process chosen. The opening comments on each vehicle were written before undertaking the actual research task of reflecting critically upon my practice and may be thought of as representing a planning stage of the research. The sections relating how I worked with each vehicle were written after the reflection work was completed and present a different perspective, one that is based in and of experience of the processes of critical reflection.

The following diagram indicates the approximate length of time that was spent exploring each vehicle of reflection throughout the research phase and their temporal relationship to each other but more will be said of this as the chapter unfolds. Although the diagram appears to show each vehicle being worked with in isolation this is clearly not the case as will be described in this chapter; there is much interweaving between the parts.

time duration is 16 months
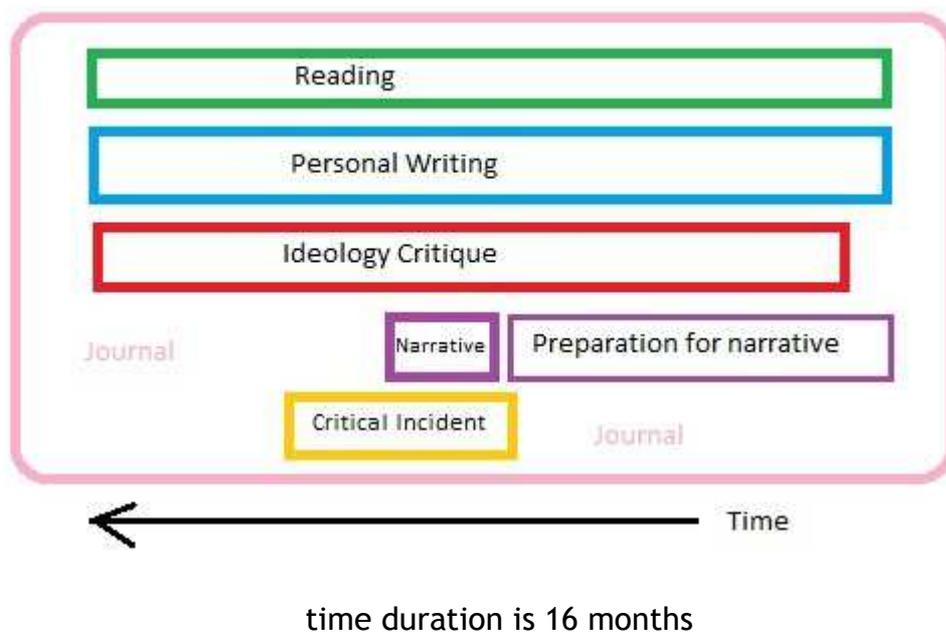
As shown in the previous section, there is much evidence to support the use of critical reflection as an effective tool for professional (and personal) development within education, and by practitioners from other fields. Critical reflection is not itself a 'method' of research, although there has been much research undertaken that utilises the processes of critical reflection (Shepherd 2006) much of which was cited in the previous chapter. It is rather an activity that can be pursued using a diverse range of tools and techniques (Farrell 2008), or by utilising different 'vehicles' (Moon 1999). These techniques vary from such tasks as discussing with colleagues specific events from practice to creating stories and poetry based around educational themes. Critical reflection may be undertaken through dialogue that one participates in with a research situation (Freshwater and Avis 2004), whether that be the observing of self or others, examining questionnaire responses, reviewing interview logs or taking part in discussion. Journals, for example, are used frequently in undergraduate teacher training courses, and the writing of fiction and poetry have also been proposed as possible tools through which to develop the skills of critical reflection. Critical reflection activities may take place anywhere, be highly organised and planned, engage others or not, involve visual, dramatic or text-based creations, entail discussion and debate, in fact, it seems that the only thing restricting what and how one may go about critical reflection is one's imagination.

Due to the flexible nature of critical reflection processes, it may be discovered to be linked with an assorted range of research methods, one such being action research. Action research advocates using critical reflection as part of the spiral model of inquiry often used for this kind of research method (Esposito and Evans-Winters 2007, Jaruszewicz 2006). The spiral model involves focusing upon a problem or issue to be resolved whilst processes of experience, reflection and action are worked through, each informing the next stages of the spiral as they are revisited, learned from and acted upon. Esposito and Evans-Winters support the use of critical lenses through which interrogation of issues may be undertaken as part of the action research method. Action research involves a revisiting of the situation which is shed in new light as a result of observations and reflections, and so the cycle is continued with the intention of increased refinement and improvement in the situation, or the testing out of possible solutions which are then reviewed and refined (King and Kitchener 1994). Action

research has been used very effectively by many who practise critical reflection, and critical reflection proves to be a valuable tool within this method of research (Esposito and Evans-Winters 2007).

I consider action research to be inappropriate as a medium through which to explore the impact of critical reflection on my teaching practice and thinking, however, as I wish to allow the focus of this research project to evolve from the various ways of reflecting critically, rather than based around a single aspect of my practice that is continually interrogated and revisited. Action research is often focused on a specific aspect of practice and I wish to avoid the restriction that it is likely to impose upon the learning opportunity.

Throughout the preparation for this research I have been led by one guiding issue; I did not want to involve others in my research. This was not out of some narcissistic concern or dislike of working with people. Instrumental and vocal teaching is generally undertaken by one teacher working with one student at a time. The teacher is not only used to working on her own, but may not be afforded the opportunity very often to get together with other practising teachers, and as we know, often the time spent with other teachers is occupied with practical issues of curriculum or difficulties experienced in the studio, rather than with the processes of critical reflection. Instrumental and vocal teachers are extremely self sufficient by necessity and are used to being their own boss and running their own teaching studio (Czaja 2006). I have always wanted this research to be about me and my practice; what I do and why. What habits have I developed, why do I follow certain routines, are there things that worry me in my teaching, and what can I do about them? I hope this study will allow me to see the bigger picture beyond the studio walls of my practice and to appreciate the details within it; outer and inner issues; external and internal influences that all play a part in how my teaching transpires and how learners are engaged with. I want to understand more of what I do and who I am as an instrumental and vocal teacher, and so the tools and techniques that I have employed in this research have been those that may be undertaken by individuals working in isolation. There are certainly limitations to undertaking research that does not involve others and I will discuss some of these later in the dissertation. I have found there to be a persuasive body of texts supporting the

benefits of participatory and discussion based critical reflection in small and large group environments (Bolton 2006, Fook and Gardner 2007, Sameshima and Sinner 2009), but I have chosen to leave this avenue of research for a future opportunity.

In preparation for undertaking this research project I investigated available educational research and literature in order to prepare for the task I had set myself. Much of the writing concerning critical reflection referred to recurring sets of tools or vehicles through which the skills of critical reflection could be developed and so this established the kinds of processes that I would employ in my research task. These included use of: 1) journals, 2) critical incidents, 3) narrative, 4) personal writing, and 5) ideology critique. While these are distinct approaches, they also have much in common. Moon (1999 p. 5) reminds us that differences in reflection are due to the ways in which it is used, applied and guided rather than the process itself. Areas in common across these vehicles for reflection are: using different lenses and perspectives, applying critical theory, asking questions, considering alternative courses of action and thought, and the consideration of the impact of frames of reference and belief structures. I am expecting that the 'medium' used for critical reflection is likely to create different 'products'. It is hoped that by using a range of tools through which to practise critical reflection, deeper and more meaningful learning will occur; it also affords the opportunity to compare and contrast different ways of working with the process.

There is much in common between personal writing, narrative and the use of journal writing in research. Firstly, they represent partial and situated knowledge and in this inquiry it is the self-as-researched that is the focus of the investigation. It is becoming increasingly more frequent to find research of this nature within the social sciences and much that has been cited in earlier sections supports this kind of research whereby knowledge is constructed, and each 'story' has something to offer the writer and reader. The self-as-researched and 'storied' demonstrates human existence and experience, and as such, has the potential to 'reach diverse audiences' (Richardson 1990). There is also the possibility of the researcher being faced with the dilemma of asking 'what do I have to offer?' as the subject of this research. Questions of worth

and relevance to others may have to be dealt with as part of the personal writing inquiry, but equally, epistemological questions are raised as a result – what exactly counts as knowledge? Many writers previously referred to condemn the statement, as I do, that self-reflection is simply 'navel-gazing' or 'confession' (Booth 2009, Swan 2008). It is possible to create links between the self-as-researched and the larger, but connected, world of education and society in order to add substance in terms of criticality, and to aid engagement with the reader by placing the research within familiar contexts.

> I often find autobiographical accounts and narrative renderings compelling and insightful, and do not want in any way to dismiss their power in educational theory and practice. Yet – and let me be blunt here – just as often such writing runs the risk of lapsing into what has been called possessive individualism. Even when an author does the "correct thing" and discusses her or his social location in a world dominated by oppressive conditions, such writing can serve the chilling function of simply saying, "But enough about you, let me tell you about me," unless we are much more reflexive about this than often has been the case. (Apple 1996 p. xiv)

Related to the self-as-researched is the issue of bias, but this has increasingly become an issue in all forms of research and is often referred to as 'the interpretive crisis' (Bochner 2001, Denzin 1994). It is becoming accepted that all research is situated within metanarratives, paradigms, frameworks and other value systems; one cannot escape their influence (Ellis and Bochner 2003). Narrative forms of inquiry explicitly and implicitly acknowledge that the constructed knowledge is temporal and tentative, situated and biased; it is these aspects that give it its own unique characteristics. As such, one cannot make generalisable statements as a result of inquiry based upon personal writing and narrative, but that does not mean that the research cannot have influence and meaning across disciplines. I have mentioned briefly that there are issues of personal welfare at stake through these kinds of personal research; often difficult, perhaps traumatic issues are being examined, and as Bolton (2005) exemplifies, the process of writing can cause pain and emotional, as well as intellectual, discomfort. Until one starts the acts of journaling, writing and 'storying' one may not know, not only how one will get on with the process, and how compatible each is with the other, but also the exact direction that the research will take and the knowledge that will be constructed as a result – the open-endedness of the process. There are therapeutic benefits to be had from

working with narrative, and this is not to be thought of in any way as a weakness of the method (Bochner 2001).

Several of these issues, and others, will be dealt with in much more detail and related to the specific findings of the research later in the report. But for now, I wish to mention one more debated issue in this kind of inquiry, that of 'truth'. Again, this is linked to the concept of bias; there is no ultimate truth in the same way that it is impossible to be totally objective – there are no absolutes, everything is conjectural and positioned. When I write of my own experiences and critically reflect upon them I am engaging in a reflexive, dialogic process, rooted in honesty and driven by a need to understand and create meaning. In addition, being direct and honest, and being as clear as possible to the reader, I hope that what will ensue will be a form of 'truth' that means something to me, and that the reader may be able to empathise, or at least, relate to some of the content. 'Truth' is always contingent upon the individual in this kind of research project, so one cannot hope to disclose 'the truth' but perhaps one can reveal 'one of a possible truths' (Denzin 1997), or it may be more appropriate to think of the 'making of meaning' as an interpretation of the concept of 'truth'.

Journals

I wish to remind the reader at this point how each of the vehicles relates to each other in terms of time and duration. The box diagram represents a period of 16 months and is all contained within the journal, represented by the pink border:
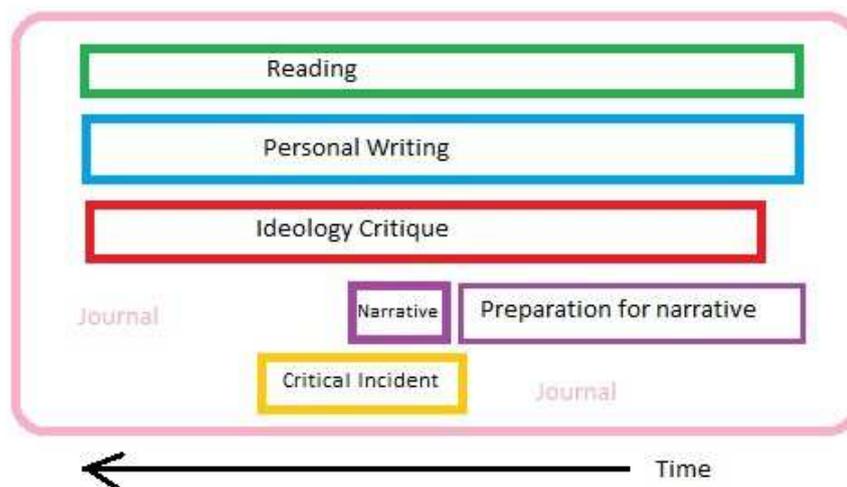
Journals may also be known as logbooks, files, diaries, portfolios, workbooks or notebooks, and they are maintained on a regular basis, usually over a period of time (Moon 1999/2006). For a researcher working on personal writing or narrative forms of investigation, they might be considered the equivalent of the ethnographer's field notes, and the journal provides raw material that may be used 'as is' or adapted for the research task. In fact, Moon (1999/2006) proposes that journals and story are closely related, and so it is a suitable tool for recording reflections that may at some point be used within a narrative research project. In her later work, she exemplifies how some qualitative researchers use aspects of story and reflective work within their inquiries to test constructs (Moon 2010 p. 141), and there are still other researchers actively using and promoting the use of journals as a research technique (Janesick 1999).

The journal is a concrete object that is written in, whether in electronic format or of the paper and pen variety. The electronic journal or blog (a vehicle as a discussion forum on-line) has been used effectively in educational contexts (see Terrion and Philion 2008) where it allows for 24 hour access by all participants, but due to the fact that it is available to many, its use as a self-reflective and critical-reflective tool may be limited, as participants are aware that there is a wide 'audience'. However, if the 'viewing' of material is limited to those within a programme or course, and presented effectively as a learning tool for all involved, it may be less intimidating and encourage open dialogue. See the work of Stiler and Philleo (2003) and Yang (2009) for an exploration of developing critical reflection through electronic blogs. The paper journal is more likely to yield deeper levels of reflection as the audience is limited to the writer and any others they wish to share it with, and for many the use of a favourite pen and the smell and feel of it on paper acts as inspiration for the reflective writing process (Moon 1999/2006). Journals act as a vehicle for recording observations, thoughts, ideas and criticisms and may include pictures, articles, graphs, diagrams and photographs, or may be simply notes, or even be a graphic or artistic creation.

What a journal becomes is related to the use they are put and the personal and professional tendencies or personality of the owner. I have never kept a personal diary; I have never really seen the point of spending time at the end of

a day to write about what I did or thought. I suppose I have always felt that if something was significant enough I would retain it, and the associated feelings, in my memory; I think I saw a diary as simply a device to record actions and events rather than as a learning tool. The journal as related to research or learning, however, is of more significance than simply recording tasks; it can become whatever the user wishes it to be, depending on the purpose assigned to its maintenance.

There are many outcomes reported from the task of maintaining a learning journal, and Moon (1999) proposes several, including; a means of attending to one's needs; finding one's voice; fostering creativity; and keeping things tentative. Often it may be difficult to separate personal and professional identities and so the journal may deal with aspects of both as a dialogical self-discovery process (Shepherd 2006). There is research that uses reflective journals as a method of gaining increased transparency within qualitative research practices (Ortlipp 2008). Much research concerning the training of teachers (pre-service and in-service) reinforces the importance of maintaining a journal as a tool for reflection and as a resource through which to explore the relationship of theory to practice and to develop reflective practice (Bain et al. 1999, Bleicher et al. 2006, Correia and Bleicher 2008, Degago 2007, Hatton and Smith 1995, Holly 1989, Maarof 2007, Marcos et al. 2008, Shepherd 2006, Shin 2006, Terrion and Philion 2008, Watts and Lawson 2009, Yang 200, Zeichner 1987). Each of these examples of research reports contain a purpose to be worked towards in maintaining the journal and provide a focus and intention for reflections, often resulting in a deeper level of reflection being achieved. Sometimes these examples also contain directions for how the journal is to be structured and suggestions of how often writing should take place:

> 'asking students to keep an open-ended journal may not provide the scaffold necessary for learning. Rather, they [(Hatcher et. al. 2004)] recommend three-part journals, which ask students to describe their service experience, provide an analysis connecting the SLE to course content, and apply connections to values and attitudes.' (Correia and Bleicher 2008 p. 43)

Different levels of reflection (see previous chapter) may be evidenced in the journal entries and fewer pre-service teachers were shown to be able to reflect

at a deeper level than at a dialogic level (Hatton and Smith 1995, Watts and Lawson 2009). This may be due to the trainee teachers' lack of experience or their immediate concerns with more technical aspects of their employ, or to the directions and structure provided for the journal entries; often participants were asked to record what happened in their teaching day, but less detailed guidance given on how to work with the material to take it to a deeper level of reflection. It is evidenced that returning to journal entries and redrafting or analysing them may develop deeper levels of reflection (Moon 1999/2006, Watts and Lawson 2009). Journals may, therefore, be an appropriate tool for in-service teachers to use to develop critical reflection levels, as they have more experience than pre-service teachers, and they may aid the development and expansion of reflective practice and professional development giving voice and power to the writer in a complex environment.

Jennifer Moon is an authority on the nature and uses of learning journals and their link to learning, reflection and professional development, and the reader is encouraged to explore her publications for further details concerning journals. It is often reported in the research cited within this section that it is time consuming to maintain a journal and some participants did not complete their journals with sufficient material for researchers to analyse or work with. Finding the time to complete logbooks can be a problem, but it appears from the research in the field that, when journals are maintained effectively, the results are very worthwhile in relation to developing critical reflection skills and their application to professional practice.

The dialogue journal has been used within education training programmes whereby the journal acts as a conversation between learner and tutor, each feeding off the other, providing feedback and alternative views (Degago 2007, Larrotta 2009, Martin 2005). While it is beneficial to have a critical partner through which to interrogate practices, my research is to be undertaken alone and Terrion and Philion (2008 p. 585) propose that dialogue can be 'conducted internally with oneself, as a form of concealed verbalization' and is an 'integral part of learning and personal growth.' This view is endorsed by other writers (Holly 1989, Moon 1999).

How I worked with a journal

I have only once been required to maintain a journal for a study task and must admit that I was not very diligent about it. I kept the journal for about eight to ten weeks and some weeks I only wrote one entry and other weeks perhaps two or three. I came to the conclusion that it was the quality of the recordings that were important rather than how often or how much I wrote in the journal and so this became my guiding principle for its use. I did not appreciate at the time that had I recorded more I would have had more material to work through in the analysing process and perhaps have learned much more than I did. I did not enjoy the task very much. From these statements I do not seem a likely candidate for a research project that is based upon recording and analysing reflections in a journal. What brought about the change? I am committed to the developing increased understanding and improvement of my private teaching practice and the improvement of the quality of private teaching everywhere. The processes of critical reflection appear to offer potential for practice improvement, appear fairly manageable to use, and may be an effective CPD tool for instrumental teachers who work alone. I was motivated in the task and had a clear purpose for maintaining a journal.

As I have worked through this research task, the 'journal' has really just become a file. It is loose leaf so I can insert paper where I please, and have organised the file according to the type of tasks undertaken – personal writing, critical incident, narrative writing, and ideology critique. Within each of these sections I have pages that are dated and contain hand-written reflective notes concerning aspects of my teaching practice. Some pages have notes from different notebooks taped or stapled together. As I return to entries for further analysis and interpretation I am able to insert pages exactly where I need them. Another section is used to record how I have found working with each kind of reflective process.

Holly (1989) lists very many positives of using word processing for maintaining a journal, but she does not seem to explore any of the negatives. I did not even consider using the computer to maintain a journal as it would make it impossible to record thoughts and reflections wherever and whenever I wanted. I would

find it quite infeasible to carry a laptop with me at all times. But of course, hand held technology is now becoming much more available and affordable, so I might change my mind about this in the future. But for now, I have found using word processing an impossibility for keeping my journal. I also prefer to write with pen and paper than type, especially if it is to be only myself reading the text, where I do not have to worry about legibility. I have found it most satisfying watching the page get filled up with my scribble; I like the feel of the pen as it slides across the page, and the smell of the ink and paper, and the sound it makes when I tear a sheet from the pad. This pleasure in the writing process has, I'm sure, contributed to my ability to record reflections as I am relaxed and enjoying the physical task, so my mind can be relaxed and explore where it will.

I have found that working with a journal has simply meant using a physical object as the place where I keep all my notes, reflections, scraps and ideas together. It has not been a 'diary' completed at the end of each day where I might record reflections on the day's teaching. The journal format could be varied by the user, obviously, but I found it helpful to organise it according to the research tasks I had set myself. I have not been disciplined to such an extent that I have written something each day; there were frequently extended periods where nothing new was inserted into the file. Some days I would write extensively on a journal entry attempting to analyse comments, other days there may be only a few notes taken. I was always comforted by the fact that what was contained within it would provide some material for further critical reflection.

Critical incidents

John Flanagan (1954) developed a method called 'critical incident technique' which consists of a set of procedures for 'collecting direct observations of human behavior' with the purpose of 'solving practical problems and developing broad psychological principles.' His method is primarily of benefit to those wishing to undertake research based upon observing and categorising, and his method is still used today (Blackmore et al. 2005, Marrelli 2005). Stephen Brookfield (1995) created a critical incident questionnaire for use by teachers to receive feedback

from learners in their classrooms about the content and conduct of lessons and this has been used and adapted successfully as a research tool (Gilstrap and Dupree 2008, Preskill 1996, Talbot 2002). However, neither of these approaches is appropriate for me to use as a method for developing critical reflection within this study as they are dependent upon working with others.

Many research documents do not expand upon specifically what a critical incident is, or what qualifies an incident to be classed as 'critical'.   Baguley and Brown (2009) propose that it is an incident in which the practitioner's 'actions affected or influenced the outcome,' Jaruszewicz (2006) suggests it is an event that creates disequilibrium, while Webster and Mertova (2007) advocate that an event becomes critical when it has 'impacted on the performance of the storyteller in a professional or work-related role.' David Tripp (1993 p. 28) suggests that 'everything that happens is a potential critical incident: we just have to analyse it critically to make it one', and Williams (2000) also proposes that it is the analysis of the incident that makes it critical, not the incident itself. This appears to be a recurring theme for the methods that I have chosen for this investigation and so I will discuss the 'critical' analysis processes within the ideology critique section later in this report.

There appears to be consensus concerning the development of competence and the positive contribution to (continued) professional development as a result of critically analysing incidents (Griffin 2003, Talbot 2002). Tripp (1993) is very clear that critical analysis of incidents is imperative for developing 'professional judgement' through interpretation and construction of meaning, and he proposes that it is important that such analysis be based in 'actuality'.

The study of critical incidents appears most common within the healthcare professions but is also prevalent within the teaching sector. In my opinion, critical incidents are likely to occur more frequently within the social and healthcare professions as they deal with life and death, welfare, abuse, care, and safety issues as part of their professional remit; dealing with vulnerable individuals and their families is likely to reveal situations of conflict, professional dilemmas and inconsistent or unfair practices on a very regular basis. While teaching is not dealing with the medical care of learners (although this

may be an issue within some teaching situations), it is concerned with the 'pastoral' care of learners. Every learning encounter involves interaction between individuals and one cannot escape the social, economic, political or cultural influences that may impact upon the effectiveness of relationships and upon the quality of the teaching and learning.

Often critical incident reporting is used to reveal and categorise common practices within professions - to gain an understanding of real issues that are affecting practitioners - and this information may be used to educate the public and inform academic institutions (Tripp 1993). There may be a temptation to treat the analysis and interpretations of critical incidents in a generic way, rather than accepting the unique situational nature of them. There has been much debate in education about whether or not research should be 'useful', that it should improve the methodological and procedural aspects of teaching 'delivery', that it is 'instrumental' in nature and should deal with evidence-based practice and research (Hammersley 2001, Hargreaves 1996b and 1997). There are some incidents that may be encountered more frequently within the teaching and learning environment than others, for example, dealing with disruption or lack of discipline, dealing with confrontational learners, how to encourage participation by all, or how to manage students lacking in motivation. It may be that many teachers have encountered at least one of these scenarios and may be able to recall the incident in some detail. However, it must be remembered that no two situations encountered will ever be the same, no matter how alike they may at first appear, so one must be careful with generalising, but one can empathise with self-as-research situational investigations.

Critical incident analysis is often used within courses preparing teachers or other professionals for the world of practice, and I am concerned that these learning professionals may consider critical incident analysis a technical problem solving tool only, instead of also appreciating and developing its use for informing professional judgement. This may be because the pre-service teacher is likely to still be concerned with problem solving aspects of practice that concern delivery and methods, as they are still in the early stages of learning their trade. In other words, they may treat the analysis of incidents within a technical

rationality paradigm rather than attempting to interrogate values that lie at the heart of the practice within a critical paradigm. There is research that openly acknowledges only the problem solving benefits of studying critical incidents (Armstrong and Hipp 2006, Goodell 2006), but Mezirow (1990 p. 12) reminds us that 'critical reflection must go beyond dealing with procedural considerations' and it is concerned with 'the why, the reasons for and consequences of what we do' (Mezirow 2000 p. 13).

Critical incidents are often though not exclusively, concerned with the negatives of our practice, the things we are unhappy about, issues causing consternation, and problematic situations. While I can appreciate that the purpose of critical reflection is one of transformation and improvement, I do not think we must always dwell upon the negative to do this. Perhaps critical incidents are mostly negative because they are used by learners of a trade who are probably making many errors as they learn the skills of their profession, although Williams (2000) endorses providing choice of negative or positive incident for study with those in pre-practice education. But, critical incidents may be used also by more experienced practitioners, where it is expected that they are encountering fewer negative incidents than they did while learning the craft. In a study of education and nursing graduates by Baguley and Brown (2009), the participants were given the option of writing about either a positive or negative critical incident, but there is no indication of how many of each was chosen.

Within the instrumental and vocal teaching environments, I have found that I come across far fewer 'incidents' than I do when teaching classes of learners. In a one-to-one situation the learner is getting the full attention of the teacher, not that this does not entail its own 'problems' or issues, but the types of 'incidents' are likely to be quite different within each of these learning contexts. It is important then when working with critical incidents that one utilises both negative and positive experiences for analysis. Of even more importance perhaps is that the incident has meaning for the person analysing it, not whether it is extrovertly positive or negative. I am also reminded, as stated above, that the incident does not require to be 'critical' in order to focus upon it in a critical way; it is sometimes the very mundane that can reveal most if approached critically. Gillie Bolton (2005 p. 33) encourages us in this endeavour by

expounding three foundations; certain uncertainty, serious playfulness, and unquestioning questioning, and also supports us to make our world 'appear strange' in an attempt to interrogate our habitual professional practices (Bolton 2006 p. 204). Several researchers have used Tripp's methods within their investigations (Cardona 2005, Griffin 2003). Others use the critical incident with narrative (Baguley and Brown 2009,) with journals (Cardona 2005), and with drawing (Armstrong and Hipp 2006).

How I worked with critical incident

Critical incidents appear to be simply a starting point for the critical reflection process and Tripp (1993) proposes an assortment of analysis tools and strategies for this purpose and I used them as a basis for this research. I worked with two 'incidents' from my practice. The first concerned a student refusing to do a task in the lesson and the second was based around an occasion in a lesson when a student became frustrated at not being able to do a specific task successfully. Within a day or two of the events I used the strategies that Tripp proposes to interrogate the incidents, these being:

- What didn't happen?
- What could have happened?
- The 'why?' challenge
- The construction and choice of meaning from experiences
- Investigating contradictions and values
- Examining alternatives, possibilities and choices
- Using different perspectives
- Creating opposites - reversal
- When was I feeling engaged/distanced?
- What was helpful/puzzling/confusing/surprising?

I recorded my reflections by hand on A4 lined paper using these headings for each incident. Twenty pages of notes were taken over a period of almost four months. This form of critical reflection relies upon an incident as not only the stimulus for reflection and critique, but also perhaps as the sole purpose for reflective work; the remembering of as much detail concerning the incident can be very helpful in establishing some initial perspectives for further exploration.

Working with critical incidents was the third vehicle I used to develop critical reflection skills in this research. I found the guidelines provided by Tripp to be helpful in establishing some critical reflection habits and to generate some quantity of ideas fairly quickly. I also found, however, that if I could not find something to say concerning one of his suggested areas of exploration then I felt I was inadequate and not succeeding at the task. Conversely if I had sketched out a page with the headings he suggested and one of them contained no hand-written notes at all, I would endeavour to think around the incident even more so that I could put something on paper; I did not want to be defeated and have to face the stare of a blank section of notes. So, essentially, I found this a fairly user friendly way to explore critical reflection. Here is an example from my journal of critical incidents concerning the assigning of blame for what did and did not happen in the lesson with the student refusing to undertake a task. These notes came from the heading 'construction and choice of meaning from experiences' and show a returning to the issue for further analysis:

> *10/4/10*
> *I like to think that if the 'fault' lies with me then I may be able to learn from the experience and be more prepared in the future. But why not examine, at least hypothetically, the possibility that the student was (also) to blame?*
>
> *If the fault does lie elsewhere how can I change that – and do I need to? There is a feeling of helplessness if the blame lies with others – the same thing may happen again and there is nothing I can do to stop it. I seem to have a need to be in control, feeling safe and secure, in charge of the educational journey.*
>
> *4/6/10*
> *The above reference to helplessness – it comes back to control again, the need to feel safe and secure and in charge of the journey.*
>
> *1/8/10*
> *Interesting this assigning of blame – someone to be responsible for the creation of antagonistic feelings. It is obvious that the 'blame' lies with me and my perception of the situation. I need to change how I view the lesson as It will always be my fault if I think blame needs to be assigned. My understanding is lacking, my perspective is lacking, my conceptual framework has created this need for blame...*

Although I did follow Tripp's guidelines in order to consider many possibilities of a situation, I did not allow myself to be solely limited by the procedures. Often I would move away from a strict examination of the incident onto a related topic, brought about by allowing personal writing to take over. When the personal writing was flowing, however, I kept thinking that I must return to the incident at hand; my focus must be on the incident and what I can find out from it and I must not allow myself the liberty of just writing about anything that comes into my mind. At the same time, I wanted to avail myself of the opportunity to learn as much as possible from the free writing process. If my hand is still moving and words are appearing on the page then I must have something that I want to say to myself, there must be something of substance here too. So fairly often I found working on critical incident analysis satisfying in that I was able to generate some amount of words and thoughts at one sitting, but also found it quite frustrating as I felt pulled between different ways of working. After a few attempts at critical incident analysis I began to worry less about following the prescriptive nature of the process and instead permitted myself to wander in the directions that felt natural; once I had exhausted one of these personal writing avenues, I would simply attempt to re-engage my thinking around the critical incident and continue from there.

I have taught, and do teach, classes within large educational establishments. Working with even a handful of learners together at the same time increases the complexity of the teacher's task; not only is she to 'achieve' something educational with all learners in the time allotted, but she needs to negotiate the individual needs, actions and reactions of all within the group. Due to the number of permutations of interactions between learners and learners, and learners and teacher, teaching larger groups often provides a richer arena for critical incidents to present themselves – there are a greater number of frameworks, backgrounds, social and political perspectives, personal constructs, opinions and beliefs that can intersect and either clash or agree. The private instrumental teacher is most usually working with individual learners, although some small group teaching may also take place. During the period of this research I had only a few learners who came in shared lessons with one other learner; the majority of lessons were individual.

In a lesson situation where there is one 'teacher' and one 'learner' there are fewer opportunities for 'complexity' than if there are many more learners participating in the lesson. The more complexity there is, the higher the possibility that tensions may heighten and perhaps develop into an 'incident' to be reflected on critically. In general, my lessons are 'incident-free'. This, of course, does not mean that all lessons run smoothly and everyone in the practice is satisfied and agreeable at all times. What it does mean, though, is that when I anticipate a build in tension I try and diffuse situations, usually with humour, or with an appropriate tale of how others deal with the issue at hand. I actually found it quite difficult to generate something that was 'incident-enough' in order to pursue the critical incident analysis process. Starting out working with critical incident, I felt it might be 'best' to start with something that deserved the title 'critical', but as the research process progressed I realised that this was less important than the critical reflection itself. Even though I had read about this in the literature it did not have any import until I was actually engaged in the task itself; I knew that the incident was not as important as the reflection, but I still seemed to want to find an 'appropriate' incident. The questions and analysis tasks that Tripp proposes using are event specific, so it is necessary to have a happening upon which to critically reflect, and I think that I placed some pressure on myself to have an appropriate 'event' for this purpose.

Ideology critique has tended to weave throughout all the reflective processes that I worked with, so although Tripp proposes using ideology critique as part of critical incident analysis, I will report on how I worked with it separately later in this chapter. It seems to me that, now having experienced the processes first-hand, critical incident analysis is quite different to the other forms of critical reflection that I have explored in this research.

I have a worrying feeling of critical incident analysis being more of a problem solving procedure rather than a purely meaning making one. The following extended extract from my journal demonstrates some of my thinking about this issue:

> *12/8/10*
> *As I work through and reread these critical incidents I get a feeling*
> *that I am trying to find answers – solution, blame. I do explore*

various interpretations of events, but it still feels like solution hunting, problem solving. This is understandable as I want to learn from my experience so as to avoid a similar 'error' in the future. But, of course, the same event will never occur in the future as each incident is absolutely unique. So even though I was exploring perspectives and different explanations they still seem to be based around finding answers. This is not my intention – my intention is to understand me and my practice more – the 'reflections' need to be deeper and more rigorous.

So critical incident analysis, as with any of these tools of reflection, has the potential to develop critical reflection skills. But it is what the 'reflector' brings to the act of reflection that makes the difference – we are so wrapped up in our ways of being that we don't even notice. I wanted to stay clear of 'answers' and examine my values and beliefs, but I was still trapped, to some extent, in the frameworks from my past. This may itself provide further ground for analysis. As in the line of the Queen song – 'I want to break free'. This is not as easy as I would wish. We are all fully acculturated in our ways of thinking, reacting, our value systems, etc. So the implication from this is that while one may on one level be aware of these flaws/faults – in order to 'change' or 'become transformed' there needs to be conscious and on-going deliberation. Time is required for changes to occur.

So because critical incident analysis was highly structured I think this has led to my reflections adhering more to the prompts, even though I consciously made an effort not to be limited by them. So the structure of prompts perhaps also restricted some of the freer exploration such as I have achieved in using personal writing.

Because the 'event' is an 'experience' with its own actors, storyline, perspectives and interpretations, it does seem to become a 'thing' to be examined, an object of analysis. The 'object' has defined parameters. I mentioned above of being pulled back to the incident all the time, not allowing myself to fully explore the outer boundaries; the 'event' itself is at the core of the analysis. Critical incident analysis seems to focus solely on one item from the past and this perhaps contributes to the sensation of restrictedness that I experienced in working through it, and that this event was in some way 'special'. While I can clearly see the relevance and importance of attempting to work through a troubling or significant incident from my practice, my whole practice and role as educator is so much more than one event. One event may be able to inform on many levels, but I would not like to be restricted to only using past events as the sole stimulus and content of my reflections as this is too insular and event specific. I think I am also influenced by thinking that critical incident

focuses on that which 'went wrong'. Whether things go right or wrong is dependent upon perspective, purpose and context, and the blame culture of today seems to make us paranoid as educators trying to always 'be right' in what we do. Sometimes it is that which goes right in each lesson that contains more learning opportunities concerning injustices, habitual modes of behaviour and ingrained patterns of behaviour than those incidents which appear to highlight the 'wrong'. Now that I have experienced critical reflection processes, I would argue that it is not the exceptional that requires attention; it is the routines that have become established that will not only reveal theories-in-use, but will also lend themselves to transformative possibilities (Bolton 2005, Mezirow 1990). Proponents of this method of research state that by focusing upon one incident it gives a sense of 'actuality' to the task, especially when used with pre-service teachers. Perhaps it is helpful to teachers in training as a tool to help avoid certain behaviours or attitudes and as a way to think more about the nature of education. I have found that critical reflection on an incident can produce a quantity of materials from which to work, but still have reservations about its scope and ability to impact upon the real essentials of practice.

Of all the themes and issues that I reflected upon during my time in working on this research project, critical incident analysis is the only one that exclusively explored issues that had upset me. I think this also contributed to the feelings of restriction that I experienced working in this method of analysis. The choosing of this one 'object' or event from past experience to be analysed was linked to some embedded emotional upset, an issue that was seeking resolution in order to make me feel better. I mentioned earlier that critical incident analysis has the potential for therapeutic benefit; this seems quite obvious to me now that I consider the events that I worked through and how they were all related to my emotional state. In order to 'feel' better I needed to work through the issue sufficiently so that some kind of resolution was achieved, some explanation to make the upset go away. This was, of course, beneficial as the process was cathartic; I am not just a 'teacher', I am a human being with all the needs and responsibilities that entails, and avoiding and resolving feelings of emotional upset are paramount. The event being examined was chosen not so much because of the actions and behaviours it demonstrated, but because of the strong emotions created as a result of the interaction; the emotions of the event

were the restrictive elements that I found difficulty in breaking free from within the analysis process. So the critical incident process was extremely effective with regard to its therapeutic potential.

So while I was consciously attempting to explore my practice and my thinking through critical incident analysis and thought that I was allowing myself to push beyond the boundaries of the structure and work towards deeper reflection and analysis, I was actually trapped somewhat by both the design of the method and my own need for emotional resolution. Critical incident analysis has the potential for transformative learning, something that is deeper, more meaningful and longer lasting than the immediate gratification of emotions, or the resolution of a problem. One incident can generate a huge amount of material from which to draw upon. This material, in my opinion, then requires further critical reflection in order to expand beyond the limitations of the incident, to look at the teaching practice in the wider context of education, and to fully explore the assumptions, values, and beliefs (the frameworks) of the practitioner. But if I am to use this method in the future, I will either use it as described above for therapeutic benefits based around a single event, or I would change the kind of 'incident' being examined to those routine actions that I practice everyday.

Narrative Inquiry

I am not really a person to take risks. As an employee, I would be a good team player, encourage cooperation, and speak up if I thought there were contradictions or issues that I was not comfortable with, occasionally have a strong disagreement with a colleague, but would never cross the 'risk' line. But within my artistic realm I take risks all the time. In order to be a successful artist, you cannot simply play safe and hide behind the security of conventions, following the rules of the genre or instrument – people want to see, hear and experience a performance that affects them in some way. I have read many reports of artists and opera-goers who were constantly thrilled by the performances of Maria Callas; it is well known that she pushed the boundaries of dramatic possibility to their limits, but she paid the ultimate price for the risk – her vocal powers diminished early. She was struck by terrible stage fright, and

although short sighted, would never wear spectacles when performing; this perhaps aided her risk-taking performance as she could not clearly see the audience (critics)! I have listened to many of her audio and visual performances and she gives her all to every moment of the performance; even when she is not singing, she captures the drama in her poise, gesture and facial expression.

I consider narrative inquiry to be a risky business, not so much in a negative way but in a way that excites me. I am not referring to the 'risky business' of it being accepted as legitimate research, for example, by some in the academic community; although it is a relatively recent method of research, it has been used for some time. It appears to have two main branches within it. The first is when the researcher collects or uses the narratives or stories of others and attempts to analyse these for a purpose (Barrett 2009, Clandinin and Connelly 2000, Riley and Hawe 2005, Webster and Mertova 2007); this may be to ascertain generalisations of experience within a certain environment, culture or practice. I do not intend to use this form of narrative inquiry. Rather, I will be using the kind of research where narratives are generated by the researcher in a way that is often linked to the exploration of personal experience, autobiography and other related studies of the 'self'.

While we consider narrative an art (Conle 2000), it is often used by social scientists and is to be discovered in academic journals dealing with literature, healthcare, politics and education, among many others disciplines (Ellis and Bochner 2003). I have several concerns about using narrative within my research, but I wish firstly to examine the features of narrative inquiry and the debates that surround its use. Narrative research may be undertaken using a wide range of text-based forms: poetry, fiction, short story, dialogue, script, diary, or any combination of these and others. Most frequently, the writing is either in first person prose or dialogue, often uses different characters, use of metaphor, different representational 'voices' and so on. The writing is based upon a premise of creating a shared experience between author and reader (Ellis and Bochner 2003, Riley and Hawe 2005). That is to say that there may be a sharing of experience, but not the same experience, as no two people can directly share the same experience in the same way (Moon 2010).

Ellis and Bochner (2003) provide a thorough overview of the genre and confirm that there is much blurring between different terms that have been used by researchers to label their experience-based research, such as autoethnography, self-stories, narratives of the self, reflexive narrative and more. The reader is strongly advised to examine their work for a comprehensive review of this form of research. What is clear from their chapter is that narrative is situated inquiry that explores the specifics and details of an individual's experience and as such is very suited to the purpose of this research task.

Narratives have been used with increasing frequency within the social and healthcare professions (Bolton 2005) and are used by both practitioners wishing to make meaning from their complex and often contradictory practice, and by those who have been marginalised through illness or oppression; it is personal writing that discloses feelings and emotions, and because of the emphasis upon experience and reflection (Gargiulo 2005), it has been used therapeutically. Ryan (2010) provides an example of using it within music education research.

The conventions of academic writing exclude the use of first person, and most definitely avoid any form of 'story telling'. Jennifer Moon is an advocate for use of storytelling in research and professional development and reports on there still being resistance to it in some academic circles (2010 p. 145). The passive voice with its disembodied intellectual authority has been the reporting tone in research, but postmodernist thinkers question the validity of the 'neutrality' of language that is said to be inherent within research, and with the support of feminist thinkers and activists representing marginalised groups and alternative ways of thinking and knowing, it has since become a valid method of research inquiry (Ellis and Bochner 2003, Conle 2000, Webster and Mertova 2007). Many words come to mind when I think of the impact that reading narrative research has on me as a reader; direct, personal, emotional, unsettling, communicative, involved, alive, compelling and powerful. I feel that it is as a result of this change in voice and representation that this connection may be made with the reader.

In the past I must admit that I found it easier to digest and 'understand' research that was 'matter-of-fact', when I could look at results that dealt with

figures and numbers. We are always having research results quoted at us in the media, and it seems to always involve a percentage – is this the only way that persuasion (coercion) may be acted out in politics and news informing? If a figure cannot be attached to a piece of knowledge, is it still useful? Clandinin and Connelly (2000) lament the 'reverence for numbers' that dominated much educational research in the eighties and nineties, and while there are positive changes toward the use of a range of qualitative methods within educational research, we are still used to being bombarded with numbers and their use as validating commodities:

> We found ourselves quantifying what interested us, and of course, as we quantified experience, its richness and expression was stripped away…Our excitement and interest in narrative has its origins in our interest in experience. (Clandinin and Connelly p. xxvi)

While Clandinin and Connelly acknowledge the loss of richness through the use of quantitative methods, Pat Sikes in Clough (2002) describes findings from research based upon these methods as lacking in sophistication and unable to grasp the complexity of various aspects of education. Some forms of research seem to get a lot of 'air time' and as a reader of research it may well be easy to simply jump to the results section and conclusion to grasp the essence of the research undertaken. However, with much qualitative research, especially the kind that I am currently exploring, there may be no conclusion as such. Moon (1999) reminds us that what is learned from research such as this is likely to involve a change in being as a result of engaging with the research. As a reader of narrative inquiry, you need to read the whole report; you need to engage with the text. There is much more onus on the reader to 'participate' with the issues raised and a sense of dialogue is created between author and reader. The author may refer to the reader as 'you' and themselves as 'I' and this creates the feeling of participating in conversation and also evokes the immediacy of the issues – they are related in real time, present tense, not like some artefact of the past that is dead and gone and of no immediate import or relevance.

Sometimes the writing can be overtly explicit and emotive with the purpose of provoking a reaction – to jolt the reader into the real world of the other (Andalzua 1987/99, hooks 2009). Narrative also allows for the representation of interaction between people within the experience explored, or between author and objects or issues; see the work of Ruth Behar (1996) for examples of this

kind of writing where she not only tells the stories of others, but integrates her own experiences with the telling of them. Sometimes metaphor can effectively aid the exploration of an experience between self and other. Sometimes the same experience can be rewritten from a multiple of perspectives, each providing added and alternative meaning for further examination (Wolf 1992).

As a novice researcher, I am learning about ways of working and ways of being a practitioner-researcher, throughout this project. I remember the first time that I read a piece of narrative research I was unsure how to react to it; I wasn't even sure that it was research! Was I supposed to take this work seriously? How could I critique it and assess the quality of it? Since researching narrative forms of investigation, I know a little more about what they are concerned with in terms of intention of the researcher and also how the reader and author relationship is to work. For example, Ellis and Bochner (2003 p. 218) suggest that the purpose of a piece of narrative is 'to offer lessons for further conversation rather than [establish] undebatable conclusions.' Once the purposes or intentions of narrative are known, the research is more likely to have meaning for a reader. These intentions can be built into the writing itself and are likely to be diverse in terms of what the writer wishes to achieve for herself or for the 'listener' (Moon 2010).

Narrative is situated within human experience (Bolton 2006, Chauvot 2009, Clandinin and Connelly 2000, Webster and Mertova 2007), critical reflection is based upon an examination of experience and Dewey (1910) emphasises the connection between examining experience and learning; it would appear then that narrative lends itself to critical reflection of the nature of the complexity of human experience as a medium for knowledge creation and education. Xu and Connelly (2009) endorse this connection between narrative inquiry, experience and teacher education and emphasise the relationship of 'teacher knowledge', what teachers know through life experience, with their effectiveness with learners. They summarise narrative as both phenomenon and method in relation to teacher development:

> Narrative as phenomenon entails three aspects: teachers' personal practical knowledge, in which the personal and experiential is important; teachers' professional knowledge landscapes, in which the context in which teachers work is important; and the intersection of different ways of knowing and being, in which the intersection of

> cultural narratives is important. Narrative as method is a way of thinking about phenomena as a life space consisting of the dimensions of time, the personal-social, and place. (Xu and Connelly p. 224)

This concept of narrative as both process and product of research and professional development is evident in other educational research (Chauvot 2009, Clandinin and Connelly 2000, Clough 2002, Jaffurs 2004, Potgieter and Smit 2009, Richardson 1990 and 2003, Spiro 2008). Dalene Swanson (2009) in *Roots/Routes* explores various issues experienced as educational researcher through poetry and essay narrative. Metaphor plays a prominent role in this work and the writing demonstrates narrative's ability to display meaning and knowledge creation from experience, and while the experiences explored are intangible (as are all experiences) they are made accessible to the reader through effective storytelling. Many of the researchers referred to in this section speak of the ability of narrative to make the 'familiar strange and the strange familiar' (Bolton 2006) and as a result provide space for the critical exploration of lived experience. As an experienced practitioner where the routines of the day seem to play out themselves with little 'active thought', I definitely need the familiar to become strange so as to become more aware of the thinking behind the accepted practices. There is a growing body of educational research that uses narrative inquiry as a means of meaning-making and knowledge creation for practitioners (Bolton 2006, Lyle 2009).

In exploring concerns that are often raised when discussing the use of narrative inquiry I have come across well debated issues such as those dealing with quality and rigour, but I have other worries that are of a much more personal nature as I consider the possibility of using this mode of inquiry myself. I do not read much fiction. I enjoy reading fiction, but if I am truthful, I used to consider it entertainment rather than educational and I would usually want to spend my reading time with material of a more constructive and inherently useful nature, but I realise now, of course, that I have been depriving myself of experiencing what fiction reading can offer. Working on this investigation has involved a lot of reading and much of the material 'sounds' similar in that it uses the passive voice, or may occasionally use first person, but it still 'sounds' and 'looks' the same as most other research texts. When I moved to an exploration of narrative

inquiry, I commenced with Ellis and Bochner (2003). Part of the way through reading their chapter I stopped to take a note of a few thoughts. The page was laid out with conversations in inverted commas, there were descriptions of people and what they looked and sounded like; I was told what people were feeling and the language was simple and easy to read. I felt two things simultaneously as I read: surprise that academics were writing in such a way, and discomfort at the change in writing style from that which I was used to. As I continued to read the text, the part of me that questioned the authority and believability of the material diminished, and my anxiety levels dropped as I became, not only more accustomed to the writing style, but also became more absorbed in the unfolding story. From reading this, I learned more in terms of feeling and empathy with the issues explored, and realised the authors were just real people like me, doing real jobs with real frustrations and time constraints, and I definitely felt a bond with the writers, so much so that I keep wanting to refer to them as Carolyn and Art (!) even though I have never met the pair. The experience was really quite powerful. Behar (1996 p. 16) acknowledges this reader and author bond:

> Since I have put myself in the ethnographic picture, readers feel they have come to know me. They have poured their own feelings into their construction of me and in that way come to identify with me, or at least their fictional image of who I am.

She also admits that this kind of writing brings with it a range of ethical issues regarding responsibility towards the reader and their emotional response to the narrative, and questions if an emotional response lessens or enhances intellectual understanding. She grapples with issues that this form of research has raised and her writing appears honest and open; perhaps the honesty is due to her ability to question motives, feelings and actions, and often in her failing to find an appropriate or plausible solution to these issues.

I have had no experience in using narrative as a research tool and as such am very wary of using it as a report writing method. However, I am willing to explore the use of narrative as a way to develop critical reflection and to explore feeling, character and perspective, which are the strengths of this medium (Gargiulo 2005, Moon 2010). Perhaps once the research has been undertaken and I have been able to hone some level of initial skill, I may be willing to utilise it in part within the dissertation. I have felt the power that this

kind of writing can evoke; it is supposed to connect with the reader, and if one is perhaps honest enough in the exploration of issues and open about the frustrations and joys of the venture then the story will have the ability to reach out and grab the attention of the reader. Ellis and Bochner (2003) do warn that it is not an easy skill to master and that the writing does need to be effective and well done. There is more skill to the use of narrative than simply relaying a story. The purpose of the writing is to be considered at all times, and how the 'plot' and 'characters' are introduced and worked with must all combine within the creation to enable the reader to connect with the experience being given. I worry that the story I produce may seem fake to the reader, but this is partly down to the writing style, honest exploration of the issues and the amount of critical reflection brought to bear upon the experience.

I am also worried where fiction ends and fact begins, when writing is autoethnographic or just a memoir. This also raises the question of what is fact and what is fiction? Is it possible to give definite meanings of these, or is the reality of a situation in the 'being' of the reader (Moon 2010)? As Ellis and Bochner (2003) clearly relate, if one wants the writing to have academic or intellectual purpose, then it is published by appropriate academic publishers, inserted into the relevant journals, will be reviewed by peers, dialogue concerning its contribution to knowledge and learning will be participated in, and so on. If, however, the writing is more for general entertainment purposes, it will follow a quite different route and be read by (possibly) different groups of individuals. This reminds me a little of some experimental (and not so experimental!) music, for example, John Cage's famous 4'33" (four minutes and thirty-three seconds) in which a pianist enters a concert hall, sits at the piano, plays nothing, and when the time is up, exits. Normally a period of silence is not considered music, but Cage was making a point about the nature of sound and silence in relation to art; if the intention is that a silence is listened to (which is unlikely, of course, to be silence) then the silent space becomes music; it is all about intention.

Abdallah (2009) explores possible pitfalls of using narrative as an inquiry method and phenomenon, and suggests that being clearer with the questions one wishes to explore may help guide the writing process. Intention and investigation focus

in the inquiry, then, may help the narrative to be more effective, but one also needs to be a good writer with a sense of design, structure and drama; writing is an art and I can only hope that my skills and intuitions from my music making may allow me to explore with some success the skills of narrative writing. As with any skill, improvement comes from constructive practice. Clough (2002) and Moon (2010) demonstrate a range of writing styles relevant to narrative endeavour and provide some helpful guidance to the initiate. Clough (2002) acknowledges the still exploratory stage of narrative or fictional inquiry and suggests that it is not so much a case of studying 'how to do' this kind of investigation, but rather one should consider it a case of exploring the possibilities inherent in this form of research, thus describing his book as a 'what is it possible to do?' text.

How I worked with narrative

Over a period of several months I recorded fourteen pages of A4 notes on thoughts about how to go about using narrative effectively to generate critical reflection materials. It was the last of the vehicles that I used within this project. I kept stalling as I was apprehensive and unsure of where to begin. I felt that the planning was very important and devoted some time to this. I was excited about the possibility of using narrative and wanted to generate a strong story that would reveal inconsistencies in my practice, but nothing seemed to happen. Nothing, that is, until I started to work on critical incident. Almost immediately this gave me the material that I needed to use as a basis for narrative work. I used the two events explored in the critical incident section as the basis for narrative work. Had I started critical incident work earlier it is likely that narrative work would have started earlier too. I wrote stories that were loosely based around the circumstances of the critical incidents but attempted to write from different perspectives, using description of character, their thoughts and feelings, the creation of dialogue and so on. Over a period of four weeks I created 20 pages of A4 narrative materials. There is an almost exact correlation of dates for the work I did on critical incident and narrative.

Narrative inquiry has not been easy for me. Earlier I expressed concern about the use of narrative inquiry, not as a mode through which to explore critical

reflection as such, but as a mode through which *I* would explore critical reflection. I have been aware from the commencement of working with narrative forms that I already hold some resistance to it, and this has no doubt affected my success with the medium. I held reservations about the 'fictitiousness' and 'fakeness' of the form as a means for authentic research – can making up a story aid critical reflection and really be counted as research? I also had very little confidence in my own ability to be successful in this medium. Some of my doubts were recorded in my journal where I stated

> *24/7/09*
> *I am still not sure that making up stories is the route I want, or need, to follow. Perhaps, in the spirit of inquiry, though, I should give it a go??*
>
> *17/10/9*
> *I do not need to 'escape' to an unreal arena to explore who I am surely? I already have a creative vent in my music making, I do not need or want another. Perhaps if I needed to use narrative as a form of therapy it might work, but I see it as an art form and am no creative writer. I should leave it to those who can.*
>
> *3/2/10*
> *But actually I do need to attempt to escape from my perspective of reality and this may provide an avenue to do that.*

In comparison with the other methods used for reflection in this project it is with this one that I have engaged the least amount of hours. This was not a predetermined decision, but it did become quite clear early on that in order for me to use narrative effectively it not only takes more time than some of the other methods, but also more time than this research project allowed.

It became obvious as I worked in this medium that there are two distinct ways of working with narrative. These different ways are linked, but not exclusively, to the purpose of the writing task and for whom it is being written. I found it possible (although not easy) to permit myself to undertake spontaneous storytelling. Sometimes this was a 'simple' retelling of something that happened in the teaching studio, or based on a 'what if?' scenario. This spontaneous storytelling allows me to come out of myself and study actors and situations. Stories are about people and their lives, and so the content is centred upon beings and their interactions. Here is an extract from my journal

concerning the incident of a student becoming frustrated at their inability to do a task successfully. It is a piece of spontaneous narrative where I write from the student perspective:

> *17/5/10*
> *I am glad that I have individual lessons; I would hate it if other people could hear me. Sometimes I have no idea how I can make such sounds – are they really coming out of me? I wish I could make them sound nicer. I know the teacher keeps asking me not to listen to myself quite so much and not to be so judgemental about what I hear, but that's really difficult when the sounds you are making you do not like. Anyway, I'm still glad that there is no-one else here to listen to me except the teacher. And that's bad enough. She must think I am a terrible singer – I don't seem to be making much progress. She seems to think I am doing fine though. I am not sure that I believe her.*

This fairly unstructured way of approaching 'storying' allowed me to examine actors more closely, to imagine possibilities and to play these out, and to focus on visual and emotional aspects of interactions. Initially I had thought that in order for the story to be 'real' it should be based on real people and real events for it to count as critical reflection on my teaching practice, but it did not take long for me to realise the fallacy in that. One of the strengths of spontaneous storytelling is its ability to explore possibilities, and I also found it the most effective medium through which to study other actors in a situation, especially if I tried to tell the 'same story' but through the eyes and ears of 'the other' and again as 'the observer'. While some of this unplanned 'storying' might in the future be read by others (with my permission) that was not the purpose of their creation; the purpose behind my spontaneous story writing was to critically reflect upon issues in private, to create a story on a page as a means of analysis and exploration, a vehicle for imagination and creativity to examine possibilities and to explore what may/could be in an alternative world; 'the reasons for and consequences' of what I do (Mezirow 2000 p. 13). In other words, this kind of narrative writing was a process through which to critically reflect upon issues. It was not a product of critical reflection as such, but a medium through which to examine practices, construct meaning and actively learn.

Other aspects of narrative that I found helpful in the reflective process were the need to describe in order to bring the characters and events to life, but also the need for dialogue to help this to happen. Trying to imagine what others may say

in reaction to situations has been very enlightening in terms of interrogating how values and beliefs are integral to our ways of being. This has highlighted for me that everything we say and do has some basis and reasoning as a foundation; while we may not agree with all that others say and do (and how could we?) we can at least accept that most people say and act in certain ways for a reason, and perhaps if we gain an understanding of their frameworks we may be able to engage in meaningful dialogue and interaction (de Bono 1982/2009). I also recorded in my journal that the use of narrative as a way to consider alternatives and see from different perspectives was similar to Schön's concept of 'reframing' an issue; narrative allows for a rethinking of the situation in order to bring about opportunity for learning. In my journal I stated:

> *23/4/10*
> *I am finding having to put dialogue into the narratives a bit difficult.*
> *I find it hard to put the right words into the mouths of the characters.*
> *I think I would rather stick to description, demonstrating the thinking*
> *of each person rather than the actual dialogue. But sometimes there*
> *is a disparity between thinking, dialogue and gesture – I might be*
> *missing this opportunity for exploration.*

> *27/1/11*
> *I can hardly believe that I used the term 'right words' in the extract*
> *above. I was clearly still thinking in terms of trying to convey some*
> *definite 'thing' rather than using the narrative vehicle as a way to*
> *explore my perceptions, attitudes and beliefs.*

After writing the above extract (23/4/10) in my journal it motivated me to attempt to overcome my inhibitions with dialogue and here is another extract from my journal showing how I worked with both dialogue and description when exploring the incident with the student who was becoming frustrated. It is written from the student's perspective:

> *23/4/10*
> *The lesson was going fine until she asked me to do that tone exercise*
> *again. "Keep the vocal folds together, less air, keep up the energy…"*
> *the teacher instructed. I'm not sure when I'm doing this right or not,*
> *and when the teacher tells me that I am (or not) I can't hear or feel a*
> *difference. I keep trying to get it right but perhaps I should just*
> *accept that I'm not cut out to be a singer. I might just stop bothering*
> *– I never seem to get it right enough of the time.*

I'll keep following her instructions and if I cross my fingers I might get one of the tries correct. Listen to what she's saying – it's supposed to help be do it better. Okay, here we go again…

It's getting too much now, I have to say something. "I don't know why I find this so difficult," I eventually managed to blurt out. "I find this difficult. Do all singers find this difficult?"

So this first way of working with narrative was very productive. The second kind of writing that I attempted was one where I planned for the story to communicate some kind of meaning, in a similar way to the writing of Clough (2002). I attempted to use narrative as a vehicle to raise awareness about an aspect of my practice but in such a way that it would read well to somebody else. This kind of writing was much more difficult as it requires the ability to write(!). In order for a story to work well it needs to engage the reader and this is based to a large extent on the artistry of the author and her ability to manipulate form, words, drama, metaphor and action (Denzin 1997). This kind of writing took a fair amount of time to plan and I found that my ability to reflect critically was hampered by my need to design and story well. As a medium for developing the skills of critical reflection I found it of little use when compared with the spontaneous kind of story telling.

While this second kind of writing was not so successful for me, it gave me much greater appreciation of what it takes to write well, to write deliberately. It also brought to my attention the ability to use different ways of creating stories around a theme as a way of exploring that theme. For example, I explored what might happen in a lesson where the teacher is using the nineteenth century, didactic mode of teaching, directing, instructing and demonstrating; this is often referred to as the 'conservatoire' model of instrumental teaching (Chapman 2006, Jorgensen 2003, Sleith no date, Young et al. 2003). I might then contrast this with a narrative written around how I might like a lesson to be, an 'envisioned' lesson of the ultimate in learning partnership, fully co-operative, engaging and inspiring for both parties. These stories would strive to have living characters and dialogue in an attempt to bring the situation to life and to examine the possible consequences in each. Moon (2010) agrees that analysis takes place in storytelling and all of my attempts at narrative have provided an abundance of critical reflection materials.

While it may be revealing to read the spontaneous storytelling of others, it is more usual that stories of an educational nature will have been written for that specific purpose; planned, designed and written with a precise function in mind and perhaps also for a specific audience (Clough 2002). While I may not be very successful at writing narratives (although I have found them very successful in terms of their ability to develop critical reflection skills) I have come to appreciate the immense impact that narrative can have. I think that narrative is a powerful and effective vehicle through which to communicate aspects of our practice to others and may allow for research to reach a wider audience.

My research project has evolved over time as I engaged in critical reflection and spent time with the different vehicles. It is unsurprising that it has also changed its course and direction in response to the authors and theories that I was reading and examining. I wish to mention two feminist writers at this point who use narrative form very ably and who have made a huge impact upon me in terms of the themes they raise and how they go about raising them. Before commencing this research project I had come across some authors whose work I admired very much as the writing was personal and seemed to draw the listener in – an intimate conversation ensued between reader and writer, and dare I say it, it was a comfortable relationship (Clandinin et al. 2007). The writing of bell hooks can hardly be called comfortable, however. For example, her writing in *Belonging* is personal, based upon her own life experiences and those of her family, and she writes in such a way as to highlight issues of class, gender and race. The detail she provides in her writing makes it believable, but also keeps the reader's interest, as all good writing should. The detail is what draws the reader into the writer's world, to experience it empathetically; hooks does not hold back her emotions. It is partly because of the style of narrative writing she employs that she has succeeded not only in making me aware of the trials she and countless others have undergone as human beings, and raising feminist issues that I may not have been aware of previously, but also in alerting me to my own well established values and assumptions and how these impact upon my teaching practice and my interactions with people and objects.

In a similar vein, I have found the writing of Anzaldua (1987/1999) powerful and shocking. Her work is not new (recent), but it is new to me. *Borderlands* is

unlike any piece of writing I have ever experienced, and it was an 'experience' and not a 'read'. She writes in more than one language in an attempt to alert the reader to her unique position of inhabiting a borderland; English, Mexican and Chicana are mixed throughout the text. I interpret this in several ways: it identifies and demonstrates her unique experience/existence effectively while at the same time erecting an actual barrier between writer and reader. This barrier however excellently demarcates the border of her land she lives in and at the same time it keeps the reader out – it reinforces the concept of 'us' and 'them', belonging and exiled, which are themes of the book. It took some time to become accustomed to these 'unknown to me' words, and after a while it no longer bothered me that I did not know a translation of them. The fact that I did not understand them seemed to be the point that I was supposed to get from it. I was blown away by this – the ability to simultaneously exile your audience and to make your point at the same time!

Anzaldua's work is shocking. She shocked me often by the brutality of the content, the actual story or poem itself concerned something that I found shocking. More than this though, she frequently writes very visually, in other words, the words and images employed are very graphic and evocative – one can 'see' the action she is describing, and the text is packed full of action. The graphic nature of the writing is incessant and combined with the themes of sexuality, gender, class and other social issues, along with extensive use of metaphor and fierce and angry vocabulary, it makes for an exhausting read. In my mind, I consider poetry to be 'beautiful' and perhaps a little 'soft' around the edges, and would anticipate some 'feel good' metaphors; not so in this text. The poetry is driving, energetic, wild and, for me, this was very unexpected. The whole text is explosive in its need to tell you something, but not just to tell you something; it demands that you listen and act upon what is shown you.

Anzaldua has certainly succeeded in 'activating' me, and in a similar way to the works of bell hooks, she has raised many issues that demand my attention. As a result of undertaking this project I am now in no doubt at all about the 'validity' of narrative as a research tool (product and process) and find its medium extremely valuable as a vehicle for both exploring critical reflection processes and for communicating issues to others. The narratives of these feminist writers

have been powerful experiences for me in many ways, and one of the most important things they have done for me is to raise awareness concerning issues of class, gender, sexuality and race. But before exploring ideology critique processes I wish to discuss the fourth vehicle that I used in this research, that of personal writing.

Personal Writing

There is much overlap between narrative and personal writing. However, I wish to make a distinction that narrative is likely to be more structured, and possibly explore types of writing (poetry, dialogue, essay), and personal writing is more rooted either in straight autobiography, or writing about 'reality' without undue fictional representation, or simply analysing, thinking, problem solving – making connections and meaning through the process of language and writing. Laurel Richardson (2003 p. 499) reminds us that writing is not simply a 'mopping-up' activity that is undertaken at the conclusion of a research project, but that writing 'is also a way of "knowing" – a method of discovery and analysis. By writing in different ways, we discover new aspects of our topic and our relationship to it,' and Rosanna Hertz (1997 p. 218) tells of some of the first researchers to integrate personal writing into the analytic work of research text.

Personal writing often details events, thoughts and feelings, suppositions, analyses, hypotheses, self-conversations and so on. It is this form of 'thinking with a pen' that I label personal writing, but it is not simply note-taking either; entries in a journal may be revised or rewritten in light of new experience or new connections, or indeed, as a result of the impact of theories, texts and other research encountered within the investigation process.

> I write because I want to find something out. I write in order to learn something that I did not know before I wrote it. I was taught, however, as perhaps you were, too, not to write until I knew what I wanted to say, until my points were organized and outlined. (Richardson 2003 p. 501)

It is this kind of writing that I wish to pursue, free-flowing language and thought, which may be reviewed later for deeper analysis or review. In my brief experience of using writing as a form of inquiry, I have found it an expressive

and effective medium through which to explore my feelings, perspectives and thinking. Thought can be fleeting, and I must admit, my short and long-term memory has never been very dependable (although I think I may have selective memory as I recall the words for many songs in recitals) so I find that always having pen and paper about my person is a great aid as ideas can come at anytime, and I get so irritated with myself if I cannot record them immediately, as I know they will be forgotten by the time I find a way to record them. Personal writing reminds me of the process of 'musical doodling' or improvising. I can create music either 'live' on an instrument or in my head; I have not pre-structured the form and shape that these sounds are taking; they are coming into creation through a liberated and instinctive process where they flow, free of judgement and I may be half-monitoring the 'success' or 'effects' of these sounds. I may return to a shape or pattern a few times as it takes a more coherent design and revise and consolidate it, perhaps eventually recording the idea for future use. I see the personal writing process similar to this musical doodling, allowing ideas to flow, but I may also impose some form of structure upon the writing such as a theme or topic for exploration, or a specific event or experience. We know more than we think we know or more than we can tell (Polanyi 1966), and this form of writing may allow us to tap into some of this knowledge, in addition to providing a vehicle for critical reflection. As Holly states, '[w]riting is an antidote to the anaesthetic that slowly beclouds us as we step into routines that protect us from the many demands of teaching' (1989 p. 80).

It is my thinking and my practice that I wish to examine in this research, and personal writing offers both a mode of reasoning and representation for the inquiry (Richardson 1990) – writing provides access to meaning through the exploration of experience and critical reflection. Personal writing is 'personal'; if I want to interrogate my practices, values and beliefs, I need to examine me, and so I need to place myself in the centre of the inquiry, as all self-as-researched inquiry does. Bolton (2005) talks of how it can sometimes be difficult to write about challenges or (successes) in the first person – it can sometimes be easier emotionally to talk about something 'out there' and distanced from the self rather than use the personal pronoun. The issue of writing in the first person has been explored earlier, inviting the reader to

actively participate in the telling, and avoiding the passive voice that is often used within research reporting.

How I worked with personal writing

Personal writing spanned a period of sixteen months and generated 67 pages of A4 writing. It was started several months before exploring critical incident analysis and narrative. Much of the stimulus for personal writing came from the texts I was reading, and from content of the other vehicles that I was using to explore critical reflection. I would also provide stimulus in the form of a 'what if?' scenario or provide myself an issue for consideration. The personal writing was not dominated by actual events in my practice unlike narrative and critical incident analysis; it has taken the form of recording feelings and activities from my teaching practice and exploring possibilities. It has also taken the form of having conversations with me in an attempt to interrogate practices and the thinking that underpins them. Personal writing can often be random, unlinked statements, single words, diagrams, snippets of thoughts and so on. It is usually completely unstructured; it is the time when I allow pure thought-flow to happen in order to get whatever is in my head, at the time, out. Sometimes I will ask myself questions and probe deeper so that the critical aspect takes over from the describing and questioning aspects, but frequently the personal writing process has been one of freedom for me to write whatever I want, in whatever order I like, trying not to control the thought direction too much. I feel that this has allowed me to access feelings, reactions and assumptions that may have remained hidden had I not permitted my guard to fall and simply let the words flow in an unrestricted way. Here are examples of personal writing from my journal that demonstrate breadth of topics explored and the free nature of the thinking:

> *21/7/09*
> *I am concerned about general issues in my practice that affect all students/learners such as what to teach and why, power issues in the studio…but I am also concerned with specifics, to do with individual relations and issues. Developing a relationship with learners rather than simply me working on them…the need to develop a common language between us…like Habermas' theory of communicative action.*

23/7/09
Professional judgement - perhaps even more important to develop this 'deliberately' in the private instrumental teaching sphere as one does not have chance encounters in the staffroom or workroom through which to informally discuss studio issues, actions, choices, decisions and practices…

29/4/10
The singing student is not just a singing student. They are indeed a learner of singing, but my relationship as teacher needs to reflect much more than this. In each lesson I am interacting with a highly complex set of variables that is a human being. I have often avoided 'getting close to' or 'interfering' on a personal level with students, not because I am uninterested in the individual, or do not wish to waste contact time in 'idle' or 'unproductive' chatter, but I have always viewed it as unprofessional – my thinking has often (now I see) been dualistic - right/wrong, black/white.

29/4/10
I am aware that at times I need to inhabit the role of expert, perhaps to such an extent that I put pressure on myself to fulfil what I think the role of the expert is, or that I feel under pressure (by conventions, students, society, tradition?) to 'be' the expert.

10/8/10
I definitely want to have 'peaceful' working relationships with my students. I appear to keep talking of getting along, meshing, co-operating, and I do seem to avoid disagreement at all costs. So I think this is something that I want to think through much more. Perhaps I need to consider the benefits of disagreement, what I am worried about if a disagreement occurs…this may reveal why I avoid them…

24/10/10
I need to be careful that learners do not simply adopt my frame of reference, but that we each continually challenge each other. Value in conflict - consider Jorgensen.

I cannot, however, indicate exactly where personal writing ends and other forms of reflective work start. It is easier to demarcate critical incident work as it has clearer 'directives' to follow, and narrative is also fairly clearly differentiated by its fictional character; ideology critique also felt like a separate task but often utilised personal writing to further explore issues. So it appears from this that personal writing is a thread running through the whole reflective process regardless of the 'tool' being used.

There has been much research and documentation concerning the apparent disparity between what teachers claim they think and do (espoused theories)

and what they actually appear to do in practice (theories-in-use) (Berliner 1986). Argyris and Schön (1974 p. 7) state that an espoused theory as used by an educator is 'the theory of action to which he gives allegiance, and which…he communicates to others' and that theories-in-use 'include assumptions about self, others, the situation, and the connections among action, consequence, and situation.' It is surely the theories-in-use that determine a teacher's framework. What is played out in action demonstrates the deepseatedness of beliefs and values; the spontaneous action and reactions in the teaching environment have the potential to reveal hidden constructs that the teacher may be unaware of. Within the personal writings that I have produced, there are instances where I say I do something for a certain reason, but upon reflection there are several reasons why such an action was taken. In preparing to undertake this research project I was surprised by the results of education research concerning this apparent discrepancy between beliefs and actions. I did not doubt what the research claimed, but did not have a real appreciation for its significance. Not only is the teacher at the receiving end of some unknown form of self deception, but the learners are also at risk from the teacher's self deception practices. I hope that I may be able to probe to some extent those practices that are based upon unexamined habit – once they are recorded on paper they can be returned to frequently; analytical and critical faculties can then be used to delve beneath the surface of practices to unearth assumptions and to question their validity. The following chapter contains specific examples of this kind of analysis.

Honesty has been extremely important to me. With it comes the possibility of emotional and intellectual disturbance, or a sense of 'vulnerability' (Behar 1996). Although I have attempted to be honest within my personal writings, even if what I was writing disturbed me, I have always been aware that anybody may at some point access my file. I do not think that this has hampered the honesty to a great extent, but I have always had ethical considerations as a priority. When talking of a student that I work with, I refer to them in the text as the student, or the learner, or he/she. I have not used names at all and by doing so did not have to worry that if the file was found, or I inadvertently left it open and someone glanced at it, there might be embarrassment or upset. This research has focused upon my practice and thinking, yes, but I have not been directly studying my students, I have been studying me; I was reporting on my

relationships and reactions to/with students as a way to interrogate my practice as a whole, my thinking and my role as educator and musician, so it was the relationships and reactions that needed to be recorded; I knew to whom each record related from the situation or context described, and so kept all records anonymous.

I wish to return to E. M. Forster's quote in which he says, 'How do I know what I think until I see what I say?' I have been very surprised at times by what has appeared upon the page. I should say that I have rarely been pleasantly surprised by the results of the writing process; it has more often been something of a sense of shock as I take in what I see on the page before me. As I allow the pen to explore possibilities of action or thought, it often takes me somewhere unexpected, and it is this that has provided some awareness of the discrepancy between theories-in-action and espoused theories and more will be said of this in the next chapter. At times I have looked at myself on the page and the 'image' reflected is not one that is recognised. I can envisage the possibility that I only write what I want to see. It is easy to slip into a false sense of security whereby everything being written and analysed seems to 'fit' with the image one holds of oneself (positive and/or negative) and that one expects to see (Bolton 2006, Swan 2008), and there were stretches of writing when this was the case. Our beliefs, attitudes, and frames of reference have much power and it is well to be alert to their ability to manipulate and control. I cannot free myself from aspects of who I am; I cannot fully control my conscious, not to mention my sub/unconscious, mind and I need to acknowledge that. However, these tools of critical reflection provide a possibility to discover that which we did not know we were. In this sense, the personal writing process has acted as a kind of mirror, one that is able to view beneath the surface in order to give a glimpse of something more profound awaiting discovery with a little more analysis and critical questioning. While I may have been shocked by some of the things that I have written – some that may be 'true' while others contained possibilities of 'truth' – I never abandoned a possibility because it was too repulsive or outrageous. It was enough that what was revealed contained the possibility of being true that often encouraged me to dig deeper, because even a possibility of incompetence or injustice in my teaching practice needs to be examined. There were occasions when I explored the possible consequences of

something with the awareness that it may well not be true in my case, but there may be a day when it could be, and that was cause enough to explore the issue further.

Ideology Critique

Ideology critique provides a vehicle for critical reflection and analysis of social, cultural, economic and political systems and structures and how they are played out, struggled and cooperated with. It allows for the interrogation of taken for granted practices, values and beliefs, and dominant ideologies. Developed from critical theory, its aims are to examine the status quo, often from the perspective of the marginalised or under-represented, with a view to changing things for the better. In other words, action is an intended result of ideology critique (Apple 2004, Brookfield 2005, hooks 1994, Regelski 2000). With respect to my own inquiry, I hope to provide opportunity to review and improve my thinking and practices, and while it does not perhaps have as complex a set of variables playing upon its workings when compared to an educational institution, there are many cultural issues, among others, than do need some unravelling. In this section I intend to provide definitions of ideology critique as found in education literature and identify in which ways ideology critique may be practised.

The foundation for many writers and researchers who practise ideology critique is the critical theory of the second Frankfurt school (Abrahams 2005, Brookfield 2005, Cranton 1996, Diessner 1991, Kincheloe no date, Peca 2000). For others, the basis may be slanted towards Marxist and socialist thinking, moral principles or social practices (Diessner 1991, Gould 2008, Holmes 2004, hooks 1994, Kincheloe no date, Leonardo 2003, Singh and Richards 2006, Tripp 1992). There is much overlap in the sources for ideology critique and so there are many definitions and applications in the literature. Literature dealing with ideology critique does have some elements in common, especially with regard to how to undertake it, but the themes and subject matter upon which it is based are usually adapted to suit the needs of the researcher or writer. Regelski (2003 p. 4) proposes that ideology is 'an assortment or system of independent ideas, principles, traditions, paradigms, conventions' and 'is concerned with beliefs,

values, attitudes, and the like, that are innocently taken for granted', and also asserts that through ideology critique 'false consciousness can be rationally analyzed and valid knowledge rationally justified and communicated' (Regelski 2000 p. 4). Brookfield (2005 p. 67) suggests that ideology is 'the system of ideas and values that reflects and supports the established order and that manifests itself in our everyday actions, decisions, and practices, usually without our being aware of its presence' while Leonardo (2003 p. 203) states that ideology is simply 'the problem of relations of domination.'

Michael Apple (2004, 1996 and 1995) is the foremost writer on ideology in education with Stephen Brookfield (2005) also having contributed effectively in the area. Apple deals with ideology in terms of power and domination and describes his approach in *Ideology and curriculum* as one that seeks to 'portray the concrete ways in which prevalent...structural arrangements – the basic ways institutions, people, and modes of production, distribution, and consumption are organized and controlled – dominate cultural life' (Apple 2004 p. 1). Apple (1995) proposes that it is through an exposure and examination of tensions and contradictions that possibilities will be created for action in education. In other words, instead of avoiding controversy and maintaining equilibrium, we should highlight for critical reflection those aspects that are contradictory in order to shake up the status quo. His writings demonstrate the complexities of ideologies and hegemony at play in our lives, and while he admits that findings may be pessimistic, understanding is at least constructed through interrogation. He shows us the bigger picture of society and education's role within it, and how there are very many values and cross-purposes at play whether we are aware of them or not as 'our work may serve functions that bear little resemblance to even our best intentions' (Apple 1995 p. 11).

This can be disturbing to say the least. I like to think that I am in control of my actions, thoughts and ways of being, but ideology critique exhibits how false that concept may be. Without knowing what is 'actually' happening, how can one possibly be armed to oppose it? I must admit that I am fairly new to much that has been worked upon within this doctoral journey, including the disciplines of politics and economics. I cannot pretend to understand everything that Apple proposes, but I do realise that there is much more to living and working within

society than I had realised. I find it quite shocking that I had not known of these forces at play, and now that I am aware of them I feel obligated to do something about it. So it may be said that ideology critique is based upon an examination of the workings (seen and unseen, explicit and implied) that underpin practices (including behaviours and thinking); often this will involve an analysis of assumptions, values and beliefs, and deal with issues of legitimacy, power, domination and emancipation.

Apple (2004) proposes there are three aspects of education that need to be examined; the school as institution, the knowledge forms, and the educator him or herself. Modified and translated to my own practice this provides a starting point for collating the results of my critical reflections; 1) the traditional foundations of my practice, 2) knowledge validation (what I teach and why), and 3) me as teacher and my role within education. This sounds like a life-long project itself. This structure will be used in the following chapter to demonstrate how participating in critical reflection has altered my thinking throughout this research process. It has become apparent, then, that there are many similarities between the aims of critical reflection and the foundations of ideology critique.

Within the music community there is an international assembly of scholars and practitioners named the MayDay Group and they describe one of their purposes as being 'to apply critical theory and critical thinking to the purposes and practices of music education.' Areas of interest to those within the community are diverse, dealing with a range of music and music education issues, but all their work is connected by their commitment to the critiquing of ideology and practice. I have found their website and journal, *Action, criticism, and theory for music education,* a most valuable resource in this research journey.

So what exactly is ideology critique? What does it look like in practice? How does one go about doing it? Regardless of the area of practice being critically examined, it appears that one has to gain awareness of the practice by isolating it, subjecting actions, thoughts, values, assumptions and beliefs associated with the practice to intensive and on-going interrogation in order to find out what is 'really' at play; what is really going on as opposed to what one may think is

happening. In order to view the 'hidden' implications and consequences of actions it is necessary to have a grasp of issues of politics, economics, culture, society, ethics and other related topics such as sustainability, human rights, business and industry, globalization and the nature of knowledge. I have found the number and the impact of areas and issues related to ideology critique to be intimidating; one has to be an expert in everything, almost, in order to be able to do a satisfactory job at critiquing one's own practice. As a novice to ideology critique, I can only hope to expand my abilities in this area and in this research concentrate only on those areas either that I fully understand and feel competent to work within, or that have personal meaning for me. To explain this further, I have found during the past several years of teaching that I have become increasingly interested in the role of authority in individual lessons and how this affects the processes of learning and the content of lessons. I have also become more concerned about the elitist nature of classical music, the impact this has on learners of music and the impact that it has on practitioners of other genres of music making. I therefore intend to allow my current interests (professional, personal, emotional and intellectual) to dictate the direction that my ideology critique is taking and the related literature that I explore. I look forward to expanding into other areas in the future as I become more competent at critiquing ideology.

Ideology critique may be undertaken as a research methodology in its own right with no recourse to educational practice or to the educator as being; it can be pursued as a purely intellectual interest, or alternatively may be utilised for personal gain alone. There is an implication within ideology critique that people are affected and influenced by that being interrogated but they may be far removed from the topic under investigation. Participating in ideology critique does not mean that one is reflecting critically or that change or improvement to practices will result. Reading the theories and analyses of those who practice ideology critique may alert the practitioner to issues in her own practice which may aid the creation of material for critical reflection. Ideology critique may be used as a vehicle through which to interrogate practices, and for the purpose of this investigation it needs to be rooted in my own practice and thinking. Critical reflection is a personal and professional undertaking so the critique of ideology needs to remain within the boundaries of one's practice. Once it moves away

from the situational nature of teacher-as-researched and the educator experience it has the potential to lose the critical reflection link and is simply ideology critique. In other words, ideology critique is a useful tool through which to interrogate practices on many levels from those of the teacher herself, the teaching studio and the many influences upon these. By undertaking ideology critique and applying critical theory to practices one is able to identify, analyse and interpret actions, thoughts, and implications and as a result, come to increased understanding of contradictions and the complexities of practice.

How I worked with ideology critique

As I worked on critically reflecting upon thoughts, actions, ideas and hypothetical scenarios it became clear that many of the reflections were of an ideological nature. Without some recourse to unearthing assumptions, interrogating beliefs and analysing habitual practices I would argue that critical reflection is not 'critical'. By interrogating these issues one is participating in ideology critique. The identifying features of ideology critique as a vehicle for critical reflection when compared with the others used in this research is that there is necessity for a connection with 'bigger issues' and influences upon practices, whether at an institutional, national or multinational level. Society is rooted in the economic, historical, cultural and political. Each day I negotiate a complexity of social and cultural practices; an individual's constructs not only intersect with those of society but are often determined by those of the society in which the individual lives. An individual's decisions, actions and behaviours, attitudes and beliefs are all influenced by, and played out within, a complex weave of political and cultural structures. I have found the analysis and interrogation of ideologies the most complex and difficult of the reflective methods to grasp in terms of attempting to unearth influences of a political, economic or social nature. I am new to the studying of politics, society, culture, economics – all those areas of our lives that both allow us to function but that also control our functioning. I am still grappling with the terms, concepts and vocabulary of ideology, but through the preparatory reading that I did I felt in a position to be able to critically reflect upon my practices and participate, in a limited way at this stage in my teaching career, in ideology critique.

My notes span a period of fifteen months, an almost identical time span as that for personal writing, and 36 pages of A4 writing were created. Much of the reflection on ideology has been an interweaving process; as I have read and become aware of my own assumptions and the values I have both obtained and maintain, I have taken notes about issues, undertaken personal writing to further explore them, returned to more reading, more reflecting and so on. It has been an on-going interactive process, a going back and forth. The notes that I have made on ideology permeate all methods of critical reflection undertaken for this research; the other forms of reflection reported on above have also been used to interrogate ideology and its related political and cultural matters. As a result it has been the most messy section to sort out and report upon, but it has also had the most impact upon my teaching practice and so has required a significant amount of time, energy, patience and reflection in order to get the ideas in a coherent state to make sense of, learn from and make meaning from, and then to report upon in this document.

Ideology critique relies upon knowledge of systems of thinking; the structures and systems of politics, society and culture. One cannot participate in ideology critique without having some familiarity with the kinds of systems and structures that societies live by, and Apple acknowledges that it requires 'a good deal of plain old hard "intellectual" work', and 'more than a modicum of reading, study and honest debate in areas many of us have only a limited background in' (2004 p. 11). This makes my struggles through this work a little less painful! I have found it more manageable to start with areas that I am more familiar with and gradually move toward considering other wider and more complex structures. Kincheloe (no date p. 4) states that in education 'criticality does not determine how we see the world nor does it provide a blueprint for particular actions. Critical theory helps us devise questions and strategies for exploring them.' I used this as a guide for examining practices whereby topic headings such as power, domination, democracy and equality became the initial stimulus (rather than something specific that may have happened in the studio) and asked myself questions about each in an attempt to uncover what might actually be happening beneath the surface of my teaching practice.

Here are examples of the kinds of questions that I would pose myself:

- Who benefits from my teaching?

- Are lessons organised in ways to suit me or my students?

- Who chooses the curriculum that I use in lessons?

- Who decides (and why) how and what learners learn?

- Do I disempower learners and not allow them a voice?

- Do I force my values on others? What are the consequences of this?

- Do I treat people differently due to their race, gender or social status?

- Who have I marginalised?

- What right do I have to decide what is 'good' for students?

- Is it possible to create a more democratic studio, and how might it be different from the current one?

- If music is an expressive art form and the meaning gained from participating in it is based upon the individual 'intersecting' with and 'cohabiting' with the material, is it appropriate to endorse assessment in the field of music? Of what use will the assessment be? Is it possible to measure the meaning that someone makes from a musical encounter?

- If all individuals experience music differently, how can we have one mode of assessment for all?

- Do I practise fairness? What is fairness and is it different to equality? What evidence is there in my practice of acting unfairly and do I support inequality in some ways?

- What criteria can be used to determine the value of kinds of music or kinds of music activity?

Providing questions that are integral to knowledge structures and systems of living/being means that the critical process is initiated from out with the specific happenings of the teaching studio; as the questions are examined it is necessary to home back in on the studio and to critically analyse teaching practices in some detail and with a fair amount of candour and honesty if the results are to be of some personal and professional relevance.

Unlike the other forms of critical reflection that I participated in, this was the one whose starting point for reflection often originated in literature and educational ideas and debate. This was beneficial as it placed my small world of the teaching studio within a wider educational context and allowed me to

examine my work and the influences played upon me, forcing me to deal with difficult and contentious issues. Eisler (2002) explores partnership and domination models and how they relate to one's employs by starting with the personal, moving outward to consider family, community, country and so on. Holly (1989) refers to these as the contexts of professional life and represents them in a circle diagram with self at the centre, moving outward to family, school, district and state, finishing with nation and world. We are all influenced by these larger and encircling forces and, by exploring the work of other theorists, educationalists and researchers, I was able to continue probing an issue in order to establish my position in relation to these bigger professional issues and to determine the influences upon the creation of my meaning perspective and framework.

It was also beneficial to critically analyse beliefs using these bigger issues as a starting point. Until this stage in the critical reflection proceedings, much of the focus could remain on the specific and intimate happenings of a lesson. It can be very helpful to deal with a specific situation and the incongruities that it throws up, or to explore the feelings of discomfort from such an event through journal and personal writing, or narrative, or through the guidelines of a critical incident questionnaire. But because the focus has been on 'micro' events, links may be missed with 'macro' issues that may be having a huge impact upon the teaching and learning in the studio. Without an examination of the bigger picture through such avenues as ideology critique, some assumptions inherent in practice may never be critically examined.

By using specific questions related to power, domination, democracy or equality and then looking again at my practice through these lenses, it has allowed me to reflect upon lessons, their content and conduct, in a much more critical and detailed way. Ideology critique alerts you to issues, and once you are aware of them it is very difficult to 'pretend' that you are still ignorant of them. In other words, once you are aware of practices of domination, you cannot simply continue purporting these practices; you actually become aware of them mid-flight, or as Schön (1983, 1987) has described, you become more 'reflective-in-action' and adjust your teaching accordingly. I have found that ideology critique has not been just a method for reflecting critically on beliefs, attitudes and

behaviours whereby one 'thinks things through' and engages in analysis; it has very much had a direct impact upon my thoughts and actions in the studio. What I mean by this is that during the act of 'teaching and learning' I seem to have an extra part of my brain that is functioning that was not there before, that monitors actions, language and behaviours and adjusts them accordingly – something like a moral and ethical judge, but working on 'enhanced mode'. This is not surprising, perhaps, when you consider that the themes examined in ideology critique are BIG themes; they are matters of life, respect, emancipation and liberation, ideals that we all hold as fundamental in a democratic society, but often our teaching reveals that we do not actually practise what we think we are practising. Here are a couple of extracts from my journal demonstrating the kinds of themes behind the critical reflections and the ways I was thinking and questioning my thinking:

> *19/9/10*
> *concerning power and status quo – I have been teaching for more than 20 years now within institutions and in private practice. In the early years of my teaching experience I concentrated on developing my skills and competence as a teacher and getting to a level of ability where I felt confident in my running of the classroom and the teaching that took place within it. There was no encouragement to question what was done or the purposes behind the educational activities. I assumed that if I did what was expected of me as laid down by superiors then I must be doing a good job. I was becoming familiar with curriculum, policy, teaching methods, current educational trends, technology, and syllabuses and so on. From a private teaching perspective this has meant adhering to the guidelines of professional organisations, attending seminars and attempting to emulate what was demonstrated at these, staying abreast of current developments and debates and attempting to be an effective teacher as put forth by these respected sources of guidance. Fitting in, doing what is expected, admired, respected – doing all the kinds of things I am expected to do. Being a well behaved educator – maintaining the status quo, no rocking of the boat, but rather, attempting to maintain things the way they are. I did not think these things at the time, but now that I look back in light of the reading that I have been doing, it is quite clear that this was my main employ – to maintain the status quo.*
>
> *I had thought, naively, that one was not supposed to speak out…I thought this was a kind of mutiny of the prevailing and well meaning practices taking place – it is inappropriate to criticise those in power of such things – this is insubordination – and as in the military, one should always follow the chain of command, whether one believes in it or not – it is for the betterment of something that I know nothing of…I am simply expected to do as instructed…obey.*

I can't recollect when I started to become aware of an ability to question the status quo, but seem to remember overhearing a delegate at one of the EdD meetings talking of subverting systems and procedures at their work, but only in small ways – you don't want to stand out from the crowd too far too soon – just the odd bit of disagreement and proposal for change here and there, but timing of these things is important to ensure their success. I remember being quite shocked that someone would consider acting in such ways in their educational establishment – surely we owe the institution our loyalty? How much my thinking has changed since then…

16/9/10
Knowledge validation – whose knowledge is of value and what kinds of knowledge are valuable and to whom? Why have I not known of these things before? This is what education is about – questioning…For many knowledge needs to be 'proved' by, for example, certification. If it cannot be certified then it is of less worth and is only a leisure pursuit…If private music learning is important, of value, of worth then do we need to prove, and if so, to whom and why? What kinds of knowledge am I supporting and passing on and developing in others? The kinds of knowledge that I teach send messages to learners that it is of value…but is it, and have I actually interrogated the kinds of knowledge that I support? This is a fundamental issue that requires deep thought. Am I simply teaching those skills that were taught to me, where are my priorities and why? Am I restricted to syllabus following or am I able to think for myself on these issues – to go above and beyond and around…?

Participating in ideology critique, even in a small way, has been extremely stimulating and thought provoking, but this has also been its main frustration! As each question is posed, answers are not found; it seems rather that many more questions are generated. Due to the intersecting of values, beliefs, society, culture and politics, every question concerning me and my practice seems to branch out beyond the confines of the studio where each response receives more and more questions requiring exploration and explanation, so spreading out even further and becoming a venerable forest of complexity! However, it is this spreading outward that has really allowed me to make meaningful connections with bigger issues and has helped me to put my work into both an educational and a musical context. Ideology critique has allowed me to contextualise my thinking and practice.

Getting the 'critical' into/out of critical reflection

So how do I go about actually doing this thing called critical reflection in a way that fully explores the 'critical'? It may be best to summarize some of the different approaches used by researchers, theorists and writers. Some people use a specific perspective or paradigm (such as feminism) through which to interrogate practices of gender, race or class. Andalzua (1987/99) and bell hooks (1994, 2009 and 2010) are examples of this kind of approach where lenses are used through which to interrogate practices. For example, they expose how women (and minorities) have been exploited, mistreated and ignored in many social practices, and how they continue to be, and how women play the role that society/industry/family expects of them. Using a lens is certainly a helpful way of critiquing aspects of life and society, but does restrict you to focusing on the one issue. This has been used as the main driving force of many feminist researchers who focus on those (not just women) who have been sidelined, ignored, mistreated or abused in society.

Other writers such as Michael Apple take a more political slant and attempt to show how government and international organisations affect not just daily life, but the beliefs we hold about our daily lives. This involves interrogating the unintended consequences of policy and the hidden agendas behind schemes and practices that on the face of it may appear to be beneficial to most, but the questions remain about those that the policies or decisions do not support. This focuses on the democratic ideals of a just society and working for the good of the majority; there are always those who are marginalised as a result, and the political slant often focuses on this aspect. I have found the issue of democracy to be compelling in relation to my practice and hope to investigate this further in my critical reflections. Looking through the lens of politics and society, one can come to an awareness of 'hegemony'. I must say that when I first encountered this term I did not really grasp its import – just another of these terms that one has to become familiar with. The point here is, though, terms and vocabulary exist for a reason – to describe an aspect of life. It took me some time to really understand what exactly hegemony was, and when I came to the understanding I thought I must have misunderstood! How can I be a willing accomplice in a social/political system/way of life and way of being that is

actually making me a prisoner of my own beliefs and where I act in a way that enforces my own imprisonment in the belief system? It is impossible to go into any detail concerning hegemony in this project but readers are directed towards the extensive writings of Apple and Brookfield for more detail.

Still other writers use societal or cultural lenses through which to question practices and expose power and domination issues. For example, within music and music education there are many debates concerning the values inherent in music as aesthetics, and the legitimacy of high art versus low art amongst many others. Many of these issues have been debated by the MayDay group under the editorship of Regelski, and Jorgensen (1997 and 2003) and Small (1977 and 1998) have contributed significantly to these concerns also, whereby the aims of music education should be those of emancipation and liberation.

There are also more generic concepts that can be used as the basis for ideology critique that focus more on the actual doing – perhaps akin to the critical pragmatists. This involves an analysis of such concepts as control, the value of conflict, and the shaking up of the status quo. I have been shocked and made to feel guilty by the statement of several writers that not taking a stance is taking a stance – by ignoring the implications of our practice, and examining the influences upon it and their effects, we are still culpable. Ideology critique has become, for me, a call to action. It invites me to examine where and what I am in reality and where I may want to be in the future utopia; it demands action. Riane Eisler (2002) writes about the issues of domination and partnership and how these have been forged in and by history and within our culture. She commences her focus on the individual and her relationship with herself and working within the perspectives of domination and partnership ideologies she expands out from the individual, to the work place, and then the local, national and international community. Her background is not in education, but as I am discovering, education cannot be treated as a discipline in isolation; education influences and is influenced by society, culture, history, economics, ethics and politics.

I have found all these texts to have provided much to think upon and they have raised many issues that I had hitherto never considered, so the journey ahead is

looking complex and busy, but bright. It is impossible to cover all bases in this research project as it has unearthed plenty to keep me going my whole lifetime. All aspects touched on above involve processes of interrogation. This term means that we must examine from all angles what we do and consider the consequences of what is done and said, and what is not done and remains silent. In addition, it means that we must examine our belief structure and what we value, consider why we hold these views and attempt to excavate the influences that have played their part in the development of these values and practices, and consider the impact of these upon those we work with in the same way that Stenhouse states of the teacher as researcher 'it is a question of cultivating habits I can defend and justify' (1975 p.158).   It also means that we must consider other influences that are so ingrained in our way of being and behaving that they seem like common sense, and tradition, and the 'way things should be' (Apple 2004, Carr and Kemmis 1986). What messages do I transmit by these actions and practices? What have I omitted from this dialogue or practice or what have I not considered? Why do I do things this way and what are the consequences of this? What do I want to change in my practice and why? Who benefits from the way I do things? All these questions are linked to the process of ideology critique.

While ideology critique is practised as a research field in its own right and practised by many disciplines out with education and sociology, it does seem to be integral to the concept of critical reflection; it adds more 'criticalness' to the reflection and also places the reflections within a wider context, so enabling increased understanding and meaning making within contexts which is the purpose of this research. Critical reflection is practised by many different disciplines and for many different purposes, but it does appear to be 'useful' in meaning making, developing knowledge and improving practice through change.

I have used the five vehicles reported above to participate in critical reflection, these being maintaining a journal, critical incident analysis, narrative, personal writing and ideology critique. A large amount of material was generated as a result. Some of the substance from these critical reflections will be shared in the following chapter where I demonstrate the examination of my thinking and practices and is structured around three aspects as adapted from those

suggested by Apple (2004), these being, 1) the traditional foundations of my practice, 2) knowledge validation (what I teach and why), and 3) me as teacher within the practice.

Chapter 4: The impact of critical reflection upon my thinking

It is my responsibility in this chapter to attempt to demonstrate to the reader that I have engaged in critical reflection and that it has had some impact upon my thinking and my singing teaching practices. I have adapted the three aspects of education that Apple (2004) proposes be examined and used these to structure this chapter. While these are three distinct areas there is some overlap between each as will become evident in the journal entries quoted throughout this chapter. As the basis for the content of each of these sections I have used themes that seemed to recur throughout my journal, themes that I returned to over the months as I practised critical reflection, and themes that had a deep impact upon me personally and professionally:

1)   The traditional foundations of my practice:
    a) Espoused theories and theories-in-use
    b) Individual lessons and the master-apprentice model
2)   Knowledge validation:
    a) Western art music – what does it mean to learn (music)?
3)   Me as teacher:
    a) My role and the relationship between teacher and learner

Undertaking critical reflection and writing about what has been learned from it are two completely different tasks. The previous chapter reported on the vehicles used for critical reflection and an evaluation of the processes, but this chapter presents the reader with evidence of these from my journal in an attempt to demonstrate impact upon my thinking. To evidence critical reflection I have chosen to concentrate on the 'change' aspect that occurs as a result of participating in critical reflection; change in terms of ways of thinking, but also change in terms of the content of thinking. For each aspect presented I will show where I used to be in terms of knowledge or perspective before undertaking critical reflection, and I will then document some of the questioning and critical analysis that I have undertaken, and endeavour to show this inward and outward dialoguing with events, literature, theories, practices and beliefs. Finally I will attempt to demonstrate the new state of things, describe how my frame of reference has changed, new meanings that I have constructed, and report on transformations that have occurred.

It is impossible for me to disclose even a small percentage of what I have discovered from participating in critical reflection that has had an impact upon my thinking, so wide ranging and penetrating have they been. The reader is asked to bear this in mind as this chapter continues. I am also aware that there is a need to mix tenses throughout the text as a way of showing how things were in the past and how they are now and I hope this aids the reader in perceiving the changes that have taken place as a result of the critical reflection process. It is also worth remembering that critical reflection can represent a way of being (or becoming and altering) (Moon 1999) in addition to it being a process, and this can be more difficult to capture in words.

> [V]erbal languages have proved on the whole less than adequate in articulating and dealing with our highly complex relationships with one another and with the rest of the world. (Small 1998 p. 58)

1)   The traditional foundations of my practice
a)   Espoused theories and theories-in-use

Argyris and Schön (1974 p. 7) state that an espoused theory as used by an educator is 'the theory of action to which he gives allegiance, and which…he communicates to others' and that theories-in-use 'include assumptions about self, others, the situation, and the connections among action, consequence, and situation.' I have included a section reporting on the changes that have taken place in my thinking on this subject as I feel that each teacher holds firm beliefs and is able to justify practices verbally. Many of these beliefs and justifications are part of the traditions of teaching; fundamentals that have become our beliefs through education, experience and culture. Mezirow (1990 p.3) reminds us that '[m]ost meaning perspectives are acquired through cultural assimilation…others are stereotypes we have unintentionally learned.'

It goes without saying that I have come across many instances where I discovered a discrepancy between theories-in-action and espoused theories. These have sometimes been the most powerful learning experiences from critical reflection as they have often undermined some of my most basic beliefs.   These

discoveries seem to impact upon me more when I not only acknowledge the fact, but also commit it to paper. Once the 'secret' is out there can be no turning back. I have to face the consequences of what has been discovered; I choose to either continue the way I have done and provide some justification for maintaining the same practices, or I choose to alter what is happening in an attempt to improve matters.

So what evidence can I provide to show that I have succeeded in uncovering a theory-in-action? Firstly, I would suggest that you have to be keen to find out what you are 'actually doing' rather than 'pretending' to analyse practice and simply producing documentation that is self-justifying. In other words, you need to be motivated in this endeavour and to pursue it honestly and rigorously. I think that if you are a professional educator you will want to look for these discrepancies in theory as it may help to improve your practice; it may allow for enhanced client/learner/practitioner satisfaction, may also permit higher success rates, and possibly lead to a more socially responsible practice. Argyris and Schön (1974 p. 38) support these benefits of working together to reveal theories-in-use, and endorse that 'motivation…must be strong' as the results initially may be disturbing. The following extracts from my journal are included to support the demonstration of my being 'motivated' in this endeavour:

> *24/7/09*
>
> *This research is driven not by a need to 'know me', but to see what drivers and assumptions and influences are embedded in my practices and to expose habitual patterns of thought, action…I want to jolt myself into another place of being – a little shift can change a whole perspective - so it is less personal (although one cannot get away from this) and also less individual – I am being driven to inquire as to the relationship between me and other things – agents and objects. For example, me and students, me and my past, me and my traditions, me and ideology, me and habits, me and my values.*
>
> *29/7/10*
>
> *Critical reflection is an opportunity to unearth tacit knowledge. We do get into a routine – we become so accomplished in our work that we utilise instinct, pattern and experience to guide us through the day. We learn through experience how to deal with the unexpected – to such an extent that that is really what teaching is – be prepared to deal with the unexpected at all times – that is thinking on your feet. But because we are so accustomed to taking the unexpected in our*

stride and settling into the roles of teaching that we forget to appreciate what we are doing. A fresh perspective can shake things up a little – knock us from the comfort of routine and allow the possibility to view practice from a fresh/alternative perspective(s).

Secondly, in providing evidence to show that I have succeeded in uncovering theories-in-action I am assuming that if I ask appropriate questions and am honest in response to these, I may excavate issues that I was not aware of before. If I am not aware of these theories-in-action prior to commencing the critical reflection process and as a result of participating in the processes I become aware of them, presumably this is an indication that something has been found that was previously hidden and unknown. This is the nature of learning, discovering that which was unknown previously. It must be acknowledged that there is the possibility that something may be discovered, but is ignored or glossed over; sometimes we remain blinkered for many reasons and so someone needs to not only want to discover these discrepancies (willingness), but also needs to be ready to take the criticism on board (preparedness). It may be found that what is discovered is too much to deal with today and the reflector may return to the issue later when the concept has had a chance to diminish somewhat in effect, or when the reflector feels in a stronger position to deal with it. The following journal entries evidence some revelations that became apparent as a result of undertaking critical reflection and are taken as proof of discovering theories-in-use:

10/4/10

What does this tell me? That some values or perspectives are so stuck in my psyche that I automatically react a certain way. Not only that, but I have an emotional reaction. Assumptions being ingrained, reacting without thinking. In other words, my practice is showing me what my real theories are – so how to go about changing these?

19/4/10

Self affirmation – is this what caused me worry and not student welfare but MY welfare? This insight now worries me – am I really so self-centred? All along I thought I was concerned about my students but actually I am concerned about me. This may come from putting too much pressure on myself to be the 'expert' 'professional' – high standards…we can only be what/who/how we are.

20/4/10

My thinking about what I do has become habitual/almost one dimensional/single loop, and no analysis of the practices has taken place to confirm or refute them. As I got into the swing of teaching I relied on well served methods, accepted practices, things that I once thought were good ideas because?...but the justification for many of the practices may never have been fully thought through in the first place and never questioned since.   I may have read about the effective use of X and so employ it, using the research as a valid and effective rationale for the practices, but given analysis and critical reflection it may be extremely inappropriate for the position I am in and for my students. Critical reflection does not provide 'right answers' but it does flag up very many varied ways of interpreting practices and considering their impact on teacher and learner.

19/9/10

I had wrongly thought that I could run an 'independent' (me in control - my practice...but it is not!) practice, based upon my own concept of teaching and learning. As I have progressed on this doctoral journey many of the views and perspectives that I held about teaching, education, and music have been brought into question. I can now appreciate from my limited knowledge of politics, economics, society and culture that I have explored through ideology critique work that all that I am is a result of a complex weave, tapestry of influences that have been weighing on me since, possibly before, birth. I am reminded of the adage that 'no man is an island' which reminds us of our inescapable link to others/beings, ideas and practices. In my own classroom I was able to flex my own education muscles, retain some concept of real professionalism...Education in school especially, is concerned with control and the exerting of power. We are taught discipline, punctuality, and guided in appropriate behaviours and ways of being – avoiding disruption and the maintenance of 'civility', 'likemindedness' etc. Clones, responsible and well behaved citizens....There is no such thing as an 'independent' practice...

I think, however, it is this third point that is the most compelling with regard to justification that theories-in-action have been discovered, and that is through the reaction of the practitioner to what is found; the influence of the affective domain upon the reflector. If my espoused theories, the ones that I happily discuss with colleagues and perpetuate in my mind as being the foundation of my practice, come under fire and are questioned as to their validity and I can find no 'real proof' that I am actually acting these out in practice, then surely a sense of instability, insecurity, uncertainty, guilt and surprise will be exhibited.

'Emancipatory education is an organized effort to help the learner challenge presuppositions, explore alternative perspectives, transform old ways of understanding, and act on new perspectives (Mezirow 1990 p. 18). Mezirow here reminds us that we are intending to find some flaws with presuppositions and meaning perspectives and these are likely to cause consternation for the critical reflector. Perhaps if one is expecting what is found then the reaction will be less, but if a 'big' issue is discovered it is likely that the size of the emotional reaction will also be large. 'Strong emotions often point to strongly held values and beliefs' (Fook and Gardner 2007 p. 103). This is certainly what I have found in terms of the discrepancy between theories-in-action and espoused theories – I have been shocked and upset by what has been discovered about me and my practice, and I take this as proof that I have learned something significant in relation to theories-in-action – I have been affected emotionally by the discoveries:

22/6/09

When one learns anew, or learns of new things, or is made aware of hitherto unknown concepts, ideas, or ways of being/perceiving there is a feeling of the scales being lifted from one's eyes, of a sense of freedom from restraints, of the ability to take on the world on its own terms. But there is also a shamefulness, the acknowledging of ignorance, of observing that which we were with disdain, with disgust – 'how could I not have known of this before?' An embarrassment and guilt for those who are still inhabiting the land of 'knowledge-less-ness' – as an educator I wish to give myself and all those I have direct contact with the opportunity to learn for themselves, to discover how to be loosened from ties of ignorance, tradition, habit...and to discover the human potential within that respects dialogue, disagreement, creativity and honesty.

20/4/10

This does seem to confirm other research of teachers' practices and what they say they practise. How they are clearly not the same thing. Isn't this odd that we think we are doing something but when in actuality when viewed from multiple perspectives and analysed it is actually something quite different - SCARY!

As I disclose some of the 'findings' from my critical reflecting, the reader may consider some of the content banal and unoriginal, or may experience that which is 'new'. One aspect that needs to be remembered about critical

reflection is the personal nature of the learning that is undertaken; it is me, my thinking and my practice that is affected by the results of reflecting critically; what I present is situated learning. It is possible that others may be inspired, motivated or challenged to consider their own practice in the light of what I disclose, but ultimately this chapter demonstrates what I have learned and the tentative meanings that I have constructed *in and around my practice context*. As Moon (1999 p. 106) states, '[w]hether learning is meaningful or not can only be judged by the learner because meaningfulness is an expression of the relationship between the material of learning and the learner's existing understanding.' This also highlights one of the strengths of critical reflection in that it can be utilised by practitioners of all levels of experience, as one is able to simply work with the knowledge and experience that one has already.

1)   **The traditional foundations of my practice**
b)   **Individual lessons and the master-apprentice model**

In addition to the normal schooling and training received by most teachers, I was also trained in what it means to be a teacher and learner of music from individual instrumental lessons and group music making activities. These lessons were part of my weekly routine from about the age of eight until I completed my undergraduate degree. While each teacher that I worked with had their own style and approach, they were more alike than different. The majority of instrumental lessons in the private sector (and still frequently in the public sector, especially in Higher Education) are conducted on a 'one-to-one' basis, there being one teacher to one student. This is neither an economic nor efficient way of running things for either student(s) or teacher. It is socially irresponsible as it allows for only a relatively small number of learners to enjoy music making and it restricts the learning opportunities available to those generated by learner and teacher, whereas within a group situation one learns from peers too. As demonstrated in the first chapter of this report, individual lessons have been the norm in music education since about the nineteenth century.

I have always received individual lessons and most of the lessons I have given privately have been individual, although I have had several sets of group lessons with learners too. During the 1980s, when I received most of my tuition, it was

still the practice in schools to have individual lessons. During the past twenty years this practice has changed to one in which music tuition is mostly given in groups. The following is an extract from the guidelines for instrumental teaching in Scottish schools (HITS no date p. 2):

> Instrumental services were mainly provided free of charge and resources tended to be allocated to schools where it was felt that they would be used effectively. Instrumental lessons were normally offered on an individual basis which reflected an elitist approach. Support for this system was such that even in the face of criticism over its selective approach most authorities maintained the status quo although a few began making a charge to parents. However during the last twenty years the adoption of new methodology, increased demand for lessons and new selection criteria have resulted in more equitable provision.

Why is it then that individual instrumental and vocal lessons continue to be the norm in the private (and HE) sector? Is it perhaps because you learn skills individually and then apply these within a group setting such as an orchestra or band out with the lesson? Is it because if you are getting the undivided attention of the teacher you are likely to progress quicker? Is it perhaps because the teacher can meet individual learner's needs better in a one-to-one setup? Is it perhaps because many learners in the private sector are adults and do not want the embarrassment of sharing lessons with others where their skills (or lack of them) will be scrutinised by other learners? There are many possible reasons for the state of things, but the nature of the vocal/instrumental lesson does require examination.

The original conservatoires of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were orphanages linked to hospitals where the children received free group music tuition and entertained the paying public through concerts to make money for their keep (Arnold 1965). There were also sacred music schools formed from the thirteenth century onwards, such as the Notre Dame School and secular music schools established from the eighteenth century. The intention of these early, and later, establishments was to produce trained artists for the burgeoning commerce of religion and music/dramatic entertainment. It is this elitist concept of 'training to become a professional musician' based in nineteenth century principles that is the foundation of the conservatoire model but is quite inappropriate for many learners of music today (Small 1977).

I have spent some time examining exactly how to go about the actual doing of the instrumental lesson in terms of engagement, roles played, and the kind of learning relationship that is formed between learner and teacher. There has been a fair amount of research regarding the kind of learning and teaching model used in individual lessons within Higher Education establishments (Gaunt 2008, Haddon 2009, Kennell 2002, Latukefu 2010, Triantafyllaki 2010, Zhukov 2008). Much of this confirms the prevalence of the conservatoire model of learning and teaching (master/apprentice model) and it is reported that many undergraduates who start teaching voice and instruments often resort to this way of teaching as it is the one they have most experience of (Woodford 2002). I have at times been perturbed by the inappropriateness of this model of learning even though I do use it frequently within my own teaching. Most, but not all, private instrumental teachers have undertaken some form of formal music education which might include self preparation for an external exam board teaching diploma, or most likely will have involved undertaking a taught diploma or undergraduate degree course. If the only kinds of teaching and learning that these private teachers have experienced is that of the individual lesson and the conservatoire model it is unsurprising that the tradition is still strong.

Other professionals that utilise individual consultations might include solicitors, doctors, dentists, therapists, psychiatrists and social workers. It is not unusual to meet with a professional on an individual basis, but it does seem unusual to participate in an educational endeavour on an individual basis for an extended period of time and at great expense, although I can think of areas within sport, such as golfing and tennis, where it does exist. An ideal situation is for learners to participate in group and individual lessons, so the best can be achieved from both, a view shared by Janet Mills (2007). The one-to-one learning situation is fraught with potential difficulties that I had not *fully* appreciated until undertaking this study.

In order to provide some insight for the reader, the following extracts from my journal (from the narrative inquiry section) demonstrate different aspects of the master-apprentice model of learning in the instrumental lesson. The first and

second extracts concern a hypothetical situation of a student attempting a task and becoming frustrated at not being able to do it successfully; each is taken from the learner and teacher perspective respectively. The third extract is written from a student perspective and explores the benefits and drawbacks of undertaking one-to-one tuition. These extracts are raw material, having received minimal editing for inclusion in this report to help make them more accessible. They are what my pen revealed to me through exploring narrative. They have revealed much of insight to me that I had not considered before.

Extract one

23/4/10 exploring a learner becoming frustrated with a task

From the learner's perspective:

The lesson was going fine until I was asked to do that tone exercise again. "Keep the vocal folds together, less air, keep up the energy…" I'm not sure when I am doing this right or not, and when the teacher tells me that I am (or not) I can't hear or feel a difference. I keep trying to get it right, but perhaps I am just not cut out to be a singer. I might just stop bothering. I never seem to get it right enough of the time.

I'll keep following her instructions and if I cross my fingers I might get one of the tries correct. Listen to what she is saying – it is supposed to help me do it better. Okay, here we go again.

It is getting too much now. I have to say something to the teacher. "I don't know why I find this so difficult," I blurted out. "I find this difficult. Do all singers find this difficult?"

Well at last I have said something about this. I am getting so frustrated at not being able to get this exercise correct. I might just stop trying, then she might not ask me to do it again. The teacher is explaining that all pupils take different time periods to learn things and that these muscles are tiny and have got into their own habitual way of working. It is not easy to get inside the larynx and manipulate the folds, cartilage and muscle. Thank goodness – I was thinking that it was just me being lame. I'm sure I should have been able to do this sooner though. The teacher says I need to be patient and persevere. That is easier said than done though. She makes it sound really easy when she demonstrates it; I'm sure I should be able to do this by now. Do you think she is just saying all these things to make me feel better? Is it making me feel better? Well, it's not making me feel worse…

Perhaps if I stop trying and just let the sound flow – relax a little more and just let it happen. There's no need to get so uptight about the whole thing is there?

Good, the teacher has moved on to something else. Maybe I'll be able to do it next time and then she won't ask me anymore. She must think that I am really slow at this singing thing – but she does say I am doing well at other things. Perhaps it is worth persevering after all. Hey ho – let's see what next week brings. I hope I can do it.

Extract two

23/4/10 exploring a learner becoming frustrated with a task

From the teacher's perspective:

So let's see how she is getting on with the tone exercise. Not enough energy, loss of focus and too much air. I'll just get her to try it again and sort out these three things...boy, do I need to work hard to get her energy up or what? It is so much better when the energy level is up and stays up, but she doesn't seem to be able to keep it up for long. We'll try a few more repetitions and see if there is an improvement.

She said that she finds this difficult. I said that lots of people find things difficult and we all take different time periods to change behaviour of muscles, folds, cartilage etc. She seems a bit frustrated by this task. Her tone of voice and body language confirm this. Let's see if I can put her mind at ease about this task as I don't want her to become unmotivated or start to lose confidence as these are the things I need to be building up at this stage.

Well I hope she believes what I just explained, but I am not sure that she is convinced. It is difficult for the learner to be patient when working on these detail tasks. I hope she does believe me though – I told her the truth and tried to be as honest and encouraging as possible. She will get there given time. But I must avoid her losing faith; she might stop trying, or just give up all together. That would be a shame, as her progress is very good. Perhaps I should play this exercise down a little bit in the next few lessons and take the pressure off for a bit?

If she could hear herself and how much better it is when she gets it right. I wonder if I can help her to remember what and how she is doing it? I'll ask her to focus on what it feels like – how hard the muscles are working, what imagery she is using, etc. That would give her a bank or ways to remember and then replicate. It is difficult to do the same thing again especially when you go home and try and might only remember some of the 'help tips'. We might go over it each week but not spend so much time on it. I don't want her becoming despondent, but I and she cannot afford to let her 'fail'.

Little reminders each week is what I'll do and then move immediately on to a different task.

Her lack of energy is probably related to frustration and motivation issues (and her health issues), so I need to get positivity high and hopefully the energy will follow.

Extract three

17/5/10 From the learner perspective:

I am glad that I have individual lessons. I would hate it if other people could hear me. Sometimes I have no idea how I can make such sounds – are they really coming from me? I wish I could make them sound nicer. I know the teacher keeps asking me not to listen to myself quite so much so as to avoid being over judgemental about what I hear, but that's really difficult when the sounds you make are not liked. Anyway I'm still glad that there is no-one else here to listen to me except the teacher, and that's bad enough. She must think I am a terrible singer – I don't seem to be making much progress. She seems to think I am doing fine though. Not sure whether I believe her.

Perhaps if I could watch and listen to her working with other singers, then I might be able to grasp better what she wants me to do, and it would be good to hear the changes in someone else's voice. Sometimes when she says I did something better I think it was just the same. Maybe there's something wrong with my hearing?

But who would be happy to undergo a public lesson – a lesson where there is an audience analysing every aspect of your performance, physique, sound? That's an even worse scenario that individual lessons. At least the teacher is used to hearing all these strange sounds from beginning students. She understands that there needs to be lots of trial and error. But in a public lesson – imagine all those people – judgemental thoughts and creating opinions of me based upon a lesson – imagine if I could do nothing right in that lesson at all – I think I might give up if that was the case. It would be so humiliating.

Still, it would be good to observe a lesson, to see and hear someone else doing what I try to do. Perhaps if everyone had a shot at being the pupil in front of everyone else, that might be a fair way to run a public lesson. It would also mean that we all share something together. It would make it easier to talk about issues if we all had a shared experience. It would be good to be able to get together with other singers and talk over problems and how we find learning and lessons. I wouldn't want to go first though! And what if everyone is better than me? Then I wouldn't want to go up at all. I would just sit back and feel inadequate. But, if there were other people like me, at my level, with some of the same problems that I have, then I would be more likely to take a turn at the public lesson.

Perhaps if everyone had to do things together at the start, that would break the ice a bit, and maybe working in a circle, or in small groups and pairs, then I would get to know other people and feel part of the group. A sense of belonging is what is needed in a public lesson – a feeling of not being alone and isolated, but one of group encouragement and all sharing the same fears and hopes.

It is still nice to have the privacy of the individual lesson, now that I think about it. I can experiment more freely and without so much humiliation and embarrassment. Perhaps this individual lesson stuff is not so bad. I'll give that exercise another go now.

These narratives were very revealing to me. As I reread them in the present I feel that it is possible to experience a little of what the one-to-one lesson may be like at times; narrative allows a human perspective to pervade the topic. There are things written in these extracts that I did not know or appreciate before. Narrative certainly helped to reveal issues, strategies and possibilities that had been hidden from me, and I value what I have learned from working with it enormously.

Learners (especially teenagers and adults) often come with their own assumptions concerning how lessons should be conducted, and very many, in my experience, expect the lesson to follow the master-apprentice model, whereby the student receives instructions and then diligently rehearses the skills and tasks and returns next lesson to receive more 'expertise' from the master. If a learner perpetuates this mindset, it is all too easy to 'blame' lack of progress on the master. If the learner does sustain this mindset, including the acceptance of their responsibilities in terms of practising, obedience and discipline, they may well make excellent progress in some areas of instrumental and vocal technical ability, but may never achieve autonomy as a learner, and may be limited in exploring the potential for her own creativity. I have come across very many advanced students of music who have been taught in this western classical tradition, including traditional and pop musicians, who are limited in their musical potential as a result of the restraints inherent in this way of learning. The learner's perspective may require some transforming if she is to free herself from this mindset and this is part of the teacher's remit.

The master-apprentice model of learning, while possessing positive features, is limited by assumptions, for example:

- The master always has the answers

- The master is always right

- The master knows what is best for the student

- The master is the expert and guru

- The student learns only from the master

- The student will learn the traditions of the profession

- The student must not question what is asked of her

- The student will need to be devoted and obedient if she wishes to master the profession

These are some assumptions that emerged from my reflections as the following journal extracts from the personal writing section show. I have quoted extensively from them as I feel it shows the grappling with issues and a change in the content of my thinking and ways of thinking over a period of months.

20/8/09 concerning individual lessons/master apprentice, but from a different and personal perspective – reflecting on my own past…

I found this teacher from my past very impressive, quiet, but passionate, and she had an interest in me. What struck me most was the reciprocity of our relationship. She would listen to me, respect what I said, even if it was rubbish, and allow me to follow my own ideas, which would be discussed next time.

She also taught me the realm of possibilities in learning – explore, experiment, attempt, evaluate…This was new to me then in individual lessons. I had been used to being told what to do. She would allow me space for my ideas but also she would provide me with further or other suggestions, but never in a coercive manner, but in a truly open way, letting the music and me have a relationship.

1/10/09

What is the learner hoping to get out of the situation? What do I have to offer them? How do they know what they want out of the singing experience – who/what informed them? How can they know what music/singing learning can offer them if they are but novices and I am the expert? They may be expert consumers of music in a viewing and listening capacity, but how much of what they know and admire is purely hegemonic – what the powers that be want them to have/experience/know?

29/4/10

The individual music lesson provides a kind of relationship, often I think in my own case if I am honest, one of an expert – the teacher, and the initiate. The learner learns at the foot of the master or guru. I know that this concept is old fashioned in education, and this kind of approach is gradually disappearing from formal education in primary and secondary schools, but music learning/instruction is quite different in many respects to the large group work found in formal fulltime education establishments.

Even though I talk of the master or guru, I do not mean that I believe this to be the case in all my lessons, as I do not. But I am aware that it is a powerful concept/idea, and I also think that it pervades the thinking of my students – they think of me as a person (I hope!) and as an expert teacher who has the answers and will guide them to the heights of excellence. When the student gets stuck the teacher guru master will guide her along the right path and facilitate her personal journey of challenge, meaning making…

I am also aware that at times I need to inhabit the role of expert, perhaps to such an extent that I put pressure on myself to fulfil what I think the role of expert is, or that I feel under pressure (by conventions, student, society, tradition?) to ‘be’ the expert.

30/4/10

The isolation and loneliness of the learner in the one to one teaching environment. It is not actually fair to say that the one to one teaching scenario is a ‘partnership’ or a ‘cooperative’ journey because the knowledge of the teacher is always putting them in the ‘best’ position – I don’t mean in terms of expert singing/teaching/music knowledge, but in terms of dealing with… one to one scenarios – how many of my students are used to undertaking one on one lessons/support sessions? What other one to one experience do they have? Doctor and patient, friend to friend?

Perhaps they(and me) are unsure of the ‘rules’ governing the one to one teaching scenario – how does one act, what is supposed to be done/said/decided upon? While I attempt to create an open and honest environment in the lesson, the rules of behaviour/engagement remain a bit fuzzy, especially for those who may lack motivation, self confidence, slow to progress etc.

The most tried and tested kind of one to one learning is that of guru/disciple, master/apprentice – but is this really the way forward all the time for all students? Learners are more likely to be familiar with class/group learning situations – these offer the additional learning opportunities of not only learning from the teacher but from each other. Working through tasks with others ensures a wider set of ideas is brought into play with the task in hand – so greater possibilities for breadth of learning, peer support, collegiality, time

to step back out of the lime light to let ideas mature and stabilise before being forced into the spotlight to demonstrate knowledge before it may be matured.

The one to one lesson provides no hiding place for the learner and no learner support from other learners. The learner has only the teacher's words and actions to believe or not to believe, to trust or not, words of comfort or reassurance may not be worth anything if the learner is not receptive. It goes without saying that there is more responsibility upon the teacher too, but their training and experience has hopefully prepared them for it. It is much more tiring working one to one than with groups. The sole responsibility for the individual lies with the teacher – the teacher manoeuvres all learning and negotiates the activities and reactions in the lesson to attempt to create learning opportunities ALL the time.

A richer experience for the learner and teacher may be had if a better ratio of individual and group lessons were organised.

30/4/10

One to one tuition is insufficient for a productive and positive learner experience. We need the breadth of other possible adventures/group players/ workshops/ group lessons/master classes/ensembles and bands etc. Socialising may account for many learning opportunities that will enhance the more isolated pursuits of one to one instrumental tuition. How to go about getting this actually working effectively is another matter though…

9/5/10

If the student considers me the guru or expert, how can I change this? Why and in what ways? The concept of expert and initiate pervades my lessons (in my head and in the heads of my students). I may need to take on the role of expert at times but it is not my only role. What are the 'rules' governing individual teaching – how to act, what is to be said and done?

19/7/10

I am able to look back at my previous teachers. Without exception I respected them all, liked some more than others as people, liked some more than others in terms of what they expected me to do, what they expected of me. They all came from the western art music tradition/culture and almost all of them worked with me within the master-apprentice model, some more than others. This meant that demonstration and imitation was used more/less. All of them directed my learning and followed the syllabuses of the conservatoires, so it was expected that I perform classical repertoire according to the rules and values of that tradition: technical work, notation reading, theoretical understanding, ability to discourse on aspects of melody, harmony, rhythm and form, etc.

16/11/10

from reading Lave and Wenger 'Legitimate peripheral participation' the foreword by Hanks

p.23 – concerning the different roles and responsibilities that the 'apprentice' undergoes as he moves from peripheral to more full engagement. He highlights the fact that the role of the student may actually consist of several roles at once, and be changing between roles, depending upon the task, his awareness/attention/focus etc.

I think I have always viewed the student as 'learner' and inhabiting a single role – LPP makes it much clearer that in the area of music learning – a learner is many things – the relationship between the learner and the task engaged in is always changing – some areas are stronger (perhaps because study of them was commenced earlier, or the student has a natural adept for them, or has watched/learned from others and is applying this in practice), others may be weaker because the student does not yet have all the bits of the jigsaw to enable him to undertake the task on his own unaided. But there may be subsets of the task that are possible.

While Lave and Wenger do not propose their theory of learning through social practice to be of primary importance, but first and foremost to the curriculum itself – I can see very clearly now how, by engaging in different types of tasks, at different points in the learning process, and by participating in different roles the learner is more likely to become fully engaged, fully responsible, learning to 'be a musician' as opposed to learning how to sing.

This requires much further reflection for me to consider how the concept of apprentice roles in relationship with different learning tasks links exactly with the specifics of my practice. But this has certainly not only opened my eyes to other ways of meaning making – it has actually alleviated much of the worry I had about power issues.

I am seeing that it may be impossible to remove the concept of 'master-apprentice' modelling from my practice, especially as many students come with this expectation to the lesson situation, even if my approach/'philosophy' did so – as I have to meet students on their terms and they will create their own meaning from their own perpective/frameworks.

However, I may be able to better consider how the master-apprentice model of learning may be further analysed – considering the different roles, social participation, task given, responsibilities passed over and so on. It is not a case of just passing on 'skills', it is definitely bringing the learner into a WAY OF BEING.

Experiencing the full range of what it means to be in music, to become a musician, to communicate in and through music etc..Not

just skills, tools, tasks, but it is how these are engaged in...praxis...the doing, the experiencing, making it have meaning...

Social practice – implications for teaching yourself from books and DVDs – can you become a musician from these? Possibly not, but you may be able to learn some skills and techniques..

These extracts from my journal demonstrate that my reflecting work was aided by the reading that I was undertaking. Lave and Wenger (1991) propose legitimate peripheral participation as a means of bringing the learner into a way of being, and this resonates strongly with me. I have come to the realisation that when one really engages with music (and especially with the voice I would venture) one can become transformed. In order for this to happen I need to somehow afford the learner opportunities for personal engagement with music in a meaningful way that enables them to 'come to be' in and with music. What is meaningful for one learner may differ for others. Upon further reflection I suppose this can be said of any discipline; when one knows it from the inside, so to speak, then one has become a practitioner within the field and the essence of the endeavour can be experienced. By allowing learners time to be with music, to observe others being with music through workshops and informal concerts, and sharing my own experience of being in music, may all support such a cause.

While the above extracts from my journal do not demonstrate a clear time line of changing and evolving ideas in a neat and packaged way, it is possible to see changes in my ideas about the nature of the master-apprentice model of one-to-one teaching. I became less obsessed with the concept of the conservatoire model and associated terms such as expert, master and learner and moved towards considering the relationship between teacher and learner, the relationship between learner and learning opportunities, and the importance of the content of the learning activities. I moved away from a skill based concept of the learning situation to one of working with beings in and of music. The focus of the lesson has altered from one of the procedures of the lesson to the relationship between two human beings and how to create a meaningful experience, grounded in music, for the learner (and teacher). Rather than remain exploring whether the master-apprentice model of learning was 'correct', conducive, fashionable, or effective per se my thinking moved beyond those boundaries to see a larger picture of how to create successful working

relationships with learners in a way that is meaningful to them and still grounded in music making.

I have since commenced offering free group workshops where students are invited to be 'worked with' in front of other students, and learners are encouraged to ask questions and to try things out for themselves. Not only does this allow learners the opportunity to feel less isolated but also, I think, allows them to consolidate their own practical learning and learn from their peers. In addition, I have commenced teaching small groups of singers the skills required to sing in a small ensemble, thus allowing learners the opportunity to make music together, feel part of a community, and to apply the skills that are being honed in individual lessons. I think it unlikely that these changes would have occurred without participating in critical reflection, narrative inquiry in particular.

It is easy to resort to general and routine ways of doing things, to continue in the way that is expected (by whom?), to follow the traditions and practices of the past without question as if they are simply 'commonsense'. No one-to-one lesson can ever be like another as each is its own unique entity and must be treated as such. It is not a case simply of whether or not it is ethical or socially responsible to have individual vocal lessons and/or use a master-apprentice teaching model. It is important to ascertain whether these are appropriate and effective for the purpose at hand with these individuals wishing to learn and participate in music at this time. All educational situations are contextual and unique. Ronald Barnett alerts us to the difficulties faced by professionals as they try to work out how to proceed in situations:

> It is not just a matter, therefore, of whether to act in this way or that, but also of: within what framework shall I act? In fulfilment of what set of principles shall I act? What understandings, what perspectives, what theories and what key concepts might offer a way forward? The potential frameworks will be critical *of each other*: they will have tensions between them and may be incommensurable. The key challenge of modern professionalism is just this, of trying to make sense of disparate discourses in one's professional actions. (Barnett 1997 p. 141)

2   Knowledge validation

a)   Western art music – what does it mean to learn (music)?

As I explored the fundamentals of my practice it became clear that many assumptions from western art music traditions were the basis of much of my work and that, when critically examined, they could not be justified. This seemed to naturally lead me towards an examination of what music learning is, should and can be.

Since my teaching career commenced I have happily worked with learners in the western art music tradition, but this has not been exclusive; I have also worked with learners in other genres including traditional and folk music, music theatre and pop and rock. There are many terms used to describe the traditions of western art music; classical music, elitist music and high art, for example. Many features of the tradition have come to light in previous sections of this report, but others include prioritising the creation of elite performers, pursuing technical excellence and perfection, working with specific high art repertoire, learning the rules and conventions of the tradition, emphasis upon analysis and the fluent reading of notation, to name but a few. Western art music traditions may be described as formal, highbrow, controlled, cerebral and utilising complex structures. Particular groups of instruments are often used in specific ways according to the 'rules' or conventions of the culture.

While I teach many styles and traditions of singing, this section focuses upon those of western art music as it was from within this tradition that I was brought up and educated. I have already revealed in the previous section dealing with the master-apprentice model much concerning my music education and training that is relevant to this section also. The following is a passage from my journal describing my rather unorthodox arrival into singing. I did not discover singing as a 'serious' pursuit until well into my twenties, and this extract demonstrates how I thought that I had moved away from strong ties of the 'classical' ideal of what singing is:

> *Most surprising about this was that my first love has always been classical repertoire; for me as a living human being, it gives me a great thrill and satisfaction to study and perform 'art' music. I*

realise that this is not the case for all. However, I came to singing late in my musical career and it was not through a traditional classical route... When I sang and engaged with material that spoke to me creatively and imaginatively, I felt a deep connection with my emotions, intellect and with the human issues in the texts of the songs. Singing allows the 'singing voice' to access and communicate the 'human voice' and feelings of others. I am here endorsing an approach to classical singing that allows the performer to utilise her own creativity and passion in order to empathise with the material and communicate with the audience. In other words, an approach that is not solely restricted by mastery of technical skills and that uses a very controlling and, in my opinion, stiff way of communicating the song material. I seemed to be building my style of classical singing upon a new approach, one that allowed for mutation and alteration in the name of humanity and creativity. The values that I held in connection with the classical singing style were not the same as those of a more traditional slant, and they were heavily associated with the act of singing, the doing of the performing rather than the displaying of an art work.

As I read this now it is clear that it is rooted within the western art music tradition, although there are glimmers of something else occurring. The following extracts from my journal (personal writing section) show me grappling with the traditions of 'classical' music learning and teaching as I discovered them within my practice:

19/4/10

Perhaps I do spend too much time on the technical and insufficient on the musical or creative. Is it possible to have more of a balance between these elements?

So am I teaching as I like to learn? Detail, high quality, challenges, pursuits etc….? There are many kinds of learners who respond in different ways and have different needs – but – are there certain skills, aptitudes, tasks, practices that I think all need to do? In other words, regardless of personal preference or strengths etc., do I essentially teach all the same – detail, quality, consistency, commitment..? What of personal connection with the material, with their voice and their abilities as a person and a learner?

24/7/09 After reading Schon 1987 p. 201

Perhaps I have been concerned with the lack of developing creativity in lessons because I have been too concerned with the technical issues – building and operating the voice. Looking back at my own development, it was the technical that I worked towards as I seemed to innately have the musical and the feel for what it is to do music…

Technical things do indeed need developing but they are not developed for their benefit or purpose, they are purposeless until they have musical defining task, in other words, creating music, giving meaning to the sound. We do not learn technique as an end in itself, it must have musical communication, meaning, significance, authentic meaning…this transpires both in the mind of the performer (for example as an improviser/interpreter) and in the music itself – it's own life-force-meaning...So perhaps, technique must always be taught, learned, rehearsed, practised in a musical, meaningful way…

14/9/09

Questions arising: music as experience or art? What about being sacrilegious? History to be preserved like an artefact? Maintaining traditions versus breaking traditions – can we do both?

Re-creating traditions – new slant, if so, how? What does this achieve and where can it take us? Perhaps allows us to appreciate the original, also to stretch our creativity – is this just a creative task or does it have artistic merit? Is artistic merit to be valued, by whom and for why? There are other values – process over product, for example. (See Booth 2009)

19/6/10

Been reading deBono again this time about 'education and being right' p. 98/99. He is talking about how education or the education system is built around the concept of 'being right' as opposed to the concept of being effective. Much of my teaching is based on being 'right' or 'correct' rather than on the essence of what music is…

In my small and fairly isolated community that is far from the cultural centres of classical traditions, it is likely that locals are educated in the traditions of classical music as presented through television and radio (but what and whose music is promoted and why?) and through the local community. The television seems to bombard us with endless reality shows such as Pop Idol, The X Factor, Britain's Got Talent, The Choir, Pop Idol, Pop Star to Opera Star and Lord Lloyd Webber's 'search for a music theatre star' shows. This presents one perspective of what it is to be a musician or performer to the public. Essentially, these shows concern themselves with entertainment and are commercially driven. What I am offering in my teaching studio should surely be more than entertainment; while I may have music education matters at the top of my agenda, students may well be coming to me for lessons with the media-fed perspective of what 'singing' is all about.

As I interrogated western art music in my journal it became clear that all categories or genres of music each follow their own system of rules and conventions, each able to include or exclude. I have since, therefore, tried to move away from a perspective that firmly categorises music styles. Rather than supporting the differences between different kinds of music, I have been gradually looking for that which all styles have in common. Providing labels may be restrictive. As soon as a label is attached to a style, it is expected that certain traditions of practice will be adhered to and this means the 'creative act' or the act of 'musicking' becomes somewhat prescriptive rather than something freeing and enabling. The label (and associated practices) firmly roots us in a static past. The culture war concerning high and low art, classical and pop (and other genres) is still raging. The following extracts evidence some of my thinking on this issue:

19/7/10

Critical reflection has allowed me to appreciate that the musical culture I was brought up in has certain values attached, and that upon examining these values I may no longer/not explicitly agree with them all, or at least, I may not agree with how others represent and critique western art music. Western art music does require a set of 'rules' to be learned – technique, notation, structure, style and interpretation - but as I see it , all different genres present the same range of complexities that need to be 'mastered' in order to be able to enter that 'culture' on even footing. Each has their own vocabulary, performance practices, repertoires, styles and conventions – all of these must be learned.

We cannot be experts in all genres can we? Why not? What about breaking down the boundaries between genres?

We can however become/be in music. Is there something in common across all music genres? I am not sure…there is manipulation of sound for various purposes. I know that Murray Schaeffer and Maxwell Davies and Benjamin Britten used composition as the driving engager – create, manipulate, structure, perform. These remained within the western style of works though….they did not explore pop or traditional….

I now think of difference between more traditional and classical are built upon imitation and the use of ready made tunes. Many pop/jazz learners copy from CDs and try to imitate too, perhaps with less 'other' guidance than trad/classical. While the processes of learning these tunes may be different :
Trad = imitate (visual, aural and oral) and composition possibly
Pop = imitate (visua, aural and oral) and composition possibly

Classical = reading and imitating (visual, aural and conceptual)

Each learns to play combinations of known and unknown melodies...

The pop/jazz learner may be working on her own – self-taught – so is most likely to be playing only known repertoire that is copied by ear, as the reading is non-existent. The traditional musician may also be learning by ear from CDs or known tunes, but may be working with a group/teacher who may introduce unknown repertoire through notation or orally. It is only in the classical tradition that learners are driven by notation – benefits are that there is a vast library of materials available for exploration and they have the skills to do this unaided, but the drawbacks are that they may never have been encouraged to explore the oral traditions of learning – the ability to copy and imitate from a peer or DVD/CD...or to create their own music...

Each culture has a set of practices that constitute the 'norm', but these can be flexible. The educator needs to be aware of these practices and how they may impact learners experience of the world of music – music can mean many things to many people – my experiences of music and what it 'means' to me will be unlike what others experience, as the 'meaning' is dependent upon so many factors.

1/8/10

The values of 'classical' performing can be quite different to the values of pop, folk, music theatre, and so on. I think I have tried for some time to apply the same values to all, but now realise how different they are, as different as individuals...and what of cross-over? And what of the way these are received by audience, teachers, appraisers – their expectation of each is tainted by their views of what counts as 'quality' 'value' in music

1/8/10

Many TV programmes in the last few years have blossomed: Pop idol, X factor, Britain's got talent, the choir, the orchestra, Lord Lloyd Webber's search for a star series...

This presents the public with a perspective of what music is, what is valued, who judges the value of someone's performance and for what purpose? It can happen to you – the possibilities of stardom are now available 'to all'. But look at all the knock out stages of these events – many people turned away for the many reasons – this is deflating...but do we just accept this as part of life? Music enjoyment and gaining satisfaction and meaning from music participation is not dependent upon others determining whether you are good enough (yet?), look for the part, wear the right clothes etc. Many of these programmes are looking for a specific kind of musician, one to fit the remit of the show...in the professional spheres of theatre and TV/film,

> *casting is very important in order to create the 'vision' of the play/film/narrative. You need to look and sound the part…*
>
> *'Fit' or image is part of music performance – the image needs to fit. 'Fit' may be consumer led, business/economic/commercial led through an agent or promoter; 'fit' may be traditionally passed down through time or culturally accepted etc. These are kinds of static meanings that get in the way of enabling music to reach all, be accessible to all. They are barriers not just to learning but to how it is received by society.*

There are many pockets of musicians across the UK and globally who are attempting to break down some of these barriers and traditions of different kinds of music, allowing a place for any kind of music(s) and combination of styles. There is a huge burgeoning of cross-over music and the clearly defined labels of styles of music are starting to slacken. Rather than learning how to fit with a single type of music, I would rather that my learners are engaging with the material and developing a personal relationship with this thing called music; moving from working with music as a noun to music as a verb (Small 1998). However, it may occur that the teacher is caught between a student wishing to learn the traditions of a genre and her own educator beliefs:

> I find myself trying to live up to expectations I cannot fulfil – and do not want to- but feel some responsibility to meet because this is…music education. There are professional standards of pedagogy and musicianship to accommodate. (Lamb 1996 p. 129)

The reader is directed towards the writings of Small and the Mayday Group website for an abundance of scholarly articles critiquing aspects of music education, including those concerned with specific styles and traditions of music.

I was trying to find a way out of the dilemmas of the western art tradition that I seemed to be discovering as I practised critical reflection. This brought me to think about such topics as the labels we assign different kinds of music practice, the function of music and what it really means to be a musician or a learner of music. What is the purpose of this 'educating' that I am engaged in? If I was working for my local authority or council I would be given a remit of what it is for school pupils to learn music. There are national guidelines in England and in Scotland available for this purpose in order to ensure all are given the same kind of music experience in terms of what learners are expected to be able to do in

performing, creating (inventing) and listening to music. The private instrumental teacher, however, does not have to adhere to any guidelines, but there are associations that provide guidelines that may aid the private teacher in determining what she wants to teach and why. Such associations include the Incorporated Society of Musicians, the Musicians Union, British Voice Association, National Association of Teachers of Singing, and the various external examination bodies affiliated to music schools and conservatoires. In addition, the guidelines from the Federation of Music Services and HITS may be used by the private instrumental and vocal teacher should they wish, and there is a comprehensive set of resources available for this purpose under the title 'A Common Approach'.

A sample 'classical' lesson from my past as a learner would consist of working on one or more tasks, with the teacher correcting my errors; repetition would be used to reinforce the correct way to execute tasks, and I was infrequently consulted as to what to do or asked for my opinions. However, I understood that this was the way of learning an instrument and one did as one was told. Some aspects were more enjoyable than others. My musical training is not so different from the majority of learners who have received individual instrumental or vocal lessons and the structure has remained fairly static for more than a century (Latukefu 2010). If we leave aside the possibly didactic teaching methods, I am concerned that many musical skills, or aspects of musical encounter, are evidently missing from lessons. There have been attempts to improve the situation during the last fifteen years or so with the introduction in schools of group tuition, with the production of guidelines that promote the development of a wider range of skills and activities and the promotion of such teaching approaches as 'simultaneous learning' (Crozier and Harris 2000).

Skills of improvisation and creativity are distinctly lacking in much western art tradition lessons, as are the skills of playing by ear and composition, for example. Lesson content is dictated either by the needs and aspirations of the teacher, or of the individual or group receiving the lessons. When freed from following the traditions of a genre of music style or model for learning, how does one go about deciding for what purpose and function are music lessons? Through the processes of critical reflection I have come to realise that there have been many

driving forces behind my concept of what lessons are all about and these have changed over time, and they can be in tension with those of learners' motivations:

25/5/10

I have just been reading Bowman (2005) from 'music education in the new millennium'. On page 35 he refers to the construction of personal and collective meaning, so I am considering is this what singing lessons are really about? The creation of a shared meaning making experience? In order for a one to one learning situation to be effective in terms of meaning making does there really need to be a shared collective meaning making occurring? Perhaps I need to consider firstly issues related to personal meaning making and then consider if there are educational benefits from creating shared meanings. There are likely to be some elements of learning that are, and will always remains, solely within the realm of personal meaning – consider how to share a personal meaning with someone. You may tell them about it, bit it is only a weak copy or imitation or representation of that experience/meaning. But there are times when this 'weak representation' may be sufficient for the teacher to share meaning with the learner in a sufficient enough way to be of benefit to the future learning of both parties.

19/6/10

If the criteria is to be 'right' according to a preset list of ideas, then this is easier to manage, assess, administrate etc, but the whole point of education is that each 'singer' needs to decide their own criterion for effectiveness in the same way that I need to measure my own effectiveness as a teacher according to my own criteria.

1/8/10

There are clear differences between learning as part of contributing to life experience, and learning with the intent of pursuing a career. But it is perhaps the career led individuals who need to become even more aware of these issues, to prepare them, to get them to view the 'business' in different ways to enable them to be prepared to take their own stand, make their own meanings, justify their perspectives, etc. It is not all about fitting in with the current order – change is possible.

There are as many purposes or reasons or motivations behind the desire to participate in music as there are individual perspectives and values. So my mind/my being needs to open up much more to all of these possibilities and present them to learners. I have been in a very blinkered position for much of my 'musician' life and 'teacher' life.

16/9/10

Do people come to lessons to learn to play – yes I would say. Do we need all the other 'extras' of notation, reading, recognition, vocabulary, transposing, improvising – is music learning about recreating the music of others or is it about maintaining and remembering traditions and cultures, or is it about creating ones own music for therapy, for dancing, for entertainment, for community use, or commercial interests, for political statements – the purpose of music learning – it can be put to many uses...Is the 'why' of learning important? It must be – why did I learn music – personal enjoyment and satisfaction I think. I assumed my teachers would teach me what I needed to know – I did not know what I needed to know. I felt a personal inclination to compose and write my own material from an early age and perhaps this is why I liked the 'theory' of music as I had an actual reason for mastering it – I used it as a tool.

It is easy to justify music learning in terms of the subsidiary, knock on effect it can have in enhancing non-musical abilities – like the Mozart effect. But surely we should firstly and foremost value it for its intrinsic and musical meanings.

The purpose of the piece is important; celebration, chronicle, story, processional, working, funeral, wedding, dance, love, etc.

Is there such a thing as private music and public music? Are some things meant for private consumption – music of the past before recording equipment was always public – music would be heard 'live' so an audience member was participating in the live music act. There may indeed have been some acts of 'personal' music making such as lullabies, work songs, singing at the spinning wheel, love songs, and lone playing to oneself. These still exist, obviously, and public forms of music exist in entertainment, celebration, ceremony, collective praise/chant etc. However, the recording has brought about the segregation of listener from the live event. This creates many complications:
1   ignorant of real 'live' music practices
2   isolation from the action
3   creation of listener as mere slave to emotional mood – any piece of music can be listened to, or skipped at will at the flick of a switch. So we have become less tolerant of that which we do not know or does nothing for us in the first few seconds.

It means 'music' or the performing act is a tool used in life for various purposes – 'muzak', mood, commerce etc. i.e. it's value as music performance – the getting together of people to listen and play – is no longer important. It really is a tool for other things – think of film, advertising etc.

I think this is an important point – the social getting together, not just for social purposes – but also because it creates debate and discussion on what is heard. Tolerance to listen to something in completion, exposed to wider range than normal. Is/was live performing purely

entertainment? I think perhaps the function of live performance is many and varied. It may start out as something and as the event develops it may become something quite different for the listener. What of the performer's role? Is his to use the instrument to most effect for the purpose at hand, i.e., has a job role to fill, it helps to know what that is in order to be able to do it. We 'expect' in most contexts that the performer will demonstrate at least some ability/skill on the instrument and be able to create something that can be termed 'music'.

28/10/10

The 'value' that others get from participating in singing and music may be completely different to that which I get. If I lead them down 'my' path – they may get nothing from it, or something, or a great deal. If I let them lead themselves down the same path, the same may be said to be true. Well, we can do a combination of both perhaps.

To be involved with music, to engage with it, to participate in it, is a practical and personal activity. 'Musicking' is a term created by Small (1998) to describe the doing of music in its many guises. It is the personal immersion in music that affords one the experience of what it offers. Listening, creating, improvising and playing are all ways through which we can be active in and with music. It is working with music as a verb and not as a noun. How does one develop this connection between human being and the phenomenon that is music? Music is so much more than tasks and skill acquisition as a study of any non-western culture's music practices can testify (Small 1977). There are many 'teach yourself' books and DVD packages on the market that provide you with pictures, diagrams, tips, notation, tunes, CDs and so on. Many people purchase these hoping to become a musician by following the guidelines. Many may become quite proficient as a result, but I would argue that without actually working with other musicians, observing and receiving feedback and making music with other people, you are unlikely to progress much beyond the acquisition of a few skills. Skills may be a necessary part of being a musician, but one needs to learn *how* to become a musician – it is a state of being and way of being.

As can be seen from above much of my practice had been driven by values from the western art music tradition, and when working in other genres I often still used these values. This was inappropriate as each genre has its own values and traditions that need to be followed and it is not possible to simply substitute one

set of values for another. As can been seen from the preceding section, as a result of critical reflection the values that much of my teaching were based upon (western art music) were interrogated and found wanting. I discovered that it was possible still to work in different genres but that fundamental values required altering. Values that were more concerned with the development of personal and collective meaning became established and a move away from treating music as art – an object – to music as an activity and a way of being was formed. I have altered my practice to reflect these changes in my thinking whereby I may still utilise notated materials and known songs, but am approaching working on them with learners in a different way that reflects my attempts to develop a relationship between learner and material in a meaningful way. In addition, I have tried to include a wider range of activity that includes composition and improvisation, developing a deeper connection with text and interpretation in an attempt to build a relationship between learner and music. I have come to realise that is it not so much the material or resource of learning that is important as the way in which a dialogue is developed between the material and the learner. An added bonus from these changes is that I am enjoying my teaching even more than I used to and learning so much more myself from these engagements.

3   Me as teacher

a)   My role and the relationship between teacher and learner

There is much research utilising critical reflection concerning the employed teacher, the teacher who works for an educational establishment. For those working within these environments, there are many policies, initiatives and competing agendas which all provide for a varied and interesting interrogation of their effect upon teaching practices. The deprofessionalisation of educators has been blamed for feelings of disempowerment and lack of worth, and trust and critical reflection is often used as a process through which teachers can feel of value, by identifying and interrogating ideologies that affect formal, institutionalised education (Burnard and Spruce 2009, Kincheloe 2003). The private vocal teacher is in a position of relative autonomy and her role might appear to be easier to clarify as a result. While there are professional associations and independent external examination boards for music educators,

the professional private teacher is very much in a position of choosing (and so being responsible for) the parameters of the practice. This includes the rates of fees, choosing learners to work with, lengths of lessons, curriculum and teaching approaches. While it is still possible to interrogate ideologies that impact upon the private music teacher, the focus is more likely to be upon the self, the formation and history of the self as musician, individual and educator, rather than a critical reflection upon the many pressures experienced within the more institutionalised form of the teaching profession. The pressures experienced by the private teacher are somewhat different to the teacher employed by an establishment although there are certainly many similarities across both professions. The private teacher mostly creates her own framework and curriculum for which she is wholly responsible to clients.

Within the chiefly one-to-one working environment I participate in with learners, the most important element for me has been to create an effective relationship, one that allows for a relaxed state of body and mind so individuals are receptive to the learning possibilities presented them. The individual lesson has potential for being an intense learning situation for the student as there are no other learners to 'hide behind', no other students to act as a distraction during lessons, and no other learners to learn from; no 'buffer-zone' exists. Because of this it can become an intense experience for the teacher too (Lamb 1996) as she cannot lapse in concentration for a moment, is always under the gaze and scrutiny of the learner and needs to participate fully and effectively at all times. I try to develop a positive and constructive relationship as quickly as possible so the learner feels comfortable, relaxed, and able to voice their opinions in an honest and open environment; these conditions are necessary for effective learning (and singing) to take place. Through the processes of critical reflection I have discovered that this espoused theory is not always what is acted out in practice.

In my 'old way' of thinking (my previous framework) I would consider a learning relationship to be going well when the following was occurring:
- The relationship seems calm, content and easy-going;
- The learner is making progress (in my opinion);
- The status quo is maintained;

- No objections are mounted.

The following extracts from my journal trace some of the thinking around this issue:

10/4/10
Was the student showing distrust in me as the expert guide on the journey of learning – did this resistance from the student make me distrust my choices for the student, did the barrier that came up act as a vehicle for undermining my own confidence in myself? I had thought that I was upset with the student, but actually, I think the student's reaction made me upset with myself. I chose wrong, or at least it raised the possibility that my professional judgement may be in error. In other words, not that student was questioning my ability or judgement, but their resistance made me question mine.

I don't actually think it was the area/curriculum issue that upset me, but more simply it was the point blank standing up against me. Did I feel threatened? My authority being threatened, professional judgement? Trust?

22/4/10
This whole scenario and relationship had been built upon my assumption that I have the student's best interest at heart – we had discussed their aims for their singing and the needs they had, and that I am the one with the most effective knowledge to guide? But learning is a partnership – if I am a guide and a facilitator (as I had thought (and hoped) I was) then the learning journey needs to be one of sharing, honesty, cooperation. It is the student who is doing the learning – they are more than entitled to choose what to learn, when and how, and in what order. Who am I to think I know best for this individual? (And they are paying – demanding the service they want…?)

10/8/10
I definitely want to have a peaceful working relationship with my students. I appear to keep talking in this journal of getting along, meshing, cooperating, and I do seem to attempt to avoid disagreement at all costs. So I think this is something that I need to think through much more. Perhaps I need to consider the benefits of disagreement, what am I worried about if a disagreement ensues? – this may reveal why I avoid them.

Does maintaining status quo mean that all is fine, everything remains intact, including my beliefs? Am I really worried about the student disagreement, or am I worried about me and what a disagreement may reveal about me?

Peaceful working relationships perhaps signal that I am in control, that things are going the way that I want them to, and that I think

they should go. Just because something is peaceful and apparently democratic and apparently all parties are happy does not mean that this is the case. <u>Silence is surely the signifier of being controlled, not being allowed a voice…I am ashamed of this.</u>

A genuinely learning society is a democratic society (Ranson, 1994): it is a society in which all voices can be heard in equal measure and in which there is no fear about expressing a point of view. (Barnett 1997 p. 158)

1/8/10
But there must be 'disagreement' in aims and desires and perspectives. It is just that most learners kowtow to my authority. I am used to being in control, even though there is cooperation involved, but it is the cooperation of a 'lesser'. I work under an authoritarian regime, even though I dress it up as cooperation.

4/8/10
Equality is not about treating everyone the same – it is about treating everyone as the individuals they are, accounting for difference and diversity – pluralism…. bell hooks has the ability to turn things on their head – to examine many possibilities and to look at things from a fresh, alternative perspective.

19/9/10
The initial years were very much concerned with ME and my small world. Once I was confident (and hopefully fairly competent) at 'teaching' I wanted to preserve what I had, what I created in each learning situation. No-one could take away from me or overly influence what I did in the studio. The studio was my private domain and I was in control of it – it was my own castle, impenetrable by external forces. I wanted to preserve this realm of professional practice that was 'mine'.

I think that this is why I now have an issue with control – I have been pushed into this defensive position by bureaucracy – a self-protection attitude. I still look beyond the parapet for current trends, advances in technology and other developments that may enable me to teach better, but it is all a self-preservation task – If I remain in this brickwork – garden of Eden, then I can control what is/what is not done and experienced, and feel that I have some sense of liberty and choice within the syllabus, curriculum, systems that I work.

19/9/10
Education in schools especially is concerned with control and the exerting of power. We are taught discipline, punctuality and guided in appropriate behaviours and ways of being – avoiding disruption and the maintenance of civility, like mindedness etc. Well behaved and responsible citizens…

I used to think that risk taking was for those who had a death wish, or were irresponsible. As far as education was concerned I have always thought that risks should not be taken when other people's welfare is

at stake. Surely it is better to play safe when dealing with people? A softly, softly approach? Again this is just concerned with protection. But we are not protected by avoiding issues, ignoring the ways things are – we are simply maintaining everything – self-protection is not self-protection. By doing it (or not taking a stand) one is actually helping to strengthen the position of those in power. They want obedient, mindless, non-thinking citizens…to do their bidding. So what at first sight seems a self-protection attitude is actually one of power-preservation for those in power – hegemony.

28/10/10
Control = safe = predicting the situation or ability to routinely cope with the situation – avoiding dealing with uncertainties…

As a result of the critical reflections above it is possible to create a list of possible meanings of the situation when the learner appears content and the learning partnership seems easy going:

- The learner is compliant with your wishes

- The learner feels unqualified to disagree

- The learner blindly trusts the teacher

- The learner is afraid to do anything but agree

- The learner follows the bidding of the expert

- The learner and teacher are obeying the 'rules' as learned through experience in and of education

- The teacher is overpowering

- The teacher does not welcome disagreement

- The teacher sees what she wants to see

- The teacher suppresses free expression and free will

Once you acknowledge the possibility of different readings of a situation, you realise that much of your knowledge that you have blindly accepted as the way things are is no longer valid; use of multi-perspectives is the only way forward. This very simple but profound concept has meant a great deal to me as it forces me to acknowledge and anticipate inadequacies in my instinctive responses and the need to consider many interpretations of the same action. I have known of the need to view things from different perspectives and to be accepting of others in their different ways of being and thinking, but until you actually sit down and do the task you do not realise the import of the statement. This seems to be connected with levels of learning – critical reflection has allowed me to take knowledge,

propositional knowledge and surface learning, to a deeper and more personally meaningful level (Moon 1999). Through experience and critical reflection I have come to a new level of understanding.

I have always been a supporter of the status quo and would not take unnecessary risks. I used to think that this was the 'correct' thing to do. I did not know that this was a fallacy until participating in this research project. By supporting the status quo, you are making a choice not to stand up and be counted. I had thought that keeping the peace was simply a way of getting along with everyone, but of course in reality it is the complete opposite. I think my reaction was partly a self-protective mechanism; if the status quo is maintained there is a sense of stability and security in the knowledge that things remain unchanged and my beliefs remain intact. It cannot possibly be envisioned that two or more people will see eye to eye on every issue, or view circumstances in the same way. We are each our own person with our own history and formation of who we are. We cannot escape our making, but we can consider our histories and the beliefs and assumptions we hold and interrogate them for their legitimacy and social responsibility. Dissension and disagreement are to be expected at all times, and we need to be tolerant of other's opinions and perspectives. Communication is the key to getting on with people in order to justify practices and interrogate our belief structures (Habermas 1984). Communication does not mean that everyone is compliant, but that all are allowed a say and are given the deserved respect to voice concerns and opinions. Argument and disagreement are to be welcomed as they will help promote the following:

- The effectiveness of my practice rather than its ineffectiveness
- The possibilities for effective learning in terms that mean something to the learner rather than only the teacher
- Giving the learner a legitimate voice rather than the promotion of silence
- Giving the learner respect and independence in this venture that they have chosen to follow

Afterthoughts

Since participating in critical reflection processes I have become more tolerant with my own instincts and tend to be aware of undertaking Schön's 'reflection-

in-action' as lessons progress where I allow myself time to consider many different interpretations of the situation at hand before considering a response or (re)action. It is liberating to know that I am no longer completely restricted by my previous epistemological perspectives, but similarly, I am aware that nothing stays still – one must anticipate complacency and embrace the possibilities for review and change at all times.

Argyris and Schön (1974 p. 19) talk of single and double loop learning and this concept now resonates significantly with what I have come to know about my practice. I see a description of myself in the following extract:

> In the context of theories-in-use, a person engages in single-loop learning. He engages in double-loop learning when he learns to be concerned with the surfacing and resolution of conflict rather than with its suppression. Single-loop learning enables us to avoid continuing investment in the highly predictable activities that make up the bulk of our lives; but the theory-builder becomes a prisoner of his programs if he allows them to continue unexamined indefinitely. Double-loop learning changes the governing variables (the "settings") of one's programs and causes ripples of change to fan out over one's whole system of theories-in-use.

It took me some time to come to these realisations that only take a few pages to relate to the reader, and their impact is fundamental to the core of who I am as a being. The change in conceptual framework concerning epistemological, cultural and social issues has been profound. I have moved from being ashamed and shocked at the discovery of the possible meanings of these practices to analysing why they should have occurred in the first place. The following section traces the initial years learning the craft of teaching, highlighting some significant issues in the formulation and alteration of my framework and beliefs.

I have been trained in education, having proceeded from secondary state education to achieving a Bachelor of Education degree in music. We learn by osmosis what it means to be a teacher through experience as a learner, one who is conditioned to behave in certain ways and punished when deviant. We learn what it means to be a learner by experience too, and it can be difficult to break from these frameworks that have been built up over many years.

> The training...received in music college or conservatory, like all professional training...has been directed as much toward the

acceptance of the profession's assumptions and the maintenance of its esprit de corps as it has been toward the acquisition of the skills that are necessary to practice it... (Small 1998 p. 67)

The modernist perspective of education that involves 'stuffing as much...knowledge into students' minds as possible' (Kincheloe 2003 p. 5), referred to by Freire (1970) as the 'banking' system of education, is still prevalent in educational practices. As the concept of postmodernism permeates education it is hoped that these practices will diminish and be replaced with active and experiential based learning, grounded in a critical paradigm. Peters (1995 p. 9) alerts the reader to some of the features of modernism that are under threat from postmodernist thinking:

> The themes are, by now, well known: master narratives and traditions of knowledge grounded in first principles are spurned; philosophical principles of canonicity and the notion of the sacred have become suspect; epistemic certainty and the fixed boundaries of academic knowledge have been challenged by a "war on totality" and a disavowal of all-encompassing, single world views; the rigid distinctions between high and low culture, popular and folk art forms are proper objects of study...

Education is feeling the effects of postmodernist thinking and music, and music education, practices cannot remain unchanged, with calls for the consideration of diversity, plurality and multicultural approaches. Many music practitioners and researchers have begun to look forward to a vision of what music (and music education) may become once released from modernist thinking (Johnson 2004, Mansfield 2002 and 2004, Small 1977 and 1998, writers for the MayDay Group). Within the instrumental field it is necessary for teachers to consider the relevance of the canon of repertoire that is the mainstay of our curriculum and consider the question 'how shall the young become acquainted with the past in such a way that the acquaintance is a potent agent in appreciation of the living present?' (Dewey 1938 p. 23) Woody (2007 p. 2) also asks educators to consider 'why the content of our music curricula doesn't better reflect the musical world in which we live.'

Once qualified as a teacher, one tries to learn the skills of the trade, learning the traditions of how 'to do' and 'be' the role that you have taken on. With the guidance of professional organisations (and where possible of colleagues) you learn to follow the codes and good practices within your

employ so that you behave in the way that is expected, so you gradually merge into the brickwork of the traditions of your profession. We become cogs in the machine of our employ. I used to consider that achieving this state of 'fitting-in-ness' was the aim of successful teachers. This is the phenomenon known as hegemony, when we willingly participate in practices that we believe to be right, just and true, but are actually just fuelling the traditions and knowledge of those in power (Apple 2004, Brookfield 2000). What I have come to realise through critical reflection is that not every teacher needs to go through the fitting-in stage, but if they do, they need to continue through to the next stage of development which is to interrogate those practices that we have become conditioned into, and not to accept blindly the practices and traditions of our profession.

The term critical pedagogy was unknown to me before starting this research project. The concept of critical pedagogy is grounded in critical theory and it has since become an enormous influence upon my practice. There are many educators who support critical education including, bell, Brookfield, Freire, Kincheloe and Mezirow. This kind of education is democratic in nature in that it allows voice to all individuals, and the learning environment fosters openness, honesty and tolerance. Its critical side is embedded in an awareness that nothing is to be taken for granted and critical examination is to be undertaken at all times. The promotion of a questioning and inquisitive learner is the aim of education, and so we provide the learner with opportunities to develop critical reflection and critical thinking skills so as to allow for the creation of independent thinking beings. Through such education it may be possible for learners to discover instances of injustice, disrespect and prejudice, and plan courses of action for their eradication. Learners discover the power of self determination and independent critical thought. This is the kind of educator that I wish to be; an educator that provides such learning opportunities both to students and to myself. I feel that I have started upon the road to becoming such an educator. I had thought prior to this study that I was promoting this kind of teaching and learning, but I have since discovered that there is much more that I can do to ensure that this kind of education is offered for all learners I work with.

My blinkered mind used to be unable to see many other ways of looking at things. Since I have discovered this ability through participating in critical reflection processes, it has literally changed my way of being. I sometimes catch myself out and fall into the old and habitual ways of thinking, but I am improving at 'checking myself'. All educational (and social) endeavours are complex and messy and this is why critical reflection is required. It can enable a changing of perspective that permits alternative meanings and understandings to be created, so allowing for a more constructive, responsible and meaningful educational engagement for both teacher and learner. I concur with Mezirow when he states that much of what we learn involves 'making new interpretations that enable us to elaborate, further differentiate, and reinforce our long-established frames of reference or to create new meaning schemes' (1990 p. 5) and hope the reader has seen this in action throughout this chapter.

Chapter 5: The application and impact of critical reflection

Summary of the vehicles, data produced and analysis processes

This research has explored using different vehicles through which to develop the skills of critical reflection and has been based in and around my private teaching practice. At this point I wish to bring together comments made from throughout the report concerning the vehicles used and the data they produced and the limitations and merits of the analysis and interpretation undertaken.

While the journal I used for this research was simply an organisational tool for the project, it nevertheless provided a place for storage of ideas and acted as a resource for further reflective work. Journals of many kinds may be used by those undertaking critical reflection. The dialogue journal (between self or other) may be a useful vehicle that was not explored in this research and a shared journal with other professionals has also been reported as of benefit to the critical reflection process (Moon 1999).

Critical incident work in this research dealt specifically with issues that had upset me emotionally in my work. A reason for this may be due partly to feeling the need to find an 'incident' to work with rather than critically interrogating just any aspect of my practice and thinking. It also provided a means for addressing these feelings that, had I not been undertaking this research, would have been left to either fester or be forgotten. I found working with the critical incident vehicle to be of great therapeutic value in addition to its ability to interrogate values, beliefs and practices. The prompts provided by Tripp (1993) provided a structure for the critical reflection process and I found the questions most helpful in interrogating an event as they encouraged depth of analysis and use of different perspectives in the analysis of actions, thoughts and ideas. I returned to the questions on a regular basis to see if I could take my thinking further with the prompts and reread previous remarks and commented on these too, so it was a cyclic process of interrogation in action. This returning and returning to comments and the prompts from Tripp's structure was part of the interpretation and analysis process where I attempted to draw new

understandings from the situation being examined and it helped me to organise my thinking.

Using narrative was completely new to me and I found the idea of working with it compelling and powerful but also intimidating. I did a great amount of preparatory reading and thinking concerning how to go about working with narrative but I was late in starting work with this vehicle as I could not find a suitable 'event' to write about. I used the emotionally upsetting situations that had been explored in critical incident as a way into this form of critical reflection and once I started writing I found it an extremely useful tool to interrogate thinking. The main benefits of this vehicle were its abilities to see things from other and multiple perspectives, to explore 'what if' scenarios and use imagination as a means to explore possible explanations and meanings of thoughts and actions. The writing of narrative was the analysis process in action; the interpretation of events, actions and ideas was happening in real time within the framework of a narrative piece of writing. Although I returned to reread these frequently I tended not to edit these pieces of writing but used them as stimulus for further critical reflection work in personal writing.

Within personal writing I allowed my thinking free reign and permitted my pen to keep moving on the page. Often this writing process was the analysis process in action; I was thinking through ideas or issues by allowing my mind to try and sort things out for itself on paper. There was often no logical approach to this vehicle, I simply allowed my thinking to wander where it would and I followed it. Sometimes I may write a few pages and find that little interrogation had taken place, but I would not be judgemental and found that by giving permission to simply write meant that I simultaneously gave my mind permission to think as it wanted. Sometimes by trying too hard to find something or by providing too strict a remit we get trapped within our thinking, so I consciously allowed this vehicle to be completely free writing. While one cannot escape the limitations of one's thinking, we can provide avenues for its expansion. As a result it was not the most efficient in producing quantities of revelations, but as a tool to free the mind and to 'think aloud' on paper it was most useful. It allowed me to see my thinking, to see myself on the paper, to show me things that I had not known were part of me and then permitted me to consider these issues further

and to consider the implications and consequences of these thoughts. The many pages of data from this vehicle provide the most random of writing but also contain the largest number of ideas and the most information about me and my thinking. I often returned to reread sections several times and as part of the interpretation and analysis of what was there I would add extra comments as I thought further through the issues on the page.

It goes without saying that by working on my own throughout this project I have been limited in the possible depths I could establish with my critical reflecting as I had only my own mind to use as a resource; this is both the purpose of this research – to work alone as most private instrumental music teachers do – but also the most limiting aspect of it. Fook and Gardner (2007) and Moon (1999) propose using discussion and group dialogue and interrogation of issues as a way to overcome the limitations of one's own thinking and working with trusted colleagues can be a suitable resource through which to achieve this. I had literature to prompt me and authors often provided lenses through which I could interrogate my thinking further throughout the whole research process. Literature was extremely necessary when working with ideology critique and I would not have been able to participate in this vehicle half as successfully had I not had many 'colleagues' in book-form helping me. The lenses, issues or perspectives provided by authors allowed my thinking to shift its course so I could bring a new way of considering to my analysis and interpretation processes. As mentioned earlier in this report the writings of the MayDay Group and feminist authors such as bell and Andalzua have been powerful tools on my ways of thinking. By allowing the thoughts of another to enter your mind you have to negotiate what to make of the new ideas, how to make sense of them in relation to the beliefs and attitudes that have already become established in ways of thinking and acting. These new ideas, or lenses, act as a catalyst to the interpretation process and often provide 'new' ways of interrogating thinking that were not present before. Critical reflection is concerned with interrogation, becoming aware of that which was previously unknown, coming to a place of being able to justify thinking and practices and reaching new understandings and actions from the processes participated in. Ideology critique was most useful in its ability to link my thinking and the interrogation of my thinking with (educational) themes, such as injustice, and these themes acted as lenses

through which I could take new and further examinations of my practice and the thinking and beliefs that underpin it.

Action

Several theorists and practitioners (Barnett 1997, Brookfield 2000 and 1987, Fook and Gardner 2007) support an action phase that follows on from undertaking critical reflection processes. Once you have become aware of assumptions and critically analysed their foundations and consequences, what do you *do* with this new found knowledge? If nothing is 'done' and the knowledge has no impact upon the individual then what exactly was the point of participating in the processes of critical reflection? According to Reagan et al. (2000 p. 27) '[t]o become a reflective practitioner, a person must alter his or her behaviour.' As a professional, it seems that the responsible thing to do is to use the knowledge and understanding that has been created in a way that positively impacts upon your teaching practice.

So what does it mean to 'act', or to 'do' something with the understanding that has been created? Does 'action' have to be practical in the sense of having an impact upon the behaviours exhibited in the learning environment, or an impact that can be viewed on paper such as changes to the curriculum or approaches to working with learners? Or is a change of mind and perspective sufficient to be counted as 'action'? Action implies to me that the way things were has changed. Changing an external aspect of one's practice that can be observed clearly by others may have a deep impact upon practice, but may also simply reinforce technical rationality aspects of one's practice as the alterations are simply cosmetic and without real foundation or purpose. Changing one's behaviour or outward actions simply because one thinks that it may hold the formula for improved practice is insufficient. In the teaching and learning environment we make changes to our practice continually as we respond to the needs of the moment. We also make changes and experiment with alternative ways of working on a trial and error basis. The behaviour changes I am referring to must come about as a result of critical examination whereby it is believed that the change is fundamentally necessary. There may then be some positive benefit from its implementation.

I started out on this doctoral project wanting to explore the possible impact that critical reflection could have upon my teaching practice and thinking and it has become clear that much of my thinking about what I do (espoused theories) has not stood up under scrutiny. While I have made some 'practical' changes to my practice (as related in chapter four), they have come about as a result of changes in my thinking, framework and meaning perspective. If thinking is changed, it is likely that this will be evidenced by a change in behaviour; a change in behaviour does not, however, mean that a penetrating change in perspective has taken place.

The transformation theory of Mezirow (1990, 2000) concerns itself with perspectives and frames of reference. If these have been interrogated sufficiently then a change in perspective may indeed take place, and then one can claim to have been 'transformed':

> Perspective transformation is the process of becoming critically aware of how and why our presuppositions have come to constrain the way we perceive, understand, and feel about our world; of reformulating these assumptions to permit a more inclusive, discriminating, permeable, and integrative perspective; and of making decisions or otherwise acting upon these new understandings. (Mezirow 1990 p. 14)

While not all theorists and practitioners state that transformation is required as proof of effective critical reflection, many support it as a likely consequence of the process; a change in perspective may relate to issues of epistemology, power, ethics or politics. I have shown in the previous chapter a few instances of how my perspective has changed as a result of this research project and wish to clarify this now.

In chapter four I told of how I had aspired, as a teacher learning her trade, to 'fitting in' with the education system, becoming a competent teacher, learning how to work with diverse groups of people, learning the rules of educational engagement and becoming a team player. From what I have read and experienced, I am quite sure that the learning of my trade cannot be so different from the experience of others. Once you are in the teaching and learning environment you need to learn how to survive the messy business that is education as quickly as possible. As teachers, we hone our skills as effective 'deliverers of education' and relax into a routine of work that seems to be

effective and we get our head down and do the job. It is a hands-on environment, or what Eraut (1994) calls a 'what ought to be done' environment and this promotes the development of a pragmatic frame of reference. I have described myself in the past as being a pragmatist and to some extent find it comforting that a theorist states that this is the likely frame of reference to be developed in teachers as they learn how to be 'competent'. I can also see how a pragmatist perspective is strongly linked to my role as musician. When you have a performance coming up you need to get the work done; discipline in practice is required to prepare effectively and fully (Burt et al. 2007) and you need to be assured of reproducing results time and time again without fail (Brower and Cooke 1996). I may pause to consider the most effective and efficient means for my task and analyse their effectiveness as I proceed, but ultimately, I get my head down and complete the job.

As I have spent time investigating literature and critically reflecting upon my practice, however, I have become very influenced by some arguments from postmodernism and poststructuralism, especially in relation to the insecurity of knowledge, and have also been influenced by the writings of critical theorists and feminists. I did not used to understand the statement that knowledge was power. How can knowing about things give you power? I realise now that once you receive knowledge, make knowledge, or come to some new understanding, it is what you do with the knowledge that matters. Increased knowledge gives you choice, increased choice, freedom to choose between ways of thinking and relating to others, freedom to choose between different courses of action and response. This is what I see 'action' as being. Carr states it very succinctly:

> To be empowered as rational human agents with genuine choice between alternative courses of action presupposes not only the freedom to do other than we do, but also the possibility of conflict and contradiction between our wants and values. Without freedom we have no alternatives, but the appreciation of alternatives brings with it responsibility to choose in the light of available knowledge what might practically be for the best – although such present knowledge can never be sufficient to ensure in the teeth of future contingency what that best might *be*. (Carr 2000 p. 80)

I have had to rethink who I am, my position in the education sphere and what my purpose is, and have attempted to create some meaning out of what I do in light of the new discoveries made. I have been granted a privileged position as a result of the meanings and understandings that I have made from this project. I

have increased choices in my personal and professional life as a consequence of the learning that has occurred. Once increased knowledge has been attained, why would someone want to turn their back on it? One may try and ignore the learning that has occurred (but why would one do such a thing?), but when it has been as deep and penetrating as I have experienced you cannot disregard it. Once you become aware of injustices in your teaching, how can you possibly ignore them and continue as things used to be? Professionalism, responsibility morals and ethics will not allow such a thing to happen. The changes that have taken place in my assumptions, attitudes, ways of thinking and perceiving have been profound and I willingly allow this new knowledge to shake up my life. This is what education, learning and progress are all about.

Impact of critical reflection

I have learned much about my thinking and practice, about the nature of knowledge and learning, and about my roles as musician, educator and music educator as I have undertaken this self-as-researched project. I have been forced to deal with fundamental issues such as questions concerning who my teaching practice is for, what the nature of music learning is, and what it means to be an effective educator. I have had to question my values and their consequences, how they came to be formed, and judge the relative merits of different perspectives. Undertaking critical reflection is not always easy; you need to be persistent and it can be unsettling and even upsetting at times. For me, I have found that the benefits have out-weighed the apparent disadvantages. I have not yet fully analysed many of my pages of reflections simply because of the quantity of learning that I have experienced and the limits of time. I have sufficient materials upon which to base my CPD for some time to come yet.

I embarked upon this doctoral course because I wanted to learn more about what was going on in the singing lessons that I participate in, to be challenged, and most importantly I wanted to become a better music educator. I am so lucky that I have a profession that inspires and motivates me; I love what I do with a passion. I try to grasp opportunities to improve the effectiveness of what I do, and this research project has proved to be more successful in terms of quantity and quality of learning than I could have hoped for. I have found many

aspects of the DEd challenging and difficult to understand at times and feel that this hampered my progress initially as a teacher-researcher, but I persevered through these challenges. Stenhouse reminds us that 'the outstanding characteristics of the extended professional is a capacity for autonomous professional self-development through systematic self-study [and] the study of the work of other teachers' (1975, p. 144).

I would like to highlight for the reader a few of the more general understandings that I have come to as a result of undertaking critical reflection. A list is simply a set of words that can have different meanings to those reading it. This list may represent accepted understandings in academia and may indeed be very uninspiring for those who have known of these things for some time. For me, they represent changes that have taken place in my way of being an educator. They are not simply words, they symbolise the results of a process that I have undergone and their impact is profound:

- Knowledge is always contingent
- We can be trapped by our perspective even when we think we are not
- Insecurity and uncertainty are to be embraced
- Assumption hunting is a continual process
- It is a necessity to analyse the usual and habitual
- The motives and consequences of our thoughts and actions need to be interrogated continually
- Education is too important to be simply the results of habitual action
- People need to be the central focus of practice
- Education is concerned with ways of being and becoming
- The disparity between espoused and action theories needs examining

This is not an exhaustive list but I hope it allows the reader some insight into the main learning I have experienced in addition to the specific areas covered in chapter four. Many of the points above refer to processes of questioning and justifying, and represent changes in my thinking that have occurred as a result of engaging with critical reflection. If we question everything we do all the time while doing it, we are likely to become hesitant teachers, unable to make a decision for fear of it being the wrong one, and the flow and spontaneous engagement that is needed in an educational encounter may be lost. There is a

time and place for interrogation; sometimes we do need to stop and reconsider in the middle of a lesson, at other times we may reflect upon a decision made earlier in the day. The point here is not to be lulled into a sense of security that does not exist. Yes, the day-to-day practicalities of teaching will go on as they have done in the past, more or less, but one must be vigilant at all times of settling into a comfortable state where we are no longer aware of inconsistencies and injustices in our practice. There is always room for improvement in all that we do and some time needs to be set aside to consider the big issues of our profession and the seemingly insignificant ones. It is often those things that are taken for granted that can be the most destructive. The daily routine of teaching will continue but there will be a renewed vigilance monitoring the habits of mind, actions and reactions of both teacher and learner. Dewey (1910) talks of the impulse for action. We act as an external reaction to the internal impulses created by the transformative task of critical reflection, so ensuring continual change in thinking and practices.

In addition to the direct impact critical reflection has had on my teaching practice and upon me as educator as described above, it has also afforded me a change in perspective concerning learning and how best this may be promoted. Much that I have learned from this research project in terms of experiential learning, the value of conflict as a learning tool and the need for hands-on practical application of concepts has deepened my commitment to getting learners involved in the exciting venture of music making and considering how this might effectively be enabled in the studio. I have endeavoured to make the impact that critical reflection has had upon me as a person and educator clear in the changes reported in my thinking, perspectives and frames of reference. All this would be meaningless to the world of education if it did not have an influence upon what and how I go about my practice. Education is a social and cultural endeavour so while I have been the focus of change in this investigation it is hoped that the learners with whom I work are the recipients of the benefits of these changes.

Using critical reflection as a quality improvement and CPD tool

Critical reflection is both a practice and a theory. When I start to critically reflect, I am theorising upon my practice and being, but I am also actively doing

the reflecting through narrative, ideology critique and using lenses of critical theory and feminism, for example. It involves the constructing of knowledge and meaning-making through various means – it is thought and action combined. Perhaps critical reflection is so prevalent in different disciplines because it provides opportunity to combine theory and practice and establishes an interactive relationship between the two (Calderhead 1988, Correia and Bleicher 2008, Fook and Gardner 2007, McDrury and Alterio 2002/3). There is a large body of research proposing that by participating in reflective practice the education practitioner, and those of other disciplines, may continually grow, develop and learn and so become more effective practitioners as a result (Attard 2008, Baguley and Brown 2009, Bennett 1996, Brown et al. 2005, Cole and Knowles 1996, Farrell 2008, Holly 1989, Johansson et al. 2007, Preskill 1996, Shepherd 2006, Talbot 2002, Wise et al. 1999).

Critical reflection is often referred to when talking of newly qualified teachers, initial teacher training, teachers to be or trainee teachers (Bolton 2005, Cardona 2005, Colton and Sparks-Langer 1993, Freedman 2006, Ghaye and Ghaye 1998, Goodell 2006, Griffin 2003, Hatton and Smith 1995, Lambe 2011, Lizzio and Wilson 2007, Maarof 2007, Nagle 2009, Neilsen 2008, Ramsey 2010, Smith 1998, Watts and Lawson 2008, Zeichner 1987). This is perhaps only natural as universities are the houses of research and the houses of educating future teachers, and research is based around what the academic institutions actually do. There is further research that examines the impact of critical reflection as used by in-service practitioners (Attard 2008, Christie 2007, Lemon 2007). Fook and Gardner (2007) offer staff development programmes for in-service teachers on the use of critical reflection, and Watts and Lawson (2009) state that teachers who have practised for some time are beyond the technical and organisational and are heavily entrenched in ways of habits so are prime candidates for effective and transformative critical reflection.

There is no doubt that I am convinced concerning the potential for improvement that participating in critical reflection processes affords the practitioner. It is my hope that this research report goes some way in convincing the reader of the same. Critical reflection is useful to those who willingly participate in its processes, who are motivated in its use and have a clear and honest purpose in

its pursuit. The evidence in this report shows that there are very many ways through which to participate in critical reflection. It may be advisable for those wishing to utilise reflection for professional (and personal) benefit to try out, in some small way, a whole range of ways of working with it. We are all unique beings, and different ways of working with critical reflection need to be examined so as to find that which is most compatible with the user. I found all methods explored in this research to be constructive in terms of their ability to help the reflector uncover assumptions and interrogate their consequences, but I did not enjoy working with all of them equally, and some I found needed much more time than this project allowed, in order for me to fully access the potential benefits they could offer. In the future it is likely that I will use those that I preferred as a way to continually interrogate and improve my practice, but I am keen to further explore the possibilities of narrative as a vehicle for critical reflection. Reporting on issues using narrative also affords the opportunity of a potentially wider audience but only if it is well crafted and has something of import to tell (Denzin 1997). There is too much excellent educational research that is not reaching educators out with academic institutions, and the narrative form may provide a more accessible medium for educators to experience the influence of research and act upon the results.

Critical reflection is an adaptable tool for practice improvement. It is possible, as I have, to start working with it with relatively little prior experience. Many of the texts referred to throughout this report contain detailed suggestions of ways to work with critical reflection, the kinds of questions to ask, and different ways to record thoughts and perceptions. And for professionals who have used critical reflection before and have settled into ways of working with it, there are many other modes that can be explored that may yield effective results. It is also adaptable in that it may be used in general ways, interrogating external influences on practice (ideology critique), or analysing fundamental questions linked to the discipline. It can also be used to explore isolated incidents that are experienced in the day-to-day work of practitioners. What has been most appealing throughout this research is that critical reflection is tailor-made to your own practice, your own issues, your own priorities; you can use critical reflection in ways that are important to you. There are not many custom-made

continuing professional development courses that are almost cost free for practitioners to use. Critical reflection can be that possibility.

A constructivist paradigm has been central to this research project. Learning from reflection is a key tenet of the constructivist perspective of knowledge creation and meaning making. Vygotsky is considered a main exponent of constructivism whereby he proposed that learning and development were not necessarily the same things in children. He proposed the zone of proximal development (ZPD), that area of knowledge that is out of reach for someone, but that may be entered with the aid of another, so establishing a social constructionist perspective of knowledge. The ZPD, I would venture, may also be accessed by utilising processes of critical reflection. It may be possible to increase one's knowledge and understanding through the application of critical reflection on one's experience. Guy Claxton is an active educator researcher in the field of learning and continues to develop many of Vygotsky's ideas:

> Being reflective means looking inward as well as out, making explicit to ourselves the meanings and implications that may be latent within our store of originally unreflective know-how. In period of reflection, in this sense, one chews the cud of experience, ruminating on experiences and impressions to see what larger significance they might have. At the same time, ideas and theories that have been registered intellectually can be re-examined in the light of personal history. Does this new perspective offer useful insights that develop my understanding of my lived experience? And, at the same time, does my experience suggest modifications to or developments of the framework? Reflection is essentially an off-line search for greater coherence between knowledge and know-how. (Claxton 1999 p. 191)

This quote suggests how the processes of reflection aid learning from experience. Moon (2004 p. 14) states that by representing reflections on paper (writing) one is 'sorting out…understanding of those ideas and is learning more since the organization and clarification of ideas are a process of learning.' She continues to say that the meaningfulness of learning is learner specific and the constructivist perspective of learning is one in which 'the new material of learning itself can influence change in what is already known or understood – or it can change itself under the influence of what is already known' (Moon 2004 p. 17). In other words, critical reflection and experiential learning are both conducted 'without the direct mediation of a teaching process' (Moon 2004 p. 73). 'We have grown used to thinking of learning and teaching as inseparable, in the sense that learning occurs when a teacher conveys knowledge to pupils in

the classroom' (Neilsen 2008 p. 486). While the benefits of reflective and experiential learning have been acknowledged for some time it is only relatively recently that theorists and educators have considered how learning actually takes place in these kinds of 'unmediated' learning processes and their use within continuing personal and professional development.

> One main factor that brings reflective and experiential learning together in a significant way for the management of education is that both are forms of learning that are relatively independent of mediation. In this way, this learning extends beyond formal education and becomes very important in self-managed continuing professional development. (Moon 2004 p. 74)

The issue of 'self-managed' continuing professional development has been at the core of this research endeavour. The self-management of one's teaching practice is cyclic in nature; critical reflection is an ongoing spiral process (Bennett 1996) and one needs to continually confront tensions and contradictions that are evident in the learning and teaching environment through engaging in critically reflective processes. Nothing remains static and one needs to establish the positive habit of reflecting critically, analysing and acting upon the findings. For constructivists the learning process is a personal and individual one, and it is also active and situated (Reagan et al. 2000 p. 109).

CPD for the private practising instrumental and vocal teacher

I propose that the benefits of using critical reflection as a quality monitoring and professional development tool for the private practising instrumental and vocal teacher include:

- Limited financial cost
- May be undertaken anytime and anywhere
- No travel is required
- Centred around one's own practice context
- May be adapted to individual aspirations and motivations
- Suited to diverse needs and is flexible in how it may be used

I have provided much evidence and argument to promote the use of critical reflection by practising instrumental teachers. It is disconcerting, however, to consider the possibility that my research will not reach the intended audience.

Because of the lack of full time undergraduate and postgraduate training opportunities for the prospective instrumental and vocal teacher in the UK, it is unsurprising that their work is often considered of less status by those who are trained as either classroom teachers or as performers and composers (Haddon 2009). Until such time as professional training becomes available for instrumental and vocal teachers, it is extremely important that the quality of teaching and learning be monitored and evaluated, and that the professional status of these practising educators is promoted. In the absence of a regulatory body monitoring standard of provision, instrumental and vocal teachers may be provided the vehicles of critical reflection as a self-regulatory mechanism. It may be possible to transform the nature and status of the private practising music teacher from inside the discipline. Radical reform is within the grasp of each instrumental and vocal teacher. Many within the music community, such as Bowman (2010 p. 2), are calling for a review of current practices in music education and are appealing for teachers to participate in this as they are the 'deliverers' of this thing called education, and he states that 'critical discernment is a crucial part of knowledge that is truly professional.' Carr and Kemmis (1986 p. 2) also call for teachers to become involved as 'the professional development of teachers requires that they adopt a research stance towards their educational practice.' Cranton (1996 p. 51) reminds us that educators 'are expected to be independent, self-directed professionals', and they need to be accountable for their practice and practices (Ramsey 2010). The professional needs to focus upon 'renewal' of knowledge that arises from 'the distillation of personal experience' (Eraut 1994 p. 13) and critical reflection may be one way of progressing this.

While there is a small but growing body of research based upon the practices of the instrumental and vocal teacher, especially from within higher education establishments in the UK, USA and Australia, until it is regarded as an integral part of music education, instrumental tuition will remain in an isolated, and potentially damaging, state. The practising instrumental and vocal teacher has a huge responsibility in terms of the kinds of traditions and practices that are being passed on to the next generation of musicians and many of the cultural and social values associated with the practising music educator are rooted in the traditions of a previous century.

Where to from here?

This current critical reflection process has not yet come to an end. It will take some time for me to integrate and assimilate much of the learning that has taken place during this research project. The kind of learning that has occurred and the meanings that have been created are to do with ways of thinking, attitudes, perspectives and ways of being. The learning that has occurred is more than simply remembering a piece of information and retaining it in my memory for some future use. Habits of mind and action have been altered and these can take some time before fully integrated. Writing this report has helped progress the assimilation process as the act of representing the learning is also a way of reconstructing it (Moon 1999, 2004). Part of the implementation of the learning involves monitoring my practice for the issues that have come to light, being vigilant to old ways of thinking and acting, and being accepting and patient. Now that I have established some experience and knowledge of critical reflection processes, I wish to continue using them so as to further improve my skills in their use and continue to benefit from their results.

I am aware that I have been unable to fully profit from ideology critique in this inquiry. This is an area that I wish to persist with in the future. As reported in earlier chapters, ideology critique requires a foundation of knowledge in politics, economics, sociology and cultural studies. My knowledge of these disciplines is steadily growing but is inadequate to undertake thorough critique of the influences and impact of them upon educational practices. From reading the works of Apple and Brookfield, it is clear that there is much that can be learned from participating in ideology critique in relation to educational endeavours. Increased understanding of what one does, the foundations upon which it and your knowledge rest, must be pursued; it is the responsible thing to do as a professional.

I have come to a place of acceptance about the apparent disparity between aims, ways of thinking and acting, and perspectives I have come to see as integral to my roles of musician, educator and music educator. It is the people that I work with that bring these three areas together. I wish to move towards a perspective that places people at the centre of my practice, thinking about their

needs and aspirations, and how I can lead them to encounter music in a personal and engaging way. I have spent much time working with systems, expectations, rules, criteria and traditions – supporting the status quo - and now want to put the human element firmly at the centre of what I do.

This self-as-researched dissertation contributes to teacher research and provides a situated perspective of how one teacher has explored vehicles of critical reflection, applied these to educational practice, and demonstrates the learning and meaning making that has been constructed as a result. Having spent time and energy working with critical reflection processes in this teacher researcher project I am better positioned to evaluate its usefulness in, and ability to aid, knowledge construction and understanding of thinking and practices. This project has enabled me to have a more detailed view of what is, and may be, occurring within the educational environments in which I work, and allowed me to discern paths I may wish to follow in the future. It has provided some clarity of vision. I feel humbled and empowered by the understanding presented to me as a result of undertaking this doctoral journey. It is hoped that the reader has gained something from the telling of the story and consequently is motivated to examine educational practices he or she is involved with.

References

Abdallah, M. (2009) 'Towards a methodological improvement of narrative inquiry: a qualitative analysis', from http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/search/detailmini.jsp?_nfpb=true&_&ERICExtSearch_SearchValue_0=ED506060&ERICExtSearch_SearchType_0=no&accno=ED506060 last accessed 20/10/10.

Abrahams, F. (2005) 'Critical pedagogy for music education: a best practice to prepare future music educators' from Rider University, http://search.rider.edu/search?site=everything&client=rideruniversity&proxystylesheet=rideruniversity&output=xml_no_dtd&q=abrahams+critical+pedagogy&sa.x=0&sa.y=0 last accessed 20/10/10.

Aggett, C. (2010) 'Reflective journaling in the singing studio', in S. C. Harrison (ed.), *Perspectives on teaching singing,* Bowen Hills, Australian Academic Press, pp. 183-204.

Anderson, S. (2008) 'Singing teachers evaluation working party – a first report', from the British Voice Association website, http://www.british-voice-association.com, last accessed 12/10/09.

Andalzua, G. (1987/1999) *Borderlands,* 2nd edition, San Francisco, Aunt Lute Books.

Apple, M. (1995) *Education and power,* 2nd edition, New York and London, Routledge.

Apple, M. (1996) *Cultural politics and education,* Buckingham, Open University Press.

Apple, M. (2004) *Ideology and curriculum,* 3rd edition, New York and London, RoutledgeFalmer.

Argyris, C. and Schön, D. A. (1974) *Theory in practice,* San Francisco, Jossey-Bass.

Armstrong, D. and Hipp, S. (2006) 'Classroom reflections: using drawn images of critical incidents for social construction of reflective practice', paper presented at *American Educational Research Association Meeting,* San Francisco, 2006.

Arneson, C. and Hardenbergh, E. (2009) 'Teaching voice teachers', in *Journal of Singing,* vol. 65, no. 3, Jan/Feb, pp. 315-319.

Arnold, D. (1965) 'Instruments and instrumental teaching in the early Italian

conservatoires', in *The Galpin Society Journal,* vol. 18, March, pp. 72-81.

Association of Teachers of Singing, '*Training Course for Singing Teachers*', available from <u>http://aotos.org.uk/training/</u>, last accessed 25/10/09.

Attard, K. (2008) 'Uncertainty for the reflective practitioner: a blessing in disguise', in *Reflective Practice,* vol. 9, no. 3, pp.307-317.

Baguley, M. and Brown, A. (2009) 'Critical friends: an investigation of shared narrative practice between education and nursing graduates', in *Teaching in Higher Education,* vol. 14, no. 2, April, pp.195-207.

Bain, J., Ballantyne, R., Packer, J. and Mills, C. (1999) 'Using journal writing to enhance student teachers' reflectivity during field experience placements', in *Teachers and Teaching: theory and practice,* vol. 5, pp. 21-73.

Baker, D. (2005) 'Music service teachers' life histories in the United Kingdom with implications for practice', in *International Journal of Music Education,* vol. 23, pp. 263-277.

Barnett, R. (1997) *Higher Education: a critical business,* The society for research into Higher Education and Open University Press, Buckingham.

Barrett, M. (2009) 'Sounding lives in and through music: a narrative inquiry of the 'everyday' musical engagement of a young child', in *Journal of Early Childhood Research,* vol. 7, no. 2, pp. 115-134.

Behar, R. (1996) *The vulnerable observer,* Boston, Beacon Press.

Bennett, C. (1996) 'Teacher perspectives: strengthening reflective teacher education', in *Teaching Education,* vol. 8, no. 1, pp.3-12.

Berliner, D. (1986) 'In pursuit of the expert pedagogue', in *Educational Researcher,* August/September, pp.5-13.

Blackmore, P., Wilson, A. and Stainton, C. (2005) 'Leadership in staff development: a role analysis', in *Research in Post-Compulsory Education,* vol. 10, no. 2, pp. 149-164.

Blandford, S. (2004) 'A different tune', in *The Guardian,* 16 November 2004.

Bleicher, R., Correia, M. and Buchanan, M. (2006) 'Service learning: Building commitment to becoming teachers', AERA presentation.

Bochner, A. (2001) 'Narrative's virtues', in *Qualitative Inquiry,* vol. 7, no. 2, pp.131-157.

Bogdan, D. (2003) 'Musical spirituality: reflections on identity and ethics of

embodied aesthetic experience in/and the academy', in *Journal of Aesthetic Education,* vol. 37, no. 2, Summer, pp. 80-98.

Bolton, G. (2005) *Reflective practice writing and professional development,* London, Sage Publications.

Bolton, G. (2006) 'Narrative writing: reflective enquiry into professional practice', in *Educational Action Research,* vol. 14, no. 2, June, pp. 203-218.

Booth, E. (2009) *The music teaching artist's bible,* New York, Oxford University Press.

Boud, D., Keogh, R. and Walker, D. (1985) *Reflection: turning experience into learning,* London, Kogan Page.

Bowman, W. (2009) 'Professional knowledge: imagining the obvious as if it weren't', in *Action, Criticism and Theory for Music Education,* vol. 8, no. 1, March, pp.1-11.

Bowman, W. (2010) 'Interruptions reshaped into transitions: personal reflections on the identity challenges of moving to music education', in *Action, Criticism and Theory for Music Education,* vol. 9, no. 2, September, pp. 48-59.

Boyd, E. and Fales, A. (1983) 'Reflective learning', in *Journal of Humanistic Psychology,* vol. 23, no. 2, pp.99-117.

Brookfield, S. (1987) *Developing critical thinkers,* Buckingham, Oxford University Press.

Brookfield, S. D. (1995) *Becoming a critically reflective teacher,* San Francisco, Jossey-Bass.

Brookfield, S. D. (2000) 'Transformative learning as ideology critique', in J. Mezirow (ed.), *Learning as transformation,* San Francisco, Jossey-Bass.

Brookfield, S. D. (2005) *The power of critical theory: liberating adult learning and teaching,* Maidenhead, Open University Press.

Brower, H. and Cooke, J. (1996) *Great singers on the art of singing,* New York, Dover Publications.

Brown, K., Fenge, L. and Young, N. (2005) 'Researching reflective practice: an example from post-qualifying social work education', in *Research in Post-Compulsory Education,* vol. 10, no. 3, pp.389-402.

Burnard, P. (1991) *Experiential learning in action,* Aldershot, Avebury.

Burnard, P. and Spruce, G. (2009) 'Teacher research: making a difference in

music education', in *British Journal of Music Education,* vol. 26, no. 1, pp. 5-6.

Burt, R., Lancaster, H., Lebler, D., Carey, G. and Hitchcock, M. (2007) 'Shaping the tertiary music curriculum: what can we learn from different contexts?', from http://www.nactmus.org.au/PDF/Burt_et_al.pdf last accessed 5/3/11.

Calderhead, J. (1988) *Teachers' professional learning,* Lewes, The Falmer Press.

Campbell, A., McNamara, O, and Gilroy, P. (2004) *Practitioner research and professional development in education,* London, Paul Chapman publishing.

Cardona, A. (2005) 'The reflective bus has reached its destination, or is it still travelling on?', in *Reflective Practice,* vol. 6, no. 3, August, pp. 393-406.

Carr, D. (2000) *Professionalism and ethics in teaching,* London & New York, Routledge.

Carr, W. and Kemmis, S. (1986) *Becoming critical,* London, Deacon University Press.

Casey, A., Dyson, B. and Campbell, A. (2009) 'Action research in physical education: focusing beyond myself through cooperative learning', in *Educational Action Research,* vol. 17, no. 3, pp. 407-423.

Chapman, J. (2006) *Singing and teaching singing,* San Diego, Plural Publishing.

Chauvot, J. (2009) 'Grounding practice in scholarship, grounding scholarship in practice: knowledge of a mathematics teacher educator-researcher', in *Teaching and Teacher Education,* vol. 25, pp. 357-370.

Christie, E. (2007) 'Notes from the field: teachers using reflection to transform classroom practice and themselves as practitioners', in *Reflective Practice,* vol. 8, no. 4, November, pp. 483-495.

Clandinin, D, and Connelly, M. (2000) *Narrative inquiry: experience and story in qualitative research*, San Francisco, Jossey-Bass.

Clandinin, J., Pushor, D. and Orr, A. (2007) 'Navigating sites for narrative inquiry', in *Journal of Teacher Education,* vol. 58, no. 1, pp.21-35.

Claus, J. (1999) 'You can't avoid the politics: lessons for teacher education from a case study of teacher-initiated tracking reform', in *Journal of Teacher Education,* vol. 50, no. 1, pp.5-16.

Claxton, G. (1999) *Wise up: the challenge of lifelong learning,* New York, Bloomsbury.

Clough, P. (2002) *Narratives and fictions in educational research,* Maidenhead,

Oxford University Press.

Cole, A. and Knowles, G (1996) 'The politics of epistemology and the self-study of teacher education practices', paper presented at the international conference of self-study in teacher education, Herstmonceux Castle, England, August 5-8.

Collyer, S. (2010) 'Singing teaching and science: an ancient symbiosis', in S. D. Harrison (ed.), *Perspectives on teaching singing,* Bowen Hills, Australian Academic Press, pp. 83-100.

Colton, A. and Sparks-Langer, G. (1993) 'A conceptual framework to guide the development of teacher reflection and decision making', in *Journal of Teacher Education,* vol. 44, no. 1, pp.45-54.

Conle, C. (2000) 'Thesis as narrative or "what is the inquiry in narrative inquiry?"', in *Curriculum Inquiry,* vol. 30, no. 2.

Cook, T. (2009) 'The purpose of mess in action research: building rigour though a messy turn', in *Educational Action Research*, vol. 17, no. 2, pp.277–291.

Correia, M. G. and Bleicher, R. E. (2008) 'Making connections to teach reflection', in *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning,* Spring, pp.41-49.

Cranton, P. (1996) *Professional development as transformative learning,* San Francisco, Jossey-Bass.

Crozier, R. and Harris, P. (2000) *The music teacher's companion,* London, Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music.

Crozier, R. and Scaife, N. (2004) *All together! Teaching music in groups,* London, The Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music (Publishing) Limited.

Czaja, E. (2006) 'Building the private voice studio and recruiting students', in *Journal of Singing,* vol. 62, no. 4, Mar/Apr, pp. 457-461.

De Bono, E. (1971) *Practical thinking,* London, Penguin Books.

De Bono, E. (1982/2009) *Thinking course,* Harlow, BBC Active.

Degago, A. (2007) 'Using reflective journals to enhance impoverished practicum placements: A case in teacher education in Ethiopia', in *Teaching Education,* vol. 18, no. 4, December, pp. 343-356.

Delany, C. and Watkin, D. (2009) 'A study of critical reflection in health professional education: 'learning where others are coming from', in *Advances in Health Science Education,* vol. 14, pp. 411-429.

Denzin, N. (1994) 'The art and politics of interpretation', in N. Denzin and Y.

Lincoln (eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research,* Thousand Oaks, Sage Publications.

Denzin, N. (1997) *Interpretive ethnography,* Thousand Oaks, Sage Publications.

Dewey, J. (1910) *How we think,* Basic Books.

Dewey, J. (1925) *Experience and nature,* from http://www.scribd.com/doc/39059058/John-Dewey-Experience-and-Nature-1925-1929, last accessed 3/3/11.

Dewey, J. (1938/1997) *Experience and education,* New York, Touchstone.

Diessner, R. (1991) 'Teacher education for democratic classrooms', seminar paper presented at the sixteenth annual meeting of the association for moral education in Athens.

Dillard, J. (2005) 'Nurturing young voice teachers', in *Journal of Singing,* vol. 61, no. 5, May/June, pp. 445-446.

Eisler, R. (2002) *The power of partnership,* Novato, New World Library.

Ellis, C. and Bochner, A. (2003) 'Autoethnography, personal narrative, reflexivity', in N. Denzin and Y. Lincoln (eds.), *Collecting and interpreting qualitative materials,* Thousand Oaks, Sage.

Eraut, M. (1994) *Developing professional knowledge and competence,* London/Philadelphia, RoutledgeFalmer.

Esposito, J. and Evans-Winters, V. (2007) 'Contextualizing critical action research: lessons from urban educators', in *Educational Action Research,* vol. 15, no. 2, June, pp. 221-237.

Evans, L. (2002) *Reflective practice in educational research,* London, continuum.

Farrell, T. (2008) 'Reflective practice in the professional development of teachers of adult English language learners', in *CAELA Network Brief,* October.

Fay, J. (1924) 'Advanced instrumental instruction in the public schools', in *Music Supervisors' Journal,* vol. 11, no. 1, October, pp. 24-28.

Flanagan, J. (1954) 'The critical incident technique', in *Psychological Bulletin,* vol. 51, no. 4, July.

Fook, J. and Gardner F. (2007) *Practising critical reflection: a resource handbook,* London, Open University Press.

Fox, M., Martin, P. and Green G. (2007) *Doing practitioner research,* London, Sage publications.

Freedman, D. (2006) 'Reflections on the research process: emancipatory

research or emancipatory zeal?', in *Reflective Practice,* vol. 7, no. 1, February, pp. 87-99.

Freire, P. (1970/1993) *Pedagogy of the oppressed,* London, Penguin books.

Freire, P. and Horton, M. (1990) *We make the road by walking,* Philadelphia, Temple University Press.

Freshwater, D. and Avis, M. (2004) 'Analysing interpretation and reinterpreting analysis: exploring the logic of critical reflection' in *Nursing Philosophy,* vol. 5, pp.4-11.

Fromm, E. (1993) *The art of being,* London, Constable and Company.

Galbraith, M. (1990) *Adult learning methods,* Malabar, Krieger publishing company.

Gardner, H. (1983) *Frames of mind,* New York, Basic Books.

Gargiulo, T. (2005) 'The strategic use of stories', in *Performance Improvement,* vol. 44, no. 10, Nov/Dec.

Gaunt, H. (2008) One-to-one tuition in a conservatoire: the perceptions of instrumental and vocal teachers', in *Psychology of Music*, vol. 36, no. 2, pp. 215-245.

Ghaye, A. and Ghaye, K. (1998) *Teaching and learning through critical reflective practice,* London, David Fulton.

Gilstrap, D. and Dupree, J. (2008) 'A regression model of predictor variables on critical reflection in the classroom: integration of the critical incident questionnaire and the framework for reflective thinking', in *The Journal of Academic Librarianship,* vol. 34, no. 6, pp. 469-481.

Goodell, J. (2006) 'Using critical incident reflections: a self-study as a mathematics teacher educator', in *Journal of Mathematics Teacher Education,* vol. 9, pp. 221-248.

Goodnough, K. (2008) 'Dealing with messiness and uncertainty in practitioner research: the nature of participatory action research' in *Canadian Journal of Education,* vol. 31, no. 2, pp.431-458.

Gould, E. (2008) 'Devouring the other: democracy in music education', in *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education,* vol. 7, no. 1, pp.29-44.

Green, L. (2003) 'Why 'ideology' is still relevant for critical thinking in music education', in *Action, Criticism and Theory for Music Education,* vol. 2, no. 2, December, pp. 1-24.

Griffin, M. (2003) 'Using critical incidents to promote and assess reflective

thinking in pre-service teachers', in *Reflective Practice,* vol. 4, no. 2, pp. 207-220.

Guba, E. and Lincoln, Y. (2000) 'Paradigmatic controversies, contradictions, and emerging confluences', in N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln (eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research,* (2nd edition), California, Sage, pp. 163-188.

Habermas, J. (1976) *Legitimation crisis,* London, Heinemann.

Habermas, J. (1984) *Theory of communicative action,* T. McCarthy (trans.), Boston, Beacon Press.

Haddon, E. (2009) 'Instrumental and vocal teaching: how do music students learn to teach?', in *British Journal of Music Education,* vol. 26, no. 1, pp. 57-70.

Hall, H. (1981) 'Moravian music education in America, ca. 1750 to ca. 1830', in *Journal of Research in Music Education,* vol. 29, no. 3, Autumn, pp. 225-234.

Hall, J. (1999) *A review of musical instrument instruction in Scotland,* Edinburgh, Scottish Council for Research in Education.

Hallam, S. (1998) *Instrumental teaching: a guide to better teaching and learning,* Oxford, Heinemann education publishers.

Hammersley, M. (1992) *What's Wrong With Ethnography? – Methodological Explorations.* London: Routledge.

Hammersley, M. (2001) 'Some questions about evidence-based practice in education', paper presented at the symposium on "Evidence-based practice in education" at the Annual Conference of the British Educational Research Association, University of Leeds, England, September 13-15.

Hargreaves, D. (1996a) 'Teaching as a research-based profession: possibilities and prospects', Annual lecture at the Teacher Training Agency, London.

Hargreaves, D. (1996b) 'Educational research and evidence-based educational practice – a response to critics', in *Research Intelligence,* No. 58, November, pp. 12-16.

Hargreaves, D. (1997) 'In defence of research for evidence-based teaching: a rejoinder to Martyn Hammersley', in *British Educational Research Journal,* vol. 23, no. 4, pp.405-420.

Harris, P and Crozier, R. (2000) *The music teacher's companion: A practical guide,* London, The Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music (Publishing) Limited.

Hatcher, J., Bringle, R. and Muthiah, R. (2004) 'Designing effective reflection: What matters to service-learning?', in *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning,* vol. 11, no. 1, pp. 38-46.

Hatton, N. and Smith, D. (1995) 'Reflection in teacher education: towards definition and implementation' from http://alex.edfac.usyd.edu.au/LocalResource/Study1/hattonart.html last accessed 2/08/09

Heads of Instrumental Teaching Scotland (HITS) 'Guidelines for instrumental teaching in Scottish Schools' available from www.hitscotland.org.uk last accessed 2/10/10.

Hertz, R. (1997) *Reflexivity and voice,* Thousand Oaks, Sage publications.

Hines, J. (1982) *Great singers on great singing,* New York, Limelight Editions.

Holly, M. L. (1989) *Writing to grow,* Portsmouth, Heinemann.

Holmes, L. (2004) 'Challenging the learning turn in education and training', in *Journal of European Industrial Training,* vol. 28, no. 8/9, pp. 625-638.

hooks, b. (1994) *Teaching to transgress,* New York and London, Routledge.

hooks, b. (2009) *Belonging,* New York, Routledge.

hooks, b. (2010) *Teaching critical thinking,* New York, Routledge.

Jaffurs, S. (2004) 'Developing musicality', in *Action, Criticism & Theory for Music Education,* vol. 3, no. 3, December, pp.1-17.

Janesick, V. (1999) 'A journal about journal wiriting as a qualitative research technique: history, issues, and reflections', in *Qualitative Inquiry,* vol. 5, no. 4, pp.505-524.

Jaruszewicz, C. (2006) 'Opening windows on teaching and learning: transformative and emancipatory learning precipitated by experimenting with visual documentation of student learning', in *Educational Action Research,* vol. 14, no. 3, September, pp. 357-375.

Jeffs, T. and Smith, M. (2005) *Informal education: conversation, democracy and learning,* 3rd edition, Nottingham, Educational Heretics Press.

Johansson, I., Sandberg, A. and Vuorinen, T. (2007) 'Practitioner-oriented research as a tool for professional development', in *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal,* vol. 15, no. 2, June, pp. 151-166.

Jorgensen, E. (1997) *In search of music education,* Urbana and Chicago, University of Illinois Press.

Jorgensen, E. (2003) *Transforming music education,* Indiana, Indiana University

Press.

Kember, D., Leung, D., Jones, A., Loke, A., McKay, J., Sinclair, K., Tse, H., Webb, C., Wong, F., Wong, M. and Yeung, E. (2000) 'Development of a questionnaire to measure the level of reflective thinking', in *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education,* vol. 25, no. 4, pp. 381-395.

Kemmis, S. (1985) 'Action research and the politics of reflection', in D. Boud, R. Keogh and D. Walker, *Reflection: turning experience into learning,* London, Kogan Page.

Kennell, R. (2002) 'Systematic research in studio instruction in music', in R. Colwell and C. Richardson (eds), *The new handbook of research on music teaching and learning,* New York, Oxford University Press, pp. 243-256.

Kincheloe, J. (no date) 'Critical theory and the moral dimension: emancipation, complexity and power' from 'The Freire Project', http://freireproject.org/joe-kincheloe-0 last accessed 17/10/10

Kincheloe, J. (2003) *Teachers as researchers: qualitative inquiry as a path to empowerment,* London, RoutledgeFalmer, second edition.

King, P. and Kitchener, K. (1994) *Developing reflective judgement: understanding and promoting intellectual growth and critical thinking in adolescents and adults,* San Francisco, Jossey-Bass.

Kolb, D. A. (1984) *Experiential learning: experience as the source of learning and development,* New Jersey, Prentice Hall.

Lamb, R. (1996) 'Discords: feminist pedagogy in music education', in *Theory into Practice,* vol. 35, no. 2, spring, pp. 124-131.

Lamb, R., Dolloff, L. and Howe, S. (2002) 'Feminism, feminist research, and gender research in music education', in R. Colwell and C. Richardson (eds), *The new handbook of research on music teaching and learning,* New York, Oxford University Press, pp. 648-674.

Lambe, J. (2011) 'Developing pre-service teachers' reflective capacity through engagement with classroom-based research', in *Reflective Practice,* vol. 12, no. 1, February, pp. 87-100.

Langer, E. J. (1997) *The power of mindful learning,* Cambridge, Perseus Books.

Larrotta, C. (2009) 'Journaling in an adult ESL literacy program', in *New directions for adult and continuing education*, no. 121, Spring.

Latukefu, L. (2010) 'Breaking from the frames of custom: a sociocultural

approach to learn singing', in S. C. Harrison (ed.), *Perspectives on teaching singing,* Bowen Hills, Australian Academic Press, pp. 205-226.

Lave, J. and Wenger, E. (1991) *Situated learning: legitimate peripheral participation,* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Lemon, N. (2007) 'Take a photograph: teacher reflection through narrative', in *Reflective Practice,* vol. 8, no. 2, May, pp. 177-191.

Leonardo, Z. (2003) 'Discourse and critique: outlines of a post-structural theory of ideology', in *Journal of educational policy,* vol. 18, no. 2. pp.203-214.

Lizzio, A. and Wilson, K. (2007) 'Developing critical professional judgement: the efficacy of a self-managed reflective process', in *Studies in Continuing Education,* vol. 29, no. 3, November, pp.277-293.

Lutz, C. (1995) 'The gender of theory', in R. Behar and D. Gordon (eds.), *Women writing culture,* Berkeley, University of California Press, pp. 249-266.

Lyle, E. (2009) 'A process of becoming: in favour of a reflexive narrative approach', in *The Qualitative Report,* vol. 14, no. 2, June, pp. 293-298.

Maarof, N. (2007) 'Telling his or her story through reflective journals', in *International Education Journal,* vol. 8, no. 1, pp.205-220.

Macbeth, D. (2001) 'On "reflexivity" in qualitative research: two readings and a third', in *Qualitative Inquiry,* vol. 7, no. 1, pp.35-68.

Maclellan, E. (2004) 'How reflective is the academic essay?', in *Studies in Higher Education,* vol. 29, no. 1, February, pp. 75-89.

Maddy, J. (1929) 'Instrumental music department', in *Music Supervisors' Journal,* vol. 15, no. 4, March, pp. 69-73.

Mansfield, J. (2002) 'Differencing music education', in *British Journal of Music Education,* vol. 19, no. 2, pp. 189-202.

Mansfield, J. (2004) 'The musical subject, technoculture and curriculum in the postmodern condition', in *Research Studies in Music Education,* no. 23, pp. 42-58.

Marcos, J., Sánchez, E. and Tillema, H. (2008) 'Teachers reflecting on their work: articulating what is said about what is done', in *Teachers and Teaching: theory and practice,* vol. 14, no. 2, April, pp. 95-114.

Marrelli, A. (2005) 'The performance technologist's toolbox: critical incidents', from www.ispi.org last accessed 27/8/09.

Martin, M. (2005) 'Reflection in teacher education: how can it be supported?', in *Educational Action Research,* vol. 13, no. 4, pp. 525-542.

MayDay Group website http://www.maydaygroup.org/ last accessed 12/9/10.

McDrury, J. and Alterio, M. (2002/3) *Learning through storytelling in higher education,* London, Kogan Page Ltd.

Mezirow, J. (1981) 'A critical theory of adult learning and education', in *Adult Education Quarterly,* vol. 32, no. 3, pp. 3-24.

Mezirow, J. (1990) *Fostering critical reflection in adulthood,* San Francisco, Jossey-Bass.

Mezirow, J. (2000) *Learning as transformation: critical perspectives on a theory in progress,* San Francisco, Jossey-Bass.

Miller, R. (2005) 'The teacher's responsibilities to the ultimate instrument', in *Journal of Singing,* vol. 61, no. 3, Jan/Feb, pp. 235-240.

Mills, J. (2007) *Instrumental teaching,* Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Mills, J., Burt, R. and Phillips, A. (2007) 'The young instrumental teacher: learning to teach music while a student at a conservatoire', paper presented at *The Fifth International Conference for Research in Music Education,* University of Exeter, 10-14 April 2007.

Moon, J. (1999) *Reflection in learning & professional development,* London and New York, RoutledgeFalmer.

Moon, J. (1999/2006) *Learning journals,* Abingdon, RoutledgeFalmer.

Moon, J. (2004) *A handbook of reflective and experiential learning,* Abingdon, RoutledgeFalmer.

Moon, J. (2008) *Critical thinking: an exploration of theory and practice,* Abingdon, RoutledgeFalmer.

Moon, J. (2010) *Using story: in higher education and professional development,* London and New York, Routledge.

Morgan, R. (1923) 'The training of the instrumental teacher', in *Music Supervisors' Journal,* vol. 9, no. 3, pp. 32-33.

Nagle, J. (2009) 'Becoming a reflective practitioner in the age of accountability', in *The Educational Forum,* vol. 73, pp.76-86.

Neilsen, K. (2008) 'Learning trajectories and reflection-in-practice through teaching', in *Reflective Practice,* vol. 9, no. 4, November, pp. 485-495.

Ortlipp, M. (2008) 'Keeping and using reflective journals in the qualitative research process', in *The Qualitative Report,* vol. 13, no. 4, December, pp. 695-705.

Peca, K. (2000) 'Critical theory in education: philosophical, research,

sociobehavioral, and organizational assumptions,'
http://eric.ed.gov/PDFS/ED450057.pdf last accessed 20/10/10.

Pembrook, R. and Craig, C. (2002) 'Teaching as a profession', in R. Colwell and C. Richardson (eds), *The new handbook of research on music teaching and learning,* New York, Oxford University Press, pp. 786-817.

Perry, W. (1970) *Forms of intellectual and ethical development in the college years,* San Francisco, Jossey-Bass.

Polanyi, M. (1966) *The tacit dimension,* Gloucester, PeterSmith.

Postholm, M. (2009) 'Research and development work: developing teachers as researchers or just teachers?', in *Educational Action Research,* vol. 17, no. 4, pp. 551-565.

Potgieter, F. and Smit, B. (2009) 'Finding academic voice', in *Qualitative Inquiry,* vol. 15, no. 1, January, pp. 214-228.

Preskill, H. (1996) 'The use of critical incidents to foster reflection and learning in HRD', in *Human Resource Development Quarterly,* vol. 7, no. 4, Winter, pp. 335-347.

Ramsey, S. (2010) 'Making thinking public: reflection in elementary teaching education', in *Reflective Practice,* vol. 11, no. 2, April, pp. 205-216.

Reagan, T., Case, C. and Brubacher, J. (2000) *Becoming a reflective educator,* Thousand Oaks, Corwin Press, second edition.

Regelski, T. (2000) '"Critical education," culturalism and multiculturalism', in *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education,* vol. 1, no. 1, April, pp. 1-40.

Regelski, T. (2003) 'About this issue: ideology as reflexive or reflective?' in *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education,* vol. 2, no. 2, December, pp.1-11.

Richardson, L. (1990) *Writing strategies: reaching diverse audiences,* Newbury Park, Sage Publications.

Richardson, L. (2003) 'Writing: a method of inquiry', in N. Denzin and Y. Lincoln (eds.), *Collecting and interpreting qualitative materials,* Thousand Oaks, Sage Publications.

Riley, T and Hawe, P. (2005) 'Researching practice: the methodological case for narrative inquiry',in *Health Education Research,* vol. 20, no. 2, October.

Rogers, A. (2002) 3rd edition, *Teaching adults,* Buckingham, Open University Press.

Rowling, J. K. (2000) *Harry Potter and the goblet of fire,* London, Bloomsbury Publishing.

Ryan, G. (2010) 'Interruptions reshaped into transitions: personal reflections on the identity challenges of moving to music education', in *Action, Criticism and Theory for Music Education,* vol. 9, no. 2, September, pp. 48-59.

Sameshima, P. and Sinner, A. (2009) 'Awakening To Soma Heliakon: Encountering Teacher-Researcher-Learning in the Twenty-First Century', in *Canadian Journal of Education,* vol. 32, no. 2, pp. 271-284.

Schön, D. A. (1983) *The reflective practitioner: how professionals think in action,* Basic Books.

Schön, D. A. (1987) *Educating the reflective practitioner,* San Francisco, Jossey-Bass.

Scott, D. (2000) *Realism and educational research,* London, RoutledgeFalmer.

Sharp, C. (1995) *Providing instrumental music tuition,* Slough, National Foundation for Educational Research.

Shepherd, M. (2006) 'Using a learning journal to improve professional practice: a journey of personal and professional self-discovery', in *Reflective Practice,* vol. 7, no. 3, August, pp. 333-348.

Shin, S. (2006) 'Learning to teach writing through tutoring and journal writing', in *Teachers and Teaching: theory and practice,* vol. 12, no. 3, June, pp. 325-345.

Shor, I. (1980) *Critical teaching and everyday life,* Montreal, Black Rose Books.

Shore, B. (1949) 'Instrumental music in England and Wales', in *Music Educators Journal,* vol. 36, no. 2, Nov-Dec, pp. 14-5, 36-37.

Singh, G. and Richards, J. (2006) 'Teaching and learning in the language teacher education course room', in *RELC Journal,* vol. 37, no. 2, pp.149-172.

Sleith, J. (no date) 'Expanding spheres of influence: developing sustainable models of instrumental tuition', from http://orgs.man.ac.uk/projects/include/experiment/jeremy_sleith.pdf last accessed 6/3/11.

Small, C. (1977/1980) *Music, society, education,* Middletown, Wesleyan University Press.

Small, C. (1998) *Musicking,* Middletown, Wesleyan University Press.

Smith, A. (1998) 'Learning about reflection', in *Journal of Advanced Nursing,* vol.

28, no. 4, pp.891-898.

Smith, F. (1932) 'Instrumental instruction in elementary schools', in *Music Supervisors' Journal,* vol. 19, no. 1, October, pp. 37-43.

Spiro, J. (2008) 'How I have arrived at a notion of knowledge transformation, through understanding the story of myself as creative writer, creative educator, creative manager, and educational researcher', abstract of PhD submission, Actionresearch.net, http://www.actionresearch.net/living/janespirophd.shtml, last accessed 20/10/10.

Stenhouse, L. (1975) *An introduction to curriculum research and development,* London, Heinemann Educational Books Ltd.

Stiler, G. and Philleo, T. (2003) 'Blogging and blogspots: an alternative format for encouraging reflective practice among preservice teachers', in *Education,* vol. 123, no. 4.

Strempel, E. (2000) 'Teaching the teacher: the 1999 NATS Internship Program', in *Journal of Singing,* vol. 56, no. 5, May/June, pp. 23-25.

Stringer, M. (2005) *The music teacher's handbook,* London, Faber Music Ltd and Trinity College.

Swan, E. (2008) 'Let's not get too personal: critical reflection, reflexivity and the confessional turn', in *Journal of European Industrial Training,* vol. 32, no. 5, pp.385-399.

Swann, J. and Pratt, J. (1999) *Improving education,* London, Cassell.

Swanson, D. (2009) 'Roots/routes', in *Qualitative Inquiry,* vol. 15, no. 1, January, pp. 49-78.

Swanwick, K. (2008) 'Reflection, theory and practice', in *British Journal of Music Education,* vol. 25, no. 3, pp. 223-232.

Talbot, M. (2002) 'Reflective practice: new insight or more-of-the-same? Thoughts on an autobiographical critical incident analysis', in *Reflective Practice,* vol. 3, no. 2, pp. 225-229.

Tait. J. and Knight, P. (1996) *The management of independent learning,* London, Kogan Page.

Terrion, J. and Philion, R. (2008) 'The electronic journal as reflection-on-action: a qualitative analysis of communication and learning in a peer-mentoring program', in *Studies in Higher Education,* vol. 33, no. 5, October, pp. 583-597.

Tobery-Nystrom, J. (2011) 'An exploration of self-efficacy in a teacher-educator's practice', Doctoral thesis from http://pqdtopen.proquest.com/#viewpdf?dispub=3434607 last accessed 5/3/11.

Triantafyllaki, A. (2010) 'Performance teachers' identity and professional knowledge in advanced music teaching', in *Music Education Research*, vol. 12, no. 1, pp. 71—87.

Tripp, D. (1992) 'Critical theory and educational research', in *Issues in Educational Research,* vol. 2, no. 1, pp.13-23.

Tripp, D. (1993) *Critical incidents in teaching,* London, RoutledgeFalmer.

Van Manen, M. (1977) 'Linking ways of knowing with ways of being practical', in *Curriculum Inquiry,* vol. 6, pp.205-228.

Wang, Q., Woo, H. and Zhao, J. (2009) 'Investigating critical thinking and knowledge construction in an interactive learning environment', in *Interactive Learning Environments,* vol. 17, no. 1, pp.95-104.

Watts, M. and Lawson, M. (2009) 'Using a meta-analysis activity to make critical reflection explicit in teacher education', in *Teaching and Teacher Education,* vol. 25, pp. 609-616.

Webster, L, and Mertova, P. (2007) *Using narrative inquiry as a research method,* London and New York, Routledge.

Wiley, D. and Peterson, P. (2008) 'Teaching voice teachers', in *Journal of Singing,* vol. 65, no. 2, Nov/Dec, pp. 175-180.

Williams, B. (2000) 'Developing critical reflection for professional practice through problem-based learning', in *Issues and Innovations in Nursing Education,* vol. 34, no. 1, December, pp. 27-34.

Wise, V., Spiegel, A. and Bruning, R. (1999) 'Using teacher reflective practice to evaluate professional development in mathematics and science', in *Journal of Teacher Education,* vol. 50, no. 1, pp.42-49.

Wolf, M. (1992) *A thrice-told tale,* Stanford, Stanford University Press.

Woodford, P. (2002) 'Social construction of music teacher identity', in R. Colwell and C. Richardson (eds), *The new handbook of research on music teaching and learning,* New York, Oxford University Press, pp. 675-694.

Woody, R. H. (2007) 'Popular music in school: remixing the issues', in *Music Educators Journal*, vol. 93, issue 4, pp. 32-37.

Xu, S. and Connelly, F. M. (2009) 'Narrative inquiry for teacher education and

development: focus on English as a foreign language in China', in *Teaching and Teacher Education,* vol. 25, pp. 219-227.

Yang, S-H. (2009) 'Using blogs to enhance critical reflection and community of practice', in *Educational Technology and Society,* vol. 12, no. 2, pp. 11-21.

Young, V., Burwell, K. and Pickup, D. (2003) 'Areas of study and teaching strategies in instrumental teaching: a case study research project', in *Music Education Research,* vol. 5, no. 2, July, pp. 139-155.

Zeichner, K. (1987) 'Conceptions of reflective teaching in contemporary U.S. teacher education program reforms', in L. Valli (ed.), *Reflective teacher education,* New York, Suny Press.

Zhukov, K. (2008) 'Exploring the content of instrumental lessons and gender relations in Australian higher education', in *British Journal of Music Education,* vol. 25, no. 2, pp. 159-176.