

**ESRC End of award report, Award R000223751**  
**Effective teaching in secondary school music: teacher and pupil identities**  
**(The Teacher Identities in Music Education (TIME) project)**

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**Executive summary (1000 words)**

**Background and research questions**

There is a widespread perception on the part of pupils, teachers, and policy makers, that there exists a ‘problem with school music’, particularly at secondary level. Some evidence for this comes from examination statistics and school inspection evidence, as well as from academic research, though there are some signs of change. The problem probably stems from the authenticity of ‘school music’ in relation to ‘music outside school’, as the latter is immensely important in the lives of most young people. The TIME project approaches these issues from the point of view of the ‘musical identities’ of pupils in relation to those of music teachers.

Many secondary music specialist teachers have been trained within the Western classical tradition, in which music-making is dominated by a ‘professional performance’ career model based largely in conservatoires and university music departments, and this may be inappropriate for the demands of the secondary school classroom, leading to a conflict between their self-concepts as ‘musicians’ and as ‘teachers’. We investigated these issues by tracing the development of the attitudes and identities of intending specialist secondary music teachers during the transition into their first teaching post, and by comparing them with music students from university and conservatory backgrounds.

**Methods**

The project had two main strands: the Longitudinal Questionnaire Study (LQS), carried out in two phases, and a series of case studies. Although our initial proposal anticipated a sample of 36 students, of whom 6 would be selected to take part in the case studies, the interest aroused by the project enabled us to work with 54 undergraduate music students and 74 postgraduate trainees in LQS Phase 1, of whom 29 and 29 respectively were followed into LQS Phase 2, representing approximately 3 times more participants than anticipated in the original proposal, as well as the 6 planned case studies.

We designed a series of quantitative measures specially for the LQS which were incorporated into a composite Musical Careers Questionnaire (MCQ), as well as some interview schedules and other materials for the case studies and the pupil listening tasks. The MCQ gathered four main sources of information: (a) musical and educational backgrounds and experiences; (b) self-efficacy in music and in teaching; (c) identification with professional groups in these two domains (the Musician-Teacher Orientation Index); (d) attitudes towards the Aims of music education, and towards Important skills for musicians and teachers.

In Strand 2, 6 newly qualified teachers who had completed the LQS agreed to participate in case studies during their second term in school. Each was ‘shadowed’ for a school day, with detailed records kept of their activities, and they completed semi-structured interviews on all aspects of their work as music teachers. They also completed a short listening activity exercise for pupils, designed to investigate the relationship between their own views and those of pupils.

## **Results**

We conducted four main types of analysis: (a) descriptive statistics on the LQS Phase 1 data, used to construct a profile of the PGCE music student: (b) analyses of variance of the LQS Phase 1 – Phase 2 changes, to investigate short-term longitudinal changes: (c) factor analysis of the new scales, to investigate their internal consistency and underlying identity constructs: (d) qualitative data analysis of Strand 2 data.

To summarise very briefly, the main findings were (a) that the vast majority of music teaching students have similar qualifications in the ‘classical performance’ tradition, and very few have non-standard qualifications; (b) that their views of their own general effectiveness as teachers and as musicians changed very little over this period, but (c) that their perceptions of the required skills for successful music teaching did change, increasingly emphasising communication and interpersonal rather than musical performance skills; (d) that many music undergraduates are put off teaching careers because of fear of pupil behaviour and disinterest, and concerns that a lack of piano skills may make them unprepared for the role.

In spite of the wide-ranging demands of contemporary music teaching, we conclude that the profession is still largely judged in terms of musical performance skills, and that this public perception needs to be broadened if the recruitment crisis is to be alleviated.

## **Dissemination and impacts**

*(a) TIME project user network* A general TIME project information network was based on the project website, leading to the production of 2 project newsletters: international interest grew to the extent that our final newsletter mailing list included 85 individuals in 10 countries. Two teacher conference focus groups were held during the course of the project which included course leaders from the collaborating institutions, and project team meetings were specially arranged at which the project was discussed with overseas visitors who had expressed an interest, from universities in Canada, Sweden, Japan and Cyprus.

*(b) Academic output* 10 seminar and conference presentations were made during the course of the project, including 5 Universities, and 5 academic and professional conferences. As well as future conference presentations, and our 2 nominated outputs, and an additional related publication, we plan 4 further major journal articles and a co-authored project book.

*(c) Professional impacts* These arose from the high level of interest shown by our external collaborators. Our data collection in the conservatories and universities led to a strong expression of interest on the part of some of them to adapt our measures for use as a screening and teaching device to assess the career aspirations of their students. The international interest in the project has also led to the inauguration of a European research network on music teacher identity in September 2003, with representatives from Sweden, Austria, Denmark and Italy as well as ourselves.