

Editorial

The first issue of volume 29 introduces two significant innovations to the journal's development. The first is the introduction of a section dedicated to contributions by teachers and practitioners, whilst the second is a page on the BJME website which focuses on bringing to the attention of teachers articles from previous issues of the journal. The motivation for both of these sections is the furtherance of one of the BJME's original aims and mission statement which was and is 'to strengthen connections between research and practice, so enhancing professional development and improving practice'; and 'to help us towards a better-informed and possibly more cohesive profession'.

Both the journal section and the website page will be focused on a particular theme. The first website theme looks at 'composing' and we are very grateful to Professor Tim Cain for selecting the articles and writing a stimulating commentary which identifies the various ideas about and approaches to researching and writing about composing that have appeared in the BJME over the last ten years. The commentary and links to the articles can be found on the journal website at <http://journals.cambridge.org/bme>.

The focus of the first journal teacher-practitioner section is on informal learning. Following upon Lucy Green's seminal work in this area and, in England, the subsequent 'Musical Futures' initiative, informal learning has become increasingly important in music education both in England and further afield. Its underpinning principle of pupil empowerment has resulted in the experience of music education being transformed for many young people. We are particularly delighted that two teachers and one teacher educator, who have direct experience of implementing informal pedagogies in the music classroom, have agreed to contribute to this section. The first contribution is from Fiona Sexton, a secondary school music teacher from a comprehensive school in East Anglia. She describes how informal pedagogies and involvement in Musical Futures have provided a framework for a change in the focus of her teaching away from *what* children were learning to *how* they were learning. Drawing on key literature from research into informal learning and pedagogies she goes on to outline some of the key characteristics of informal learning including the role of the teacher and the importance of what Green refers to as 'deep integration'. In the following article Anna Gowers, a secondary school music teacher, identifies 'five characteristics of informal learning in practice'. She also identifies tensions between the informal learning model and the expectations of schools that music teachers provide 'hard data' relating to pupils' progress and attainment. She makes the point that, when observing lessons rooted in informal learning pedagogies, it is important to understand the underpinning principles and philosophy that lie behind them. Finally Mandy Winters, a teacher educator, looks at informal learning practices from the perspective of teaching composing. She notes how an emphasis on informal learning pedagogies and Musical Futures approaches have the potential to guard against the focus moving away from the dynamic process of composing to it becoming 'reified into composition'. All three contributions raise important issues about the nature and definition of informal learning and the way in which it is distinctive from conventional practice.

The second section of the journal begins with an article which picks up on one aspect of informal learning pedagogies; learners' involvement in defining the criteria by which their music should be judged. Blom and Encarnacao in 'Student-chosen criteria for peer assessment of tertiary rock groups in rehearsal and performance: what's important?' consider this issue through looking at how students involved in rock groups in tertiary education select and develop the criteria for peer and self-assessment of their music. They note that in rehearsals the emphasis is on the development of 'soft' (behavioural) skills whilst in performance the emphasis of the selected criteria is on 'hard' technical and cognitive skills.

One of the essential features of informal learning is its ability to bridge the gap between children's learning experiences that take place in and out of schools. In 'Building vibrant school–community music collaborations: three case studies from Australia' Bartleet draws on a mixture of qualitative, ethnographic and quantitative methodological approaches to explore and describe the findings from three case studies of school–community collaborations. The findings include a number that have resonance with informal learning and pedagogy including the importance of engaging young people in the process of learning and how informal learning pedagogies can enable children to make connections between their learning in and out of school.

The potential synergies and tensions between formal and informal learning and music in and out of school are also the focus for 'The double feature of musical *folkbildning*: three Swedish examples' where, using a Bourdieuan framework applied to three contrasting case studies, Brändström, Söderman and Thorgersen explore the ways in which these tensions and synergies are exhibited within three contrasting music education contexts. In 'STEPP by STEPP in the spirit of *Umntu ungununtu ngabantu*', van Niekerk and Typo use an ethnographic and case study approach to explore the development, implementation and outcomes of an outreach project in South Africa which sought to provide opportunities for black children to learn to play and orchestral instrument. They argue that whereas there needs to be an awareness of the potential of such projects for 'cultural imperialism' that one of the outcomes of this particular initiative was a 'strengthening of students; interest in their cultural heritage and traditions'.

In an Australian study, Gower and McDowall in 'Interactive music video games and children's musical development' report the potential for games to help develop 'some music skills and knowledge'. Teachers may need to consider their own views, experiences and attitudes towards video games and their place for these games in music education.

Finally, Garvis and Pendergast in 'Storying music and the arts education: the generalist teacher voice' draw on a narrative informed case study in Australia to 'explore the gap between policy rhetoric for music and the arts and the pedagogical reality in generalist classrooms'.