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Putting Theory into Practice: Moving from Student Identity to Teacher Identity

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Abstract: As teaching is a highly skilled and complex profession, pre-service teachers' need to develop a series of attributes for their practice in relation to pedagogy, content, student learning, classroom management and their ability to engage in reflection. Through reflective narrative, this article seeks to share how a tertiary music educator prepares her generalist primary pre-service teachers to engage, explore and experience music education within the Bachelor of Education (Primary) course at Unnamed University. It also presents one pre-service teacher's experience of teaching music during her school placements in 2009 in what she calls 'putting theory into practice' moving from student identity to teacher identity. Although the 'hands-on' approach to teaching and learning on-campus and when on school placement provide pre-service teachers with knowledge, skills and understanding, the continued support of professional learning is well recognised and will be an ongoing process as pre-service teachers create their own professional identity.

Introduction

Australia is currently developing a National Curriculum (see ACARA) to be implemented in 2011. Presently each State and Territory has its own curriculum or curriculum framework with varying degrees of specificity (Watson, 2007) for the different learning areas. Tertiary educators continue to be challenged when preparing pre-service teachers with the necessary knowledge, skills and understanding to become primary teachers as they are expected to teach across all curriculum areas. At Unnamed University (Melbourne, Australia) students are prepared to meet the requirements of the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) in order to be registered as primary teachers for the Bachelor of Education (Primary) (B.Ed Primary). The unit content within this degree covers the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS) which caters for curriculum from preparatory level to year ten. A growing concern at tertiary level and in schools is the limited time and resources allocated to the 'Arts' in the crowded curriculum. Binder (2001) rightly makes the point that one of the challenges we face as music teacher educators "is to keep abreast of the standards for effective teaching so that our students are appropriately prepared" (p.3). Within VELS, music falls under the umbrella of 'The Arts' domain, which is further divided into performing and visual arts.

Southcott and Hartwig (2005) note that for the 'Arts' and specifically for music, there is only "generic language with little real information to guide the teacher" (p.147). The 'Arts' at all educational settings are undervalued (Eisner, 2004) and continue to be practised in less than ideal conditions (Hudson & Hudson, 2007). At Unnamed University the 'Arts' are core units within the B.Ed (Primary) degree. This article seeks to share some reflective data from my desk as tertiary music educator (Unnamed) preparing my generalist primary pre-service teachers to engage, explore and experience music education within the *ECA409* and *ECA410* core units. As a music education researcher I am always interested in discovering and describing what engages and contributes to my students' musical development and understanding. The article also offers a snapshot as a form of case study of one student's experience (Unnamed) teaching class music at a primary school during her school placements in 2009. During this experience she moved from student identity to teacher identity in what she calls 'putting theory into practice and thinking on your feet'. As pre-service teacher, the school placement gave Unnamed a sense of professional identity where she engaged in music teaching that can be described as 'professional' and reflected on her identity through a new construct of what Sutherland, Howard & Markauskaite (2009) call "teacher's voice". The article focuses on (Unnamed) narrative reflection on her teaching with (Unnamed) the music lecturer, to improve her professional learning in order to find new ways to teach. Beattie (2000, p.3) confirms the use of narrative enquiry as a useful way to "allow your voice to be heard as they [the pre-service teacher] speak of their concerns, issues and ways in which they experience their learning and their lives in education". It may well be argued that the notion of becoming a reflective practitioner can be a challenge for pre-service teachers as this interplay influences their concept and construction of teacher identity. It is expected that the experience they undertake from being pre-service teacher to that of teacher when on school placement can place a certain amount of tension for them as they find their teacher identity.

Professional Learning and Teacher Identity

Teacher identity continues to become the focus of much theoretical and empirical investigation in teacher education (Trent, 2010; Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009 and Gee, 2000). As teaching is often a complex and skilled practice, which is dependent on teachers' knowledge and skills, the art of learning how to teach and its process of becoming a teacher, shapes one's teacher identity. During this process Britzman (2003, p.31) argues is a "time of formation and transformation, of scrutiny and what one is doing and who one can become". Trent (2010), writing on teacher education as identity construction, are among those (Britzman, 2003; Millar Marsh 2002; Roberts, 2000) who contend that teacher identity is fashioned, refashioned, confronted and adapted to varying perspectives such as those of schools, the students and governments. Hence one's formation of becoming a teacher impacts on one's identity of a teacher. According to Varghese, Morgan, Johnson and Johnson (2005) both 'identity-in-discourse' (where identities are discursive through language) and 'identity-in-practice' (action orientated approach to understanding identity) impacts on forming your professional identity. Identity-in-practice they claim is operationalized through concrete practice and tasks as Unnamed experienced during her workshops at the university and when on school placement. Her identity formation as a pre-service teacher aligns with Wenger's (1998) construction of

identity as an experience in terms of ‘engagement’, ‘imagination’ and ‘alignment’. In the main it is our teacher “engagement [that] allows us to invest in what we do and in our relation with other people gaining a lived sense of who we are” (Wenger, 1998, p.192). During the school placement experience, Unnamed ‘teacher’s voice’ gave her a sense of professional identity as she used her music knowledge, skills and understanding through reflection to her shape professional identity.

Very often the ‘knowledge base’ gained has both theoretical and practical components that underline ones practice as a teacher. It is thought that the preparation of teaching is two pronged whereby it is solely the duty of the university to teach theory and the school is generally the site where the actual practice takes place (Henry 2001). In the main, it can be argued that the theory is engendered by and taught in academic institutions (Sutherland, Scanlon & Sperrign, 2004) and schools provide the practice. Field & Latta (2001) are among those researchers who argue that, although the school placement (practicum) has provided pre-service teachers with an opportunity to develop this professional knowledge, they don’t always gain practical wisdom associated with the profession. However pre-service teachers develop technical skills and classroom management that is often neglected at tertiary level.

Australian music education researchers have found that there is limited time, staffing and resources when preparing future music teachers for all aspects of the classroom (Temmerman, 1997; Jeanneret, 1997; Russell-Bowie, 2003; Ballantyne, 2007). Nonetheless, Campbell & Brummett (2007) remind us that the practical experience provides pre-service teachers with the ‘hands on’ opportunity in which they “develop an initial repertoire of teaching competencies, comprehend the various dimensions of music experience and understand student learning” (p.52). It will seem that once the students get a flair for teaching they soon realise that teaching is more than telling (Weinstein, 1989). It is not just content knowledge but also pedagogical knowledge, which weaves into the tapestry of being a good teacher. Pre-service teachers need opportunities to develop and expand their professional knowledge where they can be reflective about the knowledge base they gained from the university. The involvement in the profession helps “pre-service teachers move towards full membership of the profession, these components become progressively interrelated as they use these principals to inform their pedagogical practice” (Sutherland, Scanlon & Sperrign, 2004, p.80). The school placement and music workshops provide the pre-service teacher with constructive feedback as they build their own teaching competency as the ‘practice of learning to teach takes practice’.

The school placement provides students with this opportunity of “linking theory to practice” (Henry, 2001, p.24). Whereas at university, the music workshops provide a knowledge base of how to teach using African approaches and European methodologies (Orff, Kodály and Dalcroze). They learn for example about music hand signs and body percussion. When on school placement they prepare lessons that engage school pupils with pitch using hand signs and use claps or stamps as body percussion to teach about beat and rhythm. During this time they gain important skills needed as teachers and enact their profession. Wattiaux (2001) points out “good teaching is akin to weaving a fabric of connectedness between student, teacher and subject” (p.1). Teacher education programs, especially those in music education, should provide students with “experiences from which they can construct their own understandings of music, education and music education” (Wiggins, 2007, p. 36). It can be argued if pre-service students experience and engage with music teaching and learning constructively during their tertiary education, then, they may teach

constructively (Bleicher & Lindgren, 2002). When the pre-service teacher engages in music education with the help and support of the lecturer and peers, they construct and form their own understanding of the experience. As knowledge is a human construct, the reflection from their school placement and the reporting back to peers and lecturer are effective ways for pre-service teachers to transform education and improve student achievements. Learning occurs when there is a shared understanding and constructive feedback is given. This shared understanding Rogoff (1990) asserts enables one person to teach another or learn from another. Although we each are unique and have our own experiences, we have commonalities and recognise that knowledge is a social construct whereby lecturer and peer can provide useful feedback in ones professional learning and teacher identity.

Music Education Within the Bachelor of Education (Primary)

At Unnamed University, the B.Ed (Primary) degree has a 32-credit point structure, which consists of 26 core units, 6 elective units as well as 7 professional experience rounds. As part of the degree, students have to undertake a minimum of 80 days supervised school experience (placement) over the duration of the course. In their fourth year they undertake three placements: 10 days of observation and teaching at the start of the year and two 15-day placements during the two semesters. Within the four year B.Ed (Primary), students undertake in their fourth and final year 2 compulsory core units called *ECA409 Teaching the Arts in Primary Schools* in semester one and *ECA410 Primary Arts Education: Focused Study* in semester two. *ECA409* is shared between Visual Arts and Music during the 10-week semester. Students attend a one-hour lecture weekly and also attend 5 weeks of visual art and 5 weeks of music. The unit has been designed to cater for students who do not have a formal background in the Arts, although those students who come to the unit with previous skills and knowledge in music and/or visual arts gain considerably from a study of the diverse range of discipline-based content as well as from the methods of teaching covered in the unit. The music section of the unit focuses on providing students with an introduction to music education where students engage with the elements of music and various means of musical organization through a wide range of musical styles. In *ECA409* students gain an understanding of basic music teaching approaches, which focus on creative music making, (graphic notation and staff notation), singing, classroom instrument performance, listening, moving to music and playing the recorder.

In *ECA410*, semester 2, students choose one 'focused study' (dance, drama, music and visual arts) as their core unit and attend approximately 8 weeks of semester. They meet weekly for a 3-hour class (lecture and workshop). The 'music focused study' called *Masakhane: Music in the making* centers on preparing students as non-specialist teachers of classroom music at the primary school level. The unit content includes a study of European (Dalcroze, Orff and Kodály) and African music methods of teaching and repertoire together with a study of classroom instruments and djembe drumming. The word *Masakhane* 'let us build ourselves' is an Nguni African word which aptly describes students' engagement, experience and exploration of knowledge, skills, understandings and application of the principles of both European music methods and African music repertoire and pedagogies as a means of cross-cultural engagement. In this unit students get the opportunity to prepare music lessons and implement some of the ideas and content on school

placements. The core of the unit is music making and sharing practical ideas on classroom music teaching. Through weekly practical ‘hands-on activities’ students are encouraged in both *ECA409 and ECA410* to engage in reflective practice through keeping a journal of their ideas as they prepare to become professionals and graduates. During both units pre-service teachers not only gained music skills, knowledge and understanding they were encouraged to continue to establish their teacher identity through purposeful reflection which Hatton and Smith (1995) identify as technical, practical and critical. The music workshops gave the pre-service teachers the opportunity to be descriptive, dialogical and critical in their written and conversational reflections about what it means to be a teacher and how to teach music. The workshops discussions with lecturer and peers provided pre-service teachers a ‘teaching and learning space’ to be reflective about the pedagogies they learnt about and their individual experiences as preparation before going on school placements. The workshop discussion is a useful pathway for pre-service teachers to become reflective practitioners as they learn “how to research pedagogical issues” (Maaranen and Krokfors, 2008, p.210).

Methodology

In this article we use a narrative interpretive approach in the social sciences to reflect on one pre-service teacher’s experience of teaching music as she develops her teacher identity through a reflective practice process. Reflective practice in teacher education is an important “element of professional preparation” as Russell (2005) points out. It can be a beneficial process in pre-service teacher professional development hence Ferraro (2000) argues that through reflection students are encouraged to “put theories they’ve learned into practice in their classroom” and reflect ‘in’ and ‘on’ their teaching when they return from school placement with their peers and lecturer. The narrative written by Unnamed is about her professional learning as a prospective teacher where she outlines her professional knowledge through inquiry. Atherton (2003) contends, “the cultivation of the capacity to reflect in action (while doing something) and on action (after you have done it) has become an important feature of professional training”. Through keeping a journal she was able to reflect on her learning (Loughran 1996). Imel (1992) is of the firm belief that learning claims cannot take place without reflection. Brookfield (1995) points out that reflection can be seen through four possible lenses: the practitioners’ own writings about their experiences as learners and teachers (autobiographies); the learners’ eyes; the colleagues eyes and experiences; and existing theoretical literature (p.29).

In this article the first lens is used as a way to improve future instruction in the classroom. Through narrative methodology a case study of one pre-service teacher’s experience is reported through her journaling, this Chase (2005) calls “personal narrative” (p.652). Her narrative and story “become the frameworks within which [her] experience is reflected upon, shared and reconstructed in the light of new insights, perspectives, experiences and understandings (Beattie, 2000, p.5). The discourse of narrative allows us to tell stories “where the knower is connected to the known, and knowledge-making is recognised as an active creative, interpretative process, in which the telling and retelling of ones story provides a framework for the construction of professional knowledge in teaching (Beattie, 2000, p.5). As a pre-service teacher, the unit content provides a space for what Graham and Phelps refer to

as “structured and self-directed” reflection, which is “critical to professional practice (2003, p.2).

During and after workshops the pre-service teacher has time to reflect through journaling and conversation on why, how and what was taught in the music workshops. By creating a relationship with the pre-service teachers the music educator is not seen as ‘all knowing’ but rather as guide and co-learner, thus making the reflection more relational where a shared meaning and understanding takes place in an environment that is stimulating and engaging. The reflective process is foundational to ones learning and professional growth (Amulya, n.d.). It provides the opportunity for pre-service students to gain a better understanding of teaching styles helping them to become effective teachers (Ferraro, 2000). Through dialogue with the classroom teacher when on school placement and with myself and fellow peers at the university, the pre-service teacher comes to know themselves and others as they construct their professional identity. According to Beattie (2000, P.5) narratives “have long been regarded as intellectual resources in the arts”. Unnamed process of inquiry and reflection on her experience has allowed her to identify and form a personal vision of what teaching can be about. Where theory and practice are connected by her own professional knowledge, “meanings and understandings are made explicit and placed alongside the concepts, theories and descriptions of practice that come from others” like that of the music lecture and the classroom teacher perhaps when on school placement.

Making the Connection: Thinking on Your Feet **Unnamed’s Reflection**

As a former class music and instrumental teacher at both primary and secondary school level, I present the *ECA409* and *ECA410* unit content in a practical ‘hands on’ manner that links theory to practice. The pre-service teacher is taught for example in *ECA409* about the elements of music and creative music composition. In groups, during the workshop time, they prepare and experiment with graphic notation and sounds using conventional (xylophones, shakers, bells etc) and non conventional (water bottle, keys, window blinds etc) sounds. In *ECA410* for example they specifically learn about how to teach singing using notation, solfege and through imitation. As I teach they then actively participate and unpack in discussion the process of how to teach the song. During the workshops the focus is placed mainly on ‘how to teach’ classroom instruments, singing, movement, body percussion, sound scapes, creative music making and listening. As an Orff practitioner, I encourage my students to experience music teaching and learning through ‘hearing’, ‘doing’, and ‘seeing’ which helps them, as non-specialist teachers gain confidence to trial music lessons in class and during school placements if they get the opportunity. Weekly students ‘log on’ to Unnamed Studies Online (USO) to engage with readings that support their understanding of the music units and concepts taught and ‘chat’ with peers in the discussion space about workshop content and school placement experiences. During the weekly workshops at the university students participate in class and often model aspects of my music teaching, and this is often reflected in their lessons plans when I assess their assignments. As non-music specialists they are concerned about ‘what works’ and ‘how to do it’ in a real class, which is reiterated by Goodlad (1990) who points out that pre-service teachers’ are concerned with being “able to do it” (p.214). For this reason the on-campus workshops and school

placements give students the opportunity to 'model their teachers'. According to Wiggins (2007), when students experience good learning programs, coupled with "appropriate scaffolding (i.e., support) from peers and teacher" they understand the links between theory and practice in more sophisticated ways (p.36).

Both the music units for the B.Ed (Primary) emphasize the Orff, Kodály, Dalcroze, African and creative music approaches to music making. Given the limited time and resources in both music units in their fourth year of study, students are presented with a 'survival bag' of music knowledge and skills to teach as non-music specialists and they are also encouraged to construct their own knowledge. Given the opportunity to be creative and construct their own lessons when micro-teaching on campus during the workshops, my students "shed their student identities and become music teachers" (Conkling & Henry, 1999, p.20), they get the opportunity to "act as music teachers" (Burton & Reynolds, 2009, p.20) and "think like a teacher" (Darling-Hammond, 2006, p.35). The onsite classroom teaching is always coupled with formal and informal feedback from myself as well as from students in the class. Anecdotal comments and anonymous online feedback for *ECA409* and *ECA410* have shown that the practical 'hands-on' approach to teaching prove to be most worthy and useful to my students.

As the music educator it is always rewarding for me to hear about my students' experience of music teaching when on school placement or once they have graduated. The voices of my students and the questions they ask continue to inform my knowledge about teaching. Listening to their stories and reflecting 'in', 'on' and 'with them' "has reinforced the value of collaboration" and "reduced isolation" that can so often accompany music teaching (Robbins, Burbank and Dunkle, 2007, p.52).

In 2008, I undertook *ECA409 Teaching the Arts in Primary Schools* in semester one and *ECA410 Primary Arts Education: Focused Study* in semester two. I intermitted my fourth and final placement in that year and chose to undertake my school placements in 2009. I was placed at a regional primary school approximately 60km from the inner city of Melbourne. I spent both of my 15-day placements (in March and July) at this small school with only 8 teachers and on average 120 students. At this school, students attend a 50-minute Performing Arts lesson each week. It became apparent that a generalist teacher mainly used the Kodály approach, as there was no specialist music teacher at the school. Although the teacher was passionate about music education (being an instrumental player herself) the students seemed reluctant to engage. I was placed in Grade 3/4 (8y olds and 9y olds) and a Grade 5/6 (9yr olds, 10y olds and 11y olds) composite classroom. I had the opportunity to teach music at all these levels. I was required to teach all curriculum areas as a generalist teacher and was given the opportunity to teach 2 music lessons per week over 3 weeks on both the March and July placements.

I kept a daily journal of my professional teaching and learning throughout my placement at the school and also when I attended my music classes at university. I documented 'what' and 'how I taught', 'why' I chose particular pedagogical styles and in 'what ways' I might change or improve tasks to better suit individual and collective needs. I also reflected on my classroom management techniques and strategies to combat various challenging behaviours in the classroom. My goal in each lesson was for students to succeed, and having fun in an engaging environment was a key factor to my teaching. At the end of every music lesson I had the opportunity to reflect with the classroom generalist teacher. These one-on-one conversations were especially insightful as they highlighted areas of strength and ways in which I could improve my teaching and management skills. I was given the

opportunity to refine my pedagogy and introduced the classroom generalist teacher to ways of music teaching she had not seen in her 7 years of teaching experience. I tried out activities, ideas and content from the music units at the university. Having gone to the same school for my 4th year school placement, I built and developed positive and professional relationships with my students where I was seen as ‘the teacher’. This allowed me to facilitate lessons where the students were empowered to learn in new and exciting ways. Initially my students required small, sequential lessons for learning about beat and rhythm. They then felt confident to improvise their own rhythmic patterns using body percussion (claps, clicks, stamps and slaps) and were able to assertively perform and critique each other.

In hindsight, postponing both of my 4th year placements and undertaking the *ECA409* and *ECA410* units the previous year was of great benefit to me as I felt I was far better prepared in terms of content and pedagogical knowledge to teach music. Having excellent results in both those units gave me the self-belief and confidence to teach instrumental playing (non-melodic and melodic classroom instruments), movement, singing, creative music making (drawing, making classroom instruments) graphic notation and listening skills competently. My music journal of classes in 2008 not only recorded what I learnt from the ‘hands on’ experiences with my music educator and peers, but also documented ‘ways I could teach things we learnt’ which helped me map out some of my lessons when at the school. The first semester in 2008 for my music unit saw us all on a ‘level playing field’ in terms of music knowledge, here we learnt about the elements and dimensions in music and were taught recorder using staff notation. It was here that I learnt about music notation, which was invaluable to me as I sought to teach pitch at the school in 2009. The opportunity to work with my peers and create a music sound picture in the *ECA409* unit gave me the experience of ‘how to plan’ and implement music lessons. Watching my peers at the university ‘prepare’ and ‘present’ their compositions also expanded my ‘tools’ to compose and make music. I observed the modelling of ‘how to teach a song without playing an instrument’ by my music lecturer. Her methodology of teaching a song with CD/video/cassette, as accompaniment was most practical as I was then able to transfer this learning in 2009 during my placements using a digital projector and iPod with speakers.

In the second semester, the song teaching and learning continued in the unit *ECA410* where we learnt hand signs (Kodály), notation, movement and instrumental accompaniment (melodic and non-melodic classroom instruments with bourdon and ostinato). Using these approaches, I tried to teach more songs during my July placement. Even though the *ECA410* focus was African music making, Orff, Kodály and Dalcroze, I was able to transfer those pedagogies when my students learnt and created songs based on Australian Indigenous music. The pedagogy of rote and imitation using the Orff approach was most useful when I taught movement and instrumental performance. Interactive movement and performance-based experiences at the university gave me so much more confidence to teach children at school when on placement. This reinforces Russell-Bowie’s (2006) perspective that “however ‘unmusical’ teachers think they are, if they are committed to their children, have a positive and enthusiastic attitude and are keen to learn, they can succeed in implementing music lessons in their classroom” (p.45). During my July placement, I adhered to VELS and devised lessons that had students exploring and responding as well as creating and making music. The main purpose of those lessons was for them to create a corroboree performance of Indigenous music, which incorporated movement, narration and non-melodic instrumental playing.

Upon reflection of my placement during 2009, I found the more creative the activity, the greater the need for structure, rules and consequences for poor behaviour. Although the general B.Ed (Primary) degree gave students some information about classroom management I found it was in our music workshops where I really learnt proactive, engaging and interactive methods for teaching, modelled by the way the lecturer moved purposefully around the classroom. She did not stand at the front, which could be considered traditional, but used both body language and words to keep an 'eye' and 'ear' open for those who may have been struggling and gave support and encouragement to those students doing well. Her moving around when teaching demonstrated a way to be 'on the ball' in order to prevent possible disruptive behaviours. These experiences informed my pedagogy to manage and cater for both advanced and struggling students with the music activity. Both ends of the spectrum require the teacher to have 'good management strategies' in place. In both *ECA409* and *ECA410* we also learnt of ways to approach 'ongoing assessment' through keeping observational and anecdotal notes of student learning and behaviour. Although classroom management is not the focus of my reflection for this article, during my practicum I noted and agree with Garrahy, Cothran & Kulinna (2005) that "management strategy[ies] that worked for one class did not necessarily work in the next class" (p. 58).

Succinct Discussion

As tertiary music educator, I will continue to prepare my generalist pre-service teachers in a practical 'hands on' manner. Since 2001 at Unnamed University I have both seen and heard from my students through the end of semester evaluations of the unit, the benefits of teaching and learning in this manner. The 4th year generalist primary teacher will at some stage of their career use music in their lessons. In my classes they have the opportunity to move from pre-service teacher identity to that of teacher identity when they do micro-lessons in class or when they reflect on their school placements. During these discussion times they recognise that teaching is a highly skilled and complex profession. It is also interesting for both my students and I to talk about how the classroom teacher when on placement gave them feedback on how to teach and improve on their delivery and content knowledge. Here the pre-service teachers realised that each teacher has his or her own style of teaching and taking on board ways to improve one's own teaching is not a personal criticism but a way to improve one's professional practice. It is hoped that during the music workshops the pre-service teacher develops a repertoire of attributes for their own practice in relation to pedagogy, content, student learning and classroom management. I recognise that the use of journaling and reflection as a way to improve one's practice is not easy for some pre-service teachers as they find it difficult to be critical of themselves or others. The need and importance to be reflective and form a community of practitioners in one's teaching and learning is imperative as my pre-service teachers continue to create their professional identity. The narrative of Unnamed experience is one I categorise as a success story like Alsup (2006) who has also carried out research into negotiating one's personal and professional space as you build your teacher identity.

Conclusion

Although universities are responsible to prepare teachers to teach in both primary and secondary schools, generalist primary school teachers are often not confident to teach in the 'Arts'. Within the Bachelor of Education (Primary) at Unnamed University the *ECA409 Teaching the Arts in Primary Schools* in semester one and *ECA410 Primary Arts Education: Focused Study* in semester two provide pre-service teachers with some music knowledge, skills and understandings to teach music as non-music specialist at the primary school level. This article, as a form of reflective narrative, discussed aspects of Unnamed's music learning and teaching as a pre-service teacher and Unnamed's music units as part of the course. The on-campus music workshops as a "lived experience" (Chase, 2005, p.658) allowed Unnamed to move from student identity to teacher identity giving her the opportunity to explore the nexus between theory and practice during school placements. Observing the music educator at the university and her supervising teacher when on placements gave Unnamed an idea of who she might like to teach and the teacher she would want to be. These experiences gave Unnamed the chance to explore whether "music teaching will be a satisfying endeavour" (Conkling & Henry, 1999, p.20). The positive school placement in her final year gave her the confidence to want to teach music when she graduates as a generalist primary school teacher. Unnamed will undertake ongoing professional development in music education to help her 'think on her feet' as a non-music specialist as she links theory to practice. Primary tertiary courses can only begin to prepare teachers for their vocation as teachers as "learning to teach is a process that continues throughout a teacher's career and that no matter what we do in our teacher education programs and no matter how well we do it, at best we can only prepare teachers to begin teaching" (Conkling & Henry, 1999, p.22).

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