

THE IDENTITIES OF MUSIC TEACHERS

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Background

Although many of the apparent ‘problems of secondary school music’ in UK schools have been addressed from the point of view of pupils’ attitudes to what they perceive as differences between ‘school music’ and ‘out of school music’, relatively little attention has been paid to this same issue from the teachers’ point of view. The ESRC-funded Teacher Identities in Music Education (TIME) project pursues this question by focussing on musical identities: what light can the congruence between the musical identities of music teachers and their pupils throw on the practical problems?

Aims

The TIME project includes a longitudinal questionnaire study which follows intending music teachers through from their pre-service course to their work in post. The two main aims are to investigate changes in their self-efficacy and collective self-esteem as ‘teachers’ and ‘musicians’ over this period, and to compare the changes experienced by teachers from different pre-service institutions, in particular University education and music departments, and conservatories.

Method

Approximately 120 pre-service music teachers drawn from the three types of institution are currently completing the first phase of the longitudinal questionnaire study, and will be followed up in Spring 2003.

Results

By spring 2003, the data from the longitudinal questionnaire study will be collected and analysed, and this paper will present the main findings of the analysis. Preliminary comparisons between the three different types of institution suggest some interesting differences, including a relatively higher value placed on levels of performing than teaching skills amongst conservatory students; that students in music departments and colleges who are not considering secondary teaching as a career frequently cite pupil disinterest and poor behaviour as the main reason why; and that students in education departments have high and clear-cut career expectations within music education.