THE SUBJECTIVITY OF MUSICAL LEARNING:
UNDERSTANDING PARTICIPATION IN
INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC INSTRUCTION

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, Faculty of Education and Arts, University of Newcastle, New South Wales, January 2010
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Signed………………………………………………………………..
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ABSTRACT

Learning a musical instrument in childhood invites a future that holds lifelong pleasure and companionship, yet although thousands of children take up an instrument annually, many abandon their lessons after only a short period. Research on retention and attrition in instrumental music education has found that continuing participation is associated with a constellation of factors, but there is little research exploring how the learning experience itself might influence young people’s decisions to continue their music lessons. This thesis investigates the subjective perspective of learning and how this impacts upon individuals’ participation in formal instrumental music lessons during childhood and youth.

The study employed a mixed-methods design with quantitative and qualitative methods as complementary strategies. Study participants varied in their age, amount of experience, depth of involvement in musical learning and accomplishment. In the quantitative stage, a descriptive-comparative approach examined individual, social and contextual dimensions of the music learning experience of primary and secondary students in an Australian context (n=376), as well as relationships between these dimensions and continuing participation in formal instrumental music instruction. In the qualitative stage, an interpretive-descriptive approach was used to analyse semi-structured interviews undertaken with primary school children, tertiary students and adults in the community (n=66).

Affinity for music, representing the subjective meaning of music to the individual, was identified as the connection between individuals and music, and was a necessary condition for sustaining participation in musical learning. Affinity for music developed where learning was musically meaningful and where emotionally charged appraisals of learning made by the musical self were predominantly stable and positive. Musically meaningful learning occurred to the degree that individuals were able to make sense of the music through fluency and facility. The making of musical meaning was also influenced by the degree of correspondence between the musical repertoire, the individual and their socio-cultural environment. Patterns of learning associated with a range of technical and musical outcomes also emerged; these consisted of clusters of beliefs about music and learning, expressions of volition, and practice strategies.

An explanatory theory of participation in music learning developed from the research suggests that the subjective experience of music learning influences the likelihood of continued participation. The major pedagogical implication of the study is that educators will be in a better position to foster musical meaning and affinity if they target students’ practice approaches while closely appraising the social context of student learning.
PART I
INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY
Chapter 1. Participation in Musical Instrument Learning: Introduction and Review of the Literature

Introduction

Learning a musical instrument in childhood invites a future that holds lifelong pleasure and companionship (Busch, 2005; Payne & Pieffer, 2005), a sense of community (MacDonald & Miell, 2000; Merriam, 1964), healthy development (Gruhn, 2005), and self-transformation (Dillon, 2007). People of all ages share music in many ways: making music, learning through music, composing or listening to music.

When we listen to music, we are listening to the thoughts of the composers’ minds, the way they interpreted their particular place in time and culture through music. In the Western classical tradition of music performance, we are also listening to the performers’ thoughts, how they interpret the harmonies, rhythms and melodies of the composer. We are also listening to how they have gone about their own musical instrument learning.

Most individuals have to work hard to succeed at learning a musical instrument simply because playing an instrument fluently is not easy; “possibly there is no other human activity which demands so much of time-ordered fine motoric facilities” (Wagner, as cited in Gabrielsson, 2003, p. 247). Since one goal of practice is to make playing an instrument look easy, and not sound difficult (Goldsworthy, 2009), the challenges of learning an instrument are often hidden. Usually commencing at an early age, children can spend years learning the essential elements of musical instrument playing, which include learning to read and play musical pitch and rhythms, as well as creating the sound of the instrument. For any instrumental music student, the demands of skill building are high: regular and accumulated practice, effective practice routines, self-evaluation and emotional perseverance (Hallam, 1997).

Consequently, learning a musical instrument can present as a daunting task to a child and it is unsurprising that even the “most motivated children experience periods of self-doubt and reduced interest” (Pitts, Davidson & McPherson, 2000b, p. 67). Thousands of girls and boys take up an instrument each year yet many abandon it within two or three years (Australian Music Association [AMA], 2001; O’Neill, 2001). In school music programs built around continuing enrolment, such a response to musical learning is particularly problematic (M. Anderson, 1981; Bushong, 2005; Frakes, 1984; Solly, 1987). Declining involvement also has consequences at the family level, where costs such as time, effort and expenditure become untenable when children lose interest in their learning. The greatest cost however is the loss of future opportunity in terms of both meaningful experience and creativity (Csikszentmihalyi &
Schiefele, 1992). In the face of such outcomes, what continues to engage the minds of interested parents, teachers, music directors and researchers is how to help children to remain on track, and not to give up, to meet the challenges and eschew failure and dropout. Such is the motive for this study.

Several governments have tackled this issue from the parallel perspective of fostering participation in music. In Australia for example, the National Review of School Music (NRSM, 2005) recommended that all school children have an opportunity to participate in instrumental music programs. The USA has brought about substantial reforms in policies and practices through the Housewright Symposium (Vision 2020, 2000). In Scotland and England, nationwide programs have been set up to encourage greater participation in musical instrument learning (Youth Music Initiative, 2003; O’Neill, 2001).

The argument for these programs is built upon an increasing appreciation of the benefits of participation in music for individuals and their communities. Advocacy for music education emphasises consequences such as increased engagement with school life and improved academic achievement (Eccles, Barber, Stone & Hunt, 2003; Hunter, 2005; Scripp, 2002), physical, emotional and spiritual development and wellbeing (Flowers & Murphy, 2001; Hays & Minichiello, 2005; Hunter, 2005; Midori, 2005; OECD, 2007; Russell, 1997; Wilson & Bennett, 2003), and opportunities for self-development (Gates, 2002). The intrinsic values of music as ways of expression, communication and knowing about the world are also of fundamental importance to individuals and their societies (Merriam, 1964; Stevens, 2003; Walker, 2005).

However, before these advantages can be experienced, a child needs to be sufficiently involved to undertake regular, effective practice. To remain involved, the experience should engage the child mentally and emotionally in order for the child to effectively process and assimilate the required array of complex skills. Boredom and disinterest occur when these emotions and cognitions are not engaged (Damrad-Frye & Laird, 1989; Ryan & Deci, 2000b). The prevalence of boredom in studies of attrition from music (AMA, 2001; Bushong, 2005; Govel, 2004; Klinedinst, 1989; Pitts et al., 2000b; O’Neill, 2001) suggests that the mental, emotional, or subjective experience of learning is a significant determinant of children’s decisions to continue.

The decision to discontinue as a result of loss of interest may therefore be related to the nature of the experience itself, rather than an event to be expected (Sloboda, 2005). If disinterest and boredom were accepted at face value, we may overlook the more pointed question of how the experience of learning itself influences the feelings and intentions of young people. Examining the learning experience from the subjective perspective presents an opportunity to more deeply understand how feelings and beliefs influence decisions to learn. Many studies have
investigated a range of motivational and contextual influences on participation in music learning (Bruenger, 2009; Driscoll, 2009; Martin, 2008; McPherson, 2001; O’Neill & McPherson, 2002; Pitts, 2007; Sichivitsa, 2004). As will be shown in this chapter however, there is little research on the subjective nature of the music learning experience, and how subjective perceptions of learning contribute to continuing participation in formal instruction.

**AIM OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of this study is to explore the individual’s perspective of musical instrument learning during childhood and youth in order to identify variation in how individuals experience their music learning, and to understand how these varied subjective experiences influence their intent to learn their instrument. The research question guiding the conceptual development of the research is, ‘What is the nature of individuals’ experiences of learning, and how do their perceptions of learning influence participation in formal instruction?’

This question concerns the nature of musical learning, how it is described, interpreted and acted upon by the participants involved, and calls for a research approach that will facilitate a deep understanding of the experience.

**SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

In order to understand the musical learning experience, the focus of the study will be on individuals’ feelings, perceptions and understandings of their learning as well as on differences between groups of individuals who are continuing their learning and those who have learned for a lesser period of time. A focus on individuals’ feelings and perceptions is one way of understanding how people think and act as they do. This assertion is a basic tenet of symbolic interactionism (Blumer, 1969), a theoretical approach to human behaviour concerned with subjectivity and meaning making. Blumer (1969) describes this approach as based on three premises:

The first premise is that human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings that the things have for them…The second premise is that the meaning of such things is derived from, or arises out of, the social interaction that one has with one’s fellows. The third premise is that these meanings are handled in, and modified through, an interpretative process used by the person in dealing with the things he encounters (Blumer, 1969, p. 2).

In this view, people make sense of their life experiences and self through their own perceptions, interpretations and meanings, and these meanings direct their acts and behaviours (Crooks, 2001). As Blumer (1969) suggests, human behaviour is not merely a response to influences such as attitudes, motives or forces, but a process of noticing and interpreting life experiences and
also of noting how others also interpret those experiences. The interpretation of these experiences may shift or transform in response to context, and the behaviour of an individual is essentially action on the basis of the thoughts and intentions they have constructed. Studying interpretations and constructions made by the musical learner will help to reveal the subjective journey of learning undergone by individuals.

The core phase of the instrumental music learning experience to be studied is learning that takes place in childhood and youth. These are important formative periods of life when the brain is plastic (Geake & Cooper, 2003) and discovery of the world and self are critical tasks of growing up (Erikson, 1982). An axiological purpose for understanding the task of music learning at this time of life is to recognise and support the fulfilment of young people’s interests and wellbeing. The study does not focus on levels of achievement, the quality of teacher pedagogy, or whether young people develop into professional musicians. Along the lines suggested by Pitts (2005), the focus is on facilitating young peoples’ participation in music making and learning.

**CONTEXT OF THE STUDY**

In New South Wales (NSW), Australia, instrumental music tuition is usually provided by specialist instrumental teachers, either through institution-based music ‘access’ programs (e.g. The Access Program, Sydney Conservatorium), in private or commercial studios (e.g. Yamaha Music Schools), or in schools as ‘co-curricular’ activities. In NSW schools, most musical instrument learning is categorised as a co-curricular activity and is not funded by the NSW government. The existence of co-curricular music programs such as choirs, bands or tuition in NSW schools is dependent on Principals and staff of individual schools (Temmerman, 2005). Schools are consequently reliant on the values, expertise and financial resources of their immediate community. Rural areas or those with low socio-economic base for example, often have less music in their classrooms than in urban areas (Jones, nd). These arrangements mean that schools may have widely differing musical cultures and values, some valuing music as product and entertainment, others valuing music for its instrumental benefits (such as mental development), others, its intrinsic values as communication and expression (Pugh & Pugh, as cited in Stevens, 2003).

Co-curricular school band/ensemble programs (generally wind bands) typically consist of one rehearsal and one group lesson per week for each student. Performance goals usually include inter-school band competitions, and school and community performances. Musical instrument tuition in school through an elective co-curricular individual or small group lesson with a specialist teacher is dependent on parent decisions and available permanent or peripatetic specialist teachers in the school. Children in their initial years of study will typically attend a
half-hour lesson per week, may prepare for an annual exam through the Australian Music Examinations Board (AMEB) or similar and/or participate in teacher-organised studio concerts. Private studio teaching arrangements are similar to in-school instrumental lessons. One-to-one tuition through any of these routes is a popular option, although the effectiveness of this classical conservatoire model of teaching has occasionally been questioned (Persson, 1994; West & Rostvall, 2003; Zhukov, 2005), and there are no regulations governing the enterprise.

**Significance of the Study**

This study was prompted by the practical concern about and implications of withdrawal from formal musical instrument instruction where rates of attrition greater than 25% are typical of Australian, British and American school-age populations (AMA, 2001; Klinedinst, 1991; O’Neill, 2001). One general approach to understanding participation in music education (both general class music and instrumental music) has been through theoretical frameworks of motivation, and particularly expectancy-value theory (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). This theory has been successfully used to explain reasons for decisions about enrolment by way of its value and cost to individuals (Austin, Renwick & McPherson, 2006; Hurley, 1994; Lowe, 2009; Ghazali, 2006; O’Neill & McPherson, 2002). However, this approach does not reveal the particular music learning processes and experiences that leaven the values and costs of learning an instrument. An understanding of the subjective musical processes experienced by music learners, particularly those processes that engender the disinterest, boredom and disengagement cited by many who withdraw from learning, will ultimately contribute to the pedagogy and practice of music teachers.

A further issue contributing to the purpose of this thesis is that the problem of attrition has most often been studied alongside retention, primarily for reasons of sampling and comparative analysis. However, perhaps a dichotomous view of continuation versus discontinuation has concealed the underlying problem and resulted in an undue focus on the objective context of learning, passing over consideration of how young people experience pedagogy, curriculum and opportunities in music. Exploring the subjective experience of learning with individuals who have learned an instrument in their childhood or youth focuses an alternative lens onto decisions to participate.

Further, in the interests of children’s continuing participation, there is a need to value their perspectives on learning and to consider them as knowledgeable informants (Morrow & Richards, 1996) of their own encounters with music. Pitts (2004b) notes that “research in music education has been remarkably slow to value children’s perspectives” (p. 239) and asking
children about their learning, and older people about their childhood learning, is one way of “speaking with rather than for” the child (Fielding, 2004, p. 305).

Having outlined the purpose for the study, the following sections of the chapter review the literature concerned with young people’s participation in musical instrument learning.

The search strategy for the literature review was to locate studies that had as their main purpose the study of retention and or attrition from instrumental music learning. Databases searched included Proquest, IIMP, Justor, PsychInfo and Ovid; books, peer-reviewed articles and dissertations were incorporated. This resulted in approximately 40 studies that addressed attrition (i.e. participation) as the primary research problem. This literature is firstly positioned in relation to the domain of music learning, followed by an overview of the specific retention and attrition literature. A synthesis of this literature then follows, in which characteristics of young learners’ environments and their individual attributes are described at the same time as gaps in the literature are identified. Where pertinent, the review will also draw on the wider body of literature concerning instrumental music education and learning, such as practice behaviour, the development of expertise and social interactions.

**REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

The literature that focuses on participation in instrumental music learning forms a distinct field of scholarship within the wider body of instrumental music learning research. It has much in common with that literature, examining similar individual characteristics, behaviour or experiences but from the perspective of decisions to participate. Figure 1.1 illustrates that instrumental music learning, together with learning in composition and in general music classrooms, form part of what is known as *generative musical development* (Swanwick et al., 1999). This learning is a deliberate, specific and formal development of musical skills and expertise. Generative learning most usually occurs by formal instruction with specialist teachers, whether in school classroom or private music studio.
Of further interest to researchers is music learning that occurs through general developmental processes interacting with environment and cognition, such as memory for melody (Korenman & Peynirciocglu, 2007) or rhythm (Lucas & Gromko, 2007). This learning is known as enculturation (Swanwick et al., 1999; see Fig. 1.1).

Music education researchers frequently draw on an adjunct body of literature concerning the learning of general academic content (such as mathematics, English or science) in primary, secondary or tertiary education settings. In the present study, this research is referred to as research in ‘academic learning’ or in ‘academic settings’. Academic learning constructs and theories have been used with remarkable success in music education and this is discussed later in the chapter.

Returning to instrumental music learning as indicated in Figure 1.1, studies of instrumental music students and professional performers have detailed the development of musicianship and music performance skills, as well as the environments in which this learning is nurtured. The main thrust of this literature has been to examine the development of expertise, that is, how students become skilled. Considerable early work was completed by Sosniak (1985a, b, c, 1990), Ericsson, Tesch-Romer and Krampe (1990, 1993), Manturzewska (1990) and Williamon (1999). Some of these studies proposed stages of musical development through formal learning (Sosniak, 1985a, b, c, 1990; Manturzewska, 1990), and processes of learning through deliberate practice (Ericsson et al., 1990, 1993). Studies exploring the relevance of academic self-regulation and metacognition to music learning have also contributed to these explanations.
(McPherson & Renwick, 2001; Nielsen, 2001). The contribution of the social environment to learning and developing expertise has also been explored in depth, and through the work of British researchers Davidson, M. Howe and Sloboda (1996; Davidson, Sloboda & M. Howe, 1996; Davidson, Sloboda, Moore & M. Howe, 1998; M. Howe & Sloboda, 1991), researchers have shown the powerful effects of parents and teachers on learning. Specific examples of this instrumental music learning literature (herein called ‘music performance education' research or ‘instrumental music learning’ research) will be cited throughout the review where it contributes to a better understanding of factors that relate to continuing participation in instrumental learning.

Examination of why students want to learn a musical instrument has led to the study of the motivational processes attending music practice and learning, such as reasons for success and failure (Asmus, 1986a, b; Austin & Vispoel, 1998), achievement goals (Bailey, 2006; O’Neill, 1999; Smith, 2005) and other motivational factors (Hallam, 2001a, b, 2002; Harnischmacher, 1997), including self-efficacy (Nielsen, 1999, 2001, 2004; McPherson & McCormick, 1999, 2000, 2006; McPherson & Zimmerman, 2002).

Examining why students seek to withdraw from instrumental music lessons is the province of the retention-attrition literature. For the most part, the study of attrition has been undertaken in single research projects, often doctoral, and for logical and practical reasons, is generally considered in parallel with retention. The attrition studies have addressed a range of purposes including investigating problems at specific sites (e.g. M. Anderson, 1981; Bushong, 2005; Solly, 1987), predicting retention in music class, band or studio (e.g. Corenblum & Marshall, 1998; Klinedinst, 1991; Royse, 1989), and investigating particular characteristics of those who continue or discontinue, or of their environment (e.g. Austin & Vispoel, 1998; M. Brown, 1996; Frakes, 1984; Hartley, 1996), including family and teachers (Bushong, 2005; Davidson, Sloboda & M. Howe, 1996). Research participants have been of primary and secondary school age (e.g. Allen, 1981; Solly, 1986) and young adults in tertiary settings (e.g. Main, 1969; Royse, 1989; Smith, 2002).

The philosophical approach to research in the retention-attrition field has been primarily quantitative, exploring a wide range of attitude, ability and achievement measures and drawing on a variety of methods: correlational (e.g. Brakel, 1997; Cannava, 1994; Davidson, Sloboda & M. Howe, 1996), analysis of variance alone or with regression (e.g. Hallam, 1998; J. McCarthy, 1980; Mowery, 1993) and other sophisticated analyses (Allen, 1981; Morehouse, 1987;

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1 This term is used to differentiate general music classroom learning and learning to compose from instrumental music learning. It does not imply that the education is only for the purpose of developing professional musicians.
The general thrust of the quantitative studies has been to analyse and link numerous variables in any one study to whether or not a student continues or discontinues learning a musical instrument.

Other studies from the UK, USA and Australia have identified and analysed cases of attrition within broader investigations of teaching and learning (Costa-Giomi, 2004), motivation for music (Hallam, 1998), or practice (Pitts et al., 2000b; Sloboda & Davidson, 1996). Design and methodology have also expanded to include a qualitative orientation, drawing on interviews (Hurley, 1994), video-observations (Pitts et al., 2000b), and practice diaries (Sloboda & Davidson, 1996).

One unifying feature of the retention-attrition field is that research questions and findings most generally centre on variables, constructs or concepts in three dimensions of musical learning. These dimensions represent research that, in the context of retention and attrition, focuses i) on the personality or psychology of the individual continuer or discontinuer (the individual dimension), ii) on social interactions (the social dimension), or iii) on the settings and structures of music instruction (the contextual dimension). Differences between individuals who continue and those who withdraw (identified as continuers and discontinuers in this thesis) pertain to a number of factors in these three dimensions, such as their attitudes, their practice methods or their social environment. The individual factors in each dimension are hereafter referred to as ‘elements’ or ‘factors’ of the dimension.

The three dimensions are illustrated in Figure 1.2, the figure illustrating further that the elements of the dimensions are interactive. The diagram in essence represents Blumer’s (1969) constructivist paradigm, showing that the immediate environment and social culture influence individuals’ thoughts, ideas and actions. In order to understand the particular influences on musical learners, and how these may affect their intentions to participate in formal instruction, the sections below review the research pertaining to each of the three dimensions in turn.

![Figure 1.2 Three dimensions of musical learning examined in retention & attrition research](image)
THE INDIVIDUAL DIMENSION OF INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC LEARNING

This section describes a range of elements in the individual dimension that were found by retention-attrition researchers to have some bearing on decisions to continue learning. These include cognitive factors such as self-concept or achievement goals, as well as behaviour (i.e. practice) and outcomes. In each sub-section below, the element is first described, drawing on the literature from the music performance and academic learning fields, before detailing findings pertinent to retention and attrition.

Musical self-efficacy & self-concept

Self-beliefs form the basis of an individual’s inner messages or inner talk about self. Self-beliefs act as a filter between task demands (what to do, how to do it) and the accomplishing of the task, and generally exist as perceptions of ability, efficacy, competence and importance (Cantwell, 2000).

Two constructs representing an individual’s sense of efficacy and competence feature in instrumental music education. The first, self-efficacy, consists of an individual’s feeling of specific competence in a certain task (such as performing for assessment). In instrumental music performance, self-efficacy has been examined in school-age students (McCormick & McPherson, 2003), and tertiary students (Nielsen, 2004). In these settings, as in academic settings, high self-efficacy is strongly related to good performance outcomes and self-regulation (McPherson & McCormick, 2006). However, to the researcher’s knowledge, only Stewart (2002) has investigated self-efficacy in relation to attrition and retention, finding no significant association.

A related construct, self-concept, has been examined with the purpose of understanding the decision to discontinue learning (Klinedinst, 1989; Schmidt, 2005; Sichivitsa, 2004; Zdzinski, 2004). Vispoel (1994) defined self-concept as “an individual’s perceptions of self formed through experiences with the world and interpretations of those experiences” (p. 44). As described above, perceptions of self work to monitor and feed back to the self-system information that will help the individual thrive or protect the self (Boekaerts, 1993; Covington, 1984). While the construct of self-concept does not measure efficacy and affect directly, it represents, conceptually, beliefs about self that are descriptive, evaluative and affective (Bong & Clark, 1999). Definitions of musical self-concept suggest that it captures skill appraisals, confidence and willingness to learn (Vispoel, 1996). A strong musical self-concept therefore consists of having perceptions of oneself as a quick leaner in music, of being skilful and talented in comparison to other people and other domains of activity, and expecting to do well in music (Vispoel, 1996).
Strong musical self-concept is associated with a cluster of positive events or processes: successful task performance (Asmus & Harrison, 1990), motivation for music (Raynor in Asmus, 1986b), interest in music (Vispoel, 1996), musical family backgrounds (Klinedinst, 1991), high self-esteem (Vispoel, 2000), achievement (Vispoel, 1993; Wink, 1970) and, importantly for this study, intentions to continue (Klinedinst, 1991; Vispoel, 1996). Low musical self-concept is associated with contrasting processes, and is characteristic of discontinuers in a number of studies (Frakes, 1984; Koutz, 1987; Klinedinst, 1991). Case studies undertaken by Pitts et al. (2000b) revealed a cluster of self-perceptions and self-evaluations that varied with students’ motivational level, with discontinuers being less satisfied and having lower expectations of success and enjoyment. In developing a theory of Value Reinforcement, Sichivitsa (2003, 2004, 2007) argued that students’ self-concept had a significant impact on their satisfaction with music learning, and those who had low perceptions of progress were less likely to continue their learning.

When studied separately, components of self-concept such as expectancies for success and ability beliefs have similar effects on learning as when studied as part of the multidimensional self-concept construct. Discontinuers have lower expectancies for success than those who learn for longer periods of time (Chandler, Chiarella & Auria, 1988); they also hold less strong beliefs in music ability or ability to succeed (Hurley, 1994) and are aware of a lack of progress in their practising (Morehouse, 1987; Pitts et al., 2000b; Rogers, 1989). This literature is further elaborated as findings are discussed in Chapter Eight.

**Attributions for success or failure**

Attribution theory accounts for the reasons people give for success or failure in their tasks (Wiener, 1986). These reasons include ability, effort, luck, and task difficulty. Attributions to ability and effort are considered internal as they are experienced as personal characteristics of the individual. Luck and task difficulty are external attributions; they are reasons for failure or success that originate outside the individual’s control. In Weiner’s view (1986), attributions are traditionally viewed as stable over time (ability, task difficulty) or unstable (effort, luck), and the theory has been tested in a range of domains. In music learning research, Asmus (1989) further developed Weiner’s work through empirical testing of music students; causes of success and failure in music were attributed to (in order of importance) effort, musical background, classroom environment, musical ability and affect for music. Using Asmus’ work, researchers found that liking music motivated university students’ music learning (Asmus & Harrison, 1990; Legette, 1993). Other research has found that primary students consider that effort and music ability contribute to success and failure (Arnold, 1997; Legette, 1998), while family
background is also considered to be a reason for success and failure in music, influencing achievement and musical self-concept (Austin & Vispoel, 1998; Legette, 2003b).

One of the few studies in the retention-attrition literature that included the exploration of attributions was conducted by researchers at the University of Keele (O’Neill, 2001). In that study, Year 6 and 7 discontinuers felt that having to make an effort at learning displayed their lack of ability, and they consequently believed they should try an easier instrument.

Achievement goals
While attributions offer reasons for success and failure, goals are often viewed as ‘reasons’ or purposes for undertaking an activity or action (Dweck, 1996). Ames (1992) described achievement goals as an “integrated pattern of beliefs, attributions and affect that produces the intention of behaviour…represented by different ways of approaching, engaging in and responding to achievement-type activities” (p. 261). The purpose of achievement goals such as mastery or learning goals is the development of competence or ability. These goals are associated with wanting to learn and to understand, and choosing difficult tasks (i.e. adaptive behaviour patterns; Ames & Archer, 1987, 1988); they are also associated with attributing success to effort (Nicholls, Patashnick & Nolen, 1985), with the use of deep learning strategies (Archer, 1994), persistence in studying, and intrinsic motivation (Elliot, 1999). On the other hand, performance or ego goals are concerned with the demonstration of competence or ability, or the concealment of a perceived lack of ability (Ames, 1992; Elliot & Harackiewicz, 1996).

Research in music education that has utilised these goal-structure theories has revealed similarities to academic learning. For example, Yoon (1997) and Schmidt (2005) both found that among primary students, mastery goals were associated with a greater amount of practice than other goals. In comparison, performance goals were associated with less practice (Schmidt, 2005; Yoon, 1997), poor outcomes (Anguiano, 2006; Bailey, 2006) and less interest in continuing (Anguiano, 2006). Student’s intentions to practice would also come under the aegis of goals; when Hallam (1998) captured these intentions, she found that discontinuers’ intentions to practice were weak, just as Pitts et al. (2000b) found discontinuers in their study to have few plans to practice.

Practice and practice methods
The study of musical practice has been one of the most interesting and fruitful domains of music education research. Ericsson et al. (1990) conceptualised deliberate practice to represent intentional, thoughtful practice aimed at an improvement in performance of a specific goal. They argue that it is not the accumulation of practice hours but the deliberate nature of this practice that facilitates the development of expertise. Deliberate practice is goal-specific,
intensely monitored for outcomes and feedback, and consistently applied. Experts will perform many tasks in automatic mode and, at the same time, monitor and accommodate feedback. When the time spent on the activity includes inadequate strategies or contains little feedback, improvement does not occur even if hours of practice are completed (Ericsson et al., 1990). For this reason, deliberate practice can be understood as a self-regulated activity. Self-regulation refers to “self-generated thoughts, feelings and behaviours that are oriented to attaining goals” (Zimmerman, 2002, p. 65). Generally, these behaviours consist of planning, monitoring and self-evaluation of a goal or task.

In music performance learning research, self-regulation has been studied in novices and experts (Hallam, 2001a), in school students (Berg & Austin, 2006; Leon-Guerrero, 2008; McPherson & Renwick, 2001), tertiary students (Nielsen, 2001, 2004) and professional musicians (Chaffin & Imreh, 2001). This research has identified that the quality of self-regulation among beginners and children is subject to wide individual differences, with poor outcomes for those who do not regulate their practice and better results for those children who approach their learning with more planning and monitoring. Novices, school children and adolescents, as well as discontinuers, frequently employ non-regulated practice strategies such as play-through without error correction, lack of error detection, poor time management and lack of repertoire planning (Berg, 2007; Hallam, 2001; McPherson & Renwick, 2001; Pitts et al., 2000b). Discontinuers may however be aware of their lack of regulation, for they engage in more teacher-approval-seeking behaviour than continuers (Costa-Giomi, Flowers & Sasaki, 2005; McPherson & Renwick, 2001).

In sum, lack of self-regulation appears to be a characteristic of discontinuers, although due to the methodological thrust of the existing retention-attrition literature, the association of poor practice methods or lack of self-regulation with continuing participation has a thin empirical base. Practice methods are addressed in more depth in Chapters Six and Seven.

**Affective outcomes for discontinuers**

Affective outcomes of learning are proposed to be feelings that individuals experience in response to achievement or frustration of learning goals or purposes (Boekaerts, 1993; Carver & Scheier, 1990; Schutz, Hong, Cross & Osborn, 2006). The feeling-self, acting in cohort with beliefs about self and about learning, operates as one phase of a feedback system, recognising feelings about goal satisfaction, which then may be translated into new beliefs, goals or actions. Boekaerts (1993) suggested that appraisals of events fall into the categories of ‘satisfiers’, those which satisfy individuals’ goals or purposes, or ‘annoyers’, those which frustrate or annoy individuals’ goals or purposes. Satisfiers and annoyers act as triggers for emotional and/or physical engagement or disengagement.
Some researchers claim that emotional appraisals such as these have been left out of the representation of learning (Pekrun, 1992; Schutz & DeCuir, 2002). Nonetheless, emotions have long been acknowledged as part of motivation (Weiner, 1985) and learning behaviour (Boekaerts, 1993; E. Elliott & Dweck, 1988), and are theorised to evolve from appraisals or evaluations of learning (Boekaerts, 1993; Pekrun, 1992; Schutz & DeCuir, 2002).

In music learning research and in the retention-attrition literature, emotions as responses to learning are those such as satisfaction or enjoyment (Chandler et al., 1988; Koutz, 1987; Klinedinst, 1991; Rife, Shnek, Lauby & Lapidus, 2001; Rogers, 1989), boredom (AMA, 2001; Bushong, 2005; Govel, 2004; O’Neill, 2001) or valenced attitudes to music (M. Brown, 1996; Frakes, 1984; Hallam, 1998). Taking pleasure in hearing and responding to music itself is an additional way in which people experience emotions in music learning environments. This has been described in varying conceptual forms such as interest (M. Brown, 1996; Marjoribanks & Mboya, 2004), importance or value (Bailey, 2006; Freedman-Doan et al., 2000; Hurley, 1994; O’Neill, 1999; Sichivitsa, 2004; Yoon, 1997) and affect for music (Asmus, 1989; Schmitt, 1979).

A commonality among the studies cited above is a strong association between levels of satisfaction or enjoyment, personal importance or valuing, and intentions and decisions to continue or discontinue learning music. In other words, students who were satisfied with their progress or learning, who were more interested in music, or who valued it more highly were students who continued their learning for longer. However, while the empirical studies have provided description of the presence and quality or direction of affect in the experience of learning a musical instrument, there appears to be a lack of explanation of the contexts of these emotions and their agency in an individual’s desire to learn an instrument. Emotional reasons are often given as a simple response to activity; one young girl giving up because there were “no good things” about learning the horn (Pitts et al., 2000b, p. 64), another because she “went off it” and “just found it boring” (Sloboda, 2005, p. 364); many others finding no further interest in playing (AMA, 2001; Govel, 2004; Solly, 1986). One of the most common expressions of this disinterest is ‘boredom’ (AMA, 2001; Bushong, 2005; Govel, 2004; Klinedinst, 1989; Pitts et al., 2000b).

Simply acknowledging these responses however, does not illuminate the processes that engendered them, leaving little opportunity for an informed pedagogic response or intervention by parents or teachers. It appears important to understand emotions in response to the music learning experience itself (Lehmann, 1997) for there are at least three possible sources of affective responses: emotional reactions to learning itself as identified in the academic learning literature (Boekaerts, 1993; Schutz & DeCuir, 2002), the emotional reactions to music as identified in the cognition-perception field of research (e.g. Rozin, 2004), and the aesthetic or
ontological meanings of music identified in the philosophical literature (e.g. D. Elliott, 2000; S. Langer, 1942). The details of the association of emotions with context and their relationship with continuance and discontinuation are addressed in Chapters Five, Eight and Nine of the thesis.

Achievement outcomes of discontinuers

In much the same way that emotional and affective responses are associated in definitive ways with attrition and retention, so too is achievement. The evidence through those studies that have addressed attrition show that discontinuers, whether primary or secondary students, whether novices or more advanced, obtained lower musical and academic achievement grades (M. Brown, 1996; Frakes, 1984; Klinedinst, 1991; J. McCarthy, 1980; Sloboda & Davidson, 1996). Many researchers have noted that lack of accomplishment in music reading and rhythm is specifically associated with discontinuation across primary and secondary levels (Allen, 1981; M. Brown, 1996; Costa-Giomi et al., 2005; J. McCarthy, 1980; Pitts et al., 2000b) although one study found otherwise (Stewart, 2002). In support of the implications of the prevailing findings, Kuhlman (2005) suggests that academic achievement is likely to be a predictor of success in early music instruction because it indicates a student’s ability to cope successfully with the cognitive demands of music reading.

Aptitude

Often considered in conjunction with achievement, aptitude is also referred to as ‘ability’. Among retention-attrition studies, musical aptitude has been measured through the Bentley Test of Musical Ability (in Hallam, 1998) as well as through teachers’ ratings of student ability (Corenblum & Marshall, 1998; Hallam, 1998; Klinedinst, 1989). Findings have been mixed in relation to continuing participation. Corenblum and Marshall (1998) and Klinedinst (1989) found a lower musical aptitude to be associated with discontinuation, although Hallam’s (1998) cohort of discontinuers was as likely to have a high aptitude for music as the continuers. In combination with the wider literature of music education, there appear to be no definitive conclusions as to whether aptitude can help to predict retention or attrition.

Gender

Likewise, there are few definitive findings in gender studies of music participation. On the one hand, in the general music education literature, boys and girls are found to have differing attitudes to music. For example, Eccles, Wigfield, Harold & Blumenfeld (1993) found that primary school boys are less interested than girls, and in music performance education, boys frequently choose ‘masculine’ instruments such as brass or drums, while girls choose ‘feminine’ instruments such as flute or strings (Byo, 1991; Cannava, 1994; Conway, 2000; Hallam, Rogers.
& Creech, 2008). On the other hand, gender has not been significantly related to discontinuation. For example, J. McCarthy (1980) found no association, nor did Corley (2003) concerning attrition from a university music education degree. However, Kemp (1996) has theorised about the association, suggesting that since successful creative musicians have been associated with androgyny (where an individual exhibits both masculine and feminine traits), young people might drop out of music when gender-role socialisation is challenged. For example, gendered stereotyping of instruments may persuade a male flautist to give up.

In summary, the picture of the continuer and discontinuer drawn here shows that there are many details of an individual’s psychology, demonstrated by attitudes and behaviour, which are significant to their decisions to continue or to end formal instruction. Achievement as a significant background factor gives some perspective and meaning to an understanding of music learning because it is concerned with cognitive abilities. The relationship of achievement to attrition may indicate that the high-level cognitive demands of musical instrument playing affect how students experience and respond to their learning.

Relatedly, while it is now recognised that discontinuers practise less, are less self-regulated, and dislike practice, what is not clear is in what ways discontinuers’ practice might have influenced their feelings. Discontinuers’ accounts of practising could show ‘how’ they practised and the consequent impact of this on their affective and skill outcomes (for example as studied by Pitts et al., 2000b and Sloboda and Davidson, 1996). The outcomes of this learning approach perspective were touched on by Costa-Giomi et al. (2005) when the researchers observed discontinuers’ uncertainty in their approach to playing. However, the researchers were able only to hypothesise on reasons for this hesitancy, and it seems that a more comprehensive account of learning is needed that includes understanding the beliefs students have about musical learning, and also understanding the ways in which these beliefs influence competency and emotions. Such emotions are an important component of motivation (Pintrich & DeGroot, 1990) and of interest (Mitchell, 1993; Prenzel, 1992), yet an important finding of this section of the review reveals that many of the complaints of loss of interest or boredom in music lessons appeared to be have been accepted as face-value explanations for discontinuing, and the feelings not unravelled to determine their origin or associations. Similarly, the significance of music to adolescents has been clearly established (North, Hargreaves & O’Neill, 2000). However, empirical research into the meaning derived from music-making experiences has only recently emerged (O’Neill, 2006), and thus in the attrition research literature, these experiences have rarely been linked in substantive ways to the way in which young people undertake and perceive their learning, or to their reasons for participation. Experiencing music making in meaningful ways, Dillon (2007) argues, can lead to an “aesthetic grounding” of the self (p. 6) and development and “transformation” of character (p. 219). In sum, it would appear that, to date,
the subjective dimension has not been deeply explored in music education nor has the field of retention and attrition research paid a great deal of attention to the influence of affective perceptions on engagement in music education.

The section below turns to the social dimension of the music learners’ world to describe the influence of parents, teachers and peers on individuals’ decisions to continue their formal participation in music instruction.

**The Social Dimension of Instrumental Music Learning**

This section describes a range of elements in the social dimension that were found by retention-attrition researchers to have some bearing on decisions to continue learning. These consist of interactions with peers, parents and teachers. As above, the element is first described, drawing on the literature from the music performance and academic learning fields, before detailing findings pertinent to retention and attrition.

**Parents as influences on participation**

Social interactions are an acknowledged source of influence on students’ motivations to continue playing music (Chadwick, 2001; Creech & Hallam, 2003; Evans, 2009; Masten & Coatsworth, 1998; Pitts, Davidson & McPherson, 2000a; Yoo, 1997) and the research literature has been unanimous concerning the importance of parental support from even the earliest days of childhood. For example, Moore, Burland and Davidson (2003) found that having a mother at home in the infant and toddler years influenced musical success in adulthood. The literature also details the extent and type of involvement that parents have in their children’s musical lives (Brokaw, 1982; Govel, 2004; Graziano, 1991; McPherson & Davidson, 2002; Moore et al., 2003; Welch, 1998); many parents provide “multiple, simultaneous” opportunities in which children develop their abilities (Chadwick, 2000, p. xxxiii).

Parents provide, for example, modelling that influences children’s self-regulation (Xu & Corno, 1998). Parental involvement also provides emotional resources (Grolnick & R. Ryan, 1989), such as frustration control and positive feedback (Xu & Corno, 1998), especially for young children, who may not understand the purpose of home practice (Warton, 1997; Xu & Corno, 1998). In addition, parents’ values for and involvement in music shape primary school children’s musical achievement, and in later years, their liking for music (Pitts et al., 2000a; Zdzinski, 1996). Predictably then, discontinuers are found to be more likely to have parents who are indifferent or less involved in their home practice (Bushong, 2005; Davidson, Sloboda & M. Howe, 1996; Govel, 2004; Pitts et al., 2000a).
However, while Chadwick (2000) has outlined many types of support that parents give to young music learners, such as guidance, financial and practical aid, it would be helpful in the music learning context to further clarify the processes by which parents influence the musical learning of their child (McPherson & Davidson, 2002).

**Teacher-student interactions**

The influence of the teacher is acknowledged as a further powerful influence on student interest and motivation to learn (Allen, 1981; Davidson et al., 1998; Davidson, Sloboda & M. Howe, 1996; Koutz, 1987; J. McCarthy, 1980; Sosniak, 1990). Sloboda and Davidson (1996) compared five groups of differently motivated children, including a group of discontinuers. Children’s perspectives of their teacher were related to their intentions of continuing music instruction. Children rated teachers as more or less distant or friendly, and ranked their teachers’ performance standard from poor to high. Continuers generally felt their early teachers were warm and friendly, and as the students’ proficiency increased, they were more likely to enjoy teachers who had convincing professional qualities. Overall, discontinuers felt their teachers were unfriendly or disinterested and they were less able to identify ‘professional’ teacher characteristics, confounding ‘friendly’ with ‘good’ (Sloboda & Davidson, 1996). Another study focusing on teacher characteristics (Brakel, 1997) found that combinations of teaching styles that were less musically inspiring and contained less positive feedback or student autonomy were predictive of discontinuation. Further evidence of music teacher influence on instrumental students is given by Bakker (2005) who found that student motivation and positive feelings were enhanced when teachers were intrinsically motivated.

The evidence regarding student opinions of teachers points to the importance of teachers providing a warm and facilitative atmosphere, although the basis on which students make evaluations of their teachers has not been clarified; that is, why do they find their teachers less friendly or warm? That further advanced students in Davidson and Sloboda (1996), and older students (Pitts, 2004), were more ready to admire their teacher’s skill is likely related to their own developing skill, because as they develop musically, they seek a close relationship with experts from whom they hope to learn the ‘ropes’ of their profession (Davidson & Burland, 2004; Hays & Minichiello, 2005). However, for younger children, the picture is less clear. Children (up to approximately 12 years old) can perceive a classroom teacher’s attention as a function of their own ability; that is, if the teacher is cross or demanding, then the student is likely to feel less capable (McCaslin & Murdock, 1991). Since younger students tend not to distinguish between their perceptions of themselves and others’ evaluations (Eccles et al., 1993), warm and friendly teacher characteristics may indicate to the student that they are capable and ‘acceptable’ to the teacher, where a critical or demanding ‘old school’ type teacher
may encourage perceptions of less capability. Supporting this, evidence from academic settings research suggests that providing autonomy (i.e. choice and personal control) encourages positive emotions (B. Patrick, Skinner & Connell, 1993) and greater intrinsic motivation and mastery (R. Ryan & Stiller, 1991). This literature is returned to in Chapters Five and Nine when the respective findings are discussed.

Peer-student interactions

While for children the learning of music is usually embedded in the social environment of the school, in the retention and attrition literature, the presence of peers and any relationship they might have to decisions to continue or discontinue is rarely examined. Allen (1981) found that peer influence did have a significant positive effect on students wanting to stay in music, although Hallam (1998) found that perceptions of peer influence were less predictive of retention than children’s own attitudes to playing. Young people involved in the arts, however, are appreciative of the support that they gain from their peers (Davidson & Burland, 2004; O’Neill, 2002; H. Patrick et al., 1999), and the sharing of the activity itself can be a unifying factor for peer groups (Dillon, 2007; Eccles et al., 2003).

In summary of these three elements of the social dimension, there is a body of evidence to show that in a range of ways the social environment plays a role in whether or not a student discontinues. Warm and involved attention directed at engaged practice from parents and teachers appears to be strongly related to greater longevity of participation in instruction, for when parents are un-involved in their children’s activities and interests, their children tend to be less involved. However, what are the processes by which teachers and peers influence learners’ experiences? Sympathetic teachers are critical to young people, but what makes a teacher friendly or unfriendly from the students’ perspective? Unclear also is the way in which peers influence young musical learners, given that there is little known about peer interaction in relation to intentions to continue.

Another dimension that is important to the effectiveness and efficacy of student learning is the context, whether economic (Aikens & Barbarin, 2008; Davis-Kean, 2005; Marks, 2006, 2008), or structural (Ames, 1992; Anderman, 1999; El-Alayli & Baumgardner, 2003; Kaplan, Gheen & Midgley, 2002; Moore et al., 2003). The section below reviews retention and attrition literature that explores both the economic context and the environment or structure in which music learning takes place.

The Contextual Dimension of Instrumental Music Learning

This section describes several aspects of learners’ musical environment that have been found to influence participation in music learning.
Socio-economic standing

Social resources and capital have a defining effect on educational outcomes. In Western economies, low income and status may affect values and attitudes to learning through a narrowly defined career trajectory (e.g. limited to apprenticeships and trades), restricted access to community resources and social support, or concerns for economic survival (White & Wyn, 2004). Children suffering from poverty, stress or emotional instability may find it hard to develop the resilience and self-regulatory skills later needed in developing competence in instrumental playing (Masten & Coatsworth, 1998; R. Ryan & Deci, 2000a).

Socio-economic status (SES) has been found to have reliable positive associations with high academic achievement (Marks, 2008), school retention (Battin-Pearson et al., 2000) and participation in extra-curricular activities (McNeal, 1995). In the context of music performance education, the relationship of SES to a variety of different aspects of music has been examined: music preference (Olsson, 1997), attributions for success and failure in music (Legette, 2003a), and teaching strategies (Albert, 2005).

In relation to intentions to continue learning an instrument, Corenblum and Marshall (1998) suggest that SES intervenes as a proxy variable, influencing family attitudes and values towards music, which in turn indirectly influence retention and attrition in music classes. Several researchers have found that low SES has a negative relationship with continuance in band programs (Corenblum & Marshall, 1998), and primary school class music (Klinedinst, 1991; J. McCarthy, 1980). By contrast, the study by Costa-Giomi et al. (2005) of piano students in a free instruction program found no effect of factors such as family income or parental education on dropping out from piano lessons.

Whilst the reliability of SES to directly influence continuance or attrition is unclear, it may be that when decisions to continue are influenced by musical taste (Olsson, 1997), or feeling that family background is the source of musical success or failure (Legette, 2003a), socio-economic influences are playing a part.

Turning to the details of music education structures, an early study of the effect of mode of instruction (group or individual lessons) provided little evidence that the mode had an influence on decisions to participate (J. McCarthy, 1980). However, in later studies (Davidson et al., 1998; Pitts & Davidson, 2000; Stewart, 2002), discontinuation was found to be more common among those who took group lessons, whether in band programs (Pitts & Davidson, 2000; Stewart, 2002) or in group lessons with a private teacher (Davidson et al., 1998).

Some researchers have also questioned whether attributes of the instrument influence decisions to continue. For example, students given guidance to select an instrument that they liked and that suited them physiologically were more likely to stay in a school band program (Cannava,
1994). Discontinuers do complain of not liking the instrument they learn (Pitts et al., 2000b), whether or not it is their first choice. When instruments are in poor condition, this too may negatively influence decisions to continue (Allen, 1981). Further setting factors influence students to discontinue such as changing teachers (Allen, 1981), changing building or location (Hartley, 1996), a small band in a large school (Brakel, 1997) and time-tabling conflicts (Allen, 1981; Hartley, 1996; Koutz, 1987; Solly, 1986). As factors outside the control of individual students, the lack of choice or autonomy in any of these areas may have had consequences that were dissatisfying or unacceptable.

In sum, elements of the contextual dimension, that is, the external structures of the learning environment provided by teacher, conductor or school, have been shown to have some association with young people’s loss of interest in learning, although this dimension does not hold as many significant factors as do the social and individual dimensions. While there does not seem to be compelling evidence for the benefit of individual lessons over group lessons, it may be that lesson types are influencing or affecting other processes. For example, in group lessons, perhaps students are not able to interact as much or as easily with their teacher. Perhaps students in group lessons are also like those in Costa-Giomi et al. (2005), more needy of reassurance and guidance, even though or because this is less likely to occur in group lessons. Conflict of schedule or changing of buildings or teachers may also be excuses or ‘smoke-screens’ for students wanting to discontinue but finding it hard to make the move without an overt reason. High-achieving students in the study by Davidson et al. (1998) had more teachers than did discontinuers, but this was generally by choice, so ‘changing teachers’ may need more explanation or understanding when students propose this reason for discontinuing. Perhaps students were uncomfortable with becoming acquainted with new teachers and curriculum. Changing teachers frequently or by obligation may also be accompanied by incomplete instruction, conflicting information or lack of student-centred pedagogical attention.

In brief, while the context of learning as described here does not have an apparently direct impact on attrition, when elements of this dimension encroach strongly enough on students’ feelings about music, it may be the ‘straw that breaks the camel’s back.’

The preceding sections of this chapter have described many social, individual and external factors that were associated with those who discontinued formal music instruction. The limitations of current knowledge were also highlighted in the sections above. The following section presents a final analysis of the research approaches utilised in the field.

A key point of interest resulting from the literature review is that although many researchers have tested academic learning theories in the instrumental music learning context (Anguiano, 2006; Hurley, 1994; O’Neill, 1996; Renwick, 2006; Sichivitsa, 2004) (see Appendix A), and
although retention appears to be associated with a constellation of factors that influence each other in predictable ways (Hallam, 1998), in the retention-attrition field there appears to be little drawing together of the range of variables in ways that might suggest a motivational process or coherent ‘meta-explanation’ of disengaging from instrumental music learning. Although three levels of analysis were represented – descriptive, relational and explanatory (DePoy & Gitlin, 1998) – the majority of studies centred on the descriptive and relational levels and not the explanatory level (see Appendix B for research questions and design of retention-attrition studies reviewed in this chapter, and Appendix C for a summary of the variables). Furthermore, there appeared to be little connection or development of research findings from one study to another.

In conclusion, the diversity of the studies reviewed offers a multi-faceted picture of the context and characteristics of those who participate longer in learning than others, although some depth is missing. The most informative studies are those that have a strong theoretical background (Hallam, 1998) and powerful statistical analyses (Klinedinst, 1991) or where longitudinal designs have enabled the collection of qualitative data through observation and interview (Costa-Gioni et al., 2005; Pitts et al., 2000b). Nevertheless, as the review has indicated, there remain important gaps that if filled would contribute to our understanding of musical learning, and therefore be of practical use to learners, their parents and their teachers.

In particular, the review of the literature has shown that a deeper understanding of the experience of music learning from the learner’s own perspective would be one contribution to the existing literature on retention and attrition. To get to the heart of the self in learning there is a need to explore individuals’ experiences of learning, including their perceptions, their emotions, feelings, beliefs and attitudes toward learning. As the literature shows, all of these will contribute to how they learn and what they achieve (Hurley, 1994; McPherson & Zimmerman, 2002; Vispoel, 2000). The unpacking of the affective and the subjective is necessary because it is so powerful, yet it remains relatively unexplained in music learning, and although described, not integrated into knowledge and practice of teaching and learning. The subjective side of the learner may be key to understanding engagement with and commitment to learning, for “reality is in some sense constructed by the mind” (Jeans, 1942/1981, p. 143), whether constructed by ‘discovery’ (Bruner, 1961), or by meaningful experience (Dewey, 1913).

The subjective perspective is represented in Figure 1.3, which represents the conceptual framework for the study. It illustrates that the focal point of this thesis is the subjective experience of the individual, social and contextual dimensions described above. The figure shows the concept of subjective self as an interactive or dynamic response to internal and external influences. The subjective dimension is a complementary and interactive dimension
emerging from the individual, social and contextual dimensions. The concept of the subjective self will be referred to hereafter as the ‘subjective perspective’ or ‘subjective dimension’.

This framework acknowledges the constructivist approach to knowledge making, where the individual interprets and constructs their knowledge through experiencing themselves in relation to their own actions, and in their interactions with others (Willis, 2007).

A further task for the study includes developing a theoretical explanation for participation in learning that is grounded in empirical data. Several reviews of motivation theories and constructs from academic learning (Austin et al., 2006; Hallam, 2002; O'Neill & McPherson, 2002; Thomas, 1992), along with the studies cited in Appendix A, have indicated that theories and models of learning in school are highly relevant to understanding and theorising about instrumental music learning and motivation. There may be differences however, because of the intrinsically motivating nature of music itself (Lehmann, Sloboda & Woody, 2007), in that it might be seen as informing the “life of feeling” (S. Langer, 1942, p. 243).

**THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

This study will explore the ways in which individuals who had undertaken formal musical instrument instruction in their childhood and youth experienced their learning, in order to understand their subjective learning experiences and to explain their period of participation in terms of their subjective construction of this learning. The thesis therefore aims to explore the affective and experiential dimensions of musical learning. A mixed method design will involve querying such elements as learners’ interest in music, and their feelings, thoughts and beliefs about musical learning, practising, social interactions, and themselves as musical learners.
Given the lack of detailed data on Australian continuers and discontinuers and their characteristics, it is important to establish in a first stage of the study the relevance of the individual, social and contextual dimensions to an Australian population, as well as to compare groups of long- and short-term learners. As will be explained in Chapters Two, Three and Four, specific elements such as musical interest, affective reactions to practice and family interaction are of particular interest, and a quantitative descriptive-comparative research approach is utilised as the first stage method. The question directing the first stage of the study is:

What dimensions of the learning experience are associated with participation in music instrument learning for school-age students in an Australian context?

Sub-questions addressing specific elements of the dimensions are listed in the following chapter.

A second, qualitative interpretive-descriptive approach, will highlight individual differences and variations in affect, thoughts and beliefs (Bempechat & Boulay, 2001; Trigwell & Prosser, 1991), to allow alternative explanations to emerge (Hufton, Elliott & Illushin, 2002), and to make possible an entrée to the “mental atmosphere” of the individual (Von Wright, as cited in Stake, 1995, p. 38). The research questions developed for this stage are:

In the context of instrumental music education during childhood and youth, what is the nature of the subjective experience of learning for individuals?

How do individuals describe their experiences of learning, and what does music learning mean to them?

In response to the overarching research problem, a third question seeks explanation of how those learning experiences detailed through the first two stages of the study might sustain or deplete an individual’s engagement with musical learning.

How might participants’ experiences of learning help to explain differences between those who continue and those who withdraw from learning?

Overall, the study aims to avoid the conjectures and simplicities of ‘drop-out’ by offering an understanding of music learning that may contribute to effective pedagogical practices, these in turn inspiring a life-long connection to learning and also perhaps to music.

**A Framework for the Study of Individual Learning**

The concept framework of Figure 1.3 modelled the intention to investigate the subjective experience of thoughts, actions and interactions in the individual, social and contextual dimensions. One challenge arising from this purpose is that of reducing or conceptualising the vast assortment of elements into their respective conditions, processes or events. In particular,
there is a need to understand how individual learning is conceptualised in the education psychology literature to facilitate an informed approach to the data. Such a framework is described below.

Cantwell (2004) adapted a framework from ten Cate, Snell, Mann & Vermunt (2004) to understand and explain individual differences in student learning; the framework explains an integration of the many elements identified above in the individual dimension. Cantwell’s framework captures the individual learning process in three components of learning, and these influence and are influenced by each other. The framework is shown in Figure 1.4 and described below.

![Individual Learning Framework](image)

**Figure 1.4** The individual learning framework. Adapted from Cantwell, 2004 and ten Cate et al., 2004.

The *affective domain* represents perceptions of past, present and future self – self-concept, self-efficacy and self esteem – which influence the quality of regulative decisions. This domain accounts for ‘what we are feeling’. Self-concept is the story or history one has of oneself, created as a composite of past and present events, behaviours or feelings (Sichivitsa, 2004; Vispoel, 1994, 2000). Self-efficacy is the expectation or forethought one has about one’s ability to undertake specific tasks (McCormick & McPherson, 2003) while self-esteem represents one’s evaluations and judgements about oneself (Sandene, 1997). The three aspects of self in the affective domain interact in complex ways that affect the way an individual feels about undertaking music practice for example, and the feelings an individual has will affect the way in which they approach the task of practice (i.e. learning).

The *metacognitive domain* represents an individual’s thoughts and beliefs about learning and about knowledge and their translation into regulatory behaviours (Cantwell, Jeanneret, Sullivan & Irvine, 2000; Cantwell & Millard, 1994; Hallam, 2001b; McPherson & Zimmerman, 2002;
Nielsen, 2004; Smith, 2002, 2005; Sullivan & Cantwell, 1999). This domain accounts for ‘what we are thinking’ and unconsciously or deliberately directs learning activities in the cognitive domain, such as practice routines (Costa-Giomi et al., 2005; Hallam, 1995a, b; 2001a; Sloboda & Davidson, 1996; Smith, 2005). The cognitive domain accounts for ‘what we are doing’.

Together the three components of this individual learning framework are able to account for the actions of the music student in the individual dimension, in all their learning activities such as study, practice, lessons or performance. This framework offers an empirically supported theoretical structure for understanding and interpreting participants’ accounts of the learning experience, and clarifies the different aspects of the self that are at play in any learning context. Its role in the second stage of analysis is explained in Chapter Two.

**Outline of the Thesis**

While this thesis starts conventionally with Part I comprising the initial chapter focusing on the literature and the second outlining the mixed method design (shown in Figure 1.5), subsequent chapters are shaped by both the method and the findings. In Part II, the third and fourth chapters present the quantitative stage of the study wherein students’ attitudes to their music instruction are described and compared to studies of a similar nature in the field. Both chapters include the details of the development of the research instruments and the results of the analyses. The third chapter focuses on background factors that are hypothesised to be related to ongoing participation in music performance instruction, while the fourth chapter focuses on more immediate factors that may relate to continuing participation.

The chapters in Part III build their conclusions on the findings of the qualitative method and continue the exploration of students’ subjective experiences. Social interaction and the development of strong feelings for music and learning are both explored in the fifth chapter, while the sixth and seventh chapters interpret learners’ descriptions of their learning beliefs and attitudes as learning patterns that have varied properties and outcomes. The eighth chapter focuses entirely on understanding the sense of self that individual learners developed while the ninth conveys the affective conditions surrounding competency and social interactions that influenced individuals to stay in or depart from formal instruction. In Part IV, the tenth chapter sets out the conclusions of the study as an explanatory theory of participation, bringing together the two methods of the study, while the final chapter draws out the implications of this theory to music performance education.
Figure 1:5  Outline of the thesis

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Chapter One
Participation in Musical Instrument Learning: Introduction and Review of the Literature

Chapter Two
The Methodology of the Study

THE QUANTITATIVE METHOD

Chapter Three
The Musical Backgrounds and Beliefs of Young People

Chapter Four
Learning with Feelings: Lessons, Practice & People

THE QUALITATIVE METHOD

Chapter Five
Connecting With Learning

Chapter Six
Logic, Will and Purpose: How Students Think About Learning

Chapter Seven
Patterns of Learning and Practice

Chapter Eight
The Musical Self

Chapter Nine
The Conditions of Participation

CONCLUSIONS & IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

Chapter Ten
Sustaining Participation in Musical Learning

Chapter Eleven
Conclusions & Implications
Chapter 2.  The Methodology of the Study

Introduction
The previous chapter has described the need for understanding student experiences of learning in music and how these affect decisions to participate in formal learning. This chapter describes the link between the research problem and the design of the study. The first section of the chapter discusses the chosen paradigm, design and methods. This is followed by a description of the two stages in the study, including description of the participants, the procedures and materials. The final sections of the chapter consider some aspects affecting the design of the study.

As stated in Chapter One, the principal intention of this study is to explore the subjective perspective of musical instrument learning, and how varied experiences and meanings influence participation in learning. The overarching research question posed in Chapter One was:

In the context of participation in instrumental music education during childhood and youth, what is the nature of individuals’ experiences of learning, and how do their perceptions of learning influence participation in formal instruction?

The nature of the question called for a methodological approach that would facilitate description and comparison, as well as explanation and interpretation. A mixed methods design was therefore employed, where the qualitative method was used to extend and explain the findings of the quantitative method.

The following section of the chapter sets out a rationale for the use of mixed methods followed by a description of the design strategy and a synopsis of the sample and procedure.

Mixed Methods Research
According to J. Greene (2008), methodologies for research into human behaviour are shaped principally by the philosophical nature of the chosen research paradigm. Research paradigms are the frames of reference that concern the nature of knowledge and the location of knowledge (Fitzgerald & Cunningham, 2002). Two paradigms that have been important to education research have been the positivist (and post-positivist) and the interpretive, and these paradigms are generally associated with quantitative and qualitative methods respectively (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). The two paradigms describe different perspectives on the nature of reality and how it is observed.

The positivist paradigm has been most associated with quantitative methods because they generate objective, falsifiable knowledge through deductive reasoning, internal validity,
reliability and generalisability (Neuman, 2006). Post-positivist paradigms have developed from positivist paradigms to acknowledge the difficulty in capturing pure, objective, unbiased responses from the researcher or the researched (Crook & Garratt, 2006). Although an emphasis remains on the criteria of validity, reliability and generalisability, Crook and Garratt (2006) and Guba (1990) note that post-positivism takes into account the dynamism between individuals, society and the natural environment.

In contrast, the constructivist or interpretive paradigm has traditionally been associated with qualitative methods, because observation, conversation, image and symbol provide data from which an understanding of people’s experiences, meanings, discourses or practices can be drawn (Mason, 1996). In general, the interpretive-constructivist paradigm seeks to understand the world as represented in individuals’ reality rather than one ‘true’ reality; knowledge and understanding is considered to be grounded in individuals’ constructions or mental models of the world or its phenomena as they experience it, and human behaviour comes about through volition and choice (Neuman, 2006). There are also multiple ways in which an interpretive-constructivist researcher may interpret the data (Corbin & Holt, 2006; Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006), including phenomenology, phenomenography, ethnography and grounded theory. Each specific method has a set of tools for gathering and interpreting the data in light of the specialised perspective taken.

Both paradigms have means of ensuring rigour, logic and systematic investigation although debate continues concerning the validity and value of research in the interpretive and critical paradigms in comparison to research in positivist paradigms (Maxwell, 2004), despite the length of the discussion and the variation in specific traditions inside the paradigms. Some of the key differences between the two paradigms are summarised in Table 2.1. Described as the incompatibility thesis by K. Howe (1988), the debate holds that objectivity, truth, and validity, integral to the positivist scientific method, are incompatible with the socially constructed realities and claims of interpretive methods.

The development of mixed method research designs, however, has endeavoured to bridge the differences between the two paradigms for the benefit of better understanding psychological and social phenomena (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). In principle, mixed methods research “mixes or combines quantitative and qualitative research techniques, methods, approaches, concepts or language into a single study” (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 17). Both methods, rather than one, inform the research problem.
The mixed method approach acknowledges the existence and importance of social and psychological subjectivities (J. Greene & Caracelli, 2003; Maxcy, 2003) at the same time as endorsing a “strong and practical empiricism” (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 18). Whilst the quantitative method does not “reflect local…understandings” (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 19), it provides the possibility of generalisation and or prediction, while the qualitative method can probe and elucidate detailed contextual events and processes, although such conclusions may be more relative and contingent than those of the quantitative method (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

To avoid, work with or replace the sense of incompatibility associated with the paradigm debate, mixed methods researchers have developed stances (J. Greene & Caracelli, 2003). These stances either aim to make the most of the differences between the paradigms in use (dialectic stance), focus explicitly on substantive or theoretical congruence, or justify the mixing of philosophical purposes by prioritising the demands of the research context (pragmatic stance) (Greene & Caracelli, 2003). A pragmatic approach considers how the methods and their epistemological assumptions can best serve the research problem and de-emphasises the ontological and epistemological differences between the paradigms.

A philosophically pragmatic approach to the use of mixed methods was adopted for this thesis to investigate the experiences of musical instrument learning and their relation to continuing participation. The purpose for gaining two perspectives was to seek “elaboration, enhancement, illustration, [and] clarification of the results from one method with the results from the other method” (J. Greene, Caracelli & Graham, 1989, p. 259). The authors suggest that as complementarity strategies, the two methods measure overlapping but different facets of a phenomenon, resulting in an enriched understanding of that phenomenon.

Several facets of music learning were reviewed in Chapter One, which pointed to clear differences between continuers and discontinuers in many aspects of the affective, social and
contextual dimensions. Consequently, an important first step was to establish which dimensions of the learning experience were associated with continuing participation in music instrument learning in the Australian context. This first step required description, comparison and ground setting to examine the central dimensions of music learning; this was felt to be best suited to quantitative methods, using a descriptive-comparative approach through a questionnaire. An interpretive perspective was also required to understand how and why these dimensions were important to participants’ experiences of learning and their continuing participation. This research query was best suited to qualitative methods, using an interpretive-descriptive approach through group and individual interviews. The two methods therefore represent two explorations of the phenomenon of musical instrument learning in the context of continuing participation.

Both quantitative and qualitative data and analysis methods have been used in the field of musical instrument learning and thus are known to have provided empirical knowledge that is both generalisable (e.g. McPherson & McCormick, 2006; Sichivitsa, 2003) as well as richly described (Davidson & Borthwick, 2002; Hallam, 1995a). Additionally, the two methods are considered to be sensitive and appropriate to the characteristics of the participants and their situation.

Having established a philosophical frame of reference, and identified the logical steps to take with regard to data types and analysis, consideration of the specific design follows.

**MIXED METHOD RESEARCH DESIGN**

Within mixed methodology there are varied ways of combining the complementary methods that concern their temporal *rapprochement* – concurrent or sequential – as well as consideration of the points at which the two methods are linked or connected (Creswell, 2003). The research problem was considered to be best suited to a “sequential explanatory design” (Creswell, 2003, p. 213). This design is suggested by Creswell to assist in explaining and interpreting the findings of a quantitative study and follows J. Greene et al.’s (1989) complementarity purposes. The sequential explanatory design involved the implementation of the quantitative data collection and analysis in Stage 1, followed by the qualitative data collection and analysis in Stage 2. The strategies were synthesised in a third interpretive stage (see Figure 2.1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage 1</th>
<th>Stage 2</th>
<th>Stage 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quantitative Data</td>
<td>Qualitative Data</td>
<td>Interpretation of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collection &amp; Analysis</td>
<td>Collection &amp; Analysis</td>
<td>synthesised analyses</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2:1 Sequential explanatory design of the study adapted from Creswell, 2003
The qualitative strategy was given a major status in light of the overarching research aim to understand individuals’ experiences of learning and how these varied meanings and experiences influenced their participation in formal learning. The sequential design of the study permits the findings of the quantitative stage to reveal the existence and extent of differences between groups of study participants. The qualitative findings are linked to the quantitative findings through the notions of explaining and interpreting; the qualitative analysis can give an account of the contexts and processes that underlie differences between participants identified in the first stage of the study.

The following section concludes the overview of the design of the study by providing a synopsis of the participants and procedure of the study. This is then followed by a detailed description of the participants, procedure, materials and analysis for each stage of the study.

Synopsis of participants and procedure
Since the aim of the study was to focus on the nature of the learning experience and its relationship to continuing participation in music learning during childhood and youth, sampling methods were developed that would enable a well-scoped description and exploration of musical instrument learning.

The essential criterion for participant recruitment was to have experienced the phenomenon of participating in musical instrument instruction during childhood or youth. This criterion facilitated the recruitment of individuals who had learned an instrument for comparatively different lengths of time. Some participants had learned an instrument only during primary school years; others participated in instruction during their primary and/or secondary schooling, while others had continued instruction in a tertiary setting. This meant that study participants varied in their amount of experience, depth of involvement in musical learning and accomplishment.

Young people who had never formally participated in instrumental music lessons were also included in the first stage of the study to provide a comparison between groups of students who were continuing their studies and those who had discontinued on global attributes such as interest in music or family musical background.

Participants also varied widely in their ages. Ages ranged from primary school students (10-12 years), through secondary school students (16-18 years), to younger and mature adults (range 19-approx. 75 years), this last group consisting of tertiary students and adults in the community. This sampling strategy provided a cross-generational perspective that facilitated a “triangulation with temporality” (Phelan, Davidson & Yu, 1998, p. 5), where recollection of events is collected at varying distances from the event itself, and these events compared (see Table 2.2).
The temporal framework of participants’ perspectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Temporality of learning experience</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Looking back on learning in childhood</td>
<td>Primary students (n=194)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looking back on learning in childhood &amp; youth</td>
<td>Secondary students (n=182)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looking back on learning in childhood &amp; youth</td>
<td>Adults in the community (n=32)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looking back on learning in childhood &amp; youth</td>
<td>Tertiary students (n=17)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ethical clearance for the study was obtained from the University (Human Research Ethics Committee, Approval No. H-959-0205) as well as from the NSW Government Department of Education and Training ([DET] No. 04.232). The first stage of the study consisted of a questionnaire administered to primary and secondary school students across eight schools. The questionnaire was administered to complete year-groups of students (Years 5 & 6, and 10 & 11) who were either currently learning a musical instrument, had discontinued formal instruction sometime in the past, or had never learned an instrument. In the second stage, group and individual interviews were held with individuals who had learned an instrument during childhood and/or youth (primary school students, tertiary students and adults in the community), and into young adulthood (tertiary students). The data collection methods for both stages is summarised in Table 2.3. The information letters and consent forms are located in Appendices D-I).

Table 2.3 Data collection methods in the study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant/age group</th>
<th>Stage 1 - Questionnaire</th>
<th>Stage 2 - Interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School students</td>
<td>✓ (n=376)</td>
<td>✓ (n=17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertiary students</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>✓ (n=17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>✓ (n=32)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The chapter sections to follow describe each stage of the study in turn, detailing the specific sample characteristics, the procedure of the data collection, the materials used to collect the information, and the analysis employed for each form of data.

**Stage 1 – The Quantitative Method**

Based on the conceptual model serving the thesis, the aim of the quantitative stage of the study was to explore and describe the individual, social and contextual dimensions of the music learning experience of students in an Australian context and to examine the relationships between these dimensions and continuing participation in formal instrumental music instruction. A descriptive-comparative analysis was used to analyse the data, which was collected through a questionnaire.

The main research question for this stage was:
What dimensions of the learning experience are associated with participation in music instrument learning for school-age students in an Australian context?

Elements requiring examination or further exploration were identified in the literature review and measures were developed or adapted from previous studies (the development of the measures is described in Chapters Three and Four). Elements of the individual dimension included affective beliefs or attitudes to music: Interest in Music, Beliefs in Music Ability, and Boredom Proneness. Also included were affective responses to practice: Practice Mastery, Sufficient Knowledge and Self-Efficacy. To identify and compare elements of the social dimension, students’ perceptions of the social support offered by parents, teachers and peers were examined by a group of measures: Music in Family Background, Social Perceptions, Peer Support, Family Support and Teacher Support.

The sub-questions specific to these variables were:

- Do continuers, discontinuers and non-learners differ in their family’s musical background and in their social perceptions?
- Do continuers, discontinuers and non-learners differ in their liking for music, their activity in music, and their beliefs about music learning?
- Do continuers, discontinuers and non-learners differ in their general satisfaction and boredom with school and personal life?
- Do continuers and discontinuers differ in their perceptions of self-efficacy?
- Do continuers and discontinuers differ in the extent of emotional reactivity to practice?
- Do continuers and discontinuers differ in their perceptions of social support from parents, teachers and peers?

The rationale for the examination of these specific elements is addressed in Chapters Three and Four.

**PARTICIPANTS IN THE QUESTIONNAIRE**

The first steps in the sampling strategy for this stage included obtaining a representative sample and selecting the appropriate sample size for the statistical analysis to be undertaken.

The target population consisted of young people who were participating or who had previously participated in formal musical instrument instruction, through either a school program or a non-school program such as a private instructor or studio. The most practical conduit by which to access young people for this research was through schools, and thus participants were sought through primary and secondary schools with a well-established music program. The schools themselves were not the focus of the investigation. Given that the change to secondary school (at Year 7 level) is unsettling (Eccles et al., 1993), and the national attrition rate given by the AMA (2001) estimated that approximately 30% of 12 year-olds have commenced and
discontinued learning, it was felt important to target the 11-12 age group (Years 5 and 6 in primary school). A similar attrition rate was given for 15 year olds, and for the same reason, 16-17 year old students (in Years 10 and 11) were targeted.

However, given it was not possible to sample the entire target population, the accessible population was deemed to be students in primary and secondary schools with a well-established music program in a regional area of eastern New South Wales, Australia. In consultation with the region’s DET Arts Coordinator, the number of public and independent schools (not including Catholic schools) with a well-established music program in this region was estimated to be approximately 40. To gain a representative sample of students, 3 local government areas covering the main population base were used as a basis from which to select a random sample of schools from a list drawn up of those schools with a well-established music program in these areas. Fourteen schools were selected to provide a pool of school students.

Consideration of the number of students to be recruited was again based on the national estimated attrition rate given by the AMA (2001) and the proportions detailed in the British sample (O’Neill, 2001). Following this information, it was estimated that at least one third to a half of a sample of school-age students would have commenced and discontinued learning. Recommendations for sample size in survey research suggest that there should be at least 100 participants in each of the main categories (Mertens, 2005). It was estimated then that at least 300 students should be sampled to obtain representativeness regarding participation in musical instrument learning (learning, stopped learning, never learned).

Following approval by the Ethics committees of both the University and the DET, an Information letter was sent to School Principals seeking permission to conduct the research in their school. It is required by NSW law that research involving school students is overseen by the Principal of individual schools, the school thus acting as a conduit to students. Permission must be sought first from the Principal, from any teachers assisting in the administration, from the students’ parents as well as the students themselves.

Twelve of the fourteen selected schools initially accepted the invitation to participate in the research: seven primary, three secondary and two composite (combined primary and secondary) schools. Two of the seven primary schools accepted yet were unable to schedule time. Of the three secondary schools, two agreed yet were unable to schedule the administration of the questionnaire. One of the two composite schools had similar scheduling problems and data was collected only in its primary department. In sum, five primary schools, one secondary school and two independent (composite) schools eventually participated. The rate of consent return per school varied from 23% to 81% and this issue is discussed in the Limitations section of the final chapter. A summary of consent can be found in Appendix J.
MEASURES

The data collection tool in this stage was a 100-item questionnaire distributed to the school students. Following the purposes of the research, data collected with the questionnaire related to:

- Demographics (general & music enrolment information)
- Aspects of the individual dimension of musical instrument learning
- Aspects of the social dimension of musical instrument learning

The variables or measures making up the questionnaire are shown in Table 2.4. The measures used in the questionnaire were a combination of developed and existing instruments, and are fully described in Chapters Three and Four.

Table 2.4 Measures used in the questionnaire to assess each dimension

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Specific measures in the questionnaire</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General demographics &amp; student music enrolment information</td>
<td>Age, gender, participation in learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Instrument played &amp; own choice of instrument</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Age at commencement of learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Length of formal learning period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency of practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Duration of practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual dimension</td>
<td>Affect for Music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interest in music (music listening, music preference, member of a group)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Beliefs in Music Ability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boredom Proneness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-Efficacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Practice Mastery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sufficient Knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social dimension</td>
<td>Family Musical Background</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social Perceptions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Family Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher Support</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The questionnaire also contained four open-ended questions where students were invited to express their thoughts regarding key aspects of learning a musical instrument, including reasons or beliefs about participation in formal instruction and beliefs about boredom or disinterest. Although these text-based questions are situated in the quantitative stage of the study, they acted as a bridge between the two methods, and constituted the first attempt at garnering individual opinion about learning. The material was intended to both triangulate, or support and illustrate, the results of the variable analyses, and further, to help tease out interesting or significant aspects or issues that should be pursued in further depth in the second stage of the study. A copy of the questionnaire is located in Appendix K.
**PROCEDURE**

Following the Principals’ agreement, Information Letters and Consent forms were given to class teachers to disseminate to students. Some schools invited the researcher to talk to students about the research. Following parent and child written consent, either the researcher or class teachers administered the questionnaire to students at seven schools during school hours, while one school completed the questionnaires at home.

The final questionnaire sample consisted of primary and secondary students from eight schools (n=376). Half the students were in Years 5 or 6, and half in Years 10 or 11. The gender of the sample was evenly balanced, and the distribution of students between the three groups of non-learners, discontinuers and continuers was roughly equal (see Table 2.5).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Count (N=376)</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learner-status</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuer</td>
<td>142</td>
<td></td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discontinuer</td>
<td>115</td>
<td></td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never learned</td>
<td>119</td>
<td></td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>376</td>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>169</td>
<td></td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>183</td>
<td></td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>352</td>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>194</td>
<td></td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>182</td>
<td></td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>376</td>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ANALYSIS OF THE QUANTITATIVE DATA**

The items in the questionnaire were representations of two types of variables; discrete or nominal variables, including both dependent and independent variables, and continuous (interval) variables, all dependent variables. Three independent variables represented characteristics of the students:

- Learner-status:
  - Continuer (continuing formal lessons at the time of the study),
  - Discontinuer (discontinued formal lessons by the time of the study) and
  - Non-learner (had never learned an instrument).
- Gender: male, female
- Year-group: primary, secondary
The independent variable of key interest in this stage of the study was the ‘learner-status’ variable, as this identified the discontinuers, the continuers, and those who had never learned an instrument. Description and comparison of these subgroups were the principal aims of the analysis.

Analysis of the questionnaire took place at three levels:

- Descriptive analysis: frequencies, percentages, distributions, average mean scores and standard deviations; crosstabs and correlations among categorical variables (Pearson chi-square)
- Explanatory analysis & data reduction: development of the scales used in the study through factor analysis and scale reliability tests
- Inferential analysis: comparison of dependent variable means by independent variable subgroups (t-tests), analysis of variance (ANOVA), Scheffe post-hoc tests, and Cohen’s effect sizes.

All analysis was conducted using the statistics package SPSS (10). Data entry was checked for errors by checking a small sample of the questionnaire coding entries. Frequency distributions were also obtained for every item to check for errors in data entry. Response-set occurred in approximately nine cases, and these cases were deleted from the sample (n=376 represents valid cases).

Analysis of the open-ended items
The responses to the open-ended items were considered as simple qualitative data and were examined for content, and compared for similarities, differences and range. The text responses were entered into QSR N6 software for qualitative data analysis. This program codes text by ‘text units’ and can present results in quantified form. In this analysis, each individual’s entire response to one question represented one text unit. The responses were coded inductively, that is, codes were formed from the keywords used by respondents, and these words and the concepts they referred to created a set of codes reflecting the varied experiences of the students. Some statements were coded with more than one coding category.

Validity
Three standards commonly used to judge the quality of a survey are reliability, validity and objectivity. Reliability concerns the consistency or stability of the research instrument (Mertens, 2005); that is, would it give the same results if repeated with the same sample later? As the survey represents a one-time ‘snapshot’ of a cross-section of participants, reliability of the data collection instrument was established by determining the internal consistency of the measures by Cronbach’s coefficient alpha. This measures the degree of agreement or correlation between items of the given scale and is indicated where relevant.
Validity concerns whether the instrument has measured what it was intended to measure (Lewin, 2006), free of bias from the way it is administered and in its contents (Mertens, 2005). The items were constructed using concrete and simple language suitable for the youngest participants, and laid out in a visually clear format. The constructs measured had strong theoretical and empirical bases and clear operational definitions, which are presented in Chapters Three and Four.

Objectivity in post-positivist research concerns the amount of judgement a researcher brings to bear on the data; the less personal judgement required, the more objective the instrument (Mertens, 2005). In the current study, the quantitative data was collected by closed-item formats such as Likert scale responses and yes-no options. There was no subjective judgement required by the researcher.

A different set of criteria were required for the qualitative stage and the following section outlines the design of the qualitative method.

**STAGE 2 - THE QUALITATIVE METHOD**

The purposes of the second stage of the research project were to describe the phenomenon of the learning experience for those who participated for different lengths of time, to capture variation in experience of learning, and to learn how this experience manifested. This stage of the study was tied to the constructivist-interpretive paradigm, where knowledge and reality are considered mental, social constructions that guide behaviour and thought as people make sense of their experiences (Blumer, 1969; Willig, 2001). The researcher was interested in participants’ subjective experiences, meanings and understandings of music learning. The research question for this stage was:

*In the context of instrumental music education during childhood and youth, what is the nature of the subjective experience of learning for individuals?*

The data in this stage of the study were collected through group and individual interviews with individuals who had learned a musical instrument during childhood, youth or young adulthood. The two interview formats served separate functions. The function of the group interviews was as a pilot study, while the function of the individual interviews was to bring into the study individual perspectives and stories of learning. Both types of interviews invited participants to ‘look back’ on their learning in childhood and youth.
**RESEARCH WITH CHILDREN**

As indicated above, a quarter of the participants (17) in this stage of the study were primary school-age children (aged 10-12 years). Children’s ability to participate meaningfully in research interviews is influenced by several factors. These include their developmental capabilities and the perceived balance of power between the adult researcher and the child participant (Mauthner, 1997). Children best understand straightforward, non-threatening questions, delivered in an empathetic and age-appropriate manner. These factors are discussed below.

An interview demands from a child the ability to understand the question, to gather the memories and feelings together, and to articulate this in a coherent manner. Success in these tasks depends on the child’s cognitive and social reasoning development (Morison, Moir & Kwanssa, 2000). This level of development and children’s articulacy and coherence was accommodated by developing interview questions that were concrete and in simple language (Morison et al., 2000) and that often asked for examples of behaviour or events (Mauthner, 1997). Affirmations or probing for elaborations were used to encourage children to describe more fully their experience.

Research with children also needs to take account of the traditional power relationships that exist between the young and the old, and between a school student and an adult in the school environment (Mauthner, 1997). These familiar relationships can influence the data collection process in several ways. The student may respond more closely to social norms than to the substance of the question. That is, they may respond with what they think is the correct answer - as they think an unfamiliar adult would like to hear, or as they feel would protect their self-esteem (Matthews, Limb & Taylor, 1998). Following Morison et al.’s (2000) guidelines, the group and individual interviews were held in familiar settings – in either the children’s homes or their school classroom. The researcher sat variously beside the child or on the floor with them, and gave them an opportunity to look at the recording equipment. The research process was explained in simple terms, and it was made clear that the researcher was interested in their opinions and experiences. It was also made clear that they could ask the researcher to explain or repeat the question, and they were free to not answer the question. The children were encouraged to speak freely, and the researcher endeavoured to respond with non-judgemental language. The researcher herself has had many years of experience in face-to-face music teaching and felt confident in keeping the exchange child-centred (Mackworth-Young, 1990).
**RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS**

The purpose of the research instruments in this stage of the study was to probe the subjective experience of learning grounded in the actual social contexts of learning (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). Focus group and individual interviews were used in this study.

**Focus Groups**

The focus group interviews were used as a pilot study to explore how young people perceived their learning experiences. Children are familiar with group and peer settings for discussions, enjoy these interactions (Corsaro, 1997) and are likely to feel more relaxed with group discussion than direct questioning (M. Hill, 1997). Understanding children’s responses to the topic and to the research context contributed to a general preliminary understanding of the child’s perspective, language and depth of feeling about the topic (Vaughn, Schumm & Sinagub, 1996). The transcript of one group interview is located in Appendix O; through this transcript the challenge in prompting the young people to articulate what they feel, like, expect and do is apparent. This understanding and experience gained in questioning the children enabled a refinement of the proposed individual interview questions, a strategy suggested by Mates and Allison (1992). The process also introduced the children to the research project and the researcher, and most subsequently volunteered an individual interview.

Litosseliti (2003) recommends that the moderator’s role in the focus group is to keep the discussion on topic and alive; this was accomplished by the researcher structuring the interview questions with early ice-breaking questions, followed by the key questions, finishing with ending questions that allowed for reflection or summary. Children were encouraged to discuss their behaviours, actions, feelings or knowledge about music learning and playing and the researcher used probes and re-orientation to keep the conversation moving among participants and through variation of discussion (Vaughn et al., 1996).

Introductory questions concerned playing and learning a musical instrument, what it might involve, whether it was fun. A second group of questions related to student understandings of practice, whilst a final set sought their ideas about student discontinuation. This allowed discussion to be opened up to stories of individuals’ experiences. A copy of the focus group interview guide is located in Appendix M.

**Individual Interviews**

Qualitative, semi-structured individual interviews were selected as the primary research tool in this stage because they offered an opportunity for both researcher and participant to flexibly discuss an important and complex period of the participant’s life. Although semi-structured to ensure that a similar focus was explored with all participants, there is also flexibility to follow
new directions when they arise (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). This exploration of the participant’s lifeworld takes in descriptions of specific events, activities or processes as well as the meanings that these activities generate (Kvale, 1996). The qualitative interview therefore could accommodate the “nuanced descriptions” (Kvale, 1996, p. 32) that would arise from the “various ways of seeing” (Matthews et al., 1998, p. 314) that characterise children’s and others’ perspectives of the world.

In a social constructivist view, ways of seeing also characterise the researcher, who may influence the interview process itself (Warren, 2002). The knowledge created through the research process is a socially constructed result of the conversation between participant and researcher. The implications of the researcher’s perspective in this study are discussed in a later section of the chapter.

The individual interview guides were constructed so as to elicit stories and accounts of learning in a semi-structured manner, focusing on the one issue of music learning as in a topical life history (Minichiello, 1995). The questions were designed to encourage participants to describe the experiences they had in the practice room, with teachers and in ensembles, the questions being informed by preliminary analyses of the open-ended questionnaire items and the focus group data. The questioning format followed suggestions by Charmaz (2002) in that questions were formulated as initial open-ended enquiry, asking about the story of learning and then discontinuing if applicable. Such questions were, “Can you tell me about when you used to learn your instrument?” Intermediate questions then centred on feelings, thoughts and descriptions of activities such as practice, performance and lessons, for example, “Can you tell me about your lessons, what sort of things you did, how did you feel about them?” Ending questions opened out the topic for broader reflection: “Are you more or less interested in music now?”, and “How do you feel about having discontinued your instrument now?” Where the interviews were with tertiary students, the questions about withdrawal were replaced by queries about ongoing learning, “What about music has kept you interested through the years?” and “What impact has learning a musical instrument had on your life?” The interview protocols for children, adults and tertiary students can be found in Appendices L and M.

**Participants in the Interviews**

Participants (n=66) in this stage of the study were purposefully selected to facilitate an in-depth study (Schwandt, 1998) of the music learning experience and to give a range of perspectives on learning a musical instrument during childhood and youth. A further intention was to obtain these perspectives at varied distances from the event itself, the temporal triangulation suggested earlier. The perspectives were offered by primary school students (n=17) who had commenced
and discontinued learning an instrument at some time prior to the research, young and mature adults (n=32) who had learned an instrument during their school years (including two who had completed a tertiary degree in music), and young adults (n=17) who were enrolled in a tertiary music performance program. The differences in temporal perspective that the participants brought to the second stage of the study are set out in Table 2.6.

Table 2.6  Stage 2 participants' temporal perspectives on learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Temporal Retrospective</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Primary students (n=17, age 11-12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adults in the community (n=32, age 19-75)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tertiary students (n=17, age 18-25)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looking back on childhood</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>learning</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looking back on youth learning</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looking back on young adult learning</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a: the majority of adults & tertiary students learned an instrument in primary school
b: one tertiary student commenced learning after leaving secondary school
c: two adults in the community also learned in a tertiary setting

As shown in Table 2.6, the accounts of learning in the three periods of childhood, youth and young adulthood were given by individuals belonging to one of three sets of participants. Children in primary school who had recently discontinued their music lessons, adults in the community who had learned an instrument only during their childhood (i.e. primary school years), along with the majority of tertiary students, discussed childhood learning. Adults in the community who had also learned an instrument in their youth and the majority of tertiary students discussed learning during youth. Tertiary students and two adults who had completed a tertiary music performance degree discussed learning in young adulthood.

The array of ages incorporated a range of experience and periods of involvement, and it was anticipated that each set of participants would introduce a different form of reflection or perspective on the formative learning period in childhood and youth. The children were viewed as knowledgeable informants concerning learning from the child’s perspective (Morrow & Richards, 1996), while the older participants’ descriptions of childhood and adolescent learning were filtered through reflection and interpretation of their life experiences. In looking back on musical learning in childhood and/or youth, all were considered as knowledgeable informants.

A further strategy in the sampling design of Stage 2 was the criteria of ‘having ceased formal learning’ applied to the selection procedure of the school-age participants. This was in order to discuss childhood learning with young people who had recently lost interest in learning an instrument, for the literature reviewed in Chapter One had pointed to different learning
experiences for those still enrolled compared to those who had discontinued. Hallam (1998) and others have remarked on the complex and somewhat impenetrable nature of attrition; the desire in the current study was to explore a range of factors and processes that might come into play. Such processes might not be evident among a more homogenous group of motivated continuers. For example, one persuasive factor requiring unravelling was the experience of boredom. What other individual or social factors might be involved for those who withdraw from learning before others?

Accordingly, the interviews with young people were to be completed by primary and secondary school students who had recently discontinued learning. Twenty primary school children (12 girls and 8 boys) participated in a total of three pilot focus groups. The groups were convened as a homogenous combination of participants (Vaughn et al., 1996); all had recently ceased formal instruction of an instrument, and all were within 2 years age of each other. Gender was mixed.

Seventeen primary students participated in individual interviews, 15 of whom had also participated in the earlier group interviews. However, few secondary students volunteered for an individual interview and therefore none were undertaken. Two variations to the data collection strategy were enacted without success. The lack of consent may have been a result of sensitivity to the issue of discontinuing, perhaps seen as a stigma, although as discussed below (in the ‘Special Considerations’ section), steps were taken at each point of contact with students to demonstrate an overall unbiased and even-handed approach. This was a disappointing outcome, and the limitations section of the final chapter discusses the implications of this sampling.

A further characteristic of the sample was the variation in reflexivity and articulacy afforded by the age range, as earlier discussed. Older adolescents and young adults tend to think in more systematic, abstract ways compared to earlier age periods (Biggs, 1992). Further, Kauppinen (1988) noted that older adults review and explore, over time, their past experiences and unresolved conflicts. They can then often understand and reconcile the tensions and conflicting values of their earlier years. Ross (1991) suggests that adults’ retrospective accounts will more likely be an “explanatory interpretation” (p. 200) than a memory that has experiential truth. The interviewee acts like an editor of his own account over time; in the passing of time, the event loses the experience of the moment, but gains explanatory power. Under research conditions that give a participant a loose-time frame in discussion, and multiple prompts or cues, the memory of these experiences is likely to be durable and roughly accurate (Chawla, 1998).
In sum, the strategy of talking to individuals from a range of age-groups and experience facilitated discussions that varied in their emphases, profundity and meaning. The discussions gave insight from those who were ‘experience-near’ and from those who were ‘experience-far’. Descriptions of the early and later years of learning were sought to understand how learning experiences might vary. A valenced range of experiences among the individual perspectives was a distinctive feature of the sample. The sampling strategies employed to shed light on musical learning in childhood and youth are shown in Figure 2.2.

**PROCEDURE**

Twenty primary school children who had recently discontinued their music studies volunteered to participate in a group interview (consent to participate in the interviews was gained at the time of their consent to complete the questionnaire). One group interview was convened in each of three schools during the lunch-hour, group size varied from 3 to 9 (12 girls, 8 boys). The
groups lasted between 30 and 40 minutes and were audio taped. The groups were led by the researcher.

Individual interviews were conducted with primary school students, tertiary students and adults in the community. The interviews with the primary school students were held in the student’s school or home (a parent was present in some interviews); these took on average 20 minutes and were audio taped. Seventeen primary students participated in the individual interviews, 11 girls and 6 boys. Almost half had learned a wind instrument, 5 had learned keyboard, 3 guitar and 1 learned a string instrument. The children had learned their instrument for periods ranging from 6 months to 4 years.

Adults in the community who volunteered to participate were invited to do so through posters and leaflets distributed in the public domain, such as the University, TAFE colleges, churches, and adult social clubs. Interested individuals contacted the researcher by telephone, email or mail to indicate their desire to participate. An Information Letter was then posted out. Thirty-two adults within the community volunteered to participate and a telephone interview with each took place within the week of their call. The duration of the interviews ranged from 20 to 45 minutes and these were audio taped.

The individuals who volunteered to participate (males 40%) were residents of the region in which the study is based, although a portion of respondents grew up in other areas of the state, mainly Sydney and nearby rural areas. The age of the 32 participants ranged from 18 to approximately 75, and piano was the principal study for 60% of participants (13% strings, 9% wind and brass, 1 guitar). Participants had learned a musical instrument for periods ranging from 6 months to 12 years.

Tertiary students were invited to participate in the study through Information Letters after permission to conduct the research had been gained from the Head of School in their University, and information given to their instrumental teachers about the research. Seventeen students volunteered and the interviews took place at the University; these varied from 30-60 minutes in length and were audio taped. Among tertiary student participants (n=17), 6 were female (35%), the age range was 19-25 years, and students had commenced learning at ages ranging from 6 to 19 years. Principal study instruments varied through wind (26%), strings (26%), piano (26%), guitar (2 students), brass (2 students) and one percussionist.

The coding of the interviews was undertaken in several steps and these are now discussed. The coding of the pilot focus group interviews was undertaken in the same manner as the open-ended items of the questionnaire, although the structure is not reviewed here, nor reported in the general findings of the qualitative method as the findings from the pilot interviews were not substantially different to the individual interviews.
ANALYSIS OF THE QUALITATIVE DATA

The texts of all interviews were prepared by an initial verbatim transcription of the interview. The group interview guide and an example of a group interview transcript are located in Appendices N and O. The individual interviews with the children were less fluid than interviews with tertiary students and adults, and this was addressed by editing the transcripts so as to abridge interpolations or hesitancies. Therefore, after each young person’s interview was read a number of times, prompts by the interviewer were removed from the text to create a coherent narrative. The context of the comments was retained (see Appendices P and Q for an original verbatim transcription and abridged interview). This outlining of the raw data (Boyatzis, 1998) illuminated its essential and meaningful aspects. Transcripts of adult and tertiary interviews are located in Appendices R and S.

The substantial amount of data generated from the interviews made it essential to use a qualitative data analysis software program rather than to manually code. Following transcription and formatting, the data were entered into NVivo 2 (QSR). NVivo 2 was used because it allows for flat and hierarchical coding, including descriptive coding in the form of categorical case data. While the software can only reflect the quality of the researcher’s thinking, the tools it offers for searching and displaying data facilitate a thorough and systematic analysis of all data records in the project. Text in the project can be coded at any number of levels, and the layers of coding can be searched in simple and cross-sectional ways in search of meaning (Patton, 2002).

Analysis of textual data can be a complex, confusing and challenging process; it is often referred to as “messy” (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 224) and criticised for its lack of transparency or “logic trail” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 2). The use of software that aids the recording of analytic decisions and development of results contributes to the transparency called for by Miles and Huberman (1994), and it is “a priority for those who wish to advance analysis methodology” (p. 310).

The analysing of the qualitative data (individual interviews) was an inductive process following the constant comparative method of coding (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). Although this is a method of coding that is historically linked with grounded theory as described by Strauss and Corbin (1998), in this study it is used as an “interpretive-descriptive” method (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994, p. 123). An inductive interpretative-descriptive account is not devoid of theory, frameworks or concept, nor a ‘blank-slate’ approach; rather, as Charmaz (2002) describes it, the analysis takes into account “disciplinary assumptions and theoretical perspectives” (p. 683).

The method also drew on phenomenological approaches. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) (Smith, Jarman & Osborn, 1999) focuses on participants’ perspectives, seeking their interpretations and meanings of their experiences, and connects these through the ‘analytic-interpretive account’ to disciplinary or theoretical perspectives (Larkin, Watts &
IPA showed the researcher what aspects of lived experience the analysis should focus on, and encouraged the rotation between data and literature. Insights from phenomenography also guided the researcher to focus on variation in the structure and interpretations of the phenomena of learning (Brew, 2001; Marton, 1981).

The core feature of an interpretive-descriptive account is ‘thematic analysis’. This is a term used to describe a range of processes or steps leading to the generation of themes that represent patterns in the data. The steps or processes undertaken in a thematic analysis compared to a grounded theory process, for example, are not clearly articulated as a formulated method, and thus thematic analysis has been criticised as potentially shallow (Bazeley, 2009). The researcher therefore is required to set a clear plan of analytic steps. The coding steps undertaken here, using the recommendations of several scholars (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; Mason, 1996; Maykut & Morehouse, 1994), were formulated to first capture the data of interest into broad sweep or navigational categories, to then dimensionalise or refine those categories, and finally to search for connections, patterns or clusters of categories across the data to construct not only semantic but also latent or interpretive themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The logic that led to understanding the salience of the themes was based on both prevalence (how many counts of individual cases were spread throughout the categories and themes) (Braun & Clarke, 2006), as well the depth of expression of that theme, in other words, the dimensionality of the theme. The relevance of the theme to the research question was also a priority, although it is considered acceptable to adjust research questions in inductive inquiries (Mason, 2002). A final consideration was the contribution of the theme, through its links and hierarchies, to the cohesion or coherence of the overall findings and eventual conclusions.

The first step of coding consisted of indexing or reducing the data (Mason, 1996) to arrive at a systematic overview of their scope and range (Mason, 1996). The interview data was collected into broad sweep categories reflecting either topics, events, processes or sequence (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). These are summarised in Table 2.7 below. The question driving this coding step was, ‘What is this data about?’ The full coding list and descriptions of each code may be found in Appendix T.

The second step consisted of reading through each of the broad sweep categories created in the first step and identifying different dimensions or variations of these categories. For each category, the questions driving this step were, ‘What does this data tell me about the category?’, ‘Does it fit the rules for inclusion in an existing dimension or is it a new dimension?’ Each dimension was given a name and description, as suggested by Maykut and Morehouse (1994). This process usually created a hierarchy or family of related dimensions. (The term ‘dimension’
Table 2.7 Codes created through Step 1 of the qualitative analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Code</th>
<th>Content of Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Activity codes</td>
<td>Musical activities e.g. practice, lessons, ensembles etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship or social structure codes</td>
<td>People: family, peers, teachers, etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identity, core beliefs about self codes</td>
<td>Efficacy &amp; ability beliefs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-esteem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Personal attributes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude codes</td>
<td>Attitudes &amp; beliefs about learning and teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feelings (emotions, affect)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process codes</td>
<td>Motivation, Persistence, Discontinuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Learning outcomes &amp; impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Challenges in learning and teaching</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

is frequently used in qualitative analysis, and in this context refers to the breaking up of the text into subcategories.)

The third step of analysis involved looking for patterns and relationships among second level dimensions and making a higher level interpretation of these patterns as themes, reading beyond the data for meaning (Mason, 1996) by asking the question, ‘In the context of learning a musical instrument, what does this mean?’ Identifying patterns and associations between the processes, events and contexts of learning was one way of theorising about the phenomenon (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996).

As part of the interpretive-descriptive approach, emerging themes were also compared to existing literature in instrumental music education to investigate where they may merge, complement or diverge from existing theories or concepts.

This third step of analysis enabled the theoretical propositions that form the conclusions of the study to emerge. The themes of Step 3 and their links or origins to the codes in Step 2 are outlined in Table 2.8.

Table 2.8 Themes of the analysis (Step 3) aligned with Step 2 codes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme/concept name (Step 3)</th>
<th>Sources for themes: Coding from Step 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Affinity – the love for music learning (Chapter 5)</td>
<td>Motivation/ Internal intrinsic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Motivation/External</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Impact of learning/ all subcodes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attitudes &amp; Emotions/ All subcodes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social roles supporting learning</td>
<td>Motivation/ Social</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Chapter 5)</td>
<td>Learning/ Beliefs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Musical Activities/Ensemble</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Roles/ all subcodes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Musical Activities/ Practice/ Practice Strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self/ Personal attributes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Continued)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme/concept name (Step 3)</th>
<th>Sources for themes: Coding from Step 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The constructive learner</td>
<td>Learning/ Learning beliefs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The expedient learner</td>
<td>Learning/ Will to learn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The impetuous learner</td>
<td>Learning/ Purposeful learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Chapters 6 &amp; 7)</td>
<td>Learning/ Mindless learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Musical Activities/ Practice/ Practice Strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Musical Activities /Practice / Focus of practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Musical Self</td>
<td>Self/ Personal attributes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Chapter 8)</td>
<td>Motivation/ Internal intrinsic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self/ Efficacy and Ability beliefs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self/ Self esteem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having a go</td>
<td>Outcomes of learning/ Accomplishment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The pleasure of competence</td>
<td>Outcomes of learning/ Musical encounter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musical meaning and competence</td>
<td>Outcomes of learning/ Deficit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Chapter 8)</td>
<td>Outcomes of learning/ Sufficient/Personal Limit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Impact of learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Musical Activities/ Practice/ Practice Strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self/ Personal attributes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disaffection &amp; Persistence</td>
<td>Discontinuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Chapter 9)</td>
<td>Outcomes of learning/ Accomplishment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Outcomes of learning/ Musical encounter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Outcomes of learning/ Deficit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>People/ all subcodes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Persistence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attitudes &amp; Emotions/ All subcodes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self/ Personal attributes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self/ Efficacy and Ability beliefs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**VALIDITY IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH**

Recognition and acknowledgement of the conclusions of a qualitative study depend in large part on the reader finding ‘credibility’ in the research (Mertens, 2005). Credibility is a widely accepted term in qualitative research, first described by Lincoln and Guba (1989). Maxwell (1996), using the term ‘validity’ as a synonym for credibility, suggests that a practical and effective way of ensuring the validity of a qualitative study is to show how credibility of description, interpretation and theory may be threatened. Description, interpretation and theory are for Maxwell three principal elements of qualitative understanding or knowing. The following discussion on establishing the validity of the qualitative method in this study is based on Maxwell (1992, 1996).

Maxwell (1992) suggests that the researcher’s ability to reliably describe the data of the study depends upon the quality of the data collection process. Interviews should be faithfully transcribed and procedures in undertaking the data collection accurately described. In this study, all interviews were recorded and fully transcribed by the researcher and by a research assistant; the transcripts were systematically checked for accuracy (by re-listening to the recording), while the data collection procedures described above are an accurate description of the procedure.
Threats to the credibility of interpretation, Maxwell’s (1996) second element of qualitative understanding, are several. According to Maxwell, researcher bias may occur when implicit beliefs or values influence analysis and conclusions; in this study, researcher beliefs and values are acknowledged (below), and were discussed with peers throughout the project.

Truncation of participant contribution through inappropriate questioning may also threaten the variation, range or depth of conclusions drawn from the data. Use of the semi-structured interview format was intended to draw out participant perspectives and meanings as far as practicable in terms of time, participant concentration and availability. Maxwell (1992) and Wolcott (1990) both suggest that focusing rigorously on participant perspectives and drawing consistently and frequently on participants’ language will support the credibility of the study’s interpretations. Both recommendations have been implemented; the analysis is tightly focused on participant subjectivities, several theme names bear ‘in-vivo’ titles, and extensive quotes have been used in the reporting of findings.

Maxwell (1996) suggests that the third element of qualitative understanding, theoretical understanding, can be undermined by shallow or narrow thinking, where alternative explanations may not have been considered in drawing conclusions. In this study, a significant step of the analytic strategy consisted of comparison of emerging themes to already existing theories and concepts in the literature of the field.

Mertens (2005) describes two further dimensions of qualitative validity: dependability and confirmability. Strategies to achieve these outcomes include monitoring and documenting progress and change in the project, primarily to demonstrate a logical flow in methodological decisions, such as sampling strategies or category and thematic description. In this thesis, strategies used in sampling and collecting have been meticulously detailed, and the coding was documented through the codebook, described in the qualitative chapters and included in Appendix T.

The next section describes the final stage of analysis of the study, the integration of methods.

**STAGE 3 – INTERPRETIVE SYNTHESIS OF STAGE 1 AND STAGE 2**

The purpose of using quantitative and qualitative methods as complementary strategies in the mixed method design was to enhance and aggregate the findings of the two methods, in order to understand the *mental atmospheres* and subjective experiences of individual music learners. The question driving this stage was,

How might participants’ experiences of learning help to explain differences between those who continue and those who withdraw from learning?
The first stage laid the foundation for the second. The third stage of the project drew all the data together as layers in order to explore the characteristics of the learners and their overall ‘experience’ of learning an instrument as well as to construct an interpretive-descriptive account of the findings. The aim was to attempt to distinguish aspects of the experience that more specifically pinpointed differences in engagement with learning, and so ultimately to contribute to understanding decisions to continue or discontinue instrumental music learning.

**Validity in Mixed Methods**

To assess the validity or credibility of a mixed method design (as compared to qualitative or quantitative research methods), two criteria suggested by Eisenhart and K. Howe (1992) are helpful. One criterion describes the fit between research questions and their collection and analysis – that is, the collection and analysis methods should be matched to the research problem, rather than being driven by other factors such as convenience or cost. Applying mixed methods as complementary strategies was considered an appropriate choice for the research problem, as these methods could first identify dimensions of the learning experience and then subsequently explore, explain or interpret the dimensions and contexts of these experiences.

Eisenhart and K. Howe’s (1992) second criterion recommends the researcher be alert to assumptions, goals and prior knowledge. Many assumptions could be embedded in the longstanding and venerated traditions of music instruction and performance. These could act as subjective biases for the researcher with a background in classical music training, performance and teaching. Working on the premise that research is “a systematic, formal and rigorous and precise process” (Waltz & Bausell, as cited in Fawcett & Downs, 1992, p. 3), the researcher has had to reflect on her values, beliefs and perceptions, and through the research process itself bring to reflection and enquiry assumptions, prior knowledge or goals that emerged during the course of data collection and analysis.

**Discontinuation as a Sensitive Topic**

Discontinuation from learning an instrument may be considered by some to be a sensitive topic since it could touch on an area of life associated with letdown and regret. Hays and Minichiello (2005), for example, observed that reminiscing adults expressed a sense of failure and felt musically dissatisfied if they had not successfully learned to play the piano when younger.

Lee (1993) suggests that research on sensitive topics can be successfully carried out through paying attention to several points. Informed consent is vital to research that could be considered sensitive; accordingly, information letters were addressed to students and their parents, and consent forms contained an option for the child’s consent or refusal alongside that of the parent.
Adults from the community were recruited through advertising, which although depriving the researcher of control over participant demographics, indicates the freedom to participate that was available to members of the public.

Sensitive topics can be successfully negotiated in interviews when the topic is broached gradually, and this was planned for during construction of the interview guide. Indirect questions were asked as a story or tale might be asked for: ‘Can you tell me about…’, ‘Can you describe…?’ Lee (1993) also suggests asking the individual about the topic in different ways. This was achieved in this study through:

- The multiple-choice options on the questionnaire
- The opened-ended question on the questionnaire and interview - ‘What would have encouraged you to continue?’
- Asking for these stories in group and individual interviews
- Asking about behaviour (‘What led up to stopping?’) and about feelings (‘How did you feel about your progress?’)

**PRESENTATION OF THE DATA**

The qualitative analysis chapters include quotations from the individual interviews whose case identity numbers varied according to the participant group. Quotes from the open-ended items are identified in a similar manner. The following identity numbers were assigned:

- 01-227: primary students
- 1001-1163: secondary students
- 601-619: tertiary students
- 7001-7042: adults in the community

Throughout the thesis, the groups of participants are referred to by collective titles or initials indicating their participant group.

- Primary school continuers - PC
- Primary school discontinuers - PD
- Secondary school continuers - SC
- Secondary school discontinuers - SD
- Adults in the community - A
- Tertiary students - T

All interview participants were given pseudonyms to aid the flow of description and explanation for writer and reader. Quotes from text sources are referenced by the case identity number, and then paragraph number. If quotes are extracted from two paragraphs, they are included with an ampersand. Pseudonyms and group identifiers were also added to the citation (e.g. Bill, A,
The quotation is by Bill, an adult, case ID 7001, paragraphs 31 and 52. The break in text is represented by three points (...). All quotations are verbatim transcripts and thus may contain colloquial or ungrammatical phrases. Participant’s spoken emphasis in a quotation is marked in bold text. Emphasis by the researcher is marked in italics and noted [emphasis added].

Students who completed both stages of the study retained their assigned ID number. For instance, Timothy (pseudonym) retained ID 227 for both his questionnaire and his interview. Thus, any reference to ID 227 is a statement by Timothy from either his open-ended response or interview response.

Most quotations from the interviews are used only once in the presentation of evidence; on the few occasions where an excerpt is used a second time, it is to demonstrate another facet or meaning derived from that text.

**Conclusion**

This study was designed to explore the experience of learning a musical instrument, focusing on the individual perspective, in order to understand variations in how individuals experience their music learning, and how these varied meanings and experiences influence intent to learn an instrument. A mixed methods design with quantitative and qualitative methods as complementary strategies was used in order to explore overlapping but different facets of the phenomenon of music learning and its relationship with continuing participation. The analysis draws on the strengths of the different methods and the qualitative analysis approach couples the interpretive-descriptive approach with elements of interpretative phenomenology and phenomenography.

The study design’s focus on musical learning in the childhood and youth life-periods required sampling for a range of experiences determined by age, cognitive development, proximity to the event as well as length of engagement in learning. The cross-generational ‘triangulation’ is a strength of the design, for each generation of participants adds layers of perspectives and meaning. The following two chapters now present the first stage of the study.
PART II
THE QUANTITATIVE METHOD
Chapter 3. The Musical Backgrounds and Beliefs of Young People

Introduction
There is a good chance that most music students have heard the instruction, ‘Not until you’ve done your practice’, or uttered the words ‘I do not want to study piano’ at least once in their music learning career. More pointedly, both phrases have been used by authors in the title of their publications\(^2\). So how must students feel about music practice, what do they do in the practice room to bring about such reflections, and why does this influence decisions to participate?

The review of the literature in Chapter One has shown that there are multiple significant factors associated with continuing and discontinuing formal instruction of an instrument. An important, albeit under-studied aspect of music learning is the subjective or affective experience of learning. It has been demonstrated in other settings that feelings generated by the learning process are likely to have an important impact on the quality of thinking (Cantwell, 2004; Maehr, Pintrich & Linnenbrink, 2002) as well as on amount and type of practice and achievement levels (Brokaw, 1982; Frakes, 1984; Hallam, 1998; Klinedinst, 1991; O’Neill, 1997, 1999). In this music learning context, it will be important to examine the subjective or affective aspect of music learning experiences and how these relate to continuing participation.

The aim of the quantitative stage of the study presented in this and the following chapter is to identify and explore a set of background and proximal factors in the individual and social dimensions that, based on previous research, are theorised to be associated with subjective experiences of learning an instrument and decisions about continuing participation in formal instruction. This first chapter of the pair focuses on salient background or distal factors that are thought to be related to ongoing participation. Background factors considered are students’ general feelings and beliefs about music, their family background and their overall satisfaction or boredom with life. The following chapter focuses on more immediate factors that may relate to continuing participation. The background factors are discussed below.

Affective constructs such as interest in and liking for music have generally been captured as attitudes to music class in the retention-attrition literature (Frakes, 1984; Klinedinst, 1991), and in the wider academic learning context as interest (Hidi, 1990; Mitchell, 1993; Sansone, Weir, Harpster & Morgan, 1992) or as subjective task value (Eccles et al., 1993; Wigfield et al., 1997). As such, these affective factors are proposed to influence or motivate attitudes and behaviour.

\(^2\) Johnston, 1990 & Costa-Giomi, 2004
towards the object (Cantwell, 2004), in this instance, music and the learning of music. Given the centrality of the subjective domain to the thesis, these affective factors assume a significant potential in relation to students’ experiences of learning and their continuation with instruction.

A key emotional state to investigate is interest. Interest in music is conceptualised in this study, following Dewey (as cited in Schiefele, 1991), as having an energising or motivating effect, as being based on real-time music activities and involvement, and as having high personal meaning and relevance. In music, interest is likely to arise from either an intrinsic or self-directed desire (Sloboda, 2005) or from parents (Dai & Schader, 2001). Interest has been shown to trigger and direct attention and to facilitate exploratory behaviour (Reeve, 1989). From this definition, having an interest in music would mean that music has personal meaning or purpose for an individual; that the individual would most probably be involved in an activity that involved music; and that these interests and activities would be perceived as making a difference to the individual’s lifeworld. For instance, belonging to an ensemble would indicate that the student was interested in music.

A further indicator of interest in music may also lie in the uses that students make of music. Music may serve a variety of interior purposes, either as mood management or expression of self (Hargreaves & North, 1999; Hargreaves, North & Tarrant, 2000) or as communication with others through a musical discourse (R. Middleton, 1990). As such, these purposes for music listening would have high personal meaning and involve concrete musical activities.

Individuals vary widely in their music listening preferences (Olsson, 1997); adolescents prefer music that reflects their life issues (Schwartz & Fouts, 2003), and most often this music is in a contemporary pop style (North et al., 2000). Ginocchio (2008) found that upper primary children also have preference for popular styles of music such as punk rock, pop rock and rap. Thus while children and youth have, in general, a preference for popular styles, it is unlikely that this is the repertoire they would study in band or solo instrumental curriculum. It is possible that differences between personal preference and the repertoire typical of Australian curriculum offered through music teachers, examination boards or band programs would strip the learning activity of personal meaning. On this account, it was felt important to consider music preference as an adjunct to interest in music.

In contrast to interest, boredom was cited by many students in several studies as a reason for non-continuance (e.g. AMA, 2001; Govel, 2004; Sloboda, 2005), but as argued in Chapter One, the occurrence of boredom has been largely accepted as a correlate of attrition, and to date, not examined for its antecedents.

There are several explanations for boredom in the psychological literature. Boredom can arise from objective attributes of tasks or situations such as lack of novelty and contrast and an
absence of complexity; here the learner feels cognitively switched off (Damrad-Frye & Laird, 1989), and experiences periods of monotony (Perkins & A. Hill, 1985). Boredom might also be experienced as a result of variations in individuals’ disposition (Farmer & Sundberg, 1986; Perkins & A. Hill, 1985), their need for cognition (Cacioppo & Petty, 1982; Watt & Blanchard, 1994), and the complexity of their prior knowledge base (Fisher, 1993; Garner, 1990). Of significance to this study, feelings of low stimulation are associated with negative affect (Berlyne, 1960), anger, anxiety and hostility (Vodanovich, 2003) as well as dissatisfaction (Mikulas & Vodanovich, 1993). Consequences of boredom include errors (O’Hanlon, 1981), stress (Fisher, 1993; Parasuraman & Purohit, 2000), and early school leaving (Robinson, 1975). Consequently, a measure of dispositional boredom was utilised in this study to determine the association with participation, if any, of an overall disinterest in life.

A further important influence on individuals’ behaviour is the nature of their beliefs about themselves (Cantwell, 2004); of interest in this study are students’ beliefs about their musical ability. In the literature, subjective views of self have been conceptualised as self-theories, which capture for an individual their views of their own personal attributes such as intelligence, moral character or personality (Dweck, 1999). Associated with these beliefs (in academic learning contexts) are a range of behavioural patterns that include achievement goal choice (such as approach or avoidance goals), and affective reactions to perceived success and failure. Where a personal attribute is seen as fixed and unchangeable, a maladaptive learning behaviour pattern generally ensues, where individuals tend to engage in negative self-talk (Blackwell, Trzesniewski & Dweck, 2007), choose performance goals, make attributions for failure to lack of ability or intelligence (Molden & Dweck, 2000) and experience diminished outcomes. Where an individual sees such self-attributes as amenable to change or improvement, they are more likely to adopt an adaptive pattern of behaviour (Midgley et al., 2000). Importantly, mastery goals are part of this adaptive pattern, where the individual intends to learn and master a challenge or develop competence. The behaviour patterns that flow from adoption of mastery goals include persistence and optimism in the face of challenge (Dweck & Leggett, 1988), appropriate learning strategies and self-regulation (Ames & Archer, 1988; Grant & Dweck, 2003), attribution for failure and success to effort and strategies (Hong et al., 1999), and intrinsic enjoyment (Elliot & Church, 1997).

Consistent with Dweck’s (1999) conception of ability as a self-theory, musical ability is a self-theory, whether through genetic inheritance (Gagné, 1999) or through early exposure and high levels of practice (Moore et al., 2003; Sloboda & M. Howe, 1991). It is however, popularly regarded as a ‘capacity’; anecdotes such as ‘not a musical bone in my body’ or ‘tone deaf’ are often recited by individuals as descriptions or justifications of their musical inadequacy. To the researcher’s knowledge, musical ability as a self-attribute in school-age students has been
investigated only by O’Neill (as cited in O’Neill, 2002), where she found that students who had never learned an instrument were more likely to hold fixed beliefs about musical ability than those who were learning an instrument. Following this line of research, the “theory-goal-behaviour formulation” of personal theories (Dweck & Leggett, 1988, p. 264) provides an opportunity to understand the deep-seated, higher-order beliefs that underlie the music learning attitudes and actions of the students participating in the study.

In the social and contextual dimensions, several elements were targeted because they have been shown to have an influence on children’s decision to continue. In the first place, the home environment is an important element in children’s musical development (Chadwick, 2001; Lehmann et al., 2007) and the mechanism for this is proposed to be through the activities and values of parents (Brokaw, 1982; Bushong, 2005; Jacobs & Bleeker, 2004; R. Ryan, Stiller & Lynch, 1994; Sloboda & M. Howe, 1991). In the second place, community perceptions of music players and instrument types are still strongly partitioned (Dibben, 2002; Eccles et al, 2003; Million, Perreault & Cramer, 2002), and among other things, can influence instrument choice (Cannava, 1994; Conway, 2000; O’Neill & Boulton, 1996). Importantly though, it is the student’s perception of these environmental characteristics that are felt to make a difference to how students feel about music and learning (Ciabattari, 2004; Katzenmoyer, 2003; Yoon, 1997). To this end, measures were adapted or developed to account for these influences in this group of school students.

**Aim of Stage 1**

Because the subjective journey of musical learning is little investigated, the principal research question for the quantitative stage of the study aimed to explore and describe elements of the social and individual dimensions of the learning experience of students in the Australian context. This stage also explores the extent to which the targeted elements exist for this particular group of learners, and whether there are fundamental differences between continuers, discontinuers and non-learners. The analysis in this chapter examines several background factors that may provide distal influences on continuance, discontinuance and non-participation in music instruction. Specifically, the research sub-questions addressed in this stage of the study include:

- Do continuers, discontinuers and non-learners differ in their liking for music, their activity in music, and their beliefs about music learning?
- Do continuers, discontinuers and non-learners differ in their family’s musical background and in their social perceptions?
- Do continuers, discontinuers and non-learners differ in their general satisfaction and boredom with school and personal life?
**METHOD**

**Participants’ Characteristics**

The study took place in a large regional city of Australia (pop. ~500,000). The city and its region have a long industrial history and people in the area have relatively low levels of access to economic resources (on the 6th decile, ABS, 2006). In comparison, the capital city for the state ranks in the highest decile, and another regional city with a comparable industrial base although smaller population ranks in the 8th decile.

Students participating in the study were 385 students from 8 participating schools in the region (see Chapter Two for a description of the participating schools). Approximately equal numbers of boys and girls, as well as primary and secondary students responded (the data from 9 students were deleted from the analysis due to incompletion or acquiescence response set) (see Table 3.1). Students were aged between 11-12 years (primary) and 15-17 years (secondary). The table also shows that the sample was fairly evenly split in thirds by the three subgroups of continuers, discontinuers and those who had never learned.

| Table 3.1 General characteristics of student subgroups |
|---------------------------------|----------|--------|--------|--------|
| **Learner-status** | **Gender** | **Primary** | **Secondary** | **Total** |
| **Count** | Continuer | Male | 46 | 13 | 136 |
| **Percent** | 78% | 22% |
| **Count** | Female | 62 | 15 |
| **Percent** | 81% | 19% |
| **Total** | 108 | 28 |
| **Missing** | 5 |
| **Count** | Discontinuer | Male | 30 | 21 |
| **Percent** | 59% | 41% |
| **Count** | Female | 26 | 31 |
| **Percent** | 46% | 54% |
| **Total** | 56 | 52 |
| **Missing** | 7 |
| **Count** | Non-learner | Male | 13 | 46 |
| **Percent** | 78% | 22% |
| **Count** | Female | 15 | 34 |
| **Percent** | 31% | 69% |
| **Total** | 28 | 80 |
| **Missing** | 7 |
| **Grand total** | 376 |

When mixed subgroups of the three independent variables were examined using log linear analysis for nominal variables, there were no significant differences between the expected and observed distribution of the (3) learner groups x (2) gender x (2) year groups, $\chi^2 = 6.93(6)$, $p = .33$. 

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**SCORING AND ANALYSIS**

Responses to the attitude and frequency items in the questionnaire were based on Likert scales. The range of responses was from one to four, and depending on the questions, the responses were, for degree of feeling, agree, mostly agree, mostly disagree, and disagree, and for frequency, almost never, sometimes, often and almost always. L. Anderson & Bourke (2000) suggest this 4-point scale is preferable for younger students; it contains a compact range of possible responses and does not have extreme positions, which tend to be eschewed by younger respondents. Certain items of the questionnaire were reversed in meaning so as to offset possible ‘response set’ and these items were reversed scored during analysis.

The analysis was conducted in two stages. In the preliminary, exploratory stage, to investigate the possible semantic dimensions represented by the range of items in a scale (where applicable), items were subject to principal component factor analysis (Varimax rotation). Factors with an eigenvalue more than 1 were selected. Items were retained that loaded above .40 or .45. Items were then computed to form the scale (using the mean score on 75% of items in the scale); the item-to-item, and item-to-total correlations were scrutinised, and Cronbach’s alpha used to rate the reliability. The normality of the distributions in the scale variables was tested in two ways: by inspection of the histograms with normal-curve, and by the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilks tests (Field, 2005). Where these results were significantly non-normal the substantive interpretation of the non-normality is discussed in the results section.

The second stage of the analysis was to assess and compare the dependent variables among continuers, discontinuers and non-learners by t-tests and analysis of variance. Homogeneity of variance among the subgroups of the independent variables was checked by Levene’s test of equality of error variances at the same time as the ANOVA analysis was run. When this test for variance was significant, the variance ratio was calculated by dividing the variance of the group with the largest variance by the variance of the group with the least variance. When this ratio is less than two, it is safe to assume homogeneity of variance (Field, 2005).

The effect size is a standardised measure of the size of an observed effect. It is used to aid the interpretation of the substantive nature of significant differences between groups. In this study, Cohen’s $d$ was used to identify the effect sizes of the differences between groups when calculated on t-test values (Borenstein & Cohen, 1989). Interpretation of the effect size is:

- $d = .02$ – small effect
- $d = .05$ – medium effect
- $d = .08$ – large effect
Cramer’s V was used to test the effect size for chi-square statistics. Partial-eta squared was used for analysis of variance; this measures the effect of the group-differences plus associated error variance.

**MEASURES**

This section describes the measures that were developed or adapted for use in the study. The exploratory analyses of the instruments used for variables in the individual dimension are described, followed by those in the social dimension. (A copy of the questionnaire is located in Appendix K.)

**Interest in Music**

This set of measures was designed to gauge student interest in music, including feelings about music and activity in music. The conceptual definition was formulated as, “The feeling of being engaged, caught up, fascinated, or curious” (Izard, 1991, p. 100). The construct was operationalised through three separate measures of i) liking for music, ii) preferred musical genre (preference) and listening habits, and iii) involvement in music activity other than formal learning (defined below).

**Affect for music**

Asmus’ Motivating Factors in Music (1986a) scale was used to assess liking for music. The conceptual definition was, ‘Enjoyment and pleasure derived from music listening or playing’ and it was operationalised by students’ responses to statements of varied emotional responses to music. Comprised of 5 items, Asmus (1986a) reports reliabilities of Cronbach’s alpha = .69 and .73 on two populations. Examples of the *Affect for Music* items are: ‘I like to make music’, ‘I think that music is fun’, and ‘I love listening to music.’

Principal Components analysis with Varimax rotation, coefficient cut-off point of .40, yielded a one factor solution (see Table 3.2). A reliability analysis gave inter-item correlations ranging from .37 to .62, Cronbach’s alpha was .68.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Affect for Music items</th>
<th>Alpha = .68</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I think that music is fun</td>
<td>.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like music</td>
<td>.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I love listening to music</td>
<td>.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like to make music</td>
<td>.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can feel the emotion in songs and other music</td>
<td>.59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Music style preference

Items were adapted from North et al. (2000). Students were asked to indicate on a four-point scale (1 = not at all, 4 = a lot), how much they liked any of six listed musical genres; if a preferred style was not on the list, students were asked to indicate this and the strength of their preference. Examples of genres were folk, jazz, classical instrumental or vocal music.

Participating in a group

A single question asked students if they currently belonged to a music group, band or choir. Answer options were either Yes or No.

Interest in learning an instrument

As the sample included students who had not ever learned an instrument, a measure of potential interest was included. Items were adapted from the Intrinsic Motivation Inventory (Self-Determination Theory Website, n.d.). Four items represented aspects of intrinsic interest, the liking of music, the challenge of learning, an interest or curiosity about music and the simple desire to learn to play. A further six items represented extrinsic or external factors for students choosing to learn a musical instrument.

Principal Components analysis of the 10 items of the derived Interest in learning an instrument scale yielded two factors, explaining 59.1% of the variance. The first factor represented both intrinsic and extrinsic motives, while 2 items representing obligation from parents or school loaded onto a second factor. Because these items represented an external source of motivation, where students had no control over their enrolment, and this obligation/control aspect of motivation was different to the remaining four items that represented other extrinsic aspects of interest, they were dropped from further analysis. A second factor analysis on the remaining 8 items yielded two factors, extrinsic and intrinsic, with component loadings of .58 to .92, accounting for 64% of the variance. The loadings are shown in Table 3.3; the item (‘Because I love to play music’) cross-loaded, suggesting even these extrinsic motives still need some internal desire.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Factor 1</th>
<th>Factor 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Extrinsic 52.2%</td>
<td>Intrinsic 12.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Alpha = .82</td>
<td>Alpha = .81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music is a good way to join in school life.</td>
<td>.82</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I want to show I am good at music.</td>
<td>.76</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning music is a part of a good education.</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I want to be with friends who play.</td>
<td>.65</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning music will let me do interesting things.</td>
<td>.64</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I really want to learn how to play.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think it is a good challenge for me.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I love to play music.</td>
<td>.59</td>
<td>.63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Because intrinsic and extrinsic motives are no longer regarded as polar opposites, but positions on a continuum (Deci & R. Ryan, 2000a), a reliability analysis was conducted for each factor to ascertain its strength to represent one aspect of motive rather than re-score the extrinsic items in opposition to intrinsic. Although the alphas on both factors were high (Table 3.3), removal of the cross-loading item would have resulted in a two-item scale for intrinsic interest. Retaining the scoring and removing the cross-loading item (“I love to play music”) yielded a one-factor solution of 7 items, explaining 50% of the variance (see Table 3.4).

Table 3.4 One factor solution of Interest in Learning an Instrument items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Alpha = .84</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I want to show I am good at music.</td>
<td>.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning music will let me do interesting things.</td>
<td>.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning music is a part of a good education.</td>
<td>.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think it is a good challenge for me.</td>
<td>.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music is a good way to join in school life.</td>
<td>.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I want to be with friends who play.</td>
<td>.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I really want to learn how to play.</td>
<td>.53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reliability analysis of the 7 items gave Cronbach’s alpha of .84. The substantive meaning of this scale thus represents multiple factors that might influence non-learners to take up learning a musical instrument. It is a general ‘interest in learning an instrument’ scale.

Boredom Proneness
Two items were used to assess boredom proneness in this study; ‘How much of the time are you satisfied or interested in what you are doing’, and, ‘How often do you feel bored.’ Farmer and Sundberg (1986) utilised the two items to assess self-ratings along a boredom/interest continuum. In that study, the composite variable correlated strongly to their Boredom Proneness Scale, $r = .67$, $p < .001$. In this study, responses were on a five-point Likert scale, from 1 = never, 2 = rarely, 3 = some of the time, 4 = often, and 5 = most of the time. The first item was reverse scored, and both were summed to create a composite variable indicative of boredom proneness. The possible score range was 2 to 10; a high score indicated that an individual was prone to boredom.

Beliefs in Musical Ability
The children’s short-form of Dweck’s Implicit Theory Scale (1986, 1999) was adapted for the study to explore students’ beliefs about their own musical ability. The conceptual definition
was, ‘The belief that musical abilities are fixed, and cannot be augmented’; the meaning of the items thus converging on musical ability as a fixed trait that can not be deliberately developed. Scoring was reversed during analysis, as the Likert scale responses in the printed questionnaire were anchored by 4 = agree. A high-scoring response meant that the student believed that ability was malleable in nature, while a low-scoring response meant that the student felt change in musical ability was less possible. A previous study using Dweck’s Implicit theory scale obtained an alpha of .71, and test-retest reliability of .64 (p < .01) (Erdley & Dweck, 1993).

Following Principal Components analysis, the three items of the Beliefs in Musical Ability scale together loaded onto one factor, with loadings between .78 and .85, explaining 68% of the variance (see Table 3.5). Reliability analysis showed the corrected inter-item correlations ranged from .54 to .64, and Cronbach’s alpha was .76.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Your musical ability is something about you that you can’t change very much.</td>
<td>.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You have a certain amount of musical ability, and you really can’t do much to change it.</td>
<td>.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You can learn new things, but you can’t really change your basic musical ability.</td>
<td>.78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Measures used to assess elements of the social dimension believed to pertain to participation in music are described in the sections below.

**Family Musical Background**

The conceptual definition for this measure was, ‘A familiarity with playing music instruments and reading notation amongst members of the extended family.’ This was operationalised by three items that asked if there were musical instruments in the house (response options No, 1 or 2, and More than 2), if any relatives played music, and if any relatives were known to be able to read music (response options Yes, No, and Don’t know). Scoring for the three items in this Index was as follows:

- 0 = Don’t know; No
- 1 = Yes; Two or less instruments in the house
- 2 = More than two instruments

‘Don’t know’ was scored as a zero, for if the student was not aware of this, the influence would probably not be salient in students’ experiences. The scores were summed, with a possible range of 0 (low) representing the absence of practical music making in the family background to 4 (high), representing a strong presence of music making in the family background. For example, a student might score 2 for ‘more than 2 instruments in the house’, and one each for relative playing or reading music (2+1+1=4). The two items about relatives playing or reading music
had together a reliability measure of Cronbach’s alpha = .72, indicating that the content of these items was congruent and analogous.

**Positive Social Perceptions**
Two items developed as an indicative composite variable for the study asked how much students agreed with the statement that girls (or boys) who play instruments are usually bullied or teased (1 = agree, 4 = disagree). The two items were significantly positively correlated, \( r = .61, n = 370, p = .01 \) (two tailed). The two items were averaged to create the *Positive Social Perceptions Score*. A high score on the *Social Perceptions Score* indicated that the individual does not believe that girls or boys are teased because they play an instrument.

**PROCEDURE**
Items in the questionnaire were piloted for reading comprehensibility and clarity by a group of primary and secondary students (n=10), which resulted in revision of the wording of some items. The results of the pilot were not included in the analysis. The questionnaire of approximately 100 items was administered to all participating students. In addition to a common section (Section 1), the three targeted groups (continuers, non-continuers and non-participants) completed separate but corresponding sections. Section 1 included general demographics and the individual dimension measures: the *Interest in Music* items, the *Boredom Proneness* measure, and the *Belief in Musical Ability* scale. Two social dimension measures were the *Social Perceptions Score* and the *Family Background Index*. The *Intention to Learn scale* for non-participants was also included in this section. An item and respondent matrix in Table 3.6 summarises the respondents to the variables analysed in this chapter.

**DESIGN**
The primary aim of this component of the study was to investigate the relationship of the set of variables in the individual and social dimensions of the music learning environment with respect to their association with participation in formal instrumental music instruction. Subsidiary to this question, the analyses also sought differences between gender and year-group (primary or secondary) and relationships between the dependent variables. The three independent variables were learner status (continuer, discontinuer, non-learner), gender, and year-group. The dependent variables were representative of elements of the individual dimension in learning (liking for music, music style preference, group participation, intentions to learn, general satisfaction or boredom) and of the social dimension (social perceptions and family background). This chapter examines these background or distal elements of the dimensions thought to be related to ongoing participation in music performance instruction.
Table 3.6 Questionnaire item-respondent list for Section 1 of the questionnaire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items or variables</th>
<th>Continuer</th>
<th>Discontinue</th>
<th>Never learned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demographics (age, gender, music enrolment)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affect for music</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music listening</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music preference</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member of a group</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intention to Learn</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boredom Proneness</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belief in musical ability</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music in family background</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive social perceptions</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following section presents the results of the analyses, first reporting those from the individual dimension, followed by the analyses of variables in the social dimension.

**RESULTS**

The analysis investigated the relationships between students’ status as a learner, discontinuer or non-learner with their interest in music, their feelings about life generally and about their musical ability, as well as their perceptions of their social environment. Descriptive statistics for the measures in this analysis are indicated in Table 3.7.

Table 3.7 Means and standard deviations for Individual Dimension measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable (no. of items)</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Affect for Music (6)</td>
<td>371</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>4-16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boredom Proneness (2)</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>2.51</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td>2-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beliefs in Musical Ability (3)</td>
<td>365</td>
<td>2.87</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>3-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest in Learning (7)</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>.77</td>
<td>1-28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Musical Background (3)</td>
<td>371</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>1-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Social Perceptions (2)</td>
<td>371</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>.63</td>
<td>2-8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Interest in Music**

**Affect for music**

Of the three groups of learners, continuers liked music the most ($M = 3.59, SD = .43$), followed by discontinuers ($M = 3.29, SD = .52$), and non-learners ($M = 3.07, SD = .62$). Females ($M = 3.46, SD = .47$) liked music more than males ($M = 3.21, SD = .60$). Students did not differ by year-group nor were there any interactions. Table 3.8 details the $F$ values for the two main effects.
Table 3.8 F values for Affect for Music Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent variable</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F (df)</th>
<th>Sig</th>
<th>Partial eta sq</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learner status</td>
<td>5.63</td>
<td>23.21 (2)</td>
<td>&lt;.01</td>
<td>.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>12.57</td>
<td>&lt;.01</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Music preference**

There was some competition between styles of music as to their popularity. Pop/rock music and self-nominated music such as punk, R&B, dance music, disco, or heavy metal were the most preferred genres (see Table 3.9). Jazz was the only other genre to obtain a mean above 2, indicating that genres other than jazz were even less favoured or less familiar. This strong preference for pop music was spread throughout the sample, as a three-way ANOVA indicated a significant interaction between learner-status, gender and year-group, $F(2) = 4.04, p = .02$, although no main effects for year-group or learner-status were present. Scrutiny of the differences between means indicated that primary girls who had never learned were the least interested in this music, $M = 2.75, SD = .96$, while secondary male continuers were most interested, $M = 3.38, SD = .87$. The strength of this association was moderate (Cohen’s $d = .69$).

Whilst the means for the styles of music other than contemporary music genres (Table 3.9) suggested that students were not particularly interested in them, there were still significant differences between students in their liking of folk music, classical instrumental, jazz, classical vocal and country music.

Table 3.9 Style preferences among the school students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Music Style</th>
<th>Mean (SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other preferred music</td>
<td>3.16 (.90)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pop/rock music</td>
<td>3.11 (.89)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jazz</td>
<td>2.07 (.99)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country music</td>
<td>1.94 (.96)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classical instrumental</td>
<td>1.74 (.86)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folk music</td>
<td>1.60 (.80)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classical vocal music</td>
<td>1.55 (.80)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Whether a respondent was a music learner or not had a significant main effect on four music-style preferences: continuers disliked folk, classical instrumental, classical vocal and jazz less than the other students. Figure 3.1 shows the differences between learner groups on the four types of music.
Figure 3.1: Music style preferences among learner groups

Year-group and gender also had a main effect on some music styles. Primary students liked country music more than the secondary students, while female students liked classical instrumental and classical vocal music more than the males. There were also interactions among learner-status and year-group variables (Table 3.10); secondary school continuers liked folk, jazz, classical vocal and classical instrumental more than did other subgroups. Non-learners in secondary school had the least liking for these varying styles of music.

In summary, the liking for music, or familiarity with it, was spread throughout the sample. Continuers had a wider range of music tastes than other students and those who had never learned had the least interest in different music styles, while non-learners’ preferred music style was popular music.

Table 3.10: Significant differences of style preferences among groups of students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent variables</th>
<th>Dependent variables</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F(df)</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learner-status</td>
<td>Folk</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>5.73 (2)</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Classical instrumental</td>
<td>9.03</td>
<td>14.34 (2)</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jazz</td>
<td>17.84</td>
<td>21.99 (2)</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Classical vocal</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>7.84 (2)</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Opera</td>
<td>4.59</td>
<td>9.20 (2)</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year-group</td>
<td>Country</td>
<td>8.40</td>
<td>9.55 (1)</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Classical vocal</td>
<td>5.59</td>
<td>9.74 (1)</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learner-status x year-group</td>
<td>Folk</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>5.30 (2)</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Classical instrumental</td>
<td>2.99</td>
<td>4.75 (2)</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jazz</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>3.05 (2)</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Classical Vocal</td>
<td>2.54</td>
<td>4.57 (2)</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learner-status x year-group x gender</td>
<td>Pop/rock</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>4.54 (2)</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Music listening

Items were adapted from O’Neill (2001). Of three alternatives (listening by oneself, with family or with friends), listening to music by oneself was the most favoured behaviour by all participants, followed by listening with friends. Overall, continuers, discontinuers and students who never learned were as likely as each other to listen by themselves or with friends (see Table 3.11).

However, listening to music with family members distinguished learners from those who had never learned an instrument. The Scheffe post-hoc test showed that continuers (.72), listened to music with their families significantly more than those who had never learned (.56), p = .05.

Table 3.11 Proportion of students listening to music with self and others

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Non-learner</th>
<th>Discontinuer</th>
<th>Continuer</th>
<th>Chi-square (df)</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self</td>
<td>93.2%</td>
<td>88.6%</td>
<td>92.2%</td>
<td>1.72 (2)</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>81.2%</td>
<td>71.9%</td>
<td>71.6%</td>
<td>3.78 (2)</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>55.6%</td>
<td>62.3%</td>
<td>72.3%*</td>
<td>8.02 (2)</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There were also significant differences in listening habits among students of different ages and gender; the younger students were more likely to listen with their families than were the secondary students, $\chi^2 (1) = 26.20$, p = .001, and less likely to listen by themselves, $\chi^2 (1) = 11.99$, p = .001 or with friends, $\chi^2 (1) = 4.73$, p = .03. Females were also more likely to listen with their families, $\chi^2 (1) = 10.30$, p = .001, their friends, $\chi^2 (1) = 14.57$, p = .001, and by themselves, $\chi^2 (1) = 12.03$, p = .03, than males.

In summary, listening to music by oneself and with friends were important modes of listening for all respondents, but secondary students did so more often than primary students, and continuers and primary students were more likely to listen to music with their families than continuers or older students. Females were more active in listening to music in the company of others and by themselves than were boys.

Participating in a group

Students were asked if they belonged to a music group currently, whether band, orchestra, choir or ‘other’. The majority of students did not participate in a group music activity (63%). The majority of continuers were in a group (Table 3.12), compared to only a quarter of discontinuers. Significantly more females were members than males and many more primary students were in an ensemble than secondary students.

Table 3.12 Student participation in ensembles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Group-member</th>
<th>Chi-square</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Continers, discontinuers, non-learners</td>
<td>72%, 24%, 9%</td>
<td>$\chi^2 (2)$ 118.86</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males, females</td>
<td>29%, 46%,</td>
<td>$\chi^2 (1)$ 10.57</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary, secondary</td>
<td>78%, 22%</td>
<td>$\chi^2 (1)$ 59.05</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Interest in learning an instrument

Comparisons between gender and year group on the Interest for Music Learning Scale showed a significant difference between primary and secondary students, $F(1) = 10.36$, $p = .01$. The primary students showed more interest ($M = 2.83$, $SD = .72$) than secondary students ($M = 2.15$, $SD = .65$). There were no differences between boys and girls.

Boredom Proneness

Scores on the index ranged from 2 to 10 and the mean ($M = 5.02$, $SD = 1.47$) at mid-point of the index shows that most students were satisfied most of the time. There was no difference (shown in Table 3.13) between continuers, discontinuers and non-learners in their satisfaction or boredom with life generally; however, secondary students were more prone to boredom than primary students and this difference was significant. In addition, males were slightly more boredom prone than females. The three-way independent ANOVA revealed that these were the only two main effects and there were no interactions.

Table 3.13 Boredom Proneness among school students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean (SE)</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>$F(df)$</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Partial $\eta^2$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>4.81 (.12)</td>
<td>6.86</td>
<td>$F(1)$ 13.57</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>5.45 (.13)</td>
<td>8.64</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>4.95 (.13)</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>$F(1)$ 4.25</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>5.31 (.12)</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-learner</td>
<td>5.12 (.16)</td>
<td>.254</td>
<td>$F(2)$ .487</td>
<td>.62 NS</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discontinuer</td>
<td>5.23 (.14)</td>
<td>.254</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuer</td>
<td>5.03 (.15)</td>
<td>.254</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The next measure asked all participating students about their beliefs or attitudes regarding the nature of musical ability.

Beliefs in Musical Ability

When asked about the nature of their musical ability, students did not differ - there were no significant differences between learners, genders, or year groups. The mean for the whole sample, $M = 2.86$, $SD = .87$, just above the mid-point of 2.5, indicated that generally students held a rather middle of the road position, that music ability was to some extent malleable. The three-way ANOVA indicated that secondary school beliefs tended to differ from primary school students although this was not significant ($p = .055$). The t-test under-scored the difference between year-groups - primary students were more likely to agree that music ability was fixed while secondary students were more likely to believe that musical ability was malleable (with less variability), and this difference was significant, though the ANOVA and the effect size both
suggest that it is a small difference (see Table 3.14). In other words, there was no difference between continuers, discontinuers, or non-music-learners, and there was a trend for younger and older students to differ in their belief in the malleability of musical ability.

Table 3.14 Year-group differences in Beliefs in Musical Ability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean (SD)</th>
<th>t-test (df)</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Cohen’s d</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>2.78 (.91)</td>
<td>2.23 (362)</td>
<td>.027</td>
<td>.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>2.98 (.78)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Family Musical Background**

ANOVA indicated two main effects and a significant interaction. All three groups of learners differed, with continuers having the strongest musical family background, $M = 3.29$, $SD = .83$, then discontinuers, $M = 2.88$, $SD = .98$, and non-learners the least, $M = 2.00$, $SD = 1.46$, $F (2) = 18.30$, $p = .01$. Primary students, $M = 3.14$, $SD = .91$, had a stronger background than secondary students, $M = 2.32$, $SD = 1.40$, $F (1) = 13.06$, $p = .01$, Cohen’s d = .69 (see Figure 3.2). The Scheffe post-hoc showed the difference between the three subgroups to be significantly different, the effect size between continuers and non-learners was 1.1, that is, the continuers’ mean was at the 86th percentile of the discontinuers’ mean.

![Figure 3.2](image-url)  
**Figure 3.2** Family musical background

Differences between specific subgroups of students occurred. Primary and secondary continuers had a more musical background than the other subgroups, whilst secondary students who had discontinued or never learned had the least musical backgrounds (Table 3.15).
Responses to individual items of the measure (Table 3.16) showed that non-learners were the least likely to have relatives who could read music or play an instrument.

Table 3.16 Differences among continuers’ musical relatives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relative plays music</th>
<th>Non-learner (Group 1)</th>
<th>Discontinuer (Group 2)</th>
<th>Continuer (Group 2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.59*</td>
<td>.76</td>
<td>.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relative reads music</td>
<td>.58*</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>.90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Scheffe post-hoc test, *α = .05

In summary, these scores on the Family Musical Background Index indicated that continuers had more instruments in the house and relatives who could read music and play instruments than discontinuers. All primary students showed a stronger musical background than secondary discontinuers and all non-learners. Further, those who had never learned an instrument showed the lowest scores on the index, indicating that they had few of these proximal musical influences.

**Positive Social Perceptions**

Measuring perceptions that playing a musical instrument is socially acceptable for both boys and girls, the results showed that there were differences between groups of students.

The main effect on this measure following a three-way ANOVA was year-group, $F(1) = 10.36$, $p = .001$; when gender and year group were taken into account, there was no significant difference between continuers, discontinuers and those who had never learned. Continuers had lower perceptions of teasing than those who had never learned, but this difference was not significant ($p = .10$).

Independent samples t-test showed that secondary students ($M = 2.46, SD = 1.64$) had more positive perceptions of social acceptance than primary students ($M = 1.80, SD = 1.38$), $t(354.5) = 4.17, p = .001$ (unequal variances accounted for, $F = 13.52, p = .001$), meaning that while secondary students had strong perceptions that being made fun of was not problematic, primary students were slightly less convinced.
DISCUSSION

The preceding section has detailed the characteristics or attributes of the entire group of primary and secondary students who responded to the questionnaire – this included continuers, discontinuers and those who had never learned. Comparing all students highlighted some important differences and the comparisons of discontinuers to non-learners give a broader perspective than continuer-discontinuer comparisons in previous studies.

This sample of students was fairly evenly split in gender, and between primary and secondary year levels. Each sub-group in the learner-status variable (continuer/discontinuer/non-learner) represented approximately one third of students. A similar figure of 25-30% attrition occurs in several studies in the literature (e.g. AMA, 2001; Hallam, 1998; Klinedinst, 1991). More primary students were learning than secondary, and this statistic was similar to the English sample of Lamont, Hargreaves, Marshall and Tarrant (2003). Most of the attrition (~80%) had occurred by Year 8 for the students participating in this study, a similar pattern to that found in the Australian Attitude to Music Survey (2001) and higher than that reported in North et al. (2000).

Half of the secondary school students in this study had never formally learned an instrument. That there are now more students learning may reflect an increase in awareness of music through school communities by the mid-2000 decade, or more broadly, through changes of NSW school curriculum.

Music and the individual

The analysis showed higher levels of music interest and participation for students continuing in music compared to discontinuers and those who had never participated in music learning. That so many respondents liked music was not surprising, as music serves a broad array of purposes in young people’s lives (Campbell, 2007; North et al., 2000). As might be expected, those who had never learned an instrument were less moved by music than either of the other groups, and continuers expressed the most interest; this was similar to results found by Frakes (1984).

Patterns of listening to music were also similar to those found in previous studies of adolescents (Hargreaves et al., 2000), with the findings here – different patterns of listening between younger and older students, as well as continuers, discontinuers and non-learners - being new. That more continuers listened with family, although not surprising, is an important result, for it strengthens the picture of family interaction being an important influence on children’s values and choices in music.

The distribution of preferences for the music genres was associated with students’ involvement in practical music making; the majority of students liked pop/rock music as Lamont et al. (2003)
and Ginocchio (2008) also found, but discontinuers and those who had never learned preferred it most and had fewer other preferences, while continuers, perhaps because of their intrinsic interest in music, or because of their accumulating experience in formal learning, were aware of and had some feelings for a range of other music. This analysis adds more detail to North et al.’s (2000) findings, for in that study, no differentiation between continuers, discontinuers or non-learners was made. While causal statements cannot be made, the results could suggest that experiences with music learning have had an effect of broadening students’ musical knowledge and tastes.

There were expected activity patterns across the students. Fewer discontinuers and non-learners participated in ensembles, bands or choirs, while more females and primary students participated. Since fewer secondary students in this study were learning an instrument than primary students (17% compared to 56%) this might not be unexpected, taking also into account that music programs in primary schools in this study generally consisted of a band program which would necessarily involve more students than if there were only peripatetic instrumental staff on-site. Most students felt that teasing for playing an instrument was not problematic generally; however, more girls than boys were participating in music activities, (which also is not unusual, Eccles et al., 1993; O’Neill, 2001), and it may be that perceptions about music study are still gender stereotyped (Harrison, 2000; O’Neill & Boulton, 1996).

**Interest in learning**

Those who were interested in playing an instrument yet to this point had not done so, were interested for personal, intrinsic reasons as well as for how music learning might benefit them in one way or another. Merging the two types of interest, as suggested by R. Ryan and Deci (2000a), rather than separating them as opposing constructs, revealed more about why students might take up an instrument. Older students appeared to be less interested than younger students, perhaps because of their greater familiarity with music through compulsory general music classes in Years 7 and 8. That all students endorsed internal motives as well as external motives augers well for their future participation, because internal reasons appear to have a lasting power through the challenges of learning, as illustrated by students in this study, and in the literature generally (Burton, Lydon, D’Alessandro & Koestner, 2006; Eccles & Wigfield, 2002; R. Ryan & Deci, 2000a).

In regard to boredom, the results showed that the older students were more prone than the younger students while continuers, discontinuers and non-learners were just as likely as each other to experience boredom. As the scale measured their willingness to admit to boredom or dissatisfaction with their personal life (including school), it could be reasoned that for secondary students their boredom was due to either a lack of stimulus in their environment (A. Hill &
Perkins, 1985), or an inability to find cognitive challenge for themselves (Vodanovich, 2003). It is also possible that secondary students were more prone to boredom because many of them did not participate in music learning activities, for Caldwell, Darling, Payne and Dowdy (1999) found that having ‘nothing to do’ – a lack of situational stimulus – was a strong predictor of boredom. Students who do not participate in school or extra-curricular activities tend to be less engaged and interested in school (Eccles et al., 2003). On the other hand, Caldwell et al. (1999) cite research that suggests that adolescents’ fragile autonomy may make it hard to choose what to do in the light of peer and identity pressures (Kleiber & Rickards, as cited in Caldwell et al., 1999). It is also possible that the measure used in this study was too broad, including both school and free time, when both are quite distinctive contexts, representing teacher and/or parent involvement or control.

Beliefs about learning
That there were no differences between continuers’ and discontinuers’ beliefs in musical ability (in contrast to O’Neill, as cited in O’Neill, 2002), yet a tendency for younger students to feel that musical ability was more of a fixed attribute, might suggest that incremental and entity beliefs are influenced by age and the development of cognitive reasoning. Tertiary students’ incremental beliefs in ability have been associated with better practice habits (self-regulation) and higher achievement (Bråten & Strømsø, 2004) and task-goals in music (Smith, 2005), yet until now, little was known of school-age students’ beliefs in musical ability. The results contrast to Asmus (1986b), who found that attributions to ability (a fixed cause) increased with achievement level and age. However, turning to comparison of older and younger children in other settings, Bempechat and London (1991) found higher levels of incremental beliefs in physical skills (games, sports) in older children (Grades 3-5) than in younger children (K-2); similarly, 7th grade children in Gonida, Kiosseoglou and Leondari (2006) developed more malleable views of intelligence as they matured. Although the two age-groups in the current study differ slightly to those in the literature, the similarity of results here may suggest that music performance, as a combination of physical skill and cognitive ability, is less well understood by students as a learning process with attendant outcomes, and more as a ‘given’, a product. As students gain more experience in learning through practice and self-control, they may come to realise that they can make changes to their music ability.

Music in the social context
Continuers were found to have a stronger musical background than the other subgroups. This accords with the wealth of literature that shows the positive influence of families on music participation (Bushong, 2004; Chadwick, 2001; Davidson et al., 1996; Moore et al., 2003). Families who have musical literacy or familiarity with music are evidently effective in
transferring these values and interests to their children. Households with primary school children appeared to be stronger musically; it may be that music takes a higher place in families’ activities with their young children in the early years of development, since many parents sing and share movement to music with their children as described by McPherson & Davidson (2002) and Yoon (1997).

**Conclusion**

In sum, a detailed picture has been drawn in this chapter of many individual differences in background factors among students, including their liking for music and its various styles, their uses of music for social and emotional reasons and their participation in music-making. That these background factors were shown to be relevant to students’ lives, and important enough markers of interest and involvement to be of increasing importance to non-learners, discontinuers and continuers respectively, is an important step in describing the dimensions of learning in an Australian context. Further connections lie with the existing literature, for this context shows similarities to British and American settings (Hargreaves et al., 2000).

Moreover, a link may well be made between young people’s musical background and with whom they listen to music; continuers had a more musical background, listened to music more often with their parents, and had a broader set of musical tastes than other participants. Each measure adds detail to how parents effect the influence they are purported to bestow (Creech & Hallam, 2003; Zdzinski, 1996).

Group differences in higher-level dispositional attributes, such as boredom proneness and musical ability beliefs, were not distinguishable among the three subgroups of the learner variable, although differences were to be found between younger and older students. If implicit theories exist in theory-goal-behaviour patterns (Dweck & Leggett, 1988), then one might expect to see less task mastery or self-regulation in younger students. This is certainly the case for some but not all learners who are also young people (Pitts et al., 2000b). Evidence in the chapters ahead may shed further light on this pattern among the young people in this study.

The co-incidence of fewer boys and fewer secondary students being involved in music with same being more generally bored is of interest. They may be bored because they are not involved in music-making groups. They may be bored by the type of music to which they most often listen (pop/rock). Their boredom could also be related to their cultural surroundings – the regional area not offering as much stimulus as a metropolitan area might. This research cannot identify the reasons for this boredom, only to speculate, and this question could be followed up in more detail by separating school context from personal life context, and testing concurrently with other measures such as satisfaction with school (e.g. the *Quality of School Life Questionnaire*, L. Anderson & Bourke, 2000). However, it is an important characteristic to be
mindful of, as it may help teachers to better understand tendencies of their older students and to provide for this contingency.

The chapter to follow shows that there are also important elements in the more immediate environment of the practice room that emerge as systematic differences between continuers and discontinuers.
Chapter 4. Learning with Feelings: Lessons, Practice and People

Introduction
Where the previous chapter has identified a set of distal factors in the social and individual dimensions of learning that are related in coherent ways to the young people’s participation in formal music instruction, this chapter examines factors that may be a more proximal influence on music instruction participation: individuals’ feelings about practice, and their perceptions of social support in their immediate environment.

The first section of the chapter outlines a rationale for the measures employed to examine proximal factors in the individual and social dimensions of learning, followed by a description of the method (participant groups, materials, procedure and analysis). The results section is followed by the discussion.

Research in the field of retention and attrition has identified a range of factors in the individual, social and environmental dimensions of the learning experience, although no predominant factor has emerged as a clearly causal condition. It is likely, as other researchers have noted (e.g. Hallam, 1998), that discontinuation is linked to a number of factors. However, motivational theories that have ‘reasons for engaging’ at the heart of motive (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002), suggest that such reasons may be highly informative windows into the subjective nature of musical learning and its outcomes. In particular, reasons for engaging will reflect some of the affective and emotional processes that accompany music practice and learning, where the integration of these elements into an understanding of learning and achievement is overdue (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002; Maehr et al., 2002; D. Meyer & Turner, 2002).

A first strategy to explore reasons for engaging was to use open-ended items to gain a personal perspective, for it is an individual’s perceptions of their motives that matter (Sichivitsa, 2004). Intrinsic motivation is a powerful connecting force between an individual and an activity, process or object (Deci & R. Ryan, 1985; Reeve, 1989; Vallerand & Bissonnette, 1992), and has been identified in the retention and attrition literature as a feature of continuers (Pitts et al., 2000b), and in the music performance literature as a correlate of achievement (Bailey, 2006; Bakker, 2005; Faber, 2003; Schmidt, 2005). However, other forms of motivation may also be pertinent to music learning (Bushong, 2005; Sloboda, 2005; Yoon, 1997) and be demonstrated in students’ responses.

In contrast to intrinsic motivation is an absence of motive, or amotivation (Legault, Green-Demers, & Pelletier, 2006; R. Ryan & Deci, 2000a; Vallerand & Bissonnette, 1992); one correlate of amotivation is boredom (Ntoumanis, 2001). To explore the empirical evidence that
practice can be boring (AMA, 2001; Gove, 2004; Sloboda, 2005), and to complement the measure of Boredom Proneness detailed in the previous chapter, continuing students were asked why they thought that individuals might become bored with their instrumental learning.

Following Cantwell’s (2004) individual learning framework set out in Chapter One, feelings about practice are assumed to contribute to the ways students undertake their practice, and to their continuing interest in the task (Middleton & Toluk, 1999). In this study, the quality of affect associated with learning was explored through three measures of the affective-feeling response of students to their practice and learning; asking broadly, how confident or masterful students felt in their practice, and how secure they felt in their ability to learn their work and perform with assurance. A third measure in the affective domain is self-efficacy (following Cantwell’s [2004]) framework), which consists of an individual’s feeling of specific competence in a certain task. Self-efficacy is related to high-quality performance outcomes and to self-regulation (McPheron & McCormick, 2006), although to the researcher’s knowledge, the construct has once been utilised in retention-attrition research with no correlation (Stewart, 2002).

Finally, perceptions of the environment are just as important as the more objective attributes of the environment itself (Ames & Archer, 1988; Archer & Scevak, 1998; Cury, DaFonsa & Rufo, 2002; Ommundsen, 2001; Ryan & Grolnick, 1986; Sichivitsa, 2004). Research has consistently shown that environmental conditions such as supportive family and teachers (Chadwick, 2000; Davidson, M. Howe & Sloboda, 1996; Mackworth-Young, 1990; Yoon; 1997), have a positive relationship with the development of intrinsic motivation and children’s musical expertise, and the argument was made in Chapter One that the parental relationship is foundational to children’s participation. Supportive peers are another asset in the music learning environment (Patrick et al., 1999); accordingly, students’ perceptions of parent, teacher and peer social support for practice and playing were sought.

**Aim of Stage 1**

The principal research question governing the analysis in this stage aimed to explore and describe the social and individual, in particular the affective, dimensions of the learning experience of students in an Australian context. The analysis presented in this chapter focuses on only the continuers and discontinuers, examining factors that may be a more proximal influence on music instruction participation. It explores to what extent specific affective and social factors exist for these students, and whether there are fundamental differences between continuers and discontinuers. Specifically, the research sub-questions were proposed to identify:

Do continuers and discontinuers differ in the extent of emotional reactivity to practice?
Do continuers and discontinuers differ in their perceptions of self-efficacy?

Do continuers and discontinuers differ in their perceptions of social support from parents, teachers and peers?

These questions were located in the second and third sections of the questionnaire.

**METHOD**

The sections below describe the characteristics of the student participants in this stage of the study, the development of the research instruments, the procedure and the analyses undertaken.

**MUSIC ENROLMENT CHARACTERISTICS OF PARTICIPANTS**

The students who responded to the items in these sections of the questionnaire were 141 students who were continuing their formal instruction (37.5%), and 115 students who had discontinued their lessons (30.6%). There were 194 primary students (51.6%) and 182 secondary students (48.4%). Wind instruments were the most popular, followed by keyboard and guitar. Other instrument groups, such as strings, brass or percussion were played by fewer than 10% each of all students (see Figure 4.1).

![Figure 4.1 Instruments played by school students](image)

Wind instruments (clarinet, saxophone and flute) were the most popular instruments in primary schools, and were the most popular instruments for females (Figure 4.1). As shown in Figure 4.1, keyboard instruments (piano, electric keyboard, organ) were the most popular instrument for secondary school students, followed by wind and guitar. More males than females were interested in guitar, brass and drums. Tests of significance were not undertaken because the
variance of music programs among schools, such as band programs versus string programs, would have influenced the students’ instrument choice. For similar reasons, differences in which instruments were discontinued were not analysed.

The majority of students (70%) reported that they had one-to-one instrumental lessons, one quarter (26%) had group lessons, and 12% gained tuition only in the band rehearsal. The relationship between lesson type and continuation was significant as indicated in Table 4.1. The association was weak however (Cramer’s V = .15). Most students had chosen their instrument (88%) whilst the remainder had not, a significant number of the latter being discontinuers (see Table 4.1). Table 4.1 also shows that primary and secondary discontinuers learned for less time than primary and secondary continuers respectively, and this was a significant difference.

Table 4.1 Continuers’ & discontinuers’ attributes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Continuer</th>
<th>Discontinuers</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Length of learning</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>2.7 yrs</td>
<td>2 yrs</td>
<td>t (151) = 3.29, p = .01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>3.5 yrs</td>
<td></td>
<td>t (45) = 2.44, p = .02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chose instrument</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>χ² (1, N = 376) = 4.06, p = .04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>χ² (1, N = 245) = 5.12, p = .02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group lessons</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No comparison was made between secondary students and primary students, as age difference would account for the duration of learning.

Approximately a quarter of the students in this sample started learning their instrument by the time they were 7 years old. The majority of students (60%) started between the ages of 8 and 10. Only 13% of students started when they were 11, 12 or 13, and just 3% of students started in their high school years. There was no significant difference between discontinuers and continuers in regard to their starting age.

Of all the discontinuers in the sample, more than half had ceased taking instruction lessons by Year 5 (52%). By the time they had reached Year 6, two thirds of discontinuers had ceased, and altogether more than four fifths of students had discontinued by the time they completed Year 8 (second year of secondary school) (see Table 4.2).

Table 4.2 Percentages of discontinuation per aggregated school years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year level</th>
<th>Aggregated percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Years 4, 5, 6</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years 7, 8</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total to Year 8</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MEASURES

This section describes the measures (and their preliminary exploratory analyses) that were developed or adapted for use in the study. The materials listed below were employed to measure proximal elements of the individual and social dimensions. Measures from the individual dimension concerned feelings about practice and reasons for engaging and disengaging; measures from the social dimension were the family, teacher and peer support scales.

The first two of the three scales detailed below (Practice Mastery and Sufficient Knowledge) were constructed from items designed to tap into students’ feelings about their practice, and their feelings about undertaking the challenges of practice with assurance.

Fourteen items concerning two dimensions of i) pleasure, fulfilment or sense of accomplishment gained from practising, and ii) students’ experiences and perceptions of possessing sufficient knowledge to correct their errors or overcome difficulties or challenges (Garner, 1990), were included in the questionnaire. The creation of the items was informed by Garner’s (1990) theory of settings which suggests that students and adults may not use learning strategies because they do not have sufficient knowledge to apply known strategies. Additionally, it has been demonstrated by Hallam (1998) and Pitts et al. (2000b) that learners often do not have sufficient ‘aural’ experience to allow them to perceive errors or correct them.

Negative items were reverse scored. A Principal Components analysis with Varimax rotation was conducted with two factors selected (see Table 4.3) explaining 41.1% of the variance. One factor represented positive and negative responses to practice (29.1% variance), and the second represented lack of confidence in knowing how to practice (11.7% variance). Two items had coefficients below .45 (‘Learning was a challenge’ and, ‘I always felt disappointed in my practising’); the first was eliminated from further analysis because it did not match the meanings of either of the two factors, while the latter was retained on the basis of its similarity in meaning to other items.

A second PCF analysis on the 13 remaining items showed a similar but stronger pattern; 43.8% variance explained by the two factors, with the reactive emotions or states in one factor and the second representing the lack of knowledge for practice, although one item (‘I found practice worthwhile’) cross-loaded, .60 and .48 on Factor 1 and Factor 2 respectively. This item was removed, as well as the item ‘I found practice usually very boring’, since although contributing statistically to the factor, it was not in keeping with substantive meaning of the positive mastery feelings in Factor 1. The final PCFA of 11 items, two factors selected, coefficient cut-off point of .45, accounted for 43.8% of the variance, and made meaningful distinctions between the items (see Table 4.4). The two factor scores showed a significant difference between continuers and discontinuers on the practice feelings factor and on the sufficient knowledge factor. This
suggested that these two factors could reliably inform the researcher on both students’ feelings about practice and their feelings about their knowledge in practice. Description of the construction of the individual scales is detailed next.

Table 4.3 Preliminary two-factor solution of practice experience items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preliminary two-factor solution (14 items)</th>
<th>Factor 1 (29%)</th>
<th>Factor 2 (12%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Practice feelings</td>
<td>Practice know-how</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel able to express my feelings through my playing</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel confident when I practise</td>
<td>.66</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When learning something is a bit hard, I still enjoy it</td>
<td>.61</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I find practice usually very boring^</td>
<td>.61</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My practice seems worthwhile^</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowing how to play well is important to me</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I always find different ways of playing my instrument</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I often didn’t understand how to do my practice</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When the teacher explains a problem to me, I still feel unsure</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I often do not know how to fix things up</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usually I don’t notice mistakes</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My practice is frustrating</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel disappointed in my practising*</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning musical instrument is a challenge*^</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

^Item removed
* <.45

Table 4.4 Final two-factor solution of practice experience items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Final two-factor solution with reduced item pool (11 items)</th>
<th>Factor 1 (Mastery feelings)</th>
<th>Factor 2 (Sufficient knowledge)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I feel able to express my feelings through my playing</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel confident when I practise</td>
<td>.62</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I always find different ways of playing my instrument</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When learning something is a bit hard, I still enjoy it</td>
<td>.55</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowing how to play well is important to me</td>
<td>.51</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I often don’t understand how to do my practice</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When the teacher explains a problem to me, I still feel unsure</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I often do not know how to fix things up</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My practice is frustrating</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usually I don’t notice mistakes</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel disappointed in my practising</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Practice Mastery**
The definition of this variable was, ‘Mastery of practising and satisfaction with its outcomes.’ The five items of the mastery scale had component loadings ranging between .55 and .74 on the final two factor solution detailed above. When the five items themselves were subject to PCF analysis, one factor was found (eigenvalue 2.12), representing 42.5% of the variance. Reliability analysis of the five items of the *Practice Mastery Scale* showed corrected inter-item correlations ranged from .28 to .49, and Cronbach’s alpha was .63. Examples of items are: ‘I feel able to express my feelings through my playing’, ‘When learning something is a bit hard, I still enjoy it’, and ‘I feel confident when I practise’.

**Sufficient Knowledge**
This scale measured the presence or absence of doubt, insecurity or lack of self-reliance related to practice (e.g. ‘I often didn’t understand how to do my practice’). The definition for this variable was, ‘Perceptions of sufficient know-how or understanding in practice.’ The six items represented 30% of the variance (eigenvalue 3.30) in the two factor solution of the 11 items discussed above. A further PCF analysis on the six items alone gave a one factor solution (eigenvalue 2.40), accounting for 40% of the variance, the six items loading between .59 and .79 (see Table 4.5). Reliability analysis showed the corrected inter-item correlations ranged from .48 to .74 and Cronbach’s alpha = .70. A high score on this scale represented disagreement with the negatively-oriented items of the scale and represented a ‘sufficient knowledge’ base.

### Table 4.5 Component loadings of the Sufficient Knowledge scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Component loading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When the teacher explains a problem to me, I still feel unsure</td>
<td>.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I often don’t understand how to do my practice</td>
<td>.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I often do not know how to fix things up</td>
<td>.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My practice is frustrating</td>
<td>.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel disappointed in my practising</td>
<td>.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usually I don’t notice mistakes</td>
<td>.48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Self-Efficacy**
The scale was intended to measure students’ feelings of capability in performance environments. Each of the major skills required in performing an instrument – rhythm, pitch, fingering or reading, and sound production – made up the individual items. The items were adapted from Bandura (2001), the conceptual definition being, ‘The conviction that one can successfully execute the behaviour required to produce the outcomes’ (Bandura, 1997). Sample
items were, ‘When performing or doing an exam...How well could you read the notes and play without mistakes?’ And ‘How well could you play the right rhythms?’ A player who feels that, in a performance, they will be able to play the music correctly and musically, would be said to have high levels of perceived self-efficacy for that task. Responses on a 4-point Likert scale ranged from $1 = \text{not at all well}$ to $4 = \text{very well}$. Following PCFA, the four items loaded onto one factor, ranging from .69 to .82, and this explained 59% of the variance. Reliability analysis showed the corrected inter-item correlations ranged from .48 to .63; Cronbach’s alpha = .76.

**Relationships between scales**
The correlations between the practice experience scales were also examined to explore relationships that together might help understand patterns of feelings or responses to learning among continuers and discontinuers.

**Reasons for Engaging**
Two open-ended items asked students about their reasons for engaging in their learning. These questions were: ‘I started musical instrument lessons because...’ and ‘Why do you want to continue learning your instrument?’ (continuers only).

Several measures were used to ascertain discontinuers’ reasons for ceasing formal instruction. One was the *Reasons for Discontinuing Scale*, which included a list of 11 motives (derived from the literature) concerning why students might give up. Prefaced by, ‘I gave up learning because...’, examples of motives were as follows; ‘It was too hard’, ‘It wasn’t cool or trendy’, ‘I didn’t have a place to practice’, ‘It was too lonely’, ‘I felt too frustrated’, and ‘My teacher left.’ Students indicated their agreement with the items on a four-point Likert scale ($1 = \text{disagree}, 4 = \text{agree}$), a high score indicating agreement with the reasons for giving up the instrument. PCF analysis, with a coefficient value cut-off of .45, yielded three factors explaining 55% of the variance. The first factor (see Table 4.6) was comprised of items representing aspects of the learning, for example (‘I felt too frustrated’; ‘It was too hard’). The second factor represented environmental aspects of learning such as (‘I didn’t have a place to practice’; ‘There were no suitable groups for me out-of-school’). The third factor of 3 items represented aspects which are more or less out of an individual’s control, such as the teacher leaving or the expense of the lesson. After reflection on the substantive and statistical contribution of the one item cross loading on factors 2 and 3 (‘It was too lonely’), the item was removed. This action retained 10 items in three factors, with 56% of variance explained (see Table 4.6). Factor score analysis showed that there were not significant differences between younger and older students, or boys and girls on any of the three factors. The *Reasons for Discontinuing Scale* was computed following a reliability yielding Cronbach’s alpha = .76 on the remaining ten items.
Table 4.6 Final three-factor solution for the *Reasons for Discontinuing* items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Factor 1 Learning</th>
<th>Factor 2 Environmental</th>
<th>Factor 3 External</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I felt too frustrated</td>
<td>.81</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was too hard</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I couldn’t keep up</td>
<td>.62</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I didn’t like the music</td>
<td>.61</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I didn’t like the teacher</td>
<td>.48</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It wasn’t cool or trendy</td>
<td>.47</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No suitable groups for me</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nowhere to practice</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.75</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was too expensive</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My teacher left</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To explore further possibilities associated with ending formal instruction, a second measure consisted of a list of six alternative activities to music instruction, and discontinuers nominated any activities that they undertook instead of music lessons and practice (such as homework, sport or dance). Students were able to select none, one or more of the categories.

A third measure asked students (open-ended question) whether anything might have intervened to change their mind at the time of discontinuing. In addition, continuers were asked why they thought young people might be bored by music learning.

A final question asked discontinuers if they wished to learn again (*Yes* or *No* response options). A desire to resume learning might be an indicator that the prior experience was a positive one and that perhaps circumstances rather than personal preference had dictated the ending of formal instruction.

**Family Support**

The items in the *Family Support* scale were created by the researcher, drawing on the literature substantiating the affirmative role that parents play in children’s development, both academic and musical. The conceptual definition of family support was, ‘Valued support and encouragement from parents’, and this was operationalised by four items, examples of which are, ‘Having my family like music is important to me’, ‘My parents helped me be involved with music’ and ‘My family liked me to play an instrument.’ Following PCFA, one factor was revealed, the four item loadings ranging from .65 to .81, explaining 56% of the variance. Reliability analysis showed corrected inter-item correlations ranged from .42 to .58 and Cronbach’s alpha = .71.
Teacher Support

The Teacher Support Scale was based on theories of perceived ‘autonomy support’ (R. Ryan & Deci, 2000b) and teachers’ goals (Archer & Scevak, 1998). Six items were used to identify the nature of the teachers’ communication in lessons, whether teachers focused on the student and their personal achievements and interest in music or whether teachers aimed to keep students anchored to ‘normative’ progress by comparison to others. The conceptual definition was, ‘Students’ perceptions of encouragement and understanding from their teacher.’

PCFA, with a coefficient cut-off value of .45, yielded a two-factor solution explaining 63.14% of the variance, 41.4% and 21.8% for the two factors. The two factors suggested formative teacher practices (4 items, ‘My teacher noticed whether I improved in my playing’, ‘My teacher made sure I understood what to do’), and summative teacher practices (2 items, ‘My teacher compares student progress’, ‘It is important to my teacher that students do exams’) respectively (see Table 4.7).

Table 4.7 Two-factor solution & final component loadings of Teacher Support Scale items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My teacher...</th>
<th>Factor 1</th>
<th>Factor 2</th>
<th>Component loadings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Formative teacher practices</td>
<td>Summative teacher practices</td>
<td>Alpha = .74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My teacher really wants me to enjoy learning new things.</td>
<td>.87</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My teacher makes sure I understand what to do.</td>
<td>.80</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My teacher noticed whether I improved in my playing.</td>
<td>.76</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My teacher encourages me to ask questions.</td>
<td>.61</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My teacher compares student progress.(^\dagger)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.81</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is important to my teacher that students do exams.(^\dagger)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.76</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^\dagger\) Items removed from two-factor solution

Reliability analysis suggested that removing the two summative items would increase the reliability of the scale. The new formative teacher support scale of four items had Cronbach’s alpha of .74. Removal of the item ‘My teacher encourages me to ask questions’ would have increased the reliability to .80; however, since the meaning of the item relates to how teachers communicate with students in this study, the item was left in the scale. A further PCFA showed the four items loading onto one factor with an eigenvalue of 2.4, explaining 60.2% of the variance. The component loadings of these four items are shown in the final column of Table 4.7. Cronbach’s alpha was .74.
**Peer Support**

Included in the social support items were seven items concerning peers or friends. Three items were positive aspects of peer interaction, while four represented negative interactions reported anecdotally to accompany practice and learning an instrument. These negative items were reverse scored for analysis (1 = agree, 4 = disagree). The seven items representing students’ perceptions of peer support were subject to Principal Components analysis and formed three factors (explaining 61.5% of the variance). One factor included represented social exclusion: (e.g. ‘I felt left out’, ‘I was teased’), the second factor represented social distraction (e.g. ‘I’ve heard doors slammed’, ‘My practising often annoyed others’) and the third factor represented positive social approval (e.g. ‘Friends like me to play’, ‘Having friends who like music is important to me’). There were too few items to create separate scales and a reliability analysis showed that it was not possible to create a reliable scale of one dimension, and thus was abandoned. The seven items were therefore analysed separately.

The seven items were:

1. Having friends who like music is important to me.
2. Because of my music learning, I felt left out by my friends.
3. I have friends that play musical instruments.
4. I’ve heard doors or windows slammed shut when I practised.
5. My friends liked me to play an instrument.
6. I was teased because I liked instrumental music.
7. My practising often annoyed others.

**Procedure**

Following completion of the Section 1 of the questionnaire (reported in Chapter Three) continuers and the discontinuers completed the second and third sections of the questionnaire, in which the items were identical except for the tense used; for example, ‘My practice seems worthwhile’ for continuers, and … ‘seemed worthwhile’ for discontinuers. Further music learning demographic data was requested in this section (reported in the Participant Characteristics section above). An item and respondent matrix summarises the variables and the respondents in Table 4.8 below.
Table 4.8 Item-respondent matrix for Sections 2 & 3 of the questionnaire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>Continuer</th>
<th>Discontinuer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instrument played &amp; own choice</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age at commencement of learning</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of formal learning period</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of practice</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration of practice</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reasons for starting</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reasons for boredom/ discontinuing</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative activities</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Efficacy</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice Mastery</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sufficient Knowledge</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Support</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Support</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Support</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Analysis**

The analysis of the variables in this section follow the method set out in the previous chapter for the independent and dependent variables. In this analysis, the chief comparison of interest was that of continuers to discontinuers. The following section presents the results of the analyses, first reporting those from the individual dimension, followed by the analyses of variables in the social dimension.

**Results**

The descriptive statistics of the dependent variables presented in this section of the chapter are detailed in Table 4.9 while the following section details the results of the three practice experience scales, Practice Mastery, Sufficient Knowledge and Self-Efficacy.

Table 4.9 Descriptive statistics for the dependent variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable (no. of items)</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Cronbach's Alpha</th>
<th>Scale Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Practice Mastery (5)</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>.63</td>
<td>3.02</td>
<td>.59</td>
<td>1-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sufficient Knowledge (6)</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>.54</td>
<td>1-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self Efficacy (4)</td>
<td>234^</td>
<td>.76</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>.55</td>
<td>1-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Support (4)</td>
<td>249</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td>3.30</td>
<td>.68</td>
<td>1-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Support (4)</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>1-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reasons for Discontinuing (10)</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>.76</td>
<td>1.71</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td>1-4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

^Keyboard players and un-tuned percussion players did not answer one item
Practice Mastery

Of learner-status, year-group and gender, only learner-status had a main effect on practice mastery; discontinuers felt less confident or masterful with their practising than continuers. There was an interaction for year group and gender; primary males were lowest in practice satisfaction and primary females were highest (see Table 4.10).

Table 4.10 Differences in satisfaction with practice among learners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean (SE)</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F (df)</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Partial η²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discontinuers</td>
<td>3.01 (.06)</td>
<td>8.54</td>
<td>F(1) 29.09</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuers</td>
<td>3.46 (.06)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary males</td>
<td>2.90 (.06)</td>
<td>2.09</td>
<td>F(1) 7.15</td>
<td>.008</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary females</td>
<td>3.14 (.07)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The effect size for the learner-status variable, measured by partial eta squared was .10, indicating a moderate effect (10% variance), confirming that even though the discontinuers were fairly satisfied with their practice (mean over the scale mid-point of 2.5), there was a reasonable difference between them.

Sufficient Knowledge

Analysis of variance showed a single significant main effect of learner-status, F(1) = 13.57, p = .001, and no effect of gender, F(1) = .13, p = .72, or year-group, F(1) = .01, p = .94, on this scale. The t-test showed that discontinuers felt less sure of their ability to work efficiently, observe and correct errors than did continuers, and Cohen’s effect size showed this was not a trivial difference (see Table 4.11). The discontinuers’ scores again suggest that although they felt less sure about their practice than continuers, they were not in general overly negative about their thinking.

Table 4.11 Differences between continuers & discontinuers in Sufficient Knowledge

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean (SD)</th>
<th>t(df)</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Cohen’s d</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discontinuers</td>
<td>3.02 (.59)</td>
<td>3.95</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuers</td>
<td>3.29 (.46)</td>
<td>3.95</td>
<td>(202.06)</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Self-Efficacy

A three-way ANOVA indicated that continuers were higher in self-efficacy than discontinuers but that there were no other significant effects. The t-test and Cohen’s effect size showed the difference between means of continuers and discontinuers was moderate (see Table 4.12), meaning that all discontinuers, primary or secondary school-aged, felt less self-efficacious when performing or undertaking an exam than did continuers.
Table 4.12 Self-efficacy among continuers and discontinuers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean (SD)</th>
<th>t(df)</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Cohen’s D</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discontinuers</td>
<td>3.00 (.65)</td>
<td>t(166.42) 3.96</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuers</td>
<td>3.32 (.42)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Relationships between the practice variables

Summarising the results above, Figure 4.2 indicates the overall trend of continuers to feel better about their practice than discontinuers.

Further, correlations between the three practice experience scales - Sufficient Knowledge, Self-Efficacy and Practice Mastery - and the Affect for Music scale, revealed a range of relationships. The most significant relations were a moderate association between Practice Mastery and Sufficient Knowledge (.46); Self-Efficacy was moderately related to Practice Mastery (.33) and Sufficient Knowledge (.41), while Music Affect bore respectively higher correlations to each of Sufficient Knowledge (.24), Self-Efficacy (.33) and Practice Mastery (.46) (see Table 4.13).

Table 4.13 Relationships between the affective variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Music Affect</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Practice Mastery</td>
<td>.46*</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Self-Efficacy</td>
<td>.33*</td>
<td>.33*</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Sufficient Knowledge</td>
<td>.24*</td>
<td>.36*</td>
<td>.41*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p = .01, one-tailed, n=233-245
The correlations suggest that players who feel they have a secure knowledge base are also likely to feel satisfied with their practice, and to feel capable of completing tasks well. It also suggests that those students who felt satisfied in their practice, also found more pleasure generally in music than those who were less satisfied.

**Reasons for Engaging**

This section contains the results of responses to the four open-ended questions. Numbers and lengths of responses to the open-ended items were varied and are summarised in Table 4.14.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>n responses (from N possible)</th>
<th>Av. No. of words per response</th>
<th>Range of words per response</th>
<th>Continuers</th>
<th>Discontinuers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Why start to learn?</td>
<td>250 (256)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3-29</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why continue?</td>
<td>132 (141)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3-22</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why are kids bored?</td>
<td>123 (141)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1-22</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barriers to continuation</td>
<td>93 (115)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1-32</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A core list of key words was derived from the text, and these were used as categories for coding the text of the four questions; eight categories represented two orientations of reasons or motives; five or six acted as intrinsic motives, while two or three acted as extrinsic motives or reasons for learning, liking or not liking music (see Table 4.15).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Orientation</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intrinsic reasons</strong></td>
<td>Desire</td>
<td>Desire to start or commence learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Enjoyment</td>
<td>Enjoying music or finding it fun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Skill</td>
<td>Valuing the skill associated with learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New</td>
<td>Anticipating the novelty of the activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Future</td>
<td>Preparing for a lifelong enjoyment of music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Extrinsic reasons</strong></td>
<td>Family</td>
<td>The influence of family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Obliged</td>
<td>Whether they were obliged through school curriculum or family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Availability</td>
<td>Whether access to an instrument or teacher motivated the commencement or continuance of lessons</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reasons for commencing

The key categories associated with reasons for commencing learning an instrument centred on students’ personal desires or interests. Categories fitting into these desires included those listed in Table 4.16.

The most frequently used expression was simply, ‘I wanted to’ (see Table 4.16) and this accounted for nearly half of the responses. This expression was usually accompanied by one of several other reasons. Approximately one-third of the total responses referred to the enjoyment and fun expected in learning a musical instrument: ‘I wanted to learn an instrument and I like the drums’ (7), and ‘I always loved listening to music so I thought that being part of a band would be enjoyable’ (36).

One fifth of statements attributed the inspiration to their family, whether by example from their siblings, ‘My sister had started learning music and told me about it. It sounded great so I started and I love it’ (106), or suggestion, ‘My mother pushed me into it half of the way and I chose to go the other half, but I really enjoy learning the flute’ (37).

| Table 4.16 Reasons why school students started learning |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| **Orientation**                | **Categories** | **% Occurrence** | **Continuers** | **Discontinuers** |
|                                |                | **(n= 250)**      |                |                  |
|                                 |                |                  | **a**          | **(% of a)**     | **(% of a)**     |
| Intrinsic reasons              | Had a desire to learn | 44%              | 59%            | 41%              |
|                                | Looking for enjoyment | 31%              | 56%            | 44%              |
|                                | Wanting to develop skill | 14%              | 56%            | 44%              |
|                                | Anticipating novelty   | 8%               | 53%            | 47%              |
|                                | Looking to the future  | 3%               | 88%            | 12%              |
| Extrinsic reasons              | Family influence    | 18%              | 63%            | 37%              |
|                                | Obliged to learn     | 8%               | 35%            | 65%              |
|                                | Availability         | 2%               | 35%            | 65%              |

Students also indicated an interest in the skill they would develop (14%); some anticipated such a skill would provide a future career or hobby, whilst others had certain goals in mind, such as, ‘To be able to listen to a song on the radio and know that I can play it’ (237), or ‘Because I wanted to be able to play music for my family’ (227).

A small number of responses reflected students’ pleasure at starting something new, or something that was anticipated to provide a contrast to their current activities – ‘I wanted to learn something new and this was a great opportunity’ (230). Some students were obliged to learn an instrument through their school program or choice of study course whilst access to band or an instrument provided impetus for 2% of all students.
Generally, discontinuers gave more extrinsic reasons for commencing instruction (see last column of last three rows, Table 4.16), and they were far less influenced to start learning by their family (categorised as an extrinsic influence) than were continuers.

**Reasons for continuing learning**

To deepen the understanding of students’ motives for learning, an additional open-ended item asked continuers why they wanted to continue their formal lessons. The most frequent reason for continuing was the enjoyment or fun derived from learning and playing (72%) (see Table 4.17), ‘I love playing it and it makes me very happy’ (10071).

Table 4.17 Main reasons for continuing to learn

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>% (n=132)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Looking for enjoyment</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wanting to develop skill</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looking to the future</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoying self-expression</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students were also keen to improve their skills at playing, for example, ‘Wanting to learn good songs and have fun’ (10152), and continuing ‘because it’s fun to do your best to learn something new; it's exciting’ (208). The place of music in the future was still an important consideration for students; one student stated they wanted to ‘grow up in a world of music and instruments’ (93). Several students commented on the self-expression that music afforded them, for example, ‘I enjoy to play. It releases energy’ (10053), ‘because playing the saxophone matches me and it makes me feel cool’ (96) and ‘because it makes me feel good to be able to play an instrument’ (138). Three students reported being obliged to continue, and two students referred to family reasons for continuing.

**Reasons for discontinuing**

Analysis of the Reasons for Discontinuing Scale revealed that there were no significant main effects or interactions between gender or between year groups although there was a non-significant trend for primary girls (M = 1.52, SE = .12) to be lower than primary boys (M = 1.76, SE = .12), and secondary girls (M = 1.82, SE = .10) to be higher than secondary boys (M = 1.67, SE = .14), F(1)2.84, p = .1. The group mean of the scale (M = 1.72, SD = .60) indicates that these reasons were not important reasons or causes for giving up formal lessons.

Asking discontinuers if they would recommence lessons elicited 112 responses. More than a third of discontinuers (35%) indicated that they would like to start lessons again at another time. 63% of discontinuers did not want to start again, and 3 students were not sure. Continuing students were also asked if they had started and stopped another instrument at some time in their
life. Just under half (63) of the 134 continuers had discontinued at least one instrument previously and this was more likely to be the keyboard.

Discontinuers indicated that they had alternatives to lessons and practice; of the total cohort of discontinuers (115), most listed one activity, about half nominated two alternative activities and approximately one third nominated three or more (see Table 4.18). The item with the highest frequency was ‘go out with friends’. This was followed by sport, dance or gymnastics, then school study, employment and other activities. Thirteen students reported not replacing music lessons with any alternative activity.

In sum, more than half the students replaced formal musical activities with leisure and social activity, and just under half of the students had sport or dance training and school study as a replacement, while a quarter stated that they undertook employment instead of lessons.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.18 Alternative activities chosen by discontinuers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Activity</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go out with friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport, gymnastics or dance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nothing extra</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To augment the *Reasons for Discontinuing* scale and the alternative-activities list, an open-ended question was designed to provide discontinuers an opportunity to reflect on their reasons for giving up. As shown in Table 4.19, nearly one quarter of the statements suggested that the teacher was part of the reason for discontinuing. Most of these responses suggested that relationships with the teacher were important to them: ‘If I had a nicer teacher’ (73), and, ‘Private lessons with calm teacher and that explained everything’ (191). ‘Nothing’ would have persuaded a fifth of discontinuing students to continue their learning, others stating that family or friends would have had little impact on their decision to discontinue.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.19 Barriers to continuation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Category</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling negative emotions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dislike or lack of choice of the instrument</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not feeling skilful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Students wrote about boredom and ‘hatred’ of practising, several were also concerned with their skill. Here students reacted to not being able to understand the instruction they were receiving: ‘Explain how to play more’ (151), ‘Understanding better’ (10120), or realising that improvement was possible: ‘If I realised how good I could be now’ (197).

Other external causes were cited: a different instrument, or own choice, enough time for practice, a suitable practice venues or liking of the music genre, and the cost of tuition. Three students were ambivalent about this question.

To examine the same issue from another angle, continuers were asked why they thought young people might be bored with instrumental music learning. Many participants responded with two or more reasons (see Table 4.20).

Table 4.20 Reasons why students become bored

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>% (n=123)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of enjoyment</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of challenge</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The need to practise</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of achievement</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not liking the instrument</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does not believe students could get bored</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Approximately one third of students associated boredom with the dislike of playing or practising their instrument. In the students’ view, practice and repetition were strongly associated with each other and with boredom, and it was the boredom arising from repetition and a lack of challenge in music learning that was distasteful. For example, one student wrote that ‘things are very repetitive and most of the time can be a bit boring’ (205), echoed by an older student: ‘Maybe because they play it for so long and get bored with it because it’s the one thing over and over’ (10043). Some students felt that learning progressed too slowly, teachers requiring them to do things previously accomplished: ‘Sometimes they might be getting told something they already know’ (229), ‘maybe if they’ve learnt this before’ (20). Boring practice also brought up notions of not understanding learning, of lack of persistence in the face of negative outcomes and unrealistic goals, for example, ‘They don’t do well straight away so they give up and they don’t practice’ (10052), and ‘They don’t know how to teach themselves or they try to learn things beyond themselves’ (187).

Some students felt that boredom was not a problem for learners, and some incredulity was expressed - ‘there is so much to do’ (28), ‘it is too late to stop’ (96). Continuers did not suggest causes such as teacher, instrument or choice, and others suggested that lack of connection to
music might be a reason: ‘They can’t feel the music very well’ (228), ‘because [they] have no passion’ (10044).

**Family Support**

Measuring continuing and discontinued students’ perceptions of support from their family, ANOVA indicated there were two main effects on this variable. There was a weak but significant difference between the two learner-groups; although discontinuers felt reasonably supported by their family, the continuers felt comparatively more strongly about this. A second effect was that of year-group; primary students felt more supported than secondary students (see Table 4.21).

There was a weak interaction of the two independent variables year-group and learner-status. This followed the direction of the main effects; secondary discontinuers felt the least supported in comparison to primary continuers who felt the most supported.

Table 4.21 Perceptions of family support among school students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean (SE)</th>
<th>F(df)</th>
<th>Sig</th>
<th>Partial eta-sq</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discontinuers</td>
<td>3.11 (.06)</td>
<td>4.01</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuers</td>
<td>3.30 (.07)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>3.41 (.05)</td>
<td>18.43</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>3.01 (.08)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary discontinuers</td>
<td>3.01 (.09)</td>
<td>4.26</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary continuers</td>
<td>3.60 (.06)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Levene’s test of equality of error variance was significant, $F(7, 231) = 2.57$, $p = .01$, meaning that there was more variation in discontinuers’ responses than in continuers’. The ratio in this instance was 1.85 and thus the assumptions of the ANOVA, that variances be equal, were not violated.

**Teacher Support**

Although discontinuers had a reasonably secure sense of support from their teacher, $M = 3.32$, above the mid-point, the continuers felt more supported. ANOVA indicated this as a single main effect, $F (1) = 15.35$, $p = .001$. There were no differences in gender, $F (1) = .23$, $p = .88$, or year-groups $F (1) = .61$, $p = .54$, nor were there interactions between the independent variables. The independent samples t-test statistics (Table 4.22) supported this analysis (unequal variances accounted for). Cohen’s $d = .66$ indicates that the effect size is moderate. Thus, continuing students felt their progress was observed and congratulated and that their teacher helped them to understand the task ahead.
Table 4.22 Differences among learners for Teacher Support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-group</th>
<th>Mean (SD)</th>
<th>t-test (df)</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Cohen’s d</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discontinuers</td>
<td>3.32 (.70)</td>
<td>t (169) 4.22</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuers</td>
<td>3.63 (.42)</td>
<td>t (169) 4.22</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Peer Support**

While it was not possible to extract a meaningful scale from the items representing peer interactions, ANOVA undertaken on each of the seven items as single measures showed some significant differences between groups.

Continuers felt more than discontinuers that their friends liked them to play an instrument, and they did not feel as left out by their friends for doing so. Primary students felt less teased for liking instrumental music and were not as likely to feel their practice annoyed others, in comparison to the secondary students. Primary students perceived less teasing than the continuers and the secondary discontinuers, while young female continuers were less likely to have experienced opposition when practising than secondary female continuers (see Table 4.23).

Overall, these items indicate that continuers felt less pressure from their peers as they were more alike (not feeling left out, having friends who played an instrument), while primary students felt more free all round, being less teased and perceiving less annoyance to others by their practice.

The interactions suggest some other variations; younger students seemed to be less aware of or reactive to others’ negative perceptions of music playing. In general, these items follow the trend of the Social Perceptions measure (discussed in the previous chapter), and the Family and Teacher Support scales above, and show that students perceive it important to have companions who share and support their interests and are sensitive to differences between themselves and their peers.

Table 4.23 Differences between students in perceptions of peers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Sub-group</th>
<th>Mean (SE)</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My friends liked me to play an instrument.</td>
<td>Disc Cont+</td>
<td>2.47 (.10) 3.07 (.11)</td>
<td>17.32 .001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because of my music learning, I felt left out by my friends.</td>
<td>Disc Pri Sec Cont pri+ Disc sec</td>
<td>3.42 (.07) 3.71 (.08) 3.83 (.09) 3.39 (.09)</td>
<td>7.3 .007</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was teased because I liked instrumental music.</td>
<td>Disc pri+ Disc sec</td>
<td>3.80 (.05) 3.55 (.07) 3.83 (.09) 3.39 (.09)</td>
<td>7.75 .006</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’ve heard doors or windows slammed shut when I practised.</td>
<td>Cont sec F Cont pri F+</td>
<td>2.57 (.29) 3.50 (.14)</td>
<td>6.19 .014</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item</td>
<td>Sub-group</td>
<td>Mean (SE)</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Sig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My practising often annoyed others.</td>
<td>Pri+</td>
<td>3.23 (.09)</td>
<td>5.76</td>
<td>.017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sec</td>
<td>2.86 (.13)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Disc = discontinuer; Cont = Continuer; Pri = Primary; Sec = Secondary; M = Male; F = female
* Higher mean because individual agrees with the statement
+ Higher mean because individual disagrees with the statement

**DISCUSSION**

This chapter has examined students’ subjective perceptions in two important dimensions of their music learning, and has shown that learning experiences can be highly emotional and persuasive. The picture of discontinuers as a group was composed of more feelings of disappointment, frustration and boredom with learning than continuers, although at the same time music was a favoured dimension of their lives. Their experiences detailed here mirror the discontinuers’ feelings and activities observed by Pitts et al. (2000b); the current study supports and enhances those findings through the subjective reflections found in the open-ended items by the students themselves. Continuers put their finger on the problem of discontinuation so to speak when they identified discontent with parents, teachers, learning attitude and repertoire as reasons for boredom and disengagement from learning.

It seems that many students started their instruments with clear ideas about what they intended to do with their learning or what they wished to get out of the experience. The statement ‘I wanted to’ was a simple reflection of their desire to learn, and many students indicated that the motivations behind this straight forward response came from a desire to take their place in the family’s musical life, or to develop their skills to satisfy their need to achieve certain goals such as singing and playing. A fair number of students were attracted by the novelty of learning an instrument, and perhaps by the opportunity for personal exploration. Discontinuers, as found in other studies, described more extrinsic reasons for starting (McPherson & Renwick, 2001).

By far the most important reason that students chose to continue learning is that they enjoyed it. Enjoyment, skill and future concerns were all concerned with the self: self-satisfaction, self-development, and self-expression. It would seem that students chose to continue because they felt that to do so was good for them, that this represents for them a ‘covenanted’ benefit of participation (Deyhle, Hess & Le Compte, 1992). Perhaps this intrinsic enjoyment of music, both aesthetically and in a personally liberating way, triumphed over the extrinsic influence of family or other concerns, as evidenced by the absence of parental pressure for continuing. Intrinsic interest is vital to many aspects of task accomplishment (Hidi, 1990) and the higher levels of involvement by the continuers, demonstrated by participation in ensembles for example, substantiate the role that interest plays in learning an instrument.
With respect to disengaging, just as myriad reasons are given for discontinuing in the literature, the Reasons for Discontinuing scale tapped into aspects of learning outcomes as well as environment, and also bringing in aspects that are out of individuals’ direct control; these factors coalesced in a meaningful way to suggest the nature of the influences on young people’s decisions to discontinue. The low mean of the scale suggested however, that altogether these were not a predictive set of factors that might fully explain why students give up. Moreover, the mean suggests that giving up is a much more complex process or outcome than attributions to simple reasons. Such a result lends some weight to the decision to use a second method to probe attrition more deeply.

When feelings about learning, specifically, feelings about practice, were examined, the scales measuring cognition and affect about learning indicated significant differences between continuers and discontinuers on each of Self-Efficacy, Sufficient Knowledge and Practice Mastery. Students’ self-efficacy was related to their status as continuer or discontinuer, congruent with previous literature that has explored the role of self-efficacy in music exams and learning (McCormick & McPherson, 2003; McPherson & McCormick, 2006). Since self-efficacy concerns an individual’s appraisals of how well they might accomplish a specific future task, and these appraisals are largely based on prior experiences (Cantwell, 2004), then it could be said of discontinuers that they felt less confident of future outcomes largely through disappointing earlier experiences. The moderate correlation (.41) between the Self-Efficacy and Sufficient Knowledge scales also supports this premise. These results are consistent with previous research in academic settings showing lower levels of efficacy to be associated with lack of persistence (Bandura, 1997).

Discontinuers clearly felt less mastery and more doubt in their practice than continuers although discontinuers’ responses were not entirely negative. Garner (1990) suggests that students may find it hard to apply strategies to solve problems when they do not have the mental schema with which to represent the problem fully. McPherson (2005) and Barry and Hallam (2002) have already noted that many beginners have not developed a dependable aural schemata – an aural knowledge of sound relationships – and this may influence their strategic behaviour. However, the discontinuers in this sample had been learning on average for 2 (primary) or 3.5 (secondary) years and it might have been assumed that they would have developed their aural and mental schemata to a more confident and knowledgeable level. As this now seems less the case, discontinuers appear to have made little progress over the years in developing these aural schemata along with the knowledge base with which to address challenging tasks. When individuals feel unsure, disappointed or discontented in their activity, they are less likely to re-engage unless there is a more powerful external ‘press’ (R. Ryan & Deci, 2000a).
Continuing students suggested that not enjoying music was an outcome of low competence and low achievement in practice. Competence beliefs are essential to intrinsic motivation (Deci & R. Ryan, 1985), and influence expectancies for success and task-valuing (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002), and the qualitative descriptions of competence here correspond with these theoretical premises, demonstrating the students’ experiences and understandings of the effects of low perceived competence.

In a similar vein, variety and challenge are core concepts of learning theory, as qualities such as vividness, contrast and novelty stimulate the senses, thereby allowing the brain to select information for processing in short term memory (Biehler & Snowman, 1990). Continuing students commented that a dispirited reiteration of the same old pieces and techniques and an accompanying sense of lack of skill, was a likely cause of boredom with learning. When learning consists of rote and repetition, little of this learning enters into long-term memory as few links or restructuring of knowledge occur in the process. Students would then feel inept when faced with similar tasks later, as they once again have to learn the basic skill required to accomplish the task. Whilst repetitive practice methods may produce “any product” (Garner, 1990, p. 519), they have been shown to be of little value (Hallam, 2001). Additionally, students may distinguish little of salience in the musical environment ‘because they have hardly any feelings about music’ (234) and so experience subjective monotony (Perkins & A. Hill, 1985).

Overall, continuers’ insights into the problems of learning, revealed particularly in their open-ended responses, show quite distinctly where students believe problems might lie. They clearly demarcate between internal and external causes. Following Prenzel’s (1992, p. 87) definition of interest, the students have described the overall feeling as a dislike of music or practice, they describe cognitive conflict (the music could be too easy or too difficult), they question the individual’s depth of involvement since some seem to give up so easily, and many times, they are aware that there is little self-observed increase of competence. Loss of interest is fatal to persistence and intrinsic motivation, for without interest as a reason to engage in an activity, such engagement will not be seen as worthwhile or chosen voluntarily (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). The practice of music involves a sustained engagement that is increasingly self-regulated as skill develops; if a student’s interest is not gained or maintained, then intrinsic enjoyment is not fostered, and the cycle of interest, activity, knowledge and development is truncated.

Turning to the social context of learning, the analysis found that family had a sizable influence on students’ reasons for starting an instrument, although a cross-sectional analysis of the open-ended item suggested that continuing students probably modify their reasons; they become less observant of family influence, and more focused on their personal satisfaction and skill development, although they appreciated the support and willingness of their parents. As has been found by other researchers (McPherson & Renwick, 2001) though, discontinuers tended to
cite more external reasons for commencing their learning, importantly including less family demand. There was less situational influence for continuers, suggesting that family influence as experienced by the students in this study, rather than being an external pressure or demand, actually consists of warmth and support that results in imitation and identification.

It was significant that discontinuers felt comparatively less encouraged or supported by teachers, confirming earlier findings about teachers (e.g. Davidson et al., 1998; Sloboda & Davidson, 1996; Sloboda & M. Howe, 1996; Graziano, 1991). Students are susceptible to teachers’ goals, or the ‘classroom climate’ (Ames & Archer, 1988; Sandene, 1997) and relationships between discontinuers and their teachers in this study seemed to be less rich than those experienced by continuers. The influence of teachers on students’ liking for music is well established and this data further supports previous findings that sensitive communication (Hamaan, Lineburgh & Paul, 1998) and a sense of autonomy from a teacher (Deci & R. Ryan, 2000; Grolnick & R. Ryan, 1989) impinge on students’ liking for music (Bakker, 2005; Cassie, 2008). Students wanted clear explanations and a sense of choice in repertoire with their teachers, and if these things had been in place, some say they may have reconsidered their decisions to participate.

Conclusion
These two chapters comprising the results of the first stage of the study have described many fine-grained differences between continuers and discontinuers; in most measures, these two groups of young people differed. The implications of these differences has been discussed; although no causality can be ascribed to the findings, some aspects, such as liking for music and family musical background, were clearly associated with the duration of formal learning. Other, ‘higher-order’, elements of the individual dimension, such as beliefs about musical ability and boredom proneness, were not found to be associated with level of involvement in music, suggesting these elements are less influential on, or susceptible to, the day-to-day challenges of music learning.

The measures described in this fourth chapter reflected attitudes, emotions or feelings about learning as well as perceptions of the social environment. Altogether, the findings bring to mind the multivariate literature described in the literature review; the findings of this stage of the study concur with the general conclusions found in the scholarly literature on retention and attrition. As in the extant literature, no one identifying characteristic, attribute, attitude or response is evident among these measures that would alone contribute to predicting attrition or retention, although the enquiry and the results point to the differing affective reactions of continuers and discontinuers. This lends support to the strengthening call to bring affect into motivational research (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002; Pintrich et al., 1993).
Further, the open-ended questions revealed understanding and perceptiveness on the part of the students themselves. However, while the results of this stage of the study have contributed new information about the affective dimension of instrumental learning, perhaps there remains an undiscovered dimension that upon disclosure might add structure and understanding to knowledge about music learning. The next chapters follow up the insights articulated by the young people by drawing entirely on learners’ retrospective accounts of their learning to “elaborate, illustrate and clarify” (J. Greene et al., 1989, p. 266) their feelings and constructions of learning, and how these influence the quality and meaning of their music learning.
PART III
THE QUALITATIVE METHOD
Chapter 5. Connecting with Learning: The Emergence of Affinity for Music

Introduction

Drawing on the texts of individuals’ accounts of their music learning histories, this and the following four chapters explore the subjective experience of learning. Each chapter in this second stage of the study explores different facets of the subjective, experiential dimension of learning, revealing concepts and constructions grounded in participants’ feelings, ideas, beliefs and experiences. Through the interpretive-descriptive method (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994), the analysis entails examining and coming to understand the ways in which individuals responded to music learning; both their emotional responses to music itself, as well as their evaluations of themselves and of their learning environment. It also focuses on the implications of these personal experiences for the quality and longevity of individuals’ engagement with formal learning.

The chapter starts by describing the participants in this stage of the study and the initial coding structure from which the themes presented in this chapter were derived. Following these introductory sections, the main body of the chapter presents an interpretation of the evolution of participants’ initiation and involvement with music into a rich and compelling connection with music.

Participants in Stage 2

The analysis of Stage 2 draws on interviews gathered from 66 participants: primary school students and adults who had learned a musical instrument during their school years, and young adults undertaking a music performance course in a tertiary institution. The primary students were 17 students who had completed the questionnaire in the first stage of the study; these 17 had commenced and discontinued their formal learning by the time they completed the questionnaire. Their age range was 10-12 years, 11 girls and 6 boys. The adult group were 32 young and mature adults from the community, who had learned an instrument in primary and/or secondary school; they ranged in age from 21 to approximately 75 years, 19 females and 13 males. The 17 tertiary students ranged in age from 19 to 25 years, 6 females and 11 males.

The background of these participants was described in Chapter Two, but a further brief description of their term of their music enrolment is provided here. All the primary school students (identification abbreviation ‘PD’) had discontinued formal instruction by Year 6 (11-12 yrs of age). They had learned on average 2.5 years, with a range of 6 months to 3 years. Of the adults (identification abbreviation ‘A’), five had also discontinued by Year 6 of their primary schooling. Altogether twelve adults had learned for between one and three years. Eight adults
had learned from 4 to 8 eight years, and a further 8 learned for more than 8 years. With one exception, all the tertiary students (identification abbreviation ‘T’) had learned for more than 9 years. Grouping the participants on the basis of their approximate terms of learning, there were:

29 Short-term learners (≤ 3 yrs): 17 primary school students (PD), 12 adults (A)
9 Mid-term learners (4-8 yrs): 8 adults (A), 1 tertiary student (T)
24 Long-term learners (9+ yrs): 8 adults (A), 16 tertiary students (T)

Participants’ recall of length of enrolment was unreliable however, therefore these could only be approximate measures of duration of enrolment, and are used as a general indicator only where necessary.

The majority of adults had played a keyboard instrument, the remainder learning strings (5), wind (3), brass (2) or guitar (1). Tertiary students played strings (4), wind (4), piano (4), brass (2), guitar (2) or percussion (1). More than half the primary students had played a wind instrument, others played piano (4), guitar (2), strings (2) or drums (1).

All participants were given pseudonyms to more easily identify cases across the study, and for textual flow for the reader. A list of participants and their terms of enrolment is located in Appendix U.

This chapter takes up the notion of the subjective, briefly explored in the fourth chapter, with an in-depth examination of participants’ recollections of their feelings about their involvement with music. The raw data included their stories about starting their learning, their reasons for continuing their learning, and their accounts of involvement with parents and peers in their field of music learning. The 1st level coding categories providing the foundation for the analysis in this chapter included the relationship and social structure codes (text that revealed the different roles that other persons act out or fulfil), attitude codes (feelings about learning and interactions), identity codes (thoughts about disposition, identity, and core attributes of self), activity codes (listening and playing), and the motivation process code (text concerning internal and externalised interest). (These codes and their definitions may be found in the codebook in Appendix T).

In the pages to follow, qualities of affect for music evident among the participants will be outlined in four themes: discovering music (the Explorer), engaging with music (the Early Engager), committed to music (the Music Lover) and identifying as a musician (the Musician). These four qualities of affect were inextricably linked with different qualities of social interactions among friends and family, and the interpretation of the roles taken by others in these interactions is woven in with the description of the music affect themes.
The descriptions of connection to music recounted by participants spoke of more than liking for or interest in music. By looking at patterns of continuing participation, the changing social interactions and the different levels of emotional connection to music among the participants, the notion of affinity for music arose as a meta-theme or phenomenon that helped describe the depth and dimensionality of participants’ feelings for music, and it was an effective way of explaining the connection with music learning described in the sections below. The more personally involved and committed to music an individual was, the longer (generally) they participated in instruction and the greater their involvement and skill development. This emotional or personal involvement reflected the degree to which music learning and playing became a core aspect of their self.

**DISCOVERING MUSIC - THE EXPLORER**

The initial exploration of music for all participants arose from opportunities to participate. Exploring music gave some young players a sense of fun and enjoyment; others were drawn to music because they had always wanted to play, had loved the sound of music or a particular instrument, or had siblings who inspired them to become involved. These opportunities are described below.

*Music for fun*

Many participants described their early involvement as serendipitous opportunity: Nathan decided he ‘might have a go anyway and just do lessons’ (PD 99: 6); others were given access: ‘I might as well sing as well as [play] guitar’ (Chloe, PD 53: 32); some were donated an instrument by a helpful relative. Eric, now a tertiary piano student, described his introduction to music as ‘just’ another opportunity to broaden his experience:

*Eric:* It was just something new, something different, and it was something offered to me, and I was like, ‘Yes, that would be great’, and I enjoyed poking around on the little keyboard at the time. (T 610: 12)

Fellow student Adrian felt similarly:

*Adrian:* Whereas, when I took up the trombone, the only reason I chose trombone was because the school didn’t have a saxophone so I thought I would give trombone a go. (T 604: 6)

Music learning seemed to serve as entertainment and the prospect of fun was a principal motive for several among the primary students, adults and tertiary students. Patrick explained his reasons for choosing saxophone: ‘Well, at first I wanted to play saxophone…and the saxophone looked really fun’ (PD 60: 01). Fun was felt to be had through trying a new instrument, being part of the school band, doing something different. For instance, Timothy stated, ‘I hadn’t really done anything on the guitar before and I thought it would be fun’ (PD 227: 8). Similarly, adults
recalled the expectation of amusement, for example, Sandra ‘loved the sound of it, and the wind instrument was a bit different, and I thought it would be fun to learn to play’ (A 7037: 25).

‘I always wanted to play music’
Taking up lessons enabled other individuals to realise hopes held since early childhood, even though the exact origin of these hopes was not always clear. The phrase, ‘I always...’, was frequently used to describe a long-standing pull to music. Primary students as well as adults and tertiary students described this as a reason to commence:

   *Alison:* I always wanted to learn the flute. (PD 24: 5)
   *Ann:* Ever since I first set eyes on a piano, it’s always been my favourite instrument. So I wanted to learn the piano from a very young age. (A 7022: 3)
   *Dan:* I always had an interest in drums from a very early age, and I just loved the look of drums. (T 603: 3)

As some of the statements above suggest, the feeling for music could not be sourced, it seemed to have always been there. Although not sure of the origin of their motives, both Sarah and Edwina had always sensed the presence of music in their lives:

   *Sarah:* I don’t know really what caused me to want to do it, something I always wanted to do....And there was always music flowing throughout our house, and it was just something that was a part of my life. And I, not had to do, but loved to do. (A 7030: 11 & 97)
   *Edwina:* I really wanted to learn to play. It was something I had, there wasn’t a great deal of rhyme or reason, I just wanted to learn to play. (A 7021: 16)

For Sarah above, and others, it was a gradual perception of an apparently intuitive understanding of music:

   *Daniel:* It partly came from me because I understood the music. It wasn’t like it was totally out of my world. I understood the music, I knew what it was expressing and it was just a matter of whether I could do it on the cello or not. Once I realised that, then the ambition and the drive started to come. (T 606: 15)

Being ‘hooked’, as Adrian felt, was another way of describing an intense attraction that drew the individual into music. ‘Hooked’ also suggests the idea of being captured for the long haul, which for Adrian (and Daniel above) was substantiated through their tertiary studies.

   *Adrian:* I wanted to play sax but once I started playing the trombone. That was it. I was hooked. (T 604: 8)

‘I loved the sound of it’
Many participants referred to the aural appeal of a specific instrument that inspired them to create the sound themselves. They described hearing the music at concerts, on the radio, at church and at school events.

   *Hilary:* This lady was playing the violin, and I was just, you know, I fell in love with the sound, it was so, really, I just, I really liked it. (PD 191: 4)
Zoë: So I wanted to be able, as a very beginner at 6, I wanted to be able to make that sound. (T 601: 6)

Annette: I heard the cello, and I was like, ‘I’m learning that one’. (T 605: 3)

Participants convincingly spoke of their love of the instrument’s sound; as Andras described, he simply ‘didn’t know anything more than that’ (T 7040: 51).

‘It was just a family thing’

The original impulse for other participants to commence learning came from the family. Behind each of these prompts were adults who facilitated their child’s opportunities, and more importantly, there were children who wanted to respond to their parents’ guidance, and who took on some of their parents’ value or interest in music.

Ben, for example, felt that his interest in learning emerged from opportunities within his family to experiment and share; he later stated that he had learned that piano was also ‘good’ for him. Similarly, Skye was helped by her parents to start:

Ben: Dad used to have an organ sort of thing, and he got me started. In grandma’s house, there was a piano….My brother and Mum [also played that piano]. (PD 09: 4)

Skye: I was always sort of a bit interested in it and Mum - my parents wanted me to learn an instrument. (PD 53: 5)

Nicks’ father seemed to be quite involved in his son’s initiation into music:

Nick: When I was about 5, Dad said, ‘How would you like to learn recorder?’ So he took me to Foley’s and we bought a recorder and we started. (T 617: 3)

Timothy was primarily oriented to following his mother’s suggestions - ‘I was pretty much doing it for her, because she really wanted me to start another instrument’ (PD 227: 7), although he later expressed a more independent liking for music learning. Others were inspired by siblings (Rebecca below), or relatives to commence their learning:

Rebecca: My brothers and sisters used to play all the time, and I used to kind of get jealous, so I thought, I said to Mum one day, ‘Can I play an instrument?’ and she said, ‘Would you like to have music lessons?’ And I said yes and she let me. (PD 26: 4)

Tom: Mum wanted me to play recorder in Year 1, and I loved it. (T 607: 4)

When adults reflected on how they came to start, they commented on the power of family tradition in persuading children to learn; they felt their parents wanted to provide a music education because it was thought to be good for young people, it was something that ‘ought’ to be done. Some like Fiona below also reflected on the culture of their childhood, which they felt encouraged a valuing of music, self-discipline and commitment.

Fiona: I think it was also a different culture that you didn’t expect such instant results, it wasn’t so much of the instant gratification, and I suppose in my particular family, it was if you started something, you finished, it didn’t matter whether you liked it or not, you just got in and did it. (A 7012: 10)
Adults stated that as children, compliance with parents was usual, as for many it was ‘not their place’ to question the parental decision, although there was an intimation by some that they were learning for their parents more than for themselves. Andras described this willingness to comply:

*Andras:* I think you did it because your parents said you ought to, and you thought, ‘Oh well, I don’t mind doing it’ and so you did it. (A 7040: 14)

Andras’ willingness to learn suggests a positive connection between his parents’ wishes and his intentions. Other participants stated this association more explicitly; they felt they wanted to learn because they felt connected to members of the family who already played, and they wanted to take part in the family life that involved music. Having experienced warm family interactions around music, they wanted to emulate, share and belong to their family’s activities. Dale described how his many afternoons of family pleasure articulated into a desire to do the same:

*Dale:* When I was about 5 we used to go to my father’s mother’s place and she played piano, pretty much old time music, things like *Ain’t Misbehaving*, songs from the 20s, 30s, barn dance. She used to play and we used to sit around and sing, on Sunday afternoons after roast dinner, and sing. So it was just a family thing - I got intrigued watching her play piano. (A 7011: 3)

His ‘intrigue’ with the piano grew from these first emotionally connected experiences into a far greater connection with music, where he played semi-professional gigs and in religious service for many years.

Family connections could also help other motives fall into place to encourage a more connected or integrated sense of motivation, as for Annette. Not only did she want to follow her parents, she also loved the sound of the cello:

*Annette:* Both my parents were musicians so I suppose I just wanted to do what they were doing, and I just enjoyed doing it....But I suppose as well in the back of your head is always, ‘Do what your parents did’ idea. (T 605: 6)

Though motivation or initiation of lessons by parents might appear to be a more extrinsic influence on children, it seems here that parents exerted an emotional or affective influence. Rather than parent influence being an external pressure, it appeared that parents were providing a template on which the child could develop their initial interest, desire or exploration; through warmth and nurturance, parent values and beliefs about learning music were transmitted and these quite possibly laid a foundation for a more internally located curiosity or awareness of music.
STRENGTHENING THE CHILD’S RELATIONSHIP WITH MUSIC

Participants’ descriptions of their parents’ continuing involvement in their learning were generally affirmative; when parents took on roles that were emotionally supportive, they acted as encouragers. They were also intellectually supportive, helping to regulate practice, as guardians, and giving musical advice as a coach might. These patterns of parent activities and relationships became a guide for the child through the months and years of music learning. Nicks’ brief statement captures the essence of these roles: ‘From the early days there was the insistence of my parents and also the encouragement of my parents’ (T 617: 67). Relationships with teachers also contributed to the child’s connection with music; where teachers provided a positive approach, giving emotional and informational support to the child, participants described their liking of the lesson and a lack of anxiety about achievement or performance. The roles of encouragers, guardians and coaches played by parents and teachers are described below.

Encouragers

Encouragers were generally family members (including grandparents) as well as teachers. The most important function of the encourager was to hearten or support the young player; they did not offer specific advice, just a willing ear. The encourager, an auditor or companion who observed and expressed positive feelings about the student’s progress or performance, promoted positive social emotions. Most participants described pride and enjoyment in showing what they could do to this special audience. The support encouraged students ‘to keep on going’; for example, John stated:

John: I suppose what kept me going through most of the years was my Mum encouraging me to continue on….I would say my Mum had a large impact on why I kept playing for all those years. (A 7014: 39)

When Nathan, Hilary and Fiona played for their parents, they experienced sustaining encouragement:

Nathan: I’d always sort of show Mum when she came to pick us up from Grandma’s. And Grandma listened to me too. (PD 99: 22)

Hilary: I used to get my Mum and Dad up and say, ‘Roll up everybody, watch the famous me, play the viola’, and I used to practise in front of them … and they all clapped. (PD 191: 19)

Fiona: My father in particular would say how nice it sounded, or sometimes he would hum along, which used to put me off no end. (A 7012: 27)

Teachers who encouraged their students communicated a similar atmosphere:

Ben: We’d just do the songs and have a laugh and that’s about it and she’d tell stories that might have happened the day before. (PD 12: 7)

Adults and tertiary students described the patience, acceptance, and persistent encouragement of many of the teachers they had encountered during childhood and youth. These atmospheres
were ‘non-threatening’, comfortable and friendly; some teachers feeling more like a ‘sister’ than a pedagogue. Teachers who were encouraging were non-judgemental, had few expectations and were easily approached for advice.

Dan: You could tell he had just a love of people and giving his knowledge out. (T 603: 63)

Nick: My first piano teacher was a brilliant, I don’t know what became of her, and she was a beautiful girl, she was so encouraging to me, and I was 8 or so. (T 617: 67)

Nick’s recollection of his ‘beautiful’ teacher was not an infrequent response.

Encouragement from parents and teachers helped children’s self-esteem, as Renée describes:

Renée: And that was something I loved being able to do; my uncle would always come around and say, ‘Play the piano for me until I fall asleep please.’ (A 7038: 77)

Pertinent among these reflections were adults’ and tertiary students’ memories of not being ‘forced’ to practise, of being offered freedom to choose. Satisfaction accompanied their feelings of autonomy.

Lyndal: And I have never felt from my parents that I have had to do it. It’s always been a choice. (T 602: 51)

Vaughan: I just loved it from day one. And used to practise. Mum and Dad didn’t need to push me to practise, I was really happy practising. (A 7032: 12)

Amongst tertiary students, descriptions of parents as encouragers were more varied in activity than described by the children and adults. Parents would find teachers, drive to rehearsals, substitute practice for household chores, and finance travel and study. Many tertiary students described their parents’ commitment:

Tom: They would do anything for me, but then it’s up to me. They did it because they knew they had to, not that, but they brought me to my lesson and the rest was up to me. My parents have helped me a lot. (T 607: 52)

Jak: Because I owe my life to my Mum, I owe my music life, she didn’t do anything for herself but she put everything, her whole life to make sure as kids, the reason why we are here now, is because of her. Money she put into tutoring us, it’s not an obligation. (T 607: 60)

Encouraging parents helped tertiary students to find their way back to music if they felt dejected, giving autonomy and latitude. Lyndal below describes the understanding her mother extended, sentiments that were common to other tertiary students.

Lyndal: My parents have been really supportive. And my Mum is a music administrator, so she has known what I have gone through to try and get myself back on track. (T 602: 56)

Several participants offered reflection on the purpose and effect of this support. There was a sense that family support was critical, that family members were needed as models or encouragers, creating an environment in which musical learning was appreciated and promoted. Encouraging learning was considered an important parental role, for if ‘all children have to be
pushed a bit’ (Bob A 7006: 70) then ‘encouragement of the person has everything to do with how they progress’ (May A 7007: 60). Ann suggests similarly in the following:

Ann: Children who belong to a musical family have a tremendous head start because parents are interested, as long as they don’t push them too much, as long as they encourage them without pushing them. Apart from that, if the parents are not musical, like my parents were, I think they should make an effort to encourage children that show an interest. (A 7022: 86)

Positive social interaction centering on music was believed to give learners a ‘head-start’ in their musical progress, to improve their self worth, and to provide the foundation for autonomy at a later stage. For example, Edwina described her first hand experience and beliefs about this support:

Edwina: [My mother] understood the value of having that kind of support there. And make time to go through stuff like that with both of us. She felt that it was important that she showed that she was supporting us. (A 7021: 66).

Edwina continued her reflection by stating that her mother also supported the development of their self-regulation through modelling persistence and resilience: ‘She knew that neither of us would develop quite that persistence unless someone else was there to help us and give us a little push whenever we needed it’. This demand was the role of the guardian, discussed below.

Guardians and coaches

Across the three cohorts, there was strong evidence of parents as guardians. Guardians observed lessons and practice, and kept time schedules. A powerful aspect of the guardian’s role was the ability to permit or forfeit lessons, prescribe practice and dispense or remove privileges. Sanja’s comment below summarises both the role and the emotional quality of this type of parenting:

Sanja: I was very much pestered by my Mum, who thought if she was paying for lessons I better practise, and because I really had the attitude that I didn’t want to give up but I didn’t want to practise either. So she made me, not made me, she would encourage me to practise and that was a good thing. (T 611: 25)

It appeared that the purpose for this kind of parental action was to maintain regularity of practice and persistence in the face of difficulty. After much reminding to practise prior to lessons, Timothy stated that, ‘At one stage, Mum told me that if I don’t practise then, really, I can’t go on for the next term’ (PD 227: 23). Similarly, Diana and Bill recalled their parents’ prompting:

Diana: But I can remember Mum saying, ‘Come on, you have got to do it.’ So I must have put it off at some point. (A 7042: 44)

Bill: A lot of driving from Mum, ‘Go and do your practice’… I’m pretty sure if Dad had not insisted on making sure that I got practice in, I would have let it lapse myself. (A 7001: 34).

The effectiveness of guardianship was evident in Bill’s description of his parents’ role in his learning.
One outcome of compliance with the family guardian was the establishment of a practice routine. Of all participants, the primary students were least familiar with the routines of practice; only a few mentioned this type of regulation from their parents in terms of committing to regular, useful practice.

*Hilary:* Mum said like, ‘You put your mind to it’...my Mum would say, ‘You've wanted to play the viola, and you're going to stick to it’. (PD 191: 28)

*Rebecca:* So Mum said, ‘Do practice every day’, or, ‘It’s important to practise regularly’, but I thought, ‘No, I’ve got to do my homework.’ (PD 26: 10)

The notion of routine was more strongly recalled by adults and tertiary students. Routines included setting practice times and amounts, ensuring that all members of the family had their turn at practice, or keeping learners on the teacher’s track.

*John:* As a younger kid I was more like that, because when Mum was more influencing and structuring my day, I would get up and do fifteen minutes of practice before breakfast and then I’d go off to school, and then I would do another 15 mins or something of an afternoon. (A 7014: 23)

*Zoë:* And my parents weren’t musicians, and while they tried, my mother usually achieved, helped me practise, helped me do the routine, those things. (T 701: 27)

*Andras:* But I think the parents too would have said, ‘That’s not what you are meant to be practising.’ At least my Dad would have. And so it was seen as not so much as irrelevant, but, ‘You are getting distracted, get back onto what you are supposed to be doing.’ (A 7040: 29)

Parents’ determination to persist at regular practice and commitment pushed students to remain engaged for longer and not surprisingly, there was some anxiety and displeasure in connection with guardians. This seemed to reflect students’ resentment that parents were the chief negotiators of the continuance-practice nexus.

*Bella:* [I] didn’t want to practise. I’d do it for five minutes then say, ‘OK, I did it.’ It used to start arguments because Mum would say, ‘No, its not enough, please go back upstairs and do it,’ and I’d say, ‘No, it’s enough.’ (PD 62: 20)

*Renée:* Practice was always a big brawl. We used to have fights. My family, Mum and Dad and I used to have fights when I was younger because I didn’t want to practise and they actually threatened to sell the piano once because I just wasn’t interested. (A 7038: 37)

Under parents’ compliancy rules (predominantly recalled by adults), it was disrespectful to question authority, and some experienced this duty to practise as a ‘big stick’. Practice became a discipline tool used by parents and teachers, and forays into other musical worlds, such as improvising or ‘doodling’, as described by some children and adults, were proscribed.

*Maria:* My memory is like it was a big stick. But I think that is also the way as a child how you feel. (A 7034: 68)

*Bill:* At that stage you don’t see the reason for it. Like learning to brush your teeth, don’t want to but you have got to. (A 7001: 34)

For the few tertiary students whose parents were described in this way, the sense of pressure or unpleasantness was not debilitating, as it seemed to be balanced by the young person’s own
interest. This is evident in Nick’s statement cited earlier, for whilst there was ‘a lot of parents’ insistence’, also ‘there was an underlying enjoyment of it’ (T 617: 8).

Primary students’ comments about family influence indicated a further dimension of parent support. Much as a sporting coach might, many parents were involved in their children’s practice, listening for mistakes, providing information, and giving advice on how to practise and improve.

*Penny:* Because my Mum played music when she was little, I would kind of ask her if that sounded right, and she’d say yes or no, because she could read the music too. And so she kind of helped me with that. (PD 34: 12)


While there was little identification of parent musical expertise in the primary children’s texts, it seems that some parents had enough knowledge to help their children with practice tasks. The majority of primary students described some aspect of parent coaching, although few adults or tertiary students mentioned their parents’ influence in this way. Even so, two tertiary students suggested that this sort of help was important in childhood, a time when it was more difficult to plan and to persist.

*Edwina:* When I was younger I didn’t really have the concentration to be able to do it on my own. So it was good to have that kind of support. There almost all the time. Especially when 20 minutes a day 5 times a week is a bit daunting for an 8 year old. And having a parent there who doesn’t see it as being quite so much, helps to settle you down a bit, get you into the habit of doing it. (A 7021: 53)

*Nick:* In the early days, Dad used to make charts, I do a half hour, I’d tick it off, and my Dad was really into goal setting and motivational sort of things. So he would always sit me down and give me talks and devise some kind of scheme; if I do this I get to go to pizza hut...My parents were very proactive about getting me to keep playing. They were very determined. (T 617: 31)

When this knowledgeable environment was not available, Sandra perceived it as a loss:

*Sandra:* Because my family wasn’t musical they couldn’t help me except as in listening, and being supportive. Like my Mum would say, ‘That sounds better’, but sometimes I would say, ‘Well, I was playing it wrong anyway’. But being supportive, ‘That sounds great’, or, ‘You sound like you’ve improved’. Things like that. No one could help me. I ended up trying to teach them. So I didn’t have the family help that some people do. (A 7037: 66)

Although feeling encouraged by her parents, Sandra was still aware of her need for musical knowledge and felt disadvantaged by the lack of task assistance.

In summary, for most, the early days of discovering music were filled with fun, novelty, or a sense of belonging. Interactions with family were generally positive, parents and other family members providing encouragement for some, and guidance or supervision for others. While generally only the youngest participants described the specific advice their parents gave them, many adults and a handful of tertiary students described the watchfulness of their parents.

Where experiences with teachers were positive, these helped young people feel comfortable and
accepted. Together these acts of emotional or ‘moral’ support helped to build up and nurture the bond of the child to music and learning.

Most participants in the study described their connection with music in terms of this first degree of affinity. A proportion of these explorers also found an increasing enjoyment of music, becoming enthusiastic about music learning. The nature of this deeper connection with music was defined by continuing positive affect, increased involvement with playing and development of skill. Individuals who described this deeper connection were more accepting and committed to music than those who were exploring music learning, and they described different levels of knowledge and value for music in comparison to their earlier days in music.

**ENTHUSIASM FOR MUSIC - THE EARLY ENGAGER**

For those music students who continued their learning after the early ‘exploring’ period, participation in music became an increasingly interesting, important or enjoyable activity. Often a reason for continuing was the pleasure received; below are examples of tertiary students’ degree of empathy with music in their school days:

*Damien:* I began feeling this good satisfaction when I would start making things up on the piano. (T: 614: 3)

*Nick:* I started playing a lot of jazz and I really enjoyed doing that. (T 617: 10)

Adult participant Fiona suggested that her initial interest was triggered by her siblings’ musical involvement, yet her own affinity and value for music led her to see a personal worth in continuing with learning while she was at school:

*Fiona:* I think the fact that I wanted to, I had to wait so long to start, meant that when I did start, I was happy to continue. (A 7012: 3)

As evident in Fiona’s statement, continuing instruction was a characteristic of early engagers. As they continued their instruction, their skills improved, and there were other activities such as second instruments, theory or exams in which to participate.

*Betty:* I think when you get to a certain stage in piano you have to do musicianship exams as well, so I did those exams. (A 7003: 3)

*Sid:* I took lessons continuously for a long time…for a number of years, and I got quite good. (A 7008: 5)

Another characteristic of early engagers was their projected future participation. This included joining band or orchestra, continuing instruction, or specialising on one instrument. Michael (PD), for instance, having resumed lessons immediately prior to the interview, stated that he now had ‘way more’ interest in music, and was hoping to form a band. Tertiary students easily
recalled such childhood or youthful aspirations; at this time they seemed already to be aware of a musical future.

Zoë: But I probably wanted to be part of an orchestra. (T 601: 6)

Jak: At that stage then I was thinking a long term goal of something, I think I wanted to focus on saxophone. (T 609: 17)

Nick: I actually liked doing that maybe more than the piano, so even as a youngster I thought, ‘Hopefully one day I would like to play big pipe organs,’ and things like that. (T 617: 10)

**CONNECTING WITH OTHERS**

Connecting with others was an important part of the early engagers’ musical life, for descriptions of social interactions permeated their descriptions. Wanting to be a part of the musical community was a strong incentive to continue. For Sanja, the church provided this environment, while Rhonda was one of a few who described the role of her school in connecting her with music:

Sanja: Also being brought up in the church there was always music around me. So I was very much wanting to be a part of that. (T 611: 5)

Rhonda: At my school music was a really important culture in terms of, it was the major extra curricular activity at school. I just wanted to be part of that. I think I saw other people who were playing instruments as being probably people who were quite successful and quite comfortable I wanted to feel like that. I was at that age when I was looking around thinking well, what can I be more? (A 7010: 5)

Role models took on particular importance as young engagers developed their sense of self, their musical taste and their aspirations over time:

Jak: Particularly when I was younger playing the piano, [my brother]…captivated me. (T 609: 62)

Eric and Miranda described another facet of social interaction; playing music with others was an important part of their continuing interest in learning. Miranda described how this kept her in music during her school years:

Miranda: It’s probably the fact that all the time, I played in some kind of group. I never have not played with other people. If I was just left to play by myself, I may have lost interest. At various times. But when you are making music with other people, it becomes a social thing as well as a musical and creative, gives it some more depth. (A 7002: 56)

Eric described his current experiences at the university:

Eric: Because I think the important thing about chamber music, and a jazz group or quartet, everyone is just as important as the other. It’s a cliché, but it’s never really one person that lets down the whole group, it’s either all of you or none of you. That keeps me going as well. (T 610: 57)

Ensemble work, whether string orchestra or wind band at primary, secondary and tertiary levels, gave many participants pleasure and a sense of camaraderie. This recollection was most typical
of tertiary students and adults; although primary students talked about their school band, they appeared to not experience the same level of enthusiasm or joy as the other participants.

When relationships with teachers were positive, these continued to play a significant and supportive role in young people’s lives. Teachers contributed most by scaffolding the music environment, providing information, solving problems, and continuing to demonstrate the patience of earlier involvement. Flexibility was an important aspect of the student-teacher relationship. Flexible teachers forgave lack of practice, and provided students with repertoire they liked; lessons for some became the ‘highlight of the week’. Sanja’s comment below shows how her perceptions of her teachers influenced her motivation to play, and, implicitly, her connection with music.

Sanja: I had some dodgy teachers and good teachers...When I had a good teacher all I wanted to do was practice, whereas if I had a bad teacher, the last thing I wanted to do the whole week was to think about that. (T 613: 68)

While adults and tertiary students provided less detail on their interactions with teachers than the children did, their reflections included summations such as ‘really good’, ‘brilliant’, ‘wonderful’ and ‘fantastic’. Rhonda describes this smooth relationship:

Rhonda: I had a wonderful teacher, so much of who I am is because of the contact I had with her. She was the most amazing person....But she allowed me to succeed in a way that I had never been able to succeed in anything before. (A 7010: 22)

In this way, young people became more engrossed in music, their interest increasing from early exploring days to a more involved and enthusiastic participation in music. Interacting with other music makers contributed to their ongoing participation and connection with music. Some of these early engagers experienced an even more involved connection with and commitment to music. The music lover theme was associated with high emotional connection to music that was more personal and motivating than enthusiasm.

**COMMITTED TO MUSIC – THE MUSIC LOVER**

This theme was constructed from categories of data showing young people’s connection to their music becoming increasingly internalised - closer to the self. The exploration and enthusiasm that characterised the initial engagement in music had evidently changed for a number of participants into a stronger affinity that fuelled greater consistency in reengaging with the instrument through lessons, practice and ensemble participation, although a re-orientation to participation as listening also occurred. Those who remained attached to music making could play their instrument ‘for hours’, appreciating the expression that music allowed them. These young people became learners who accepted their musical learning experiences and came to value them.
Sarah: I loved it. I would come home from school and I would sit at the piano until dinnertime, and I loved it. (A 7030: 57)

As Sarah’s statement indicates, a strong attachment to music was a particular characteristic of the music lover.

Sanja: There’s a huge pull with me musically, if I hear something I'll either not like or I'll just love it. (T 611: 63)

Simon: But I love the guitar a lot. (T 618: 73)

Tom: Because music has always been a huge love. (T 607: 52)

Rhonda and Dale’s experiences (below) clearly describe their personal connection with music; emotional expression and communication are some of the reasons for their elevated feelings for music. These statements also show how making or playing music was an integral part of their affinity for music.

Rhonda: I always loved the way it made me feel. It felt like I was flying when I was singing. (A 7010: 61)

Dale: I just love getting the guitar out…because of the skills that I have, it would be a shame not to share that with other people. (A 7011: 10)

Jak’s description of his connection with music includes his feelings of immersion in its processes; he feels inspired by the creativity and subjectivity of music performance and the level of thinking required to achieve his desires:

Jak: Well I love it because it is my attention to detail is huge…then there’s flexibility, creativity and subjectivity, but my huge attention to detail and that is in every field of my life. I’m not anal, but I love being thorough. (T 609: 70)

In the excerpt below, Vaughan showed that his initial affinity with his guitar, supported by earlier experiences he does not recall, developed into self-generated attention to his learning, accompanied by highly positive feelings. Despite the brevity of the statement, the commitment and value that Vaughan felt towards his instrument are explicit.

Vaughan: But I don’t remember, I mean, I just loved it. I just loved it from day one. And used to practise. Mum and Dad didn’t need to push me to practise, I was really happy practising. (A 7032: 12)

Only two primary students expressed this intensity of emotion for music: like Vaughan above, Michael and Timothy used the word ‘love’ for their instrument or playing.

‘Something that was just part of my life’
A further characteristic of being committed to music centred on the feeling that music was a ‘part’ of one’s life. Music was ever-present, although descriptions of self and music stopped short of complete identification with music. Through family influence or through long-term
participation, the continuing suffusion of music in life activities was the principal attribute of
the music lover:

*Dale:* It is basically a part of my life... Well I couldn’t imagine not being able to play piano
and classical guitar and so on, it’s been a part of my life for so long. And I started when I was
around 5 or 6, and so it’s always been there. (A 7011: 54)

*Sarah:* There was always music flowing throughout our house, and it was just something that
was a part of my life. (A 7030: 97).

Music became a part of life through daily practice accumulating into years of lessons and
practice for Renée below:

*Renée:* I never thought about because that was just my life. From when I was 6. That’s was
just what I did. I practised every day for the big exam at the end. And then I’d pass it and start
all over again. So it’s not something I ever thought about, it’s just something did, but I was
very happy doing it. Thought about passing the exam. I didn’t mind. (A 7038: 60)

When music was part of life, it also shaped that life. As noted by Carol below, and eloquently
explained by Rhonda, music learning shaped the inner person, helping define the inner self as
‘me’, ‘this is what I do’. For Rhonda, the role of music-learning in her life was as water on a
rock; shaping and forming her life, though not becoming that life-spring itself.

*Carol:* Because it is such a big part of me, I have studied it for about 13 years, and it sort of
scared me to think if I didn’t have music what else would I have had? (A 7029: 71)

*Rhonda:* I would say it has defined a lot of who I am. It’s shaped me a lot. It’s been a bit like
water on a rock I suppose. It’s been so constant that slowly it’s cast me out, and yet it’s not
what I am made up of, probably a bit of an existential analogy. That’s what I would say. A
rock is not made up of water, but when it has water over it constantly it’s actually defined by
it. And it probably knows it’s a rock because it isn’t the water that flows over the top of it.
And that’s how I feel about it. (A 7010: 62)

Likewise, learning an instrument shaped Ryan’s life, and led him to choose a career in music,
despite opposition and pressure, ‘I’ve copped flak for it’, but ‘I’ve stuck in there.’ In a similar
vein, another tertiary student experienced her music as a relationship for herself:

*Zoë:* I love the sound; the instrument is an amazing thing to me. I do feel particularly
privileged to be able to interact with it on a daily basis [and I want to] continue my
relationship with the instrument for as long as possible, in as full a way as possible’ (T 601:
49).

Dan stated this relationship more bluntly, for he could never ‘not be interested’ even if he were
to ‘lose a hand’, he ‘would always be around music’ (T 603: 58).

The satisfaction and expression experienced by music lovers, however, was not immersion. In
contrast to the *musician* theme to be described ahead, music shaped the behaviour of the
individual, but by their accounts, not their identity. For example, Lyndal describes her character
development, the sort of person she is, the people with whom she shares her interests and life
but she does not ever describe herself through music:
Lyndal: I think it has made me a much richer and more interesting person probably... I think it is a really interesting world to inhabit, and you meet some really crazy out-there eccentric people but they are all kind of like you. (T 602: 60)

Another tertiary student also described that he wanted to use music to explore his life; ‘it gives an extra dimension’, ‘an intrinsic factor’, yet he described it more as a reason for certain choices rather than as his identity.

For some, this strong attachment to music travelled with them into adulthood, transformed though into a love of music, not only a love of music playing. Music lovers were not only tertiary students who were expressing their love of music by learning more about performance skills, but also adults who had discontinued their formal instruction but continued to value music. The strong attachment to music for the music lover could manifest as participating in music in other ways such as listening and appreciating music. Adult music lovers felt that the knowledge acquired over years of instruction, through learning the notation, confronting self-control and deliberate practice, inspired their admiration for the intellectual qualities of music and the dedication of music professionals.

Cindy: It also makes you appreciate different types of music, and just when you hear music, you can understand the complexities that are going on behind it. (A 7019: 68)

Barbara: I appreciate it more I think. (A 7005: 49)

Fiona: It’s so much richer now, because I've got a lot more experience and understanding. (A 7012: 56)

Tracy stated, like other music lovers, that she rarely plays her instrument, but that:

Tracey: I still love the piano; I think it is a great instrument. I hope it never gets diminished, people learning it. And I love listening to classical music and jazz tunes. (A 7013: 43)

Tracy’s excerpt shows that she enacted her affinity with music by listening to rather than learning to play it. These reflections demonstrate that whilst some individuals did not connect themselves with music making, nevertheless, music was important to their sense of personal satisfaction and expression in life.

In contrast to the fervent attachment to music accompanied by divergent patterns of participation characteristic of the music lover, others found themselves en route to becoming a musician.

LIVING FOR MUSIC – THE MUSICIAN

A concise and pointed statement by primary student Aline clearly describes a fourth quality of affinity in music that was demonstrated by the majority of tertiary students and a handful of adults. Aline articulates the act of identifying one’s self with music as a reason why individuals
might pursue music: ‘Because I wouldn’t have considered music as being the reason of my life’ (PD 154: 31). In summing up why she would not study music at high school level, Aline provided an antithesis to the statements described by this theme of the musician. Her statement suggests that to pursue music at higher levels, one needs to have music as a ‘reason’ for being, and for her, music does not provide such a *raison d’être*.

Such a ‘reason for being’, nurtured during the school years, blossomed for some as a sense of identification with music, a relationship with a process, which if severed, could cause loss and confusion. For Zoë, music was a part of her life history; if she were to leave music, ‘it would be a grieving process, like losing a member of my family’ (T 601: 40).

As Aline suggested, living for music meant that music had become an important and dominating feature of life. For a number of participants, it appeared that the habits, disciplines and aesthetics of music had become internalised sets of attitudes and values. Music playing and music learning formed a core part of self; it was either how they always identified themselves or were beginning to identify themselves. Music was something they ‘did’ and something they ‘were’. For many, it was ‘their life’, something they were immersed in. The musician theme was less an explicit expression of high feelings for music than an expression of personal identification.

As a musician, the individual felt unique and determined to pursue their passion and they deliberately sought activity and immersion in music. Music playing and learning was a way of fulfilling themselves.

*Jak*: As well as wanting to be a good musician because I love it, I need to be. (T 609: 36)

*Dan*: But I remember a need to play in bands…and a need to be in front of people playing. Didn’t know how I was going to do it, I was just hoping, ‘I’ve just got to do it, otherwise it will be eating me up.’ (T 603: 13)

*Daniel*: For me playing the cello, it’s something that has just happened to me and I’ve got to overcome - like destiny. It’s where all my challenge resides in life. (T 606: 24)

Identifying with music meant that individuals were aware of their musical autonomy, that the drive to be involved with music was a creation of their own needs, representing something they really wanted to do. Learning music was likened to learning about one’s self; music was like a communication or message from the inner person to the outside, and it revealed new possibilities for self-understanding and self-fulfilment. At times music could be so personal that the revealing of self was unsettling. As suggested by Rhonda (A), music contained both a ‘torturous world of not being able to get it quite right …and a rapturous world about “it feels right” and “I know who I am when I play”’. 
There was an understanding among participants that this fusion occurred for some and not for others, and that this had ramifications for individual effort, for as Maria below suggests, when music is part of who you are, the demands of practice are not overwhelming:

Maria: I think with some people it’s not that laborious in a way, it’s like you are engulfed by it and it becomes part of who you are. (A 7034: 41)

The fusion of music into one’s identity described by Maria exemplified the musician’s feelings; where the music lovers’ expressions were as threads linking them to music, musicians’ feelings were as ropes. Music lovers and musicians shared similar sensory attractions to music, through sound, through touch, through the look of the instrument. This sensory appeal seemed to contribute to their affinity with music; they felt drawn to their instrument or to music. For example, one tertiary student described how his attitude changed as the role of music in his life metamorphosed from a ‘hobby’ to something ‘more personal’; he took on an ‘obsessive-compulsive’ attitude. As Maria described above, he became ‘engulfed’ by music and it became ‘part of who’ he was.

Musicians experienced emotional challenge and satisfaction in performance and mastery, and in working with others in chamber music. New sounds, styles and meanings opened new understandings, facilitated by teachers and by special modes of participation such as chamber music, lectures, or concert practice.

Daniel: I don’t know, the love of it, and the complete joy and satisfaction and when you do achieve something on it, like if you do play a piece of music, well then there is nothing else like it, in a way. That’s complete joy and ecstasy when that does happen, plus the satisfaction of it’s hard work and you have to keep at it, it’s an on going process and that part of it, I really enjoy, you have to master something, and I really respond to that, I really love it. (T 606: 60)

In the above excerpt, Daniel explains that through his identification with music, aesthetic satisfaction, mastery, and the evolving nature of his learning not only motivate him but also provide high levels of intrinsic interest. He later described a deeper experience of self in music:

Daniel: If you can be in that process of creating it [music], then it is just the most wonderful thing ever, because it is already wonderful, but you then you are like a mechanism in that and it’s like you are channelling that. It’s like your way of being like God in a way, like a creator, if you believe in that. (T 606: 70)

A similar depth of affinity was characteristic of May (A 7007), who whilst she did not claim to be a musician (having resumed violin in her fifties), she nevertheless found music to be part of her self-expression, to be her voice; she identified with sound, her sound through the violin. This is illustrated in three passages excerpted below.

Within myself, music was always in me....I just was totally music focussed....I still have melodies running around my head every day ....I feel music so deeply it doesn’t take much to move me to tears....And I do long to express myself musically, and thankfully, I am.
[My teacher] said something the other day, which was that music is a language, and it needs to be used. Music is a language. I think I am only just starting to find out what my language is. I'm only just starting to find what my own sound is.…A thing that has got to come from within.

But I can feel now that this will be a way of me coming into more of a fullness of life. It might have taken a long time to really get started but I think it is happening at this late stage of life. (May, A 7007)

Other women conveyed a similar sentiment that music was a ‘mode of expression’, and ‘absolutely core’. Richard also sensed a personal identification with music, particularly his instrument, and he identifies not only the personality aspect, the identity of the musician, but also the social interaction this identification allows him:

Richard: I sort of identify my sax as being as much a part of my personality as anything else in my life is.…I am a musician, it’s part of what I am. Like to have something I can talk to other people, about, talk to other musicians and I can say, ‘Yes, that sounds good’ or ‘I like the way it does this, the way it does that’, and other people can say, ‘Oh that’s good.’...Doesn’t matter just like being able to have that commonality I guess.....Other things have come and gone. Like martial art; but it never really captured my passion the way that music has. (7041: 47 & 67)

Here however, there is a slightly cooler sense of identity. Richard alludes to possessing the musician identity, an ‘aspect’ that he is ‘proud of’. This might suggest that whilst he perceives himself as a musician, it is more by dint of something he does than by his ‘being-ness’ in music.

Involvement with music for musicians typically aroused a range of positive and intense feelings associated with personal involvement, skill development, and musical or aesthetic expression. Holding music in high esteem, musicians became highly involved in and attached to the particulars of their craft, experiencing the world more deeply through their passion for music; Nick for instance stated: ‘I could listen to that same cadence 100 times, 1000 times, and still love it. And being able to produce that music is what has kept me going. It’s not easy’ (T 617: 71).

As with the other themes of affect for music described above, social interaction was intricately linked with the love of music, although for the musician, the interactions held different purposes.

**ENTERING A COMMUNITY OF MUSICIANS**

The affective and cognitive importance of social networking in music became evident among the music lovers and musicians. Participating in ensembles was one of the most important social connections for musicians, providing a high level of personal satisfaction, pleasure and intellectual challenge. An important and unique connection made by musicians was to develop and nurture an association with professional peers; through emulation, through seeking their
instruction, and through thinking about the ways in which professionals in their field approached their work.

*Lyndal:* Just the love of playing with other people. Playing, I’d like to just keep continuing to be able to play with better and better people. (T 602: 47)

Social interactions with professional peers and teachers directed learners’ sense of responsibility inwards, activating their own achievement motivation.

*Jak:* So learning from people like [my teacher from Sydney], you need to realise the standard is so much lower [here], and that type of thing will motivate me. (T 609: 62)

*Nick:* It’s more looking at other people who I consider to be good musicians, and thinking I would love to be able to do that. (T 617: 67)

Reflecting for the most part the tertiary student’s transition to university, there was less mention of parents and teachers as the prime social motivators; more positive peer interaction and appraisal, and indication of a desire to belong to a community of musicians. Camaraderie, teamwork, responsibility in chamber music, competition and role models influenced students to participate fully and to the best of their ability.

*Nick:* In these days it’s not so much encouragement, it’s more looking at other people who I consider to be good musicians, and thinking I would love to be able to do that. (T 617: 67)

It seemed that these young adults had moved away from the naïve expectations of childhood, unequivocal parental praise, and planning to be ‘the best in the world.’ Now they shaped high expectations by the standards of a new musical community, with goals to develop technique to serve musical communication and aesthetic fulfilment. The personal evolution from school years’ praise and reward facilitated reflexivity for some; it enabled music students to look within themselves to find not only drive, but to develop a self-contained cultivation of their learning processes.

*Tom:* And nowadays, now that I am higher, they don’t expect that you need it [praise] anymore. No one says well done or anything. For a while that was pretty hard…but it’s more you have to know inside yourself if you think you’ve done it well, so it makes you practice more, because you can’t rely on winging it…but you’ve got to practise it enough to know it’s good before you play, so that when you play it you know its good, you don’t need someone to say well done. Because musicians here, who are a pretty good standard and want to get better, don’t like saying, ‘Well done’ as much. No one likes to pat you on the back. (T 607: 47)

In the excerpt above, Tom clearly articulates the changes in social support he has experienced through his learning period; the support from parents has helped him move to a new reflective position. Tom has moved from inter-personal relationships that supported and motivated to an intra-personal reflective stance, and this facilitates the emergence of a different set of motives to sustain his playing. His self-reflection illuminates efficacy thoughts (‘know it’s good before you play’), mastery goals (‘want to get better’), and self-knowledge (‘have to know yourself’).
excerpts from Daniel’s interview (followed by the complete excerpt) demonstrate a similar interplay of these dimensions in his development as a musician.

- ‘Because I see these other people, Yoyo Ma, playing music.’ (model)
- ‘I’ve got my own belief in myself; Just the love of it that keeps me going.’ (high self-belief and affinity)
- ‘I want to do it by myself; I want to show that I can do that too.’ (mastery & performance needs)
- ‘I can do that as well.’ (expectations)

I want to show that I can do that too. I can bring it about myself, because I see these other people, Yoyo Ma, playing music, and it’s just because they can do it, and they can bring about their own personal way, but for me, I’ve got my own belief in myself, that I can do that as well. Seeing that, I can do that too, I am going to do it, and I want to do it by myself….Just the love of it that keeps me going, and it’s like my calling in a way. (T 606: 65 & 82)

Daniel’s belief that music is his ‘calling’ captures and integrates for him all previous challenges and motives, and acts as his identifier of himself; he knows where and how to find himself. This drive to experience both the aesthetic of the music, expressed earlier in his interview, and to experience his own self-development, seems to map Maslow’s definition of self-actualisation word for word – “fulfilling themselves” and “doing the best that they are capable of doing” (Maslow, as cited in Dennis & Powers, 1974, p. 58).

**REVISITING AN OLD LOVE**

One indication of a deep connection with music is continuing participation, enjoyment and enhanced learning. These indicators were vividly demonstrated by a small group of adults who resumed their learning sometime after their school years.

Taken as a self-directed choice, the decision to resume learning contrasted strongly to their earlier experiences. This group of participants felt that not only were their reasons for learning vastly different, their learning itself was now different to when they were younger. Along with free choice to learn was more purpose and effectiveness in their learning.

*Andras:* I think now I’ve got a better idea of why I want to be playing the instrument I’m playing now, whereas there was more your parents said you were going to play, and you did. (A 7040: 14)

Outcomes of this learning were fulfilling and motivating; participants were able to play the music that for so long had delighted but for which their skill-levels had not been sufficient.

*Ann:* And I felt so rapt, because I was finally playing the music that I really wanted to hear. (A, 7022: 10)

Because they felt they were learning better, and they now had a choice, participants felt they were discovering music:
Andras: But I can say now, ‘This is what I want to do’, and I can expect that my teacher will either say, ‘No that’s not appropriate because …’, or will say, ‘Yes, why not?’ Then we discover a piece of music. So, I can be more in charge of where we are going. I can say, ‘No I’m not interested in exams because I don’t see the point, I’m in it for my enjoyment and my focus,’ and because it’s what I want, and the way I want it, and I’m motivated to practise. (A 7040: 57)

...and discovering themselves:

May: When I was fifty, I decided that I wanted to take up the violin again, and I really am so glad I did because I am learning every day. When I say learning, I’m learning to stretch myself and try things, that at first are scary for me …but I think there’s a need in me to kind of stretch myself and overcome this basic fear and feeling of not being good enough. (A 7007: 26)

These last statements indicate that a foundation for liking music had been laid in participants’ earlier years, and that living for music and identifying with its products and processes was an iteration of the first joy of discovery.

**DISCUSSION**

On the basis of the evidence presented throughout this chapter, participation in learning an instrument is strongly associated with the degree of affective or emotional involvement in music and music instruction, referred to here as affinity. This emotional involvement appears to be a process of ‘internalising’ the feeling for music or music-learning. The more personally involved and committed to music an individual was, the longer (generally) they participated in instruction and the greater their involvement and skill development. Most participants developed an initial interest and willingness to explore music; an increasing enjoyment and enthusiasm followed for many of the adults and tertiary students, but few of the primary students. Several adults expressed their affinity for music in terms of a strong connectedness (the music lover), along with the majority of tertiary students. Among a handful of adults and most tertiary students, being a musician was of great personal value. (A table showing the distribution of degrees of affinity across participants is located in Appendix V.) The development of affinity was in conjunction with a social relatedness that changed in quality and function over time. The notion of affinity for music thus incorporates the idea of a relationship or connection with music playing and learning, and this connection has dimensions of liking, skill and involvement.

*Theoretical implications of the phenomenon of affinity*

The notion of internalisation is contained in a number of important theories in educational psychology, including and R. Ryan and Deci’s organismic integration theory in motivation (OIT, 2000b), Schunk and Zimmerman’s (1997) social cognitive analysis of self-regulation, and Hidi and Renninger’s (2006) model of the development of interest. The process of internalisation that is common to these theories is explained by the taxonomy of affective
learning developed by Krathwohl, Bloom and Masia (1974). The taxonomy describes the progressive adoption of attitudes and values to one’s own sense of control; these gradually become ‘subjectively located closer to the self’ (R. Ryan & Connell, 1989). The taxonomy (as a continuum) ranges from awareness and response to the phenomenon (here, the learning of music), through to the establishment of an internalised set of values that direct an individual’s actions (see Figure 5.1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Characterisation</td>
<td>Acting according to a personalised, internalised set of attitudes and values.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisation</td>
<td>Gradual building and integration of consistent beliefs and values.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valuing</td>
<td>Acceptance of the value; development of commitment and appreciation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responding</td>
<td>Active participation; reacting; willingness to respond; developing interest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receiving</td>
<td>Willingness to attend, awareness, some attention paid to the learning.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 5.1 Taxonomy in the affective domain from Krathwohl et al., 1974.

The Krathwohl taxonomy provided a lens through which it was possible to identify and understand the differences (or changes) in music students’ affinity and involvement in learning. At the most external end of this continuum is receiving, where a student shows a willingness to attend to another’s view, value or task. Responding indicates that a student has become an active participant in the learning, that they have some interest and pleasure in it and look for opportunities to engage in the learning; valuing suggests that the learner has begun to attach stronger emotional value or worth to the learning, committing themselves to it, while organisation means that the student has begun to formulate actions, interests or goals around this valued activity. Finally, characterisation suggests that the student has subsumed these values and beliefs into their own self-system, and their behaviour reflects this prioritisation and personal drive (Krathwohl et al., 1974).

Adapting this framework to the findings of the study, explorers were individuals whose interest was triggered by opportunity, whether aural or social, and who responded to the opportunities; early engagers showed developing commitment and valuing of music by their enthusiasm and involvement; music lovers knew that they really ‘loved’ music, that they valued it highly; and musicians lived a life through music, acting according to a highly connected closeness to music (see Figure 5.2).
Hidi and Renninger (2006) proposed a similar continuum of internalisation in their model of ‘interest’. The themes that emerged inductively from this qualitative data were not *a priori* variables yet closely resemble the Hidi and Renninger model of a developmental trajectory of interest. *Exploring music* corresponds to the first phase of interest in which the moment of interest is generally triggered by the occurrence of novelty or meaningfulness for example. Events in the lives of the current study’s participants, as *explorers*, had a ‘catch’ quality (Schiefele, 1991) that served to hold their interest long enough for the first taste of the music experience. This ‘catch’ experience came through parents, hearing instruments, and school program availability. The second and third affinity themes (the *Early Engager* and the *Music Lover*) correspond with the second and third phases of Hidi and Renninger’s (2006) model. In their second phase, the authors describe the sustaining of *situational interest* as a state that ‘involves focused attention and persistence’ that ‘reoccurs and again persists’, while the third phase refers to a strengthening interest in the topic resolving into an *individual* interest. Both states of interest (situational and individual) prompt re-engagement as individuals develop knowledge about and positive affect towards the object of their interest. These actions of re-engagement, knowledge development and increasing affect were characteristic of the affinity described in *Enthusiasm for music* and *Committed to music*. 

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**Figure 5.2** Definition of the degrees of affinity. Adapted from Krathwohl et al., 1974.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degrees of affinity with music</th>
<th>Krathwohl’s definitions adapted</th>
<th>This study’s definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Living for music</strong> (Musicians)</td>
<td>Characterising</td>
<td><strong>Living music</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Acting according to a</td>
<td>Need to be active in music; sense of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>personalised, internalised set</td>
<td>destiny; involvement as self-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>of attitudes and values to</td>
<td>development; finding of self;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>music learning.</td>
<td>making music.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Loving music</strong> (Music lovers)</td>
<td>Organizing</td>
<td><strong>Loving music</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gradual building and</td>
<td>High emotional &amp; active/passive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>integration of consistent</td>
<td>connection to music; extended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>beliefs and values towards</td>
<td>participation; feelings of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>learning music.</td>
<td>immersion; self-motivated;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>part of individual’s life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Engaging with music</strong> (Early engagers)</td>
<td>Valuing</td>
<td><strong>Engaging</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Acceptance of the value of</td>
<td>Increasingly interesting, important or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>music learning; development</td>
<td>enjoyable activity;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>of commitment and</td>
<td>Sense of personal value; some</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>appreciation.</td>
<td>aspirations; satisfying &amp; recognisable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>improvements in skill; connecting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>with others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Discovering music</strong> (Early explorers)</td>
<td>Responding</td>
<td><strong>Exploring</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Active participation; reacting;</td>
<td>Wanting to play; loving the sound;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>willingness to respond;</td>
<td>a family thing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>developing interest.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The fourth degree of affinity for music was designated *Living for music* to represent an intensely personalised involvement in music that shaped individuals’ plans and pursuits. This theme was most characteristic of the tertiary students, for while many adults ‘really loved music’, many tertiary students appeared to esteem and respect the aesthetic and the philosophical, as well as finding more personal meaning in music. Not all the tertiary students called themselves musicians, yet among them, descriptions of their closeness to music, its personal meaning, and their discovery of self through music were characteristic of an identity formed in music. Here identity was linked to ‘reasons for being’ rather than being reflections of their level of achievement or professional status, as others have found among music students (Pitts, 2002a, b). In this study they did not necessarily call themselves musicians, but they did experience ‘authentic’ and ‘expressive’ aspects of musical experience (Pitts, 2002b). Thus while the phenomenon of this degree of affinity shows how identity may be formed, it is not a reflection of professional status. However, this intensity of affect was directly associated with their study and career choice, and therefore redolent of the fourth phase of interest in Hidi and Renninger’s model (2006), which describes the “relatively enduring predisposition to reengage” (p. 111) with the interest content. Later in the thesis (Chapter Nine), it will be shown that this affinity, like interest in Hidi and Renninger’s model, can also stagnate or fade, that is, fail to be further internalised.

Changes in affinity were evident in the adults’ retrospections of their experiences in returning to music after their schooling. This embedded quasi-longitudinal data enriched the explanations and understandings of the connection to music described in this chapter. As adult learners, the individuals felt a renewed commitment and direction in their learning, feelings also expressed by adult learners in Pitts (2004a). Here they documented changes in their levels of affinity with music, from fun and exploration (as well as compliance with parents in their childhood), to an abiding involvement with music, and this affinity was directly related, by their reports, to effective learning, visible progress and self-fulfilment.

**Social support and internalising values**

Throughout this chapter, the relationship between the music learner’s affinity with music and the social agent was shown to be reciprocal; social agents helped learners make a first connection with music by initiating or encouraging; social agents also provided sustaining guides for learning and self-regulation and later ideal representations of musical professionalism. In turn, music itself acted as a potent facilitator of the relationships among family members or peers, affording socialisation, connecting and belonging through its forms – chamber groups or ensembles – and through its emotional, expressive and communicative functions (see Table 5.1).
Evidence of social support for children’s music learning emerged in this study most strongly in two areas. First in the developing of a reason, purpose or motive for initial engagement in music learning, that is, through the warmth of social-music interactions or through the making of opportunities; second, in the fostering of self-control and early self-regulation. The first domain of influence was effected by encouragers; the second domain of influence through guardians and coaches. The interconnectedness of affinity and (social) cognition was clearly evidenced by the inductive finding that both feeling for music and nascent self-regulation were strongly influenced by the social environment. In turn this affinity was a positive influence on the quality and outcomes of learning, this underscored by the adults who resumed their learning.

Other researchers have described parent involvement as affective (warm and caring), cognitive or intellectual (interaction in learning) and physical (such as doing activities for or with the child, Grolnick & Slowiaczek, 1994). These were the behaviours of the encouragers, guardians and coaches. Behaviours performed by significant, attached ‘others’, foster the child’s internalisation of the values and behaviours (Davidson & Borthwick, 2002; Eccles & Harold, 1991). According to Bronfenbrenner (1979), a family and its “activities, roles and interpersonal relations” is a microsystem (p. 10), and in this environment children develop “patterns of motivation and activity” that become their “developmental trajectory” (p. 285). That is, the child’s patterns of activity, their interests, habits, and developing values, are constructed in the family. These patterns of interests and values may well include music when parents hope that music instruction will enrich their child’s intellectual and emotional or inner life (Hurley, 1994; Yoon, 1997). As also found by Yoon (1997), many parents in the current study appeared to have wanted this enrichment for their child, for most participants described their parents as encouragers.

With regard to the development of self-regulation more specifically, McPherson and Renwick (2001) cite school homework literature as a reference point for self-regulation in music practice. One of the main purposes of homework is to enable children to learn self-regulation, that is, to achieve their goals or modulate their activities according to social norms without social assistance (LeCuyer & Houck, 2006). Yet, as Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) theory suggests, and this study supports, the foundation of self-regulation lies in social support and guidance. Schunk and

### Table 5.1 Association of affinity for music with social interactions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree of affinity for music</th>
<th>Values (Krathwohl et al.)</th>
<th>Social influence / roles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discovering music (Explorers)</td>
<td>Responding</td>
<td>Encourager, guardian &amp; coach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enthusiasm for music (Early Engagers)</td>
<td>Valuing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loving music (Music Lovers)</td>
<td>Organising</td>
<td>Musical colleague, model, mentor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living for music (Musicians)</td>
<td>Characterising</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Zimmerman (1997) suggested a schema by which a child’s self-regulation develops from early experiences. In the first instance, the use of models, social guidance and feedback leads children to observe and imitate, then to gradually absorb these ways of doing and thinking into self-control and self-regulation with decreasing levels of social support (Schunk & Zimmerman, 1997). In music, Chadwick’s (2001) study provides evidence, as does the current study, of this mode of parental involvement; parents were highly involved in their children’s practice, not only encouraging through sitting and listening, but actively participating in practice routines through defining goals and sequences of tasks, as well as being able to provide quite specific technical advice.

Although they had access to coaches, the primary students in this study were less subject to rules of compliancy from guardians than the adults appeared to have been. Furthermore, while there was evidence of negative interactions with guardians, adults rarely mentioned specific technical coaching from parents. This may have been due to the participants’ distance from the event, or that few had technical advice from parents.

As individuals’ affinity with music grew, so their interactions with others took on new characteristics. While role models were important in early days as well as later, the collegiality and camaraderie of ensemble work were important functions of later, more musically mature, social interactions, as Kokotsaki and Hallam (2007) also found. Such interactions are important factors in musicians’ professional life (Davidson & Good, 2002), for they affect the musical product or aesthetic, as well as constituting a dynamic personal motivation. The activities of musical colleagues here may be seen as contributing to young musicians’ culture; sharing musical activities enabled young people to build up their knowledge and share their discoveries (Bruner, 1990; Ethell & McMeniman, 2000).

The development of affinity was supported not only by family members and peers and their different modes of interaction, but also by those teachers who were felt to be positive and facilitative. Whether in the earliest days or in recollection of later instruction, teachers who supported the growth of affinity were teachers who were warm, flexible and appeared to have established a personal relationship with the young person. These teachers are like those warm and friendly teachers identified in previous studies (Sloboda & Davidson, 1996), teachers who also provided scaffolding for the emerging performer (Davidson & Burland, 2004; Hays & Minichiello, 2005), providing opportunities for positive feelings about music and intrinsic motivation to surface (R. Ryan & Stiller, 1991).

**Conclusion**

In summary, the depth, richness and fine-grained nature of the findings suggest that the social environment directly supports the development of an affinity for music and both are formidable
influences on children’s motivations to learn. Both the social environment and the quality of affinity with music acted reciprocally, so that affinity for music was spawned by involvement with others, while music acted as an agent to encourage the sharing of activities, emotions and values about music. The findings in this chapter augment the Music Affect and Music Interest variables in the questionnaire, not only showing differences between participants in their liking for music, but also richly describing a level of affinity hinted at in the open-ended items described in Chapter Four: ardour, depth of involvement, and the liberation of self-expression.

The findings articulated in this chapter have proceeded straight to the heart of the subjective experience of music learning. Having established an understanding of the nature of individuals’ connection with music and some important ways in which the individual’s culture helped shape motives and means, the following two chapters focus on the dispositions, knowledge and behaviours that participants themselves brought to their learning and the role of each of these in their progress, success or achievements.
Chapter 6. Logic, Will and Purpose: How Students Think about Learning

Introduction
Having identified a quality of feeling for music that was characteristic of different groups of individuals in the study, the following two chapters together describe and explain the varying ways in which participants in the study recounted the processes and products of their learning. This chapter describes three elements of learning that emerged from participants’ memories and reflections on their learning tasks, activities or goals. The three elements were beliefs about music and learning, the focus of practice, and willpower. Each of these elements of participants’ engagement with learning was a powerful influence on the quality of their learning experiences and outcomes. Participants’ beliefs and attitudes to music and music learning directed their focus of practice, while willpower, effort or discipline emerged as potent self-control beliefs and actions. The second chapter of this pair goes on to explore more specifically how students went about their learning by grouping together participants showing similar clusters of beliefs, effort and strategies, and by relating these to both objective and subjective learning outcomes. Both chapters are informed by the individual learning framework developed by Cantwell (2004) and described in Chapter One, highlighting in particular the interaction between the cognitive and metacognitive domains.

The purpose of this chapter therefore is to explore the variability and complexity of individuals’ beliefs, thoughts, attitudes or opinions in order to understand what and how students thought about their learning, and how these beliefs and attitudes manifested in practice intentions. As the findings in the fourth and fifth chapters indicated, strong affective responses can permeate many aspects of learning, practice and performance.

The three elements resulting from the analysis presented in this chapter were developed from the coding established in the second step of coding analysis. (The steps were described in Chapter Two and the Codebook is located in Appendix T). Importantly, the description and analysis of the data was informed by a return to the literature to understand the implications or consequences of the findings from the learning theory perspective. This step was an anticipated procedure discussed in Chapter Two, and is an important step in developing theory from empirical data (Charmaz, 2002; Larkin et al., 2006).

From the text in the Attitude category emerged beliefs about music and about learning, the analysis of these beliefs about music and learning focusing on participants’ underlying conception of the nature of knowledge and of learning in music (following the approaches to learning literature, e.g. Biggs, 1987; Cantwell, 2002; Trigwell & Prosser, 1991). From some of
several Process codes – those which captured participants’ discussions of challenge and motivation – emerged the themes of willpower or volition. From the text in the Activity/Practice category came the evidence for several levels of goals or purpose of practice, analysed through applying the work of Reid (2001) and Cantwell and Millard (1994) to emerging categories of practice focus or purpose.

**BELIEFS ABOUT LEARNING AND MUSIC**

The element of ‘learning beliefs’ that was revealed by analysis and interpretation of the initial coding was a striking feature of participants’ thinking. For the most part, these beliefs centred on what participants thought about learning and what they thought about music as a form of knowledge to assimilate or understand. Generally strongly polarised as complex learning beliefs or simple learning beliefs, the strong and ready articulation of these beliefs indicated that these thoughts were apt and familiar tools used by students in thinking about their practice and their learning.

**COMPLEX LEARNING BELIEFS**

This group of learning beliefs together represented a theme of learning and music knowledge as complex and multifaceted; three sub-themes showed that i) knowledge and learning of music is complex and changing, ii) that one must learn how to learn and work hard, and iii) that it takes time to learn.

**Music knowledge is complex and changing**

This sub-theme articulates participants’ understanding of music as a complex and interlinked body of knowledge, comprised of logical processes. Bob described the syntax of music as similar to that of language reading:

*Bob: I always equated it with learning to read: you start off learning the letters, and stringing the letters together into a word, and then later on, you can string the words together quickly into a sentence. And I guess it’s the same in music. You have got to recognise the notes as part of the whole. When you start off you just read one note at a time…and then later, when you get more practice, the letters, the notes become words so to speak. (A 7006: 41)*

Bob above identifies a hierarchical system of music representation and in likening it to literacy learning, intuitively alludes to ‘levels of meaning’ suggested by Kirby (1991) to be present in text processing, and later proposed by Cantwell and Millard (1994) to be foundational to music reading and playing. Each level of symbolic (here, musical notation) meaning becomes increasingly more complex as the information processing of the brain converts information into
increasingly comprehensible ‘chunks’ such as motifs, phrases and themes (Cantwell & Millard, 1994).

Peter below also suggests that although he has now forgotten how to read music, music is a representational system.

*Peter:* And to me, music is a code, and I’ve forgotten how to break the thing. It’s foreign as French to me now to read music. (A 7026: 23)

Learning each of these components of music – symbols, motifs, phrases – was seen as essential to progressing to the next level of comprehension and music literacy. Also seen by some as ‘building blocks’, on which the foundations of music performance were laid – ‘each new development as being a building block to something more’ – such views were indicative of Hofer and Pintrich’s (1997) sophisticated belief about the nature of knowledge, where such knowledge consists of related interlinked concepts.

Sid below describes how he believes his learning took place; he investigated various aspects of learning, remembering and reproducing, and worked both visually and aurally. He uses his will to initiate different learning tasks (re-reading, writing, research), undertakes self-regulation (playing by memory), demonstrating that he understands there are several levels of learning and comprehension taking place.

*Sid:* I guess looking at the music, re-reading the music, writing it down, going over my theory notes of what the notes were and how they should be played, and also I guess from memory, remembering the tune and trying to remember how it was played from there. (A 7008: 36)

Like Sid, Hilary (primary student) below suggests that she knows that learning consists of familiarity with notes and the instrument; she suggests that intention to learn is important, and that the focus of learning starts at the level of notes and features of the instrument and notation.

*Hilary:* [To make good progress on that instrument, you need to] practice, always read the notes and things, learn them and know them. (PD 195: 15)

Richard’s (adult) understanding of ‘basics’ seems to encompass his developing awareness of the need for foundation building for technical prowess, an element of knowledge missing from his school years learning:

*Richard:* I certainly wish I’d paid more attention to the basic stuff, scales and that because it would mean being able to play improvisational stuff. It really helps a lot. I didn’t realise it at the time, but these days I certainly recognise it being able to do the basics. You’ve got to crawl before you walk and that kind of thing. (A 7041: 52)

Simon and Ryan (tertiary students) below imply that the attainment of technical skills ‘opens up’ more meaningful levels of learning.

*Simon:* I suppose it is just acquiring skill, getting better, and expressing yourself. (T 618: 44)

*Ryan:* I realised that [technical] aspect was important. You realise it’s like a sprinter, they are not simply running up and down all the time, they might be walking, gym squats, barbell, you
have to do (...) because it’s a few basic fundamentals that all of sudden opens everything else to you. (T 613: 23)

Rhonda (adult), in understanding different levels of learning, recognises the gap between her own level and potential levels of learning.

*Rhonda*: I guess I saw the quality of music in an exam or performance as very different. Exam needs to be right, performance needs to be passionate. And I couldn’t make the leap on that. (A 7010: 29)

Thus the difficulty of learning was acknowledged as a result of its complexity and a need for cognitive and metacognitive thinking was vital:

*Tracy*: Yes. I think that most things aren’t easy. Most things require some thoughts. Thought patterns, thoughts changing, or ideas changing. (A 7013: 70)

These descriptions of learning and knowledge suggested multiple layers in the construction of this knowledge or of learning. Participants had notions that these layers comprised sequences, steps or hierarchies that were linked, one layer depending on the other. They also expressed their understanding that music notation was a symbolic representation of sound, that it was comprehensible at varying sizes of notation and structure, and that understanding this system was vital to being able to play music. Participants (adults and tertiary students on the whole) were also able to articulate relationships between levels of learning; this included working at increasingly complex levels of musical learning, from technical skills, to musical elements, to communication and then to personal expression (Reid, 2001).

‘Learn how to learn’ and ‘work hard’

When primary students explained learning, some implied that learning involved goal-oriented self-regulation, although few made direct reference to transforming the notation of a piece through learning into musical meaning as suggested by the older participants above. Skye stated that ‘when you've got to study, you can't really [have fun]. You have to learn how to play specific things to give you skills’ (PD 53: 23). Laura described a similar focus on learning through thinking, suggesting that music is ‘not like running, where you don’t have to concentrate’ (PD 73: 23). Laura identifies that practice is a mentally demanding activity compared to her experience of running.

Maria (adult) felt that the nature of music learning consisted of building blocks, thus demonstrating a complex learning belief, but she felt that as a child she had not grasped how to assimilate these building blocks, and thus had not learned how to learn:

*Maria*: I think I had no idea about how that if you practice you got better, or that kind of building blocks to do it. So I think I was quite good at music straight off, but then when I hit the plateau, which now in later life, that that’s what it was, I didn’t know how to persevere.
with it. So I look back at my own learning in every subject, it was that thing of once I hit sort of the hard bit I just didn’t know how to get through it. (A 7034: 4)

Maria herself suggests that this younger attitude was a simple conception of learning and an inflexible approach. However, at the time, she seemed not to know of any other way to learn, whether through not being able to choose between effective strategies, including volitional strategies (Zimmerman, 1998), or not having a sufficiently useful metacognitive knowledge base (Garner, 1990).

Tom had a similar revelation, and suggested that he now understood, as a tertiary student, that he needed to plan his practice and adjust his strategies to match the technical challenge of his repertoire. Tom’s focus of practice remained however on the technical development of his playing, and this is examined later in the chapter.

Tom: And then when you start to get better, pieces start to get more challenging and you need to practice in order to play them. So you can’t just practice the piece. You have to practice things to prepare for it, like scales, exercises, and that’s practice. (T 607: 23)

In the excerpt below, Adrian explains that learning for him consists of being able to identify contextual suitability for different strategies. He trusts that his teacher is able to provide this for him now, but considers it a goal that he learns to develop his own routines. Like Bråten and Strømsø’s students (2004, 2005) he is learning how to learn.

Adrian: Knowing what to practise. I spend a lot of time practising. I use a lot of routines to build those skills, and often, it’s knowing what to put into those routines to build those skills. It’s knowing when a skill has been developed enough with a particular routine and knowing that it’s time to replace that exercise with a different one that’s going to stretch that skill further. That’s where having a really good quality teacher comes in, because they can tell you when you need to change the routine. I’m learning to do that myself, but I’m not great at it yet. (T 604: 54)

In combination with understanding that one had to ‘learn how to learn’, a frequent reflection among adults and tertiary students was that learning a musical instrument was also hard work. As seen below, the hard work of learning seemed to refer to an implicit goal of mastery. Some recognised that learning how to execute the structural components involved in the playing of music, for example, rhythm and pitch notation or sound production, required purposeful, deliberate practice (Ericsson et al., 1993). This perception had important implications for the ways in which students approached music learning; such ‘ongoing’, ‘hard work’ was mentally demanding, that is, it required effortful and controlled processing of information.

Carol: It’s a lot of hard work. I think I have to be able to be really focused to practise effectively. (A 7029: 53)

Lyndal: You can’t take it to the next level, without putting in more hard work. (T 602: 16)

Dan: I am putting in a lot of hard work. (T 603: 46)
Mixed emotions were involved too; Annette ‘hated’ the preliminary ‘hard work’, although Daniel found ‘satisfaction’ in the same process. Jak described the ‘gestalt’ aspect of this learning.

*Jak:* It’s physically challenging, and it’s challenging mentally on every level, and so if you can get past that hurdle, just pushing yourself. (T 609: 39)

**It takes time to learn**

That learning not only was hard work but also a long drawn-out process was noted by several participants who recognised the need for a commitment to practice over time, in the form of routines and consistency. This realisation was very similar to the *learning is a gradual process* belief from Schommer’s (1990) work on epistemological beliefs, and evidence of this belief in gradual learning was supported throughout the discussions by participants’ complaints of not having the time to practice. Hilary for example was looking forward to sounding like her idols; however, almost alone amongst her primary cohort, she was able to articulate her realisation that learning was a long-drawn-out process, and that effort and will were necessary to realise this goal. (Her reference to ABBA may be misplaced as far as violin role models go, but the meaning of her statement is clear.)

*Hilary:* ‘Only in like a couple of days, I’ll be able to do that. Oh, this will be so cool. I can get the violin, I can play like the girls in ABBA, I’ll be so good at it.’ That’s what I thought; but when – eventually - it takes a lot of practice, and of time, and it took practice and years for them to get where they are. (PD 191: 16)

Laura and Edwina also understood that learning takes time to accomplish:

*Laura:* Well, the learning and everything, like it takes time to learn a piece and then get it perfect then move onto the next thing. (PD 73: 13)

*Edwina:* It takes a little while to catch on to a particular concept. (A 7021: 41)

*Zoë:* For a while I used to just measure my practice in hours. I literally had a list: Monday, Hour 1, Hour 2 and ticked them off….I think popular understandings of practice are going to the room, shut the door, spend your hours of unappealing time, get sore and tired. (T 601: 22 & 27)

Zoë (tertiary student) above was able to change her perspective on time over her tertiary years study; whilst always respecting that learning takes time, she changed her emphasis from amount of time in use, to effective use of that time. She is also able to identify a less mindful attitude to time use in others.

Taking time to learn took on a more personal meaning for tertiary student Eric as he became more committed to his playing: he refers not only to time required, but also to the purpose of this time.

*Eric:* The Russian teacher I had at the workshop [in HSC], he was like, ‘You should be playing 7 hours a day’, and I remember thinking to myself, ‘I don’t spend that much time with
It occurred to me later on that playing with the piano is a real relationship, you have a relationship with the music, and once you realise you have to make time for that as you would for a person, then it’s not so hard to fathom spending 3 hours. (T 610: 35)

Understanding that taking time to learn because learning is a gradual and drawn-out process is an example of understanding learning as intricate and multifaceted. As Eric thinks about his practice and performance goals, he comes to understand what his teacher was referring to.

**Simple Learning Beliefs**

A less complex view of learning and knowledge was also evident; some participants appeared to hold beliefs that learning was a straightforward matter of acquiring knowledge, storing it, and using it when necessary (Säljö, 1979). Similar to Bråten and Strømsø’s (2004) naïve knowledge construction beliefs, learning in this view was simple, and participants appeared to be unaware of notions such as steps, sequences or building blocks. Musical knowledge appeared easy to acquire, ‘given and stable’ (Kardash & Howell, 2000).

In this study, two sub-themes were characteristic of a simple or naïve set of beliefs about learning a musical instrument. First, that learning an instrument and all that flowed from this (success, failure or difficulty) was not one’s responsibility, and second, that music essentially is a simple and finite body of knowledge that can be acquired and used, rather than learned and elaborated upon for further purposes such as making meaning (Reid, 2001; Saljo, 1979).

**Music looks easy to play**

This view of learning represented learning as an external occurrence, something that ‘happened’ to a student, that music caused or did not cause interest, rather than a student being an actor in their own construction of learning. For the most part, a participant who held this conception of learning and knowledge attributed most learning success and failure to external features, such as task difficulty, complexity and unknown causes (as in Weiner, 1985). For example, Skye (below) found that music ceased to give her interest after some experience with it.

*Skye: It just stopped giving me interest, because I was really excited about practising and then it just sort of got boring after a while…Well, when it’s new it’s like very hard, but as you get more and more used to it, it becomes more and more fun, but as you start to get bored, you know…. (PD 53: 8 & 23)*

As Skye became more familiar with music, the novelty passed, and she became bored, this suggesting that she was not finding challenge or interest in the learning, nor viewing learning as a self-directed progression on a developmental path, towards finding musical meaning (Reid, 2001).
Patrick and Bella (also primary students) perceived difficulty to be a property of the music, and while they seemed not to acknowledge their own role as active learners, they were yet aware they had not acquired the note or register:

Patrick: Um, [I played jazz on clarinet] a bit but it seemed a lot harder because it sounds a bit different and I didn’t really know the notes for that sort of thing. (PD 60: 15)

Bella: Yea, [harder] ’cos just sometimes you just can’t get to that top note. (PD 62: 1)

Tasks and repertoire were often valued for their easiness or simplicity. This aspect of perceived simplicity, rather than being the flip side of ‘perceived task difficulty’ as in Expectancy-Value theory (Wigfield, 1994), seemed to reflect a belief that music learning is simple and unitary; a belief that is closely associated with impoverished strategy use and performance-avoid goals (Bråten & Strømsø, 2004). The attainment of ‘easy’ is not attributed to learning or effort, so much as it is a given property of the repertoire or instrument.

Laura: I thought, well, that would be a good instrument because it looks easy to play (PD 73: 6)

Timothy: [Interested in guitar] because all I have to do is get [it] out, which is quite easy isn’t it? And then I can play. Like the piano was easy to get out. (PD 227: 34)

Bella: The things I liked best was probably…just…learning some easy new things and stuff like that. (PD 62: 11)

Katie: I just like how they work, like you can have one in your room; like the keyboard, you can take it off the stand and put it away. It just seems like something easy and compact. (PD 195: 13)

Kathy’s perception of learning below demonstrates this simple or naïve conception in two ways: once she had learned to sound her instrument, it became ‘really simple’ and there was little left to do, for ‘after a while, there wasn’t really anything [that was hard]’ (PD 9: 16). This comment seems to reflect a lack of understanding of hierarchical layers of skill development or personal involvement in the process. Kathy continued to attribute success or failure externally; for example:

Kathy: I’d always laugh when I got to a high note because the clarinet would squeak. It just made a strange noise. (PD 9: 9)

As an internal attribution, perhaps she might have said, ‘I always made a squeak when I played high notes.’ In this case though, the squeak appears to be a property of the instrument.

Along similar lines of simplicity and facility, some adults noted that wanting ‘instant results’ was typical of their childhood attitude to learning, and that this was finally an inhibitor to their progress.

Kaye: I think I actually felt a bit disappointed I think. Because playing before, came instant, I think perhaps and only being adolescent, I wanted things instantly. So perhaps it was my age as well, but because it didn’t happen instantly, that was kind of difficult. (A 7009: 29)

Albert: One is that you have to practice; I wasn’t instantly playing well, which was a disappointment to me although it was logical that you have to learn. (A 7035: 4)
Ann: Because I was always jumping ahead in my mind as to how it should play. Because the teacher would play it to see if I liked the piece, to see if I wanted to learn it. Of course I would have that in mind as to how it should sound, because I couldn’t achieve it straight away, I was a bit impatient, I used to get a bit dissatisfied. (A 7022: 50)

Accompanying this belief or desire for quick learning was impatience: Ann above, and Sid below, felt they could not cope with the nature of learning:

Sid: I guess for the piano I got very frustrated and impatient with it because I reckoned it required a lot more patience and understanding; you’ve got to use both hands, so many keys you have to play, pedals you have to push, there was a lot more to playing the piano than the trumpet. (A 7008: 19)

Practice makes perfect

A second aspect of simple learning beliefs was a narrowly focused attitude to practice. This attitude consisted of a notion that the essence of music learning lay in practising the instrument, and that this would eventually give the right result; those who held this attitude made little reference to the role of instruction, study or thoughtfulness in practice. For example, among the adults, simple anecdotal ideas seemed to form the basis of strategic knowledge. When practice was discussed, both its purpose and the manner in which it was undertaken were described in unsystematic ways and attributed to luck or unknown causes - ‘and you are thankful that you can hit it and get the right sound’ (Bob, A 7006: 41). Another example is Lyndal’s apparent bafflement concerning recent improvement to her playing:

Lyndal: In the last few years, they have just happened, I honestly do not know how. The solutions have happened or it has improved, I don’t know if it’s just being conscious of what I had to do. (T 602: 26)

Bill (below) appeared to feel the purpose of practice to be entertainment rather than a learning opportunity that may also give satisfaction. The purpose of practice was variously to ‘enhance what you have learned’, or a ‘means to an end’. Bill and Cindy sought more from practice than was possible for a novice; they sought a level of pleasure unrelated to learning per se.

Bill: But once you get to a certain point I think in skills, practice is easy to listen to, whereas getting down to elementary, 1st, 2nd grade it’s not. It is not particularly entertaining either for you or for anyone else (A 7001: 23)

Cindy: Practising also is a performance for yourself I suppose. (A 7019: 50)

A further example of a restricted understanding of learning is evident in Tom’s excerpt below, which suggests that Tom is not interrelating ideas, such as the relationship between the clarinet and his state of mind, nor critically analysing the origin of his ‘temperamental’ clarinet. As Bråten and Strømsø (2004) suggest, he is demonstrating a naïve belief about how his musical knowledge, or his learning, is constructed. Tom suggests his clarinet sometimes works, sometimes does not. The lack of reliability appears to be attributed to the instrument or to the results of practice, without reference to his own cognitive and metacognitive processes.
Tom: You’ve got to realise which I never did, that some days you pick up the clarinet and it’s just not good, it won’t work…[But now] I’ll pick up the clarinet and I might work, put it down, and about 2 hours later pick it up and it will be perfect. It’s so temperamental. (T 607: 13)

The following statements exemplified the notion of practice as the quintessence of learning.

Sid: The more I practised the better I’d become. (A 7008: 42)

Bob: But the only way of learning a thing is to practise … It only comes with practice. (A 7006: 6 & 46)

Dale: [What about any problems?] If I did have, I just practised. (A 7011: 33)

Florence: Well, [practice] would definitely make you so much better. And let’s face it, if you don’t practice things, you don’t get better. (A 7016: 17)

Ann: Well, the old saying, practice makes perfect. If you don’t practice you don’t get anywhere. (A 7022: 14)

Steve: It was something that had to be done. [Parents said], ‘You need to practise’, ‘practice makes perfect’, all those sort of things. ‘You’ll get there if you practise’. ‘Look, how much you’ve improved, that’s because you’ve been putting in the hours’. (A 7027: 75)

Some primary students appeared to act on a perception that they should always be performing on their instrument to accomplish teacher expectations. The reported attitude to time of primary students’ teachers appeared to emphasise this aspect:

Skye: He said that it was about fifteen minutes to half an hour each day, preferably forty minutes, but I couldn’t do that. (PD 53: 20)

Patrick: [Teacher said] that you should practise at least half an hour a day. If you miss a day you could just do an hour. [Did you ever try to do that?] I tried but I only really did about an hour a week. (PD 60: 28)

Aline: And that’s about all, and that sometimes took an hour. To do that all. (PD 154: 14)

Practice here appeared to be a ‘rule’ of learning, yet as E. Langer and Moldoveanu (2000) suggest, activity taken under this rule will more likely be mindless and ungoverned by thoughtfulness or reflection. Taken together, these two aspects of simple learning beliefs suggested that learners who held these beliefs did not have a view of music learning as consisting of cognitive processes and metacognitive control, that is, of teaching themselves through deliberate practice. Nor did they have an understanding of the content of their learning as a complex integration of multiple elements. Rather, musical accomplishment was considered to be accessed simply by practice and interaction with the instrument or the repertoire, often relying on anecdotal tactics and folk wisdom. Learning was not something one learned to do or that one constructed (as in the knowledge construction dimension of Bråten & Strømsø, 2005; also Wiggins, 2007). This view of learning also suggests that learners, especially the tertiary students who might be expected to have a wider knowledge base at this level of interest (Hidi & Renninger, 2006), have impoverished knowledge about human learning processes and the control of these.
Along with beliefs about learning, a second powerful element of participants’ thinking about learning was the use of the will – their will to learn.

**The Will to Learn - Volition, Effort and Persistence**

Will is the ‘attitude of mind which is directed with conscious intention’ towards some action, physical or mental (Oxford Dictionary, 1939). Willingness to learn or to make effort towards learning is constitutive of important self-regulated volitional strategies (Corno & Kanfer, 1993), and throughout the texts, participants expressed their willingness to learn as willing to ‘make an effort’ (Boekaerts, 1997). Making an effort was generally regarded as persistence until a problem was resolved, or commitment to consistent practice. In general, participants in this study were aware of when they used their will or volition to initiate and persist in practice, or not. Their perceptions of this construct were articulated in the main by the use of words such as *self-discipline*, *self-control*, and *trying*. Three sub-themes express the variation in participants’ understanding of their will or volition in music learning, *Making the effort, Devoted to learning*, and *A duty to learn*. These are elaborated below.

**Making the effort**

Participants demonstrated that volition consisted of making an effort to do one’s ‘hardest’, even if this was not enough for success as Patrick experienced: ‘Cos I tried to get up there and really do my hardest…they were really too advanced for me’ (PD 60:19). Rebecca for example found that it took ‘heaps of effort [to get a piece to sound nice]’ (PD 26: 38). Other primary students’ statements included ‘try hard’, ‘try harder’, ‘try really hard’, and ‘keep trying’.

An important aspect of the notion of effort was participants’ association of will, desire, or motive with effort. Thus not only did they describe the ‘trying hard’, but also ascribed this to wanting to do so. Michel expressed this as, ‘Wanting to try to do it’ (YD 127: 17); Laura indicated that lack of will had negative consequences: ‘If you don’t want to practise, well then, you’re not going to be very good at the instrument you play’ (PD 73: 13); Rafe described it as, ‘Having the will to want to work it out’ (T 619: 20). In the excerpt below, Penny demonstrates that frustration with learning was usually a stimulus to persist, but she implies that her will to practise, ‘If I really wanted’, was the strongest determinant of her persistence, acting to overcome emotional ‘intrusions’ (Corno, 1993) and promoting tolerance of failure (Turner, Thorpe & D. Meyer, 1998).

*Penny:* [Like if it was hard in the music], well I’d get a bit annoyed because I’d keep trying and then I still couldn’t get it, but usually I’d just keep trying until I did get it...Sometimes I’d just go, ‘Oh, forget it’, and I’d just give up on that part and go onto something different, but if I really wanted to get that part, I’d keep going. (PD 34: 15)
Carol expressed this mindset as: ‘OK, I’m going to sit here and learn this’ (A 7029: 53).

This perseverance could be seen in participants’ consistent application of the will over time. ‘If you sat down and actually took the time’ then ‘you could actually see in the half hour of practice you could play three bars perfectly’ (A 7038: 23), because, as described previously, ‘it takes a little while to catch on to a particular concept’ (A 7021: 41). Persistence led players to ‘sit there for hours just tinkering around till I heard the exact precise [note]’ (A 7042: 50). Edwina provides a further example of the link between sophisticated or complex learning beliefs and volition. Her statement associates the ‘hard yards’ of learning with the will, desire or intention to push through:

Edwina: Practice also means that you are willing to put in the hard yards to achieve something. You are not just waiting for it to come to you. It shows a bit about persistence and understanding that to get something out of an experience, you have to put something into it as well. (A 7021: 61)

Other reasons for wanting to persevere included the investment of the preceding years:

Sarah: ‘OK, I’ve got to stick this out. I just can’t quit when it gets hard.’...I kept going, ‘No, I’ve got to do these, it’s something I’ve always wanted to do; I can’t just give up now.’ (A 7030: 52 & 54)

Some found persistence second nature: ‘I’ve always practised my instruments, absolutely heart and soul’ (Rhonda, A 7010: 13); ‘I’d just keep doing it till I got it, that’s the sort of person I am’ (Susanne, A 7031: 49). Renée refers to the need for regularity, consistency, patience, and persistence in the excerpt below. Her use of the word ‘have’ indicates her sense of obligation and of the will or effort required to accomplish this consistency and persistence.

Renée: It teaches you that you have to practise every day if you want to see results. You have to be consistent with things, and you have to be patient and you have to keep at it. It’s not something that you’ll just learn and that’s it. It’s a continuous process. (A 7038: 71)

Whether innate or deliberate, an intention to submit to practice was essential: in participants’ terms, ‘self-discipline’.

**Devoted to learning**

This second sub-theme interprets the evidence of a compelling attachment to playing that was also associated with ample practice as devotion. Learners’ high levels of interest in their music contributed to their will to learn by “arousing [their] initiation and direction of attention” (Reeve, 1989, p. 83). Most tertiary students exhibited this level of attachment to practice, in either their tertiary studies or their school years’ learning, while a handful of adults had experienced this attachment in their childhood or youth. Further, two adults (Graham [7004] and May [7007]) who resumed their formal learning became devoted to practice later in life. Devotion to practice was embodied in hours of enjoyable practice. Devoted practisers rarely
needed to be reminded to practise, for a devoted practiser generally described him or herself as disciplined. The exam pathway provided evidence of progress, and some devoted practisers carried on their studies for a number of years.

Sarah and Ann below referred to the hours they would sit at their instrument:

Sarah: Yes I loved it. I would come home from school and I would sit at the piano until dinner time, and I loved it. (A 7030: 57)

Ann: I just loved going in the front room by myself, and just losing myself in piano music for a couple of hours. (A 7022: 26 & 29)

The quotation below illustrates how attitudes to practice changed for Renée:

Renée: Practice was a bit of a drag when I was younger...eventually I started actually enjoying getting up an hour earlier before school and playing because it became something I wanted to do, not something I had to do. (A 7038:23)

Louise (tertiary student) recalled a period of intense dedication to practice (of two instruments):

Louise: I remember being very motivated for a while...getting up at 5am, practice for a couple of hours...it felt really good doing that for a while. (T616: 17)

The feelings associated with this practice were intense for Jak; there was a feeling of exhilaration in the creative act of developing strategies to serve technical and musical purposes, and it appears that his devotion (i.e. will) to learning sustained his intrinsic need for mastery (Reeve, 1989).

Jak: Practice for me is a huge thing and what excites me to keep on practising is that whole strategy, the whole ‘making ways’ of overcoming things. (T 609: 33)

A duty to learn

A less self-motivated but volitional act was the duty to learn. Related to the social connections identified in the previous chapter, the duty to learn was most strongly described by adults. Carrying out practice as a duty came from inner talk that suggested, ‘I have to do it and I will’, and there was little sense of a struggle with having to do it. The dutiful practiser seemed to accept that practice had to be done. Dutiful practisers followed teacher directions, and in a sense submitted their will to that of their teachers, ‘He just gave me the tune and I would learn it’; and to parents: ‘It didn’t matter whether you liked it or not, you just got in and did it.’ Dutiful practice had overtones of compliance and is similar to external regulation, self-regulation that is in response to external rewards or penalties (R. Ryan & Deci, 2000a). As the quote above suggests, dutiful practice was undertaken to protect self-worth and to avoid negative evaluation (R. Ryan & Deci, 2000a). On the way, learners found that practising was not so unpleasant, and overall the experience was not unpleasant enough for it to become a chore. Dutiful practisers were not as emotionally connected to practice as were devoted practisers, but the job was done.
Betty: My sister and I took turns, I would have done my half hour of piano practice first, then
she had to do hers, and we did it because it was a duty, which didn’t make it an enjoyable
thing, but we just did it because we were told to. And it was an expectation and you didn’t
argue with your parent. A duty. (A 7003: 12)

Nathan: Yeah, I just, - after school I was really exhausted and I would almost collapse on the
lounge and then I’d have to go to piano practice on the keyboard or the organ. So that sort of
did turn me off it a bit. But, I still did it quite a bit. (PD 99: 03)

Betty, typically of many adults, completed practice because it was a duty to her family, she was
asked to do it and she did. Nathan and other tertiary students seemed to feel the duty was more
to themselves. Ensuring that practice was done facilitated progress and good relationships with
teachers, though there were often days when participants would not ‘bother playing’.

Willingness to learn was thus enacted by participants through their choices to make an effort,
persisting until resolution of a problem or committing themselves to consistent practice, whether
through an external sense of obligation to parents or through a pressing internal or emotional
drive for mastery.

**UNWILLING TO LEARN**

Alongside evidence of will, effort and persistence in the coding categories, there also appeared
evidence for hesitancy and lack of effort or willingness to continue or persist. Some participants
spoke of how they avoided practice and learning, how they wished to minimise the effort they
applied to their learning, wanted learning to be easy or quick (Wolters, 2003). One primary
student clearly identified the difference between wanting or liking to do something, and the
intentional action that would need to follow the initial desire:

  Skye: I’d like to learn saxophone, but I don’t think I’d have the willpower of practising it. (PD
53: 30)

Tertiary student Sanja made an almost identical remark. Although Sanja understood quite
clearly the need for will and self-control, she was not yet prepared to commit herself to this
level of activity in her tertiary studies: ‘I think it requires a lot more discipline than I really have
the time for’ (T 611: 37).

The idea of unwillingness or lack of will to participate in music learning appeared as two
distinctions: an unwillingness to participate or a lack of initiative, and distractibility or a lack of
persistence in maintaining practice routines or self-regulation. Returning to the literature to help
understand or explain the nature, enactment or embodiment of volition, these two aspects of
lack of will may be described as hesitancy and volatility (Kuhl, 1985). These two concepts are
developed through the following two sub-themes, Minimising the effort and Lack of
concentration, respectively.
Minimising the effort

The most obvious evidence for lack of will lay in a lack of initiative and in procrastination towards practice. Feeling they lacked drive, learners undertook practice with recalcitrance, resisting instructions or requests, or they tended to delay practice for as long as possible. Half the primary and tertiary students remembered rarely practising during their school years: ‘I don’t know how I got to where I am, because I don’t recall doing much practise’ (T 604: 34); however, there was little recollection by adults concerning their reluctance to practice.

Laziness or lack of personal ambition were common explanations for this lack of initiative; Patrick and Lyndal for example both reflected on their self-labelled ‘laziness’ as a reason for lack of practice in childhood:

Patrick: I was just lazy with it… I didn’t try my hardest. (PD 60: 10&14)

Lyndal: I think I was probably lazy and didn’t want to put in the effort. I was having fun playing and didn’t want to put in the hours of practice. (T 602: 16)

Participants also reasoned that their lack of self-discipline, drive or patience were barriers to progress, which, with reflection afforded by the interview, adults now saw as necessary to persistence at high levels:

Simon: I didn’t have much self-discipline. (T 618: 3)

Fiona: Can’t really think of any problems except lack of self-discipline. (A 7012: 24)

Maria: I didn’t take responsibility very well. (A 7034: 15)

Bill: But I haven’t got the drive and the inclination. (A 7001: 20)

Sid: I guess I wasn’t that dedicated to play two instruments. (A 7008: 14)

Ann: I was a bit impatient, I used to get dissatisfied. (A 7022: 50)

Tracy: It is my nature to be a bit impatient. (A 7013: 74)

Primary students’ lack of initiative in taking on methodical practice included tactics to avoid practice, such as completing practice as fast as possible, ‘forgetting’ to practice, and finding other activities that claimed priority. Laura for example stated that she would ‘do it how I wanted’, possibly looking for quick, easy practice; Taya consistently avoided responsibility by forgetting her violin, and Skye and Adrian felt like Ben: ‘The quicker I get this done, the quicker I can go outside to play’ (PD 12: 16).

Ben also described the ‘bother’ of practice despite the pleasure of lessons: ‘[I felt] good when I had the lessons but I couldn’t really be bothered’ (PD 12: 16). The hard work of learning regularly consisted of challenges of one sort or another that were often avoided. Below Sanja reflects on her learning in childhood, while Louise’s comment concerns her final year of school.

Sanja: And if there was something that I didn’t quite get, I would skip over it, stumble through that, and then continue on through the part where I was very good. And I would concentrate on that part. Which isn’t the part that needed improving. (A 7037: 51)
Louise: Really sporadic, I still managed to get here [the University], but with maximum stress and minimum organisation. (T 616: 17)

Often a practice session would consist of improvisation and performance of loved favourites to avoid the deliberate effort required.

Taya: I used to actually stick to the music, but sometimes, I'd just go off in my own world and play what I liked and made up little songs and notes. (PD 128: 11)

Peter: I could sight-read and that was my undoing as far as practice went because if I was given a new book by my teacher, rather than practising the one that she told me to practice and doing it lots of times, I would play right the way through the book as far as I could, sight-reading. Getting the time all totally wrong of course, because I...hadn’t got a very good sense of rhythm. But I enjoyed, I would play quite happily for a couple of hours and just didn’t notice the time going. (A 7026: 22)

John comprehensively explains the tendency to ‘play-through’ and his statement is a clear example of being externally regulated as far as the set practice tasks were concerned and then invoking minimal effort strategies to complete the work:

John: At that time, I had a tendency to practise the things I enjoyed, and not the things I didn’t enjoy practising. What I tended to do was, I practised the things I enjoyed then at the end of the week would be my lesson, ‘I better practice these or else I will get in trouble’. So, I would practice them towards the end a couple of times. Not what I should have done, but it’s the way it worked out. (A 7014: 23)

While Taya’s, Peter’s or John’s lack of goals may represent spontaneity and playfulness (Rathunde & Csikszentmihalyi, 1993), it was also one way of avoiding the effort of learning. Barbara’s experience indicates that conflict between the younger student and teachers or parents was associated with this tension between ‘work’ and ‘play’: ‘I would do everything except what I was supposed to play. I went to the chapel once to do Bach, and I was playing the Lambeth Walk and almost got expelled.’ (A 7005: 13).

Tertiary students’ procrastination surfaced when faced with assessment. Several individuals discussed their tendency to put off practising until the last moment, and attributed their poor exam outcomes to their long-standing habits of procrastination. It appeared that procrastination and avoidance of practice had been a typical trait during their school years, yet as they moved into tertiary study, such tendencies meant they were not able to keep pace with the level of performance required. Typical comments by tertiary procrastinators included:

Ryan: Now I am meant to do at least 4 hours a day. I don’t, but I should be’ (T 613: 21).

Sanja: Sometimes I ignore it until it comes 3 weeks before performance time and then I have to deal with it, I might deal with it in a stressed way. And cram. And then I won’t perform as well. (T 611: 32)

Lyndal realised that a disposition to laziness or lack of self-discipline was contrary to the nature of her study: ‘I’m still not the world’s best practiser. I have to really force myself to do it now’ (T 602: 19). She went on to describe how failure in her practice led her to lose confidence and to
almost give up in the face of this failure; she attributed her hesitancy to a dramatic lack of volition to pull her through the challenge of failure and continued to invest as little effort as possible.

*Lyndal:* But then I get really frustrated during the sessions. I'll start with something that I can't, and it always sounds awful, and if it doesn't sound great to me straight away, I pack it up. I know that's not what you are supposed to do, but I've never had the will power to work past that point.

*I:* So when you get frustrated with something…?

*Lyndal:* I just stop doing it. Obviously I have had big goals to work towards, like last year's recital, so you actually do have to put in a certain amount of work to get it up to a point, but it has always been reluctantly and it's always been mostly the night before. And so I do as little as possible. (T 602: 19)

As Lyndal experienced, the consequences of minimising effort and avoiding responsibility were weighty when students were involved in tertiary studies. Much of the avoidance described above was associated with failure and disappointment, and many participants were cognisant of their hesitancy.

**Lack of concentration**

Distractibility, akin to Kuhl’s (1985) *volatility*, was another factor that affected attention and progress. Consistent implementation of practice routines was rerouted by volatility, this demonstrated as irregularity or inconsistency of practice as well as difficulty in being able to maintain concentration throughout a practice session. When distracted, participants did not appear to call on strategies to either diminish the distraction or re-direct their focus. Social distractions for instance were quite strong for several participants, Rebecca at the primary level, Sanja at the tertiary level:

*Rebecca:* [What I didn’t like about practice was] I used to have friends near me, and I always wanted to go out there, but Mum said you’ve got to practise first. (PD 26: 13)

*Sanja:* I was distracted socially; I'm always distracted socially. Just the fact that in my house now, without my parents doing anything, I'm doing a lot of things, housework I've never done before, and then so I didn’t do as much practice, and my teacher was like, 'You are going to fail', and so I stressed out and practised. (T 611: 58)

Some participants appeared extremely self-directed but also lacked attentional guidance or focus. Nell (tertiary student) described this in detail. At each point in her adolescent tuition, where she felt she did not like the task, she took another route that was easier and seemed not to involve self-regulation. Comparing her ability to her friend perhaps gave her a false sense of security. In the excerpt below, she appears to bypass two areas of apparent deficit (sound and fingering):

*Nell:* But I didn’t practice what he asked me to do. I practised what I wanted, but he said I could learn faster than my friend, so I didn’t worry. I played with the CD and something very simple, but he asked me to do high registers; I can do that but I don’t like it. The sound is not nice. He asked me to play scales in semiquaver in crotchet = 120, and I don’t like to play that
because I don’t have very fast fingering so I did something else, like I like to play the sight-reading first, duo with my friend, and also play the wind quintet with my friends, I played the bassoon part. (T 608: 14)

Penny similarly allocates her attention to practice only when she is in the ‘right mood’, rather than structure her practice in routine and consistency:

*Penny:* Well, I wouldn’t do it if I didn’t want to do it, and I’d only really want to do it if I was in the right mood. (PD 34: 13)

Just as Corno (1994) predicted, moments of challenge were the moments that called for meta-level control – control over reactive emotions to failure, or control over intellectual focus in the face of environmental distractions. Frustration and perhaps disappointment at breakdown in reading or sound production for example should have been key triggers for control strategies such as those found in self-regulated behaviour. Where volatility or hesitancy appeared, many participants did not appear to be ‘protecting’ their practice goals from emotional and environmental distractions by setting learning goals, by planning practice or by learning new strategies to overcome persistent technical problems. For these learners, rather than mastery or performance goals, most goals that emerged as products of their lack of volition were work-avoid goals.

The following section follows up this notion of goals by analysing the purposes of practice as they were articulated by the participants.

**Planning Practice**

One of the key processes of self-regulation is that of goal-setting. This form of planning is part of what is termed the ‘forethought’ phase of self-regulation, and includes focus on specific tasks, problems of learning, and process and product goals (Schunk, 2005; Zimmerman, 2002). While learning beliefs and volitional intent acted as drivers of participants’ behaviour and actions, an examination of the practice coding categories provided evidence of broad foci or purposes for practice.

**The Purpose of Practice**

As a theme of the study contributing to an understanding of student learning, the *Purpose of practice* represents an interpretation of what learners were aiming for in their practice, what the purpose of the practice was, for them. The most sophisticated purpose or focus of practice was one where the learner focused on the musical and interpretive facets of their practice. A second focus for practice revolved around learning to ‘add’ aesthetic elements to the performance, whereas working to be technically precise and accurate was a more concrete, third purpose for
practice. Here, participants’ descriptions of the importance of a technical skill base to support a musical, interpretational, expressive or personal focus are reminiscent of both Cantwell and Millard’s (1994) *levels of focus* and of Reid’s (2001) *conceptions of learning*. Both studies described the development of meaning as a goal or focus of practice, and both cited learners who practised at only the lower levels (Reid: the *instrumental or technical* levels; Cantwell & Millard: the *unistructural* and *multi-structural* levels) as well as those who practised at both lower and extended levels of integration of knowledge and musical meaning.

Examples in this study of these levels of focus are grouped around i) a focus on instrumental technique, ii) a focus on learning to play musically, and iii) the focus on making musical meaning through instrumental technique. These foci acted as goals, purposes or intentions for learning.

**Fingers on buttons – focusing on technique**

As expected of individuals at the beginning of their learning cycle, the intention of primary student practice was most often described in relation to the features of notation and to the early stages of technical development (Biggs, 1992), for example, ‘fingers on buttons’. Below, two students indicated that practice consisted of ways in which they attempted to learn to read music:

*Ben:* In the lessons I could memorise the song that we did first. That’s easy because she would kind of start it off with me and then she’d finish it off and she has these ways to remember it, like CDEFG, make it like a catchy tune...Saying it out aloud so it sticks in our minds so it’s like CDEC, and it would be like *Star Wars* or something … [That’s how I’d learn a new piece] most of the time. (PD 12: 13)

*Rebecca:* Some nights I just sit down and look at the piece and say, ‘That’s such and such letter’. (PD 26: 39)

Sid (an adult having resumed learning) described how he now goes about learning his pieces; although he uses various strategies, he maintains his attention on the technical level of his playing.

*Sid:* I guess just keep playing ….I guess looking at the music, re-reading the music, writing it down, going over my theory notes of what the notes were and how they should be played, and also I guess from memory, remembering the tune and trying to remember how it was played from there. (A 7008: 36)

The emphasis from teachers on exams, scales and exercises throughout the learning period may have encouraged some individuals to be primarily concerned with technical achievement:

*John:* But there is also the other side of practice, you need to work on technical skills in order to progress your playing. (A 7014: 45)

*Sandra:* Mastering the skills and techniques that you need to play the pieces. (A 7037: 50)
Even for some tertiary students who had achieved higher levels of proficiency, an emphasis on the singular nature of technical achievement held sway. Vaughan continued his study through university level before changing vocation, while Tom was a current tertiary student. Both excerpts below are indicative of a uni-dimensional focus; a focus either on the instrument, fingers and embouchure, or on technical accuracy and speed.

**Vaughan:** Sometimes practice meant working through the really difficult bits, learning those passages, being really disciplined about that process. But then also part of practice was just sitting down reading through music, playing and being as familiar as possible with the guitar, and what I was doing. There’s probably the aspect of getting my fingers working really well so building up speed, which would be through scales but also through pieces, playing. (A 7032: 38)

**Tom:** I've always got pieces of music these days that I can’t play, so to me, it’s warm up through a long time - I never used to - and then working on stuff I can’t do. (T 607: 38)

Many adults likewise described intentions for practice to consist of technical proficiency and improvement, primarily through repetition, with an especial focus on scales.

**Adding ups and downs - learning to play musically**

An intermediate level of attention was evident in a handful of students (majority tertiary students); they indicated awareness of musical elements, such as dynamics and emotional content, and that music could be meaningful. They described the placement of musical elements into practising and performing; these elements went into ‘constructing’ a musical piece (level 2, *Elements*, Reid, 2001). For instance, students indicated how they were learning to put ‘up and down’ in their scales, not playing them ‘mechanically’, and also that they wanted to ‘add’ emotional content into the piece. Nell described that her practice consisted of putting in ‘everything, the harmony, aural’, while Louise suggests that practice should consist of new ideas of thinking about tone.

**Nell:** So that I think when I have to practice, its like I put everything in here, harmony, aural, everything, so I don’t need to worry about the technique. (T 608: 35)

**Louise:** You always need to have new ideas because otherwise it’s stagnant. Like new ways of thinking about tone and stuff. (T 616: 25)

Rafe’s description below of this focus of attention indicates that he felt a conflict in understanding music. While it is ‘supposed to be an art’, he felt that the majority of his time was spent on technique; ‘for me practice is more of a rudiment thing, more of a training thing rather than practise music’ [sic](T 619: 23). He stated that his many hours of practice were composed of a detailed attention to his technique. However, in the excerpt below, he also indicated an awareness of a further level of understanding when he stated that his ‘focus’ could get out of ‘balance’ between the technical and the musical.

**Rafe:** Sometimes you develop problems because you are paying too much attention to an area so the whole balance of the thing is a big issue to keep everything balanced. Not focus too
much on one thing...Let’s say a musical concept as opposed to a technical physical concept. Keeping the idea of the music in mind and not just focusing on the mastery of the craft. (T 619: 14)

Similarly, Ryan implies that the attainment of technical skills ‘opens up’ more meaningful levels of learning.

*Ryan:* I realised that [technical] aspect was important. You realise it’s like a sprinter, they are not simply running up and down all the time, they might be walking, gym squats, barbell, you have to do…because it’s a few basic fundamentals that all of sudden opens everything else to you. (613: 23)

Zoë (tertiary) expressed this same understanding of learning when she mentions *both* ‘technique and music’ as her focus in practice:

*Zoë:* It’s the type of engagement you achieve with your technique and the music. Because you could be working one or both of those things simultaneously. (T 601: 22)

The excerpt below shows how higher purposes of practice might be fostered. Renée indicates that she ‘knew’ about dynamics and expression, and would ‘add’ these to her music. With a new teacher, she then experienced this expression more personally; mentally first, so that she planned her musical thinking, and then physically in her touch on the keyboard. Through this instruction, she was able to learn more about the meaning of music and how to communicate this meaning through touch.

*Renée:* I knew about expression and dynamics, and my teachers would teach me that. But not to the extent that she [new teacher] did. I knew that expression was vital in a piece, but I would sit and just play it and go loud and soft and whatever else, whereas with X all I would do would play the first note, she’d say, ‘No, stop think about it first. And then play your first note.’ And it was just incredible the difference that would make…And I had no idea that you could change music so much just by doing tiny little things like that. (A 7038: 63)

**Musical messages - expressing musicality**

A further level of attention and intention in practising represented participants’ need to shift the focus of their music practice beyond concentration on scales, techniques and practice methods, to learning more about music through listening and related study, and focusing on the meaning of the music, showing respect for the composer’s intentions as well as creating individual interpretations.

Some tertiary students (and no adults or children) stated that their intentions in music not only incorporated attention to technical skills and mastery of the instrument, but also attention to expressing themselves and communicating a ‘musical message’. The two students below demonstrate their interest in going beyond the ‘mastery of the craft’ and looking to connect music performance with emotion and a deeper meaningfulness.

*Eric:* You could also go the extreme I think where you listen to music, and your appreciation of music then affects the way you play. How you would play Mozart, more so the classical
style. It’s like developing your understanding as well. I don’t know if I call that practice, but you need that to be able to practice. Not all about type-writer style going on. (T 610: 38)

Simon: I try to do it less mechanically, and more emotionally, getting to the mood of the piece, and then I really enjoy it. And the singing connects to it more, but looking at the poetry and what that means. (T 618: 29)

In the excerpt below, Daniel believes that an understanding or experience of the musical message will allow him to overcome the tensions and traps of restrictive practice techniques and to see his way to something greater than the sum of musical skills.

Daniel: Because that’s what makes a great musician; the great artists may not necessarily have a great technique, but when they play something it means something. The technique has to be enough to allow them to express themselves, but it’s the musicality that comes across so strongly, the life energy, that it doesn’t matter about stuff [technique] because they are so intense about the music...The main purpose of it is to get the main message of the music. So those little things, if you’re being carried by that, won’t matter, because you’re putting forth something that is much greater than those things. (T 606: 40)

In the extended excerpt below, Nick describes both technical and musical levels in his practice; he indicates that as a result of changing his attitude to practice, he has been able to focus on and value the technical level of practice, accuracy, technical facility and touch, as well as develop a broader and more integrated conception of the meaning of music, historically and aesthetically.

Nick: When I see people playing something and they have learned it wrong, I go, ‘Oh, how can you do that, can’t you see it’s there on the music?’ But I used to be like that.

I: So how do you account for the difference?

Nick: Well different repertoire was one reason, and also another reason is that difference between piano and organ. You can’t really do anything like that on the organ. Organ playing needs to be very precise and every note has to be clearly articulated because the texture is so full, you have to be really clear in your playing, so that probably is the second reason. Difference in attitude, I just didn’t care as much back then.

I: Can you elaborate?

Nick: In a way it’s almost like respect for the music that I was playing. Because in those days it was just something I did for personal enjoyment. I didn’t really think about, ‘Who are these composers?’, I didn’t really think about the music. I never questioned what was on the page. The history behind it, the reason behind it, I would just play it. And I didn’t care, if anyone tried to tell me about Bach or Mozart I would just switch off, thinking I didn’t care. But these days, [I] know about the composers, and you want to give the piece the respect that it deserves. (T 617: 29)

Hence, tertiary students working at this level of focus appeared to integrate all three levels in their playing (technical, musical and communicative), with mindfulness to the continuing development and integration of the three. Described by Holmes (2005) as ‘unity of technique and interpretation’, the tertiary students expressing this purpose for practice seemed generally to understand they must have a stable and effective technique, and that musicianship cannot flourish without this base.
DISCUSSION

This chapter has set out to explore and describe the varying ways in which the learning of music appeared to participants in the study. The analysis revealed three elements of learning that emerged from participants’ memories and reflections on their learning: beliefs about music knowledge and about learning, the role of the will in moving through the ‘hard work’ of learning a musical instrument, and the purpose of practice. It is important to note that statements by the children, the adults and the tertiary students contributed to the construction of these themes. Together the three themes capture the various ways in which music learning appears to the study participants (Marton, 1981; Pang, 2003). The ease with which these elements were articulated suggests that these were familiar trains of thought used as a basis for self-direction in practice. These three themes describe some of ‘what’ students are thinking about, and ‘how’ they think about it.

Learning and musical knowledge appeared to participants in two dimensions, one as complex and fluid, the other as simple and easy. The complexity of the learning, participants felt, lay in the logical structure of music, in the notes and rhythm patterns, and in the transferring of these symbols from the page, through the mind, to the fingers, the lips, and so on. Viewed as complex, learning music was accepted as hard work and time consuming. The second dimension of learning beliefs held that learning music was a simple activity, and consisted of popular anecdotal or unreflected axioms, such as ‘practice makes perfect’, to explain what learning involved. Difficulty or errors were assumed by participants to be features of the instrument or the music, rather than indicators of progress in learning.

Similar dimensions exist in other domains of learning. Research has consistently shown four dimensions to exist in individuals’ understanding of the nature of academic learning or knowledge (Bråten & Strømsø, 2004; Hofer & Pintrich, 1997; H. Patrick & M. Middleton, 2002; Schommer, 1993, 1998). Considered as epistemological beliefs, each of the four dimensions vary on a continuum, including Fixed Ability (from believing ability to learn is fixed at birth, to believing it can be improved), Quick Learning (from believing learning is quick or not-at-all, to believing it is gradual), Simple Knowledge (from believing knowledge is unrelated isolated parts, to believing that knowledge consists of interrelated concepts), and Certain Knowledge (from believing knowledge is unchanging, to believing knowledge is evolving). Simple knowledge and quick learning appeared in the current analysis to be the most salient insofar as the experiences of this particular cohort. An important finding in the academic domain that is relevant to music learning is that beliefs change in response to education and maturation (Schommer, Calvert, Gariglietti & Bajaj, 1997), and in general, beliefs about the certainty and simplicity of knowledge tend to give way to less concrete beliefs through
adolescence (Hofer & Pintrich, 1997; Schommer, 1993; Schommer et al., 1997). That is, young music students’ understandings of music learning may well change as they mature, and if they are in environments favouring more complex beliefs (Hofer, 2004). This change was evident in the present study.

On a more concrete level of understanding learning, other researchers have investigated individual understanding of the processes or structure of learning as conceptions of learning (Marton, 1981; Säljö, 1979). Learning that is ‘taken for granted’ transfers facts and pieces of knowledge to the mind, while learning that is reflected upon (‘thematised’) can be planned or adapted to meet difficulties or errors for example (Säljö, 1979). Conceptions of learning or learning epistemologies act as higher-order, metacognitive processes that direct intention and behaviour (Cantwell, 2004).

Another higher-order, dispositional process identified as an orchestrator of practice was willpower, or volition. Willpower was seen as a personal attribute that was also the final arbiter of intentions to practice, clearly articulated by Penny: ‘If I didn’t want to, I wouldn’t do it’. The final decision was seen to lie within one’s will. The notion of volition is implicit in many theories of motivation and self-regulation, although much less is known about volitional processes than motivation (Corno & Kanfer, 1993). Corno (1993) suggests that volition acts as a meta-motivational process, directing and controlling intellect, emotions and behaviour towards goals “that are subjectively difficult to enact” (p. 16). The dimensions of will voiced by the participants in this study echo Corno’s words. They found many of their learning tasks difficult, whether challenged by technique, time or obligation. Yet they also described how they used their will to ‘try’, ‘try harder’, effort, persist, remain focused or non-reactive. Among many others, Covington (1984) notes that effort is perceived by young people to be a “supreme virtue” (p. 14). At the same time, many participants were well aware of their procrastination, distractibility and effort-minimising behaviour. Other researchers have also described individual’s perceptions about effort or volition. Professional musicians in Hallam (2001b) for example, discussed their need to ‘get down to it’ and their problems of distractibility, and Hallam interpreted these aspects similarly as organisation of practice and concentration.

However, it is not only individual traits that account for how much effort is given to a task. Children’s perceptions of how easy something might influence how much they try (Salomon, 1984). These perceptions might be guided by the attributes of the task (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000), but they also arise when beliefs in simple and certain knowledge are dominant (Schommer, 1993). These beliefs could then influence, misleadingly, how much effort students would give to the task and their perceptions as to when that effort might be wasted (Kuhl,
1992). These premises account for the link between the two themes Beliefs about learning and music and The will to learn in the present study.

Finally, related to planning and goals but providing a different perspective that emphasised the processes of musical practice, the third theme interpreted the level of attention in practice as purposes or focus of practice, ‘what’ learners were trying to do (Wentzel & Wigfield, 1998). These varied on at least three levels. Guided by the work of Reid (2001) and Cantwell and Millard (1994), the statements illustrated what learners felt to be essential content of their learning: notes or phrases, technique or musical communication. Reid (2001) showed that these conceptions influence the outcomes of learning.

To the researcher’s knowledge, the observance of these levels of practice focus has been accomplished only by Reid (2001) and Cantwell and Millard (1994), and yet the clarity with which these conceptual levels of learning were observed in the data in this study suggests that these descriptions are highly salient for music learning. Being readily describable even by less sophisticated learners, they may give useful insights into individual learning processes, as well as providing a guide in assessing learners’ technical-musical development.

The disentangling of metacognitive processes described here is one way of looking behind the scenes of learning; the findings illustrate the seeds of self-regulation in music described by McPherson and Zimmerman (2002) for example, although examining the music learning experience at this dispositional level is a relatively new undertaking. It is however an important task, for “habits of mind” (Prawatt, 1989, p. 25) direct the actions of the body, and fluency in music performance only comes about through good quality messages from the brain (Geake & Cooper, 2003; J. StGeorge, 2003).

**Conclusion**

In sum, the elements of individual learning described in this chapter give a detailed picture of the thoughts or dispositions that learners bring to their practice: what they think about learning (their beliefs about learning), how they continue to learn (volition and effort) and what they are aiming for in practising (their goals or focus). The interaction of these dispositional elements and their influence on the ways in which participants undertook their practice is examined in the following chapter, with the aim of discovering if there are consistent ways in which individuals approached their practice, and what sort of outcomes were likely from these approaches. The analysis will examine how participants practised and link these ways of practising forward to outcomes such as fluency or break-down (of technique), and backward to the individual’s dispositional approach to learning. Identifiable orientations or patterns of learning may indicate where interventions or pedagogy can change the course of learning for some.
Chapter 7. Patterns of Learning and Practice

**Introduction**

The way in which students approach a learning task has a powerful effect on the outcomes of that task (Dweck, 1986). Some students appear to undertake their learning from an adaptive perspective that facilitates their persistence under threat of failure (Dweck, 1986) and motivates them to seek challenge and mastery (Ames & Archer, 1988), while other approaches are maladaptive, such as when students react poorly to failure, avoid challenge and quickly desist from difficult tasks (Dweck, 1986). In music, O’Neill and Sloboda (1997) found that mastery and helpless orientations affected how children responded to failure; helpless children were far less confident than mastery children after failure. Even when ability is experimentally controlled for, these adaptive and maladaptive orientations affect the approach to and outcome of learning in predictable ways (Midgley et al., 2000).

This chapter aims to demonstrate that some of these adaptive and maladaptive patterns of thought and practice were evident in the three groups of participants in this stage of the study, and that these patterns had similar consequences as in school learning for musical outcomes and the development of competence. Accordingly, this chapter builds the analysis by drawing together the beliefs, intentions and focus identified in the previous chapter with patterns of strategy use and musical outcomes, to identify patterns of learning.

Three issues motivated the approach to the analysis presented in this chapter. First, in the process of reflecting on and comparing the themes of learning beliefs, volition, focus and strategy codes (the latter described below), coding categories were observed to co-occur in individual participants, and the question arose as to whether there were particular patterns of these elements among individual participants. A second observation was of the high frequency of low-level strategies articulated by the tertiary students, who might be expected to demonstrate a wider range of strategies, including higher level tactics (Nielsen, 1999, 2001; Williamon & Valentine, 2000). It seemed therefore that describing the elements of learning, thematising the most salient habits of mind, as accomplished in the previous chapter, goes only some way to understanding individual learning, and further analysis was needed to understand why (aside from age and expertise), learners might practice as they do.

One approach to the problem was to use analysis tools that helped to find patterns among themes (Guest & McLellan, 2003; Miles & Huberman, 1994); this included studying the data as clusters or matrices of coding categories. Previous research in academic learning has shown that different combinations and balances of motives and strategies for example, are characteristic of different groups of individuals (Ainley, 1993; Kember, Biggs & Leung, 2004). In consequence,
the patterns of learning presented here are not *emic*, they do not reflect the subjective meanings of the learner, because the analytic approach was guided by the learning theory cited in the chapter introduction and below. However, as noted by Buckley, Hasan and Ainley (2004), this approach to analysis may be viewed as *person-centred*. The cluster or matrix analysis moves away from assigning the text to descriptive hierarchical categories (Guest & McLellan, 2003) towards configuring and patterning. This analysis is more of a second-order perspective (Marton, 1981), thematising aspects of learning that were not expressly articulated by the participants. This chapter of the thesis goes some way to answering the research question, ‘What is the nature of individuals’ experiences of learning?’, by providing a structural description of patterns of learning or engagement that are “properly and solidly grounded in the data” (Guest & McLellan, 2003, p. 199).

The first section of the chapter outlines the practice strategies used by participants (i.e. their actions in the cognitive domain; Cantwell, 2004), followed by a brief review of the learning approach literature. The remainder of the chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of the intersecting patterns of thinking and practice that were conceptualised as learning patterns or profiles.

**LEARNING STRATEGIES**

When students think about what to do in practice, their goals are represented in actions and strategies (Flavell, 1979). Cognitive strategies typically used in music practice vary according to their purpose and context. Researchers have identified a range of strategies in use by experts, novices and children at different levels of competence and these are associated with contrasting outcomes. For example, Barry (1990) examined differences between guided and free practice, finding guided practice was slightly more efficient than free, presumably fairly non-regulated, practice. McPherson and McCormick (1999) found that those students who practised more often employed more and a wider range of cognitive strategies than those who practised less. Hallam (2001b) considered the relationship between strategy use and developing expertise and presented a hierarchy of strategies characteristic of this development (accounting for age-related changes). These ranged from ‘play-through’ and no correction, to practising difficult passages in isolation. Similarly to Hallam’s novices, Pitts et al. (2000a) found the lowest level of strategic behaviour among their young novices.

An alternative categorisation of practice strategies was undertaken by Sullivan and Cantwell (1999); a hierarchy of strategies was created based on the type of cognitive processes encountered in music reading. Three levels of strategies (low, medium and high) reflect the progression of learning through a basic strategic repertoire recurring through increasingly
complex processing iterations; these included the size of the unit of attention (e.g. notes, bars, phrases), organisation of problem solving (from minimal to prioritising tasks), the use of external and internal resources (help-seeking and self-questioning), and the transformation of data (notes) into meaningful structure. These levels of strategy are employed in the current study to categorise individual strategic behaviour.

Participant responses to questions about practice and problem management elicited a range of strategies used in practice, although overall, there appeared to be limited reference to high or mid-level strategies in comparison to the frequency of lower level strategies.

Low-level strategies dominated the reported strategic behaviour of the primary students and to a lesser extent the adults (as also in Hallam, 2001a; Pitts et al., 2000a). More surprising was the predominance of reported low-level strategy use among tertiary students, with less emphasis on higher level strategies than might be expected at this level of experience and cognitive development (e.g. compared to students in Nielsen, 1999, 2001, 2004).

According to the strategy hierarchy created by Sullivan and Cantwell (1999), low-level strategies included:

- Rote learning
- Trial and error
- Sight-reading/play through
- No response/avoidance
- External recourse (asking for assistance rather than independent problem solving)

Many of these strategies appeared to constitute the practice of participants from all three groups (Table 7.1). Repetitive practice was clearly the dominating strategy used in striving for fluency and coherence in representation of the music score. The majority of primary students cited repetition or trial-and-error practice as their sole practice methods, while sight-reading and play-through were common forms of practising. Habitual use of repetitive methods of learning is characteristic of novices or inexperienced players (Hallam, 2001a), as well as a less mindful approach to learning (Salomon & Globerson, 1987), although such practice behaviour appeared to have a stamp of approval from some teachers. For example, ‘She’d circle where I had to practise maybe three or four times... then I’d play through the song three or four times.’

The belief that ‘practice makes perfect’ as noted in the previous chapter appeared to be translated into an inflexible tactic referring solely to amount of practice in the absence of monitoring, evaluating and adjusting, with some members of all three groups depending on this type of practice for successful outcomes. Both trial-and-error practice and repetition inevitably involved frustration and negative affect, as practice goals were not achieved.
Table 7.1 Low-level learning strategies among participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low-level strategy type</th>
<th>Example</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rote learning</td>
<td>But when you are practising, you are doing the same thing over and over: That’s when I got bored. (PD 227: 15) I look at something I just keep playing it over and over and over and over and over again until it's in my head. (T 619: 17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trial and error</td>
<td>But otherwise I just practised in my own room and did the things that I couldn’t do and I just went over them until I could nearly get them. (PD 62: 12) And I get to this one bit and I stumble over it again and again and again, and its only after repeated practice having run that bit over and over and over again. (A 7041: 54)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sight-reading or play through</td>
<td>And if I saw a music book I’d just open it and play any song. (PD 73: 4) I would play right the way through the book as far as I could, sight-reading. (A 7022: 26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response or avoidance</td>
<td>Everything except what I was supposed to play (A 7005: 13). That’s why I didn’t practice, they weren’t pieces that I liked playing. (T 607: 23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External recourse</td>
<td>And I would just leave it for the next lesson and ask. (PD 60: 13) And any problems that I couldn’t quite understand or get the gist of, I would ask... ‘Is this right?’ (A 7016: 14)</td>
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As illustrated in the examples in Table 7.1, repetition often engendered as many mistakes as the previous attempt, this indicating that little monitoring of pitch (including fingerings) and rhythm patterns occurred.

Avoidance of practice or the dissolution of practice into improvisation, sight-reading or reminiscence of old favourites was common among children, adults and tertiary students. For some, there seemed to be little mindful separation of practice tasks, such as scales and repertoire, from other activities where essentially they were enjoying their skill and the entertainment or aesthetics of the music. Other reasons for avoidance of practice seem to suggest an avoidance of the effort required to think through practice, which is a commonplace response to mental challenges (Meece & Holt, 1993; Wolters, 2003).

External recourse was an attractive alternative to self-generated solutions to problems, and this indicates that a distinction could be made between help-seeking that is selective and deliberate, seeking for understanding, and help-seeking that is more dependent on a quick-fix solution (Schunk, 2005).

Mid and high level strategies were fewer in number, although varied in type. Sullivan and Cantwell (1999) noted five strategy categories at the mid-level:

- Speed alteration
- Chunking: sorting smaller units into larger more meaningful units
- Linking: linking new information to prior knowledge
Most mid-level strategies described by participants appeared to centre on speed, rhythm, or pitch alteration, while scanning through repertoire for problems was a basic tactic used by members of all three groups (see Table 7.2). Other practice methods in evidence included breaking sections into smaller units and separate-hands practice. Nielsen (1999) observed similar selection and organising strategies in two experienced organ students. Except for scanning, mid-level strategies were generally only reported by tertiary students and a handful of more experienced learners among the adults, while there was little text that could be categorised as high-level learning strategies.

Spontaneous creative strategies were also used by some in response to individual needs. Jak stated that ‘on tonal things I would just invent my own exercise things. Because I know they are specific to my needs’ (T 609: 36), while another student set a regimented routine for recovery from embouchure collapse. Another participant indicated that mental rehearsal was an effective way for him to learn and to stay in form.

Many researchers have examined the strategies used by music students of various ages and levels of expertise, and the strategies detailed above fit well into established categories of practice methods identified by Hallam (2001a), Nielsen (1999, 2001, 2004) or Pitts et al. (2000a). The remainder of this chapter now goes on to make links between these strategies, both forward to the outcomes of the practising, and back to the thinking that generated the actions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mid-level strategy type</th>
<th>Example</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Speed alteration</td>
<td>If you have a fast passage that you are having trouble with, to play it slower and slower and slower, and then leave it, and then come back to it the next day. (A 7022:36) If you can’t play it, play it at half time, if you think you are onto it, try playing it at double time if you can get through it. (T 617: 40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chunking</td>
<td>You are practising little sections at a time. (A 7019: 50) If you can isolate the task into smaller units, and pick one of those units, however long. (T 601: 22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scanning</td>
<td>I would go look through it and I would find out what the problem was. (PD 191: 24) Specific areas of difficulty, one piece I would go over that a couple of bars in a lot of detail and try to put it all together. (A 7019: 35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>So you reinforce yourself by going to concerts, listening to CDs, reading up stuff, talking to your friends about their problems. So that also helps you through. (T 619: 17) I have a good book, the Inner Game of Music. I sometimes have a read of that and it helps. (T 616: 22)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The section begins with a return to the literature to understand how strategies and thinking about learning interact, following which is presented a group of learning patterns or profiles that describe several variations of engagement in learning.

**THE THINKING AND DOING OF LEARNING**

Despite the prodigious number of strategies claimed to be used by participants, strategy knowledge alone is not enough for effective learning. An individual has to learn how to use these strategies in flexible and changing ways. Researchers have found that some learners possess strategy knowledge but do not use these strategies, as well as noting that self-reports of strategy use do not always match up with observations of strategy use (Garner, 1990; Hallam, 2001; H. Patrick & M. Middleton, 2002). Much of the above description of practice was declarative and procedural knowledge about these methods, and the predominance of repetition suggests more advanced learners may have been lacking in knowing how to best use their practice methods; they were lacking in conditional knowledge of strategy use.

In contrast, successful self-regulators will usually, according to Cantwell and Moore (1996) and Schunk (2005), think about what they are doing, use ‘repair strategies’ to rectify problems, and adapt, adjust, and change according to new situations. This control of regulation is known as metacognition and is generally understood to lie in the planning, monitoring, evaluating of one’s learning (Hallam, 2001b). Shuell (1986) stated that metacognition consists of higher-order, executive skills that include the knowledge one has about learning processes and tasks, and the skills to regulate and ‘orchestrate’ these activities in learning. Metacognition “allows a student to move forward in learning even when faced with a highly unfamiliar or difficult task” (Veenman, Kok & Kuilenburg, 2001, p. 166). Cantwell (1992) describes metacognition as i) knowing that one has to use strategies, ii) knowing that one has to choose between different strategies and iii) knowing that one has to control or regulate the use of these strategies.

The skilfulness of metacognition lies in the *executive control process* that is used to flexibly control and regulate learning (Cantwell & Moore, 1996); when use of this process is inflexible or inappropriate due to lack of knowledge or confusion, the authors refer to the *inflexible* learner and the *irresolute* learner respectively. Differentiation between these different types of learning can account for situations where individuals who possess knowledge about strategies or tactics do not in fact use these strategies, or do so in inappropriate ways (Cantwell, 1992). Similarly, although Hallam (2001a) found that music practice strategies develop in cognitive quality as expertise develops, she and many others in academic learning (Ainley, 1993; Cantwell, 1992; Dweck, 1986; Kember et al., 2004; Lourdes & Francisco, 2007; Trigwell & Prosser, 1991) have found that the quality of strategic behaviour is not only associated with expertise, but is also a
function of a student’s learning approach. The use of increasingly complex cognitive and metacognitive practice strategies is not only related to age and experience, but also to beliefs individuals have about learning.

*Learning approach* is more precisely a theoretical term than an empirical one, for across the literature, approaches have been variously studied as pertaining either principally to integrations of learners’ motives and strategies (e.g. Biggs, 1992), or to integrations of perceptions of the learning task, the learning environment and motives to learn (Entwistle & Ramsden, 1983). Ainley (1993) suggests these approaches as orientations, and such approaches to learning appear conceptually similar to goal orientation such as mastery, performance, avoid and approach (Elliot & Church, 1997), and adaptive and maladaptive orientations to learning (Midgley et al., 2000). Goal orientations have been extensively studied in relation to student learning activities and outcomes (e.g. Dowson & McInerney, 1997; Meece, Blumenfeld & Hoyle, 1988; Meece & Holt, 1993; Midgley et al., 1998; Pintrich, 2000).

The learning approach literature has focused on academic learning with some few exceptions for instrumental music learning (Hallam, 1995a, b; Hagans, 2005; Smith, 2005; Sullivan & Cantwell, 1999). In one of the few music studies to connect both goal orientation and strategy use as an example of learning approach, Sullivan and Cantwell (1999) examined the influence of prior experience and learning approach on strategy use, and found that, in the case of learning a classically-notated music score, learning approach influenced strategy use while musical experience had no significant influence. A *deep approach* to learning was associated with the use of higher-level strategies while *surface approach* students were less likely to use these same strategies. Smith’s (2002, 2005) work on relations between implicit ability beliefs, goal orientations and practice strategies found patterns of relationships and outcomes to be similar to Sullivan and Cantwell’s two studies (1994, 1999).

Therefore, music learners who have a mastery orientation or a deep approach to learning tend to use strategies that are appropriate to the task and they monitor both task progress and the usefulness of the strategy in achieving their goals. This adaptive dynamic control over learning is the nature of skilful metacognition discussed above and can be seen as a mindful enactment of learning shaped by the learner’s disposition, approach or orientation to learning.

An example of the metacognitive skill of applying practice methods in appropriate contexts is demonstrated in the excerpt below. In his statement, Adrian appears to be alluding to knowledge of when and how to use particular routines in his learning; recognised as conditional knowledge, this provides the *knowing-how-and-why* support for procedural knowledge (Biggs, 1992), that is, metacognitive skill.

*Adrian:* It’s knowing what to put into those routines to build those skills. It’s knowing when a skill has been developed enough with a particular routine and knowing that it’s time to replace
that exercise with a different one that’s going to stretch that skill further. That’s where having a really good quality teacher comes in, because they can tell you when you need to change the routine. I’m learning to do that myself, but I’m not great at it yet. (T 604: 54)

The following section presents three learning patterns or profiles that emerged as patterns of engagement with learning. Just as others (Ainley, 1993; Dowson & McInerney, 2003; Elliot & Church, 1997; Hallam, 1995a; Lourdes & Francisco, 2006) have found multifaceted integrations of elements to figure as dispositions or orientations towards learning, so the learning profiles in this study were associated with the ways in which learners chose, monitored, and adjusted their strategy use: their metacognitive skilfulness.

The three patterns of learning represent distinct clusters of the elements of learning identified earlier: learning beliefs, volition, focus and strategies. The analysis also links each of these learning patterns to the individuals’ perceptions of their progress. This combination of elements is indicated in Table 7.3. The three learning profiles were the Constructive learner, the Expedient learner and the Impetuous learner. Each of the following sections gives examples of these profiles and their clustered elements for individual participants. Where individuals used both low and higher level strategies or focus, the higher level is cited. The approximate duration of learning is also presented. As indicated in Chapter Two, there were 29 short-term learners (≤ 3 yrs, 17 primary school students and 12 adults); 8 mid-term learners (4-8 yrs, 7 adults and 1 tertiary student); and 24 long-term learners (9+ yrs): 8 adults and 16 tertiary students. As discussed in Chapter Two however, many participants found it hard to recall the duration of their learning, so these terms must only be regarded as approximate.

Table 7.3 Patterns of learning and their constituent elements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Pattern</th>
<th>Beliefs</th>
<th>Volition</th>
<th>Range of Strategy &amp;/or focus</th>
<th>Perceptions of progress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constructive</td>
<td>Complex</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low - high/musical</td>
<td>Positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expedient</td>
<td>Mainly simple</td>
<td>Inconsistent</td>
<td>Low - mid</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impetuous</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low - mid</td>
<td>Negative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Constructive Learner

The constructive learner profile describes the learning orientation of a group of individuals who were generally persistent in their learning, making an effort when challenged by difficulties, believing that learning did need effort or self-discipline, and they held more complex beliefs about music knowledge and learning. Constructive learning was essentially learning built logically and deliberately, and individuals remarked on their progress or satisfaction in learning.

Constructive learners used both mid-level and low-level strategies in their practice. Among primary students, three exhibited this somewhat purposeful or mindful approach to their
learning that included persisting through difficulties, maintaining fairly regular practice and using a wider range of practice methods than most other primary students. Table 7.4 shows these elements where they were clearly present. For example, Laura’s beliefs about learning were developing towards sophistication; she was aware that learning takes time and effort, and that practice is about learning; she put this notion of discipline into her own practice, persevering through learning challenges and using mid-level practice methods to work towards her practice goals. She felt that her practice was reasonably effective, marked by progression through her tutor books. Even though these three primary students did not learn for long, they had a deepening understanding of the nature of learning, which when combined with some persistence in the face of difficulty, helped them to devise or apply strategies that were more effective than simplistically playing through the repertoire.

Among adults, several had similar characteristics. For example, Renée understood the complex nature of music learning, and was prepared to commit herself to learning, with persistence, patience and consistency in practice routines (see Table 7.4). She was able to regulate her emotions when the learning was difficult, and used mid-level strategies at the same time as turning her practice focus to adding expression and perhaps further: ‘How alive my music sounded’. Furthermore, she successfully passed several levels of music examinations and looked forward to more. Vaughan’s excerpt (Table 7.4) shows that he was able to choose a strategy, adapt it to the task and persist with this until successful accomplishment. The adult learners in this group had some depth of understanding about learning, and most usually this was accompanied by a stronger intention and persistence; regulation occurred through monitoring and acting on emotions, task difficulties or failures.

In the cohort where one might expect to see a strong representation of constructive learners, six tertiary students showed a clear understanding of learning as complex, time demanding and cognitively taxing (see Table 7.5). Jak, Daniel and Annette (in Table 7.5) all described the mental challenge of learning, the responsibility for this being one’s own, and this was associated for them in using and adapting strategies to their own benefit, focusing not only on the technical but also on higher musical meaning. For example, almost all of Daniel’s discussion of learning was interspersed with reference to the focus of his practice. In the following statement, he condenses all three levels: ‘I’m still thinking about technique, but I’m still trying to think about performance aspect and how you get there and be relaxed; and just playing the music and just letting that be’ (T 616: 18). The notions of effort, persistence and commitment were paramount to these individuals, and most often brought overall perceptions of successful progress.

Other tertiary students showed a similar orientation to perseverance and self-regulation, although their learning pattern was harder to determine explicitly. Eric for example, did not talk about his learning in terms of beliefs, but dedicated himself to practice: ‘practising 6 hours a day
is not such a big deal’, and changed his practice methods from his earlier school-days’ practice where he would ‘just keep playing over and over until I got it, and I would always start from the beginning, and play to the end’ (T 610: 32).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Laura (PD)</th>
<th>Complex Beliefs</th>
<th>High Volition</th>
<th>Mid-level Strategy or focus</th>
<th>Positive Progress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Well if you practice you learn more and then you can understand.</td>
<td>I’d just try my hardest to get it right.</td>
<td>I’d have to take time and work on them. And just go through them slowly.</td>
<td>I went really, pretty good. I went through I think three books and thought I did pretty well.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skye (PD)</td>
<td>When you’ve got to study, you can’t really do that. You have to learn how to play specific things to give you skills.</td>
<td>I sort of piled up my work myself.</td>
<td>Figure out what you’re best at, what you’re not best at, and you’d work more on things you were bad at.</td>
<td>[I enjoyed it most] just after I started when I started to get good and get used to it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hilary (PD)</td>
<td>And it took practice and years for them to get …where they are.</td>
<td>So I had at least, make sure that I’ve actually learned something and accomplished something.</td>
<td>If I made mistakes … so what I did, I stopped from there, and I practice until I got that part right, and then I start from the beginning and then I did it all over again to get it right.</td>
<td>I’ve actually accomplished something. And it made me feel good inside.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renée (A) long-term</td>
<td>It’s not something that you’ll just learn and that’s it. It’s a continuous process.</td>
<td>Apart from that, just persistence and patience and practice.</td>
<td>I had to go over the tricky bits of them, break them down. … it was unbelievable how much more alive my music sounded, because she focussed on touch and dynamics.</td>
<td>At the end of every exam I would feel get excited again, up a grade.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vaughan (A) long-term</td>
<td>But then also part of practice was just sitting down reading through music, playing and being as familiar as possible with the guitar, and what I was doing.</td>
<td>Very disciplined… did that quite diligently …perseverance, wanting to do it.</td>
<td>Really slow it right down, and then just slowly increase it, and so I would work on the one piece for ages sometimes, and just slowly and slowly work them through the difficult pieces.</td>
<td>When things were going well, I was playing really nice music, music I really enjoyed, that was probably the best time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carol (A) long-term</td>
<td>It’s a lot of hard work.</td>
<td>I knew myself what standard I had to reach. And how much effort I had to put in.</td>
<td>Set a bit of a goal, say, ‘OK by the end of this, I want half of this page done, or I need these bars done or to fix this part’.</td>
<td>I really liked it, and I was sort of good at it as well…I liked to be able to see myself progress.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edwina (A) midterm</td>
<td>You are not just waiting for it to come to you.</td>
<td>It shows a bit about persistence and understanding that to get something out of an experience, you have to put something into it as well.</td>
<td>It teaches you a little bit about goal setting, for yourself in music, which I found quite useful.</td>
<td>But the progress that you make once you are out of the rut I think more than makes up for it.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7.5 The Constructive learner profile among tertiary students

|                | Complex Beliefs                                                                 | High Volition                                                                 | High-level Strategy &/or focus                                                                 | Positive Progress                  |
|----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|===============================================================================================|------------------------------------|
| Jak (T)        | Its physically challenging, and its challenging mentally on every level.        | So if you can get past that hurdle, just pushing yourself.                    | On tonal things, I would just invent my own exercise things. Because I know they are specific to my needs. | Huge amounts of progress.          |
| Daniel (T)     | I think it takes time ... the challenge is playing a musical instrument is something to do with your own self. | When I first started, I was really disciplined ... 2 hours in the morning and then get on the bus and go to school and come back and do 3 hours. | As a musician and a human being, to learn from your mistakes. You need to see your way forward and envisage something and that's for me. | Something good comes out of it and you're encouraged to keep going and you see why you are doing it. |
| Annette (T)    | Not in lots of practice, more in practice where you actually think.              | But I would still do quite a fair bit of it.                                 | I normally will with dotted rhythms, running scales, as well as stopping bow, and so on, so my brain is in slow motion getting the idea of it. | I had it from memory just because all my practice was really efficient. |
| Louise (T)     | You have to work really hard to get a very little step along... Practice means just building blocks on what I already know. | Over the break I was practising regularly as well throughout Christmas and New Year I kept going. | I will break it down and play it in different rhythms or different octaves... I sometimes have a read of [the Inner Game of Music]. | ‘Now I can do that’ and I would be excited about playing the new pieces, and doing the harder things. |
| Nick (T)       | But also practising the right way, using your brain about it.                    | I don’t like to go on until I’ve got it sorted out.                          | If you can’t play it, play it at half time, if you think you are onto it, try playing it at double time if you can get through it... it’s almost like respect for the music. | I actually feel good like I am progressing. |
| Adrian (T)     | Knowing what to practise... I know the amount of effort that goes into learning and refining a skill. | I spend a lot of time practising.                                            | Knowing that it’s time to replace that exercise with a different one that’s going to stretch that skill further. | I am sight-reading [things] now that I couldn’t have played with months of work before. |
**The Expedient Learner**

The *expedient learner* profile represented a cluster of learners who had in common a lack of persistence in the face of challenge; although some had an understanding of the need for self-discipline, and some infrequently expressed sophisticated learning beliefs, most held relatively simple beliefs about music knowledge and learning. Practice generally consisted of repetition or avoidance, and was suffused with the feeling that ‘the quicker I get this done, the quicker I can go outside to play’ (Ben, PD). In this sense the expedient learner did not have a strong personal investment in practice, more often practising through obligation than need, and such practice was contingent on mood and task simplicity. Perceptions of progress were mixed, both for the individual and between individuals. For example, Penny was occasionally satisfied with her progress, while Ben, Kaye and Maria struggled with making satisfactory progress (see Table 7.6).

As an example of the expedient learning pattern, Penny’s aim to play as well as her friend held only as long as she felt ‘in the mood’ for practice (see Table 7.6) and this did not help her develop consistency in her practice. Similarly, Timothy, Taya and Ben had simple or non-existent conceptions of music learning and little persistence in the face of competing interests or task difficulty. The adults’ descriptions of their learning developed this profile more richly; at the same time as describing a belief, they were able to describe how this influenced their learning and outcomes (see Table 7.6). There was some description of feeling that music could be learned instantly. They described less desire to commit to the hard tasks of learning, because these were unexpected and in some way tiresome. Although music appeared to be an easier accomplishment for Nick in comparison to other expedient learners, he was able to describe a similar lack of attention to detail and planning when younger. When there was a lack of volition, then often there was an absence of strategy description (Albert and Nell, Table 7.6). Nell appeared to practise only what and when she felt like it.

Despite regular performance assessments, a handful of tertiary students committed little energy to practice. Further, as illustrated in Table 7.7, this practice was highly un-regulated, even when mid-level strategies were known. For example, Lyndal shows that she is aware of effective practice methods, but she struggles with emotional control in the face of task difficulty or failure, and is unable to change her strategies or goals, preferring to avoid the task. Ryan’s excerpt suggests his beliefs have not substantially changed since his school-years learning, and his practice is not planful or reflective. All the excerpts below are in the context of tertiary music study and all three students experienced technical and musical problems in their formal assessments.
### Table 7.6 The Expedient learner profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Simple Beliefs</th>
<th>Inconsistent Volition</th>
<th>Low Strategy or Focus</th>
<th>Mixed Progress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Penny (PD)</td>
<td>Keep practising to see if I can get things as good as her.</td>
<td>Well, I wouldn’t do it if I didn’t want to do it, and I’d only really want to do it if I was in the right mood.</td>
<td>If it sounded the same [as others], I’d go, ‘Cool, that must have been right.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taya (PD)</td>
<td>But I guess that practice make perfect.</td>
<td>Play what I liked and made up little songs and notes.</td>
<td>I’d just go off in my own world and … play what I liked and made up little songs and notes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timothy (PD)</td>
<td>I guess I thought it [piano] was a bit easier than some of the others. I thought it would be good to start off with something a bit easier.</td>
<td>Got too hard and then, every time it got harder, I practised less and less.</td>
<td>But when you are practising, you are doing the same thing over and over.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ben (PD)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>But I couldn’t really be bothered.</td>
<td>Then I’d play through the song three or four times.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaye (A)</td>
<td>Being adolescent, I wanted things instantly.</td>
<td>I probably at the time didn’t put in the effort I guess.</td>
<td>I guess repetition until you get it right.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maria (A)</td>
<td>I think I had no idea about how that if you practice you got better.</td>
<td>But my initial thing is to leave something when it gets too hard.</td>
<td>I just think that if I hit the wall I didn’t have the strategies of how to overcome that.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albert (A)</td>
<td>Wanting instant gratification with it.</td>
<td>Being a bit lazy about following through on things.</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nick (T, when a child)</td>
<td>I didn’t really think about the music.</td>
<td>But I didn’t really care.</td>
<td>If I came to a hard bit, I wouldn’t stop and pull it apart, I would gloss over it. Make up what I thought it should go like, even if it wasn’t exactly what was in the music.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nell (T, when a child)</td>
<td>When I practise, I feel everything is good and I don’t need to worry about things, and I am just sitting there and playing.</td>
<td>If I didn’t practice, and I had to practise, I’m thinking I have to practise, very annoyed, I hate practice.</td>
<td>And I don’t like to play that because I don’t have very fast fingering so I did something else.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7.7 The Expedient learner profile among tertiary students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Simple Beliefs</th>
<th>Inconsistent Volition</th>
<th>Low or Mid Strategy</th>
<th>Lack of Progress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lyndal (T)</td>
<td>In the last few years, they [improvements] have just happened, I honestly do not know how... funnily enough I'll come back the next day and can do it.</td>
<td>But it has always been reluctantly and it's always been mostly the night before. And so I do as little as possible.</td>
<td>I'm starting to not get away with it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanja (T)</td>
<td>I think that it comes in fits and starts... logical side of the brain is less developed than their creative side. It tends to go with your feelings... my organising like day-to-day is all over the place, and so that affects my practice.</td>
<td>I was never consistent... If I don't like the piece then I won't want to learn it... I see it as very boring sometimes and sometimes I will deliberately avoid it.</td>
<td>After 5 minutes of playing what I sit down to play, a Chopin study for example, I will start practising jazz chords.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ryan (T)</td>
<td>Like any kid, there are no hopes or expectations, you are just there....That's the irony I say one thing and I do another.</td>
<td>Because I know I could have done a little bit better here and there...sometime I was a bit lazy.</td>
<td>I probably didn't do anything about it till someone else pointed it out.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**THE IMPETUOUS LEARNER**

The *impetuous learner* profile represents a cluster of individuals who had in common a strong sense of will and discipline, most persevering when challenged. Impetuous in this sense reflects an excitability or passion towards practising. At the same time, they held mixed beliefs (principally simple) about music knowledge and learning, and demonstrated a lack of self-regulation or metacognition, relying predominantly on low-level strategies. Patrick’s beliefs for example (see Table 7.8) tend to interact with his will such that although he had difficulty solving problems in his practice, he made strong efforts to keep up with his band colleagues and found some innovative ways to go about his work. Sarah, Richard and Andras also demonstrated this cluster of elements in their emphasis on the effort they made or the effort they felt was required for music learning, although this was in combination with a lack of self-regulation, relying mostly on low-level strategies. Musical achievements reflected their lack of regulation and individuals were often disappointed in their results.

The predominance of repetition and dedication of hours of dogged practice flagged this impetuous orientation as ineffective, despite (a misplaced) faith that repetition would deliver fluency, accuracy and accomplishment. The profile manifested in some tertiary students as a need to ‘put in the hours’ above all other aspects of practice. Even when tertiary students...
described the purpose for practice as building skills and facilitating musicianship, and when interest in music was high, passionate even, practice could still be characterised by this approach. For example, Tom (Table 7.9) felt he needed to keep practising, even though this practice was ‘redundant’. One saving outcome was that the piece was memorised, although more by default than by forethought. Tom’s response appears to indicate that once his goal of practice is met (he can play the piece), he does not move to alternative strategies to accomplish new goals, but rather persists with both an unaltered goal and an unwavering repetition strategy. Practice in this manner would make the conscious interpretation of information (Salomon & Globerson, 1987) quite unlikely. Even when Tom’s copious practice led to familiarisation and memorisation by default, he later explained that he experienced performance anxiety and doubt over the outcomes of his playing. Similarly, Rafe’s performance confidence (see Table 7.9) rests on the number of times he has played his repertoire. Accordingly, his outcomes are unpredictable.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Table 7.8 The <em>Impetuous learner</em> profile</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mixed Beliefs</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrick (PD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah (A) midterm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andras (A) midterm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard (A) midterm resumed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiona (A) midterm resumed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mixed Beliefs</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dan (T)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rafe (T)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tom (T)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Zoë (T)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I can’t show then how good I am in my recital just because I feel like I am going to choke.

[Progress] goes upwards, and then dips down. And then it goes back up. So you think you know something and you don’t.

All of a sudden it started getting really hard, and I couldn’t do it... 2nd semester I actually failed.
DISCUSSION

This chapter aimed to describe and understand the way in which individuals approached their learning, on the understanding that the way in which learners approach their tasks is of great import to outcomes of the task. Three learning patterns were described in this chapter; first the constructive learner, where individuals held complex beliefs, and implemented their volition along with a range of strategies. Individuals were generally satisfied with their progress. The constructive learning pattern showed that even when in primary school, students could approach their practice in a flexible and relatively calm way, employing established elements of self-regulation of emotion and environment as well as strategy. This supports previous research findings that the quality of beliefs is not always associated with age or expertise (Schommer, 1998).

A second profile of learning, the expedient learner, suggested a superficial pattern, where learners showed little volition to start or maintain their practice although some described brief periods of greater willingness to practise. These learners were characterised by naive beliefs. Although some of their practice was enjoyable, many opportunities to learn were avoided, learning occurred almost incidentally. Some of the primary students played their instruments only at once-weekly rehearsals, in much the same pattern as that recalled by some tertiary students. Simple repetition and play-through were the usual practice techniques and they were easily distracted from their work by friends or homework; the typical phrase was ‘I couldn’t be bothered’. At the tertiary level, expediency was evident in those students who left their learning to the last minute, who avoided practising those things that were hard to do, or who misunderstood the levels at which they were required to perform.

A third pattern, the low road pattern of the impetuous learner, described a group of learners who were highly interested in their practice and playing, yet seemed not to be able apply logical reasoning to their practice, instead relying on familiar though ineffective beliefs about learning, and incurring anxiety and technical unreliability. Holding somewhat simple beliefs about learning however, did not preclude having a strong will to learn, or similarly, a strong connection with music.

The three learning patterns found in this study are distinguished by the quality of metacognitive control that was employed by the individual, and it is these metacognitive control elements that represent the strengths and weaknesses of the learning profiles.

All three learning profiles were found among shorter and longer term learners. Both profiles characterised by high volition or commitment to learning and practice (the constructive pattern and the impetuous pattern) were typical of short, mid and long-term learners, while the
expedient profile was more typical of those who were short or mid-term learners. In other words, those who expressed an understanding of perseverance, and indicated that they had persisted (whether blindly or intelligently) in the face of challenge, mood or distraction, were often those who continued their formal instruction for longer periods. While the claim that will to learn would appear to be a logical corollary of longer periods of instruction, this study has also shown that will to learn is not sufficient for effective learning, although it is one condition that needs to be satisfied.

Other researchers have found similar clusters of learning engagement styles or orientations where groupings vary in the quality or concentration of their elements. Ainley (1993) found six profiles varying in degree of goal orientations, ability, achievement and learning strategy use. The constructive learner here is similar to Ainley’s committed and engaged clusters, which were oriented more to understanding and persevering, while the expedient learner is not unlike the non-strategic reader in Alexander and Murphy (1998), a learner who was unable or unwilling to invest mental effort in learning, this then relating to shallow learning. Others have also found groups of learners who demonstrate a learning profile that tends to be less strategic and less regulated than others (Ainley, 1993; Mandel, Marcus & Mandel, 1992; J. Meyer, 1991). These learners may be confused (Calder, as cited in Entwistle, J. Meyer & Tait, 1991), unaware (Biggs, as cited in Entwistle et al., 1991), or uncertain or inflexible with their planning and monitoring of learning (Cantwell & Moore, 1996).

However, one profile requires further thought. The impetuous learner profile captured the orientations and behaviours of a group of individuals who had much at stake. That is, these players were generally long-term players who were highly committed to their music playing, yet seemed to go about their learning ineffectively, precipitating failure or deficit and musical standstill. This imperative to practise bears similarities to the low road of learning described by Salomon and Globerson (1987). The low road of learning describes learning that takes place on a repetitious basis; it is mentally undemanding yet time-intensive, the learner taking some time to gain automaticity in skill. It stands in contrast to the high road of learning, which is deliberate, mindful and effortful (Salomon & Globerson, 1987) and typical of the constructive learner in this study. While low road learning is a necessity for the accomplishment of physical skills because much practice is needed to develop the automaticity of motor-control processes, it needs to be accompanied by an expenditure of effort and control in the practice. Music performance is just that activity where the “automaticity of skill employment is not enough” (Salomon & Globerson, 1987, p. 630). Bebko, Denmark, Im-Bolter and MacKewn (2005) suggested that high automaticity gained without effortful control processes (such as metacognitive thinking) will lead to processing with errors, albeit it at higher speeds. Rote
repetition may produce early results, “any products” (Garner, 1990, p. 519), that satisfy the player in the absence of awareness of other possibilities.

Consequently, the low road approach to learning constitutes only half the picture as far as deliberate practice, according to Ericsson and Lehmann’s (1996) description, is concerned. The narrow focus and a reliance on vast amounts of incidental practice is indicative of mindlessness. Whilst there appears to be sufficient volition to spend time in practice, students with this profile seem not to make mental efforts such as thinking about their learning. They seem not to be active constructors of their learning, and their failure to exert effective control over their physical practice suggests that either they have little familiarity with effective self-regulatory strategies (Miksza, 2007; Zimmerman, 2002), that their learning environment may be promoting performance goals (associated with surface learning approaches; Ames, 1992), or that they may possess strategic information, but not be knowledgeable about how and when to use these strategies. This last possibility likens these learners to those of Cantwell and Moore (1996), whose inflexible control (rigid and over-reliant on habitual strategies) and irresolute control (uncertain and confused) over self-regulation led to goal failure and to inferior outcomes (as also in Alexander & Murphy, 1998). Despite their perseverance and dedication to hours of practice, Rafe, Tom and Dan appear not able to choose alternative practice strategies or to carefully monitor the success of their selected strategy. Their ‘obsessive’ activity is like non-productive persistence (Thompson, Webber & Montgomery, 2002), for the students failed to disengage or redirect their efforts, demonstrating preoccupation as described by Kuhl (1985).

For example, Rafe’s reliance on over-learning to guarantee success would render his performances vulnerable to errors, for the mindless automaticity characteristic of over-learning can cause people to be insensitive and inflexible to contextual, conditional or novel cues encountered in performance situations (E. Langer, 1992). Examples of these errors could include misreading chords or patterns containing sixths or seconds as common arpeggios in sight-reading, or omitting to observe and apply carry-through accidentals or key-signature changes. Even experts need to continue to monitor, plan, reason and anticipate (Ericsson & Lehmann, 1996). A maladaptive disposition to learning such as the impetuous profile indicates, is associated with poorer outcomes across a number of studies of similar dispositions (Cantwell & Millard, 1994; Cantwell & Moore, 1996; Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Schmeck & Phillips, 1982). For the students in this study, it was associated with frustration and music performance anxiety.

Thus not only does the type of strategy chosen by the player affect their progress towards fluent, accurate and musical playing, but so too does the way in which the player applies the strategy. The folk-wisdom or traditional scripts that accompany music learning are replete with aphorisms containing little internal logic in their instruction. Sloboda (2001) has argued
vigorously for setting straight the folk myths that pervade music performance learning. ‘Practice for half an hour a day’, ‘do your scales five times each’, ‘practice makes perfect’, memorisation of scales for examination – all may persuade a novice to believe that practice per se is the route to proficiency.

There is no doubt that practice quantity has its place in the development of expertise. Ericsson and colleagues (1996) suggest that it takes 10,000 hours or approximately 10 years to develop expertise in a musical instrument. Averaging nearly 3 hours a day, it might seem that the repetitive practice is essential to progress. However, Ericsson and Lehmann’s (1996) thesis is that this practice must be *deliberate*, that is, goal-specific, intensely monitored for outcomes and feedback and consistently applied. The low road practice approach prioritised amount of time over metacognitive, self-regulatory actions. Advice such as ‘practice makes perfect’ contains no definition of the quality of the practice itself, and little discrimination regarding the effects of automaticity, which may appear to be the exclusive goal of practice. This vacuum is readily filled by uninformed, if well-meaning, experience-only, trial-and-error methods of practice. The hectic quest for automaticity through repetition or over-learning may not be the only, or ideal, way in which to advance to proficiency or expertise. Moreover, applying naïve practice maxims or relying on un-informed instruction at an early stage in a musical career may be more damaging than at first glance. Salomon and Globerson (1987) suggest that information from authorities (e.g. teachers and parents) and commonly accepted ideas (such as the practising lore), may become resistant to mindful re-examination even when there is a necessity to do so. Long-held traditions of accumulated practice may therefore be the cause of poor outcomes and physical debilitation (such as Repetitive Syndrome Injury) when applied naïvely.

In sum, the three profiles discussed here have been found to exist (in various forms) among individuals in a variety of settings (school and university) and ages (Cantwell, 1998; Cantwell & Millard, 1994; Conley, Pintrich, Vekiri & Harrison, 2004; Dweck & Leggett, 1998; Schommer, 1998; Schommer et al., 1997). The research examining approaches to learning points to the influence dispositions have on the application of self-regulation as students undertake learning tasks. That such learning patterns are also typical of individuals in this study supports the notion that investigating learning from the more distal source of *disposition* gives important insights into how students learn (see also Cantwell & Moore, 1996; Schommer, 1998). Few studies in instrumental music learning have investigated the psychological antecedents of self-regulation of practice (exceptions are Hallam, 2001a; O’Neill & Sloboda, 1997; Reid, 2001) and this chapter has provided a person-centred exploration of the nature of individual differences that students bring to their learning.

It is potentially very helpful to identify patterns of learning in students’ approach to practice. When student beliefs and attitudes to practice are revealed in their will to learn (manifested in
persistence and concentration), and the flexibility of their learning techniques, teachers can identify whether their students are struggling with the mental control of their learning, despite being willing. When simple beliefs are identified, then they can be addressed through discussion, instruction and modelling. When will to learn is flagging, then teachers might look for circumstances that may be leaching will to learn from the students. Garner’s theory of settings (1990) suggests that lack of aural monitoring or an insufficient knowledge base, as also identified in Chapter Four, may be at the root of metacognitive skill problems.

**Conclusion**

This chapter and the previous have provided an in-depth analysis of the different ways in which students go about their learning, and these patterns were associated with affective outcomes as well as length of engagement in formal instruction. Analysing the nature of the learning process has required a deep consideration of the elements of human thinking that go into learning a musical instrument. For this reason, these two chapters have revealed less of the subjective, presenting a higher-level reflection and thematic interpretation of these profiles than the learners themselves might have been able to craft. Just as the teacher’s role in a lesson is to reflect and facilitate, to understand and demonstrate, so the role of the researcher here has been to examine the learning process from distal sources, beliefs and attitudes, as well as from the more proximal sources of self-reports of practice activity. That such an examination is worthwhile is demonstrated by the musical outcomes experienced by the participants. The power of these technical and musical outcomes to influence learning and feeling is the subject of the following two chapters, where first the involvement of self in learning is examined in Chapter Eight before turning in Chapter Nine to the matrix of effects of learning on individuals’ intentions to continue their formal instruction.
Chapter 8. The Musical Self

Introduction
Where the previous two chapters have examined thinking about learning, this chapter examines feelings about learning, presenting an interpretive account of a musical self that is the subjective evaluator and interpreter of musical acts. This chapter aims to answer in part the question of the nature of participants’ subjective perceptions of their experiences. Subjective evaluations and interpretations are important because they form the basis for future endeavours (Cantwell, 2004; Markus & Nurius, 1986).

The text pertaining to the self-perceptions detailed here was of a broad yet complex sweep, and in Step One and Two of the coding, the text was categorised across three coding categories: into the Process Codes, the Outcomes of Learning category, and the Identity Codes (categories of core beliefs about self). The themes presented in this chapter were built from an exhaustive examination and interpretation of the coding categories, and they emerged at ‘end-of-cycle’ after other previously elaborated thematic configurations such as ‘connection to music’ and ‘patterns of learning’ had taken shape.

The thematic analysis illuminated several strands of subjective evaluations that formed part of participants’ self-descriptions. These strands were musical ability, feelings of competence, and self-esteem. Subjective evaluations of competence were touched on in the previous chapter where they were shown to be related to practice patterns; in the next chapter they are detailed as influences on engagement and disengagement. This chapter follows the ebb and flow of the three strands of self-perceptions as they relate to the participants’ learning experiences.

The findings are presented in three parts representing three themes. The first theme, A Musical Ear, describes perceptions of musical ability. The second theme details dimensions of Progress and Pleasure representing positive appraisals and outcomes of learning, while the third theme, Difficulties, Deficit and Despondency, details negative appraisals and outcomes of learning.

A Musical Ear
Many of the tertiary students and adults held a strong belief that talent made a significant contribution to music learning, theirs and others’. They felt that talent or musical ability gave access to the musical world, that it kept them attached to practice, and facilitated progress and good outcomes. Talent was often expressed as ‘a gift’; considering it as a ‘gift’ conferred something of treasure or value.
Tracy: I think it is a great gift to be able to play a musical instrument…Because I would love to have that gift. To be able to play so eloquently. (A 7013: 20)

Tracy’s comment illustrates several important aspects that were echoed by others. First, she indicates the pleasure she derives from music. Second, her statement suggests that she is well aware of not having received the gift of music. Third, it would seem that she believes that the gift bestows ‘eloquence’ on a player, suggesting eloquence is an outcome of talent, rather than it also, or primarily, being related to skill development and competence (Sloboda, 2000).

Playing by ear, or having ‘an ear’ for music, was felt to be a marker of the musical gift, and emerged in dichotomous form; either one could play by ear, or one could not. If one had an ear, there was assumption and confidence that one could successfully learn or play music. These self-descriptions of ability spanned two poles: at one end the feeling of ‘being a natural’ at music, at the other the feeling of not ‘being musical’, or not having an ear or gift for music.

**AN ACTIVITY ‘WHERE I SHINED’**

Claiming the ability to play music as a ‘natural’ was generally only typical of the tertiary students; ten of 17 students gave positive descriptions of their talent or musicianship. They felt they had ‘an ear for tunes’ and were able to ‘figure stuff out’ easily and quickly.

*Ryan:* I think it was just an activity where I shined at, rather than other things that kids do … This is hard too, but it was something I ended up being geared towards. (T 613: 36)

*Tom:* Yes, I was always good at it so I took it for granted for a long time, I just played because I could and I never really practised but because I was playing so much it was practice anyway without knowing. I always expected to be good at it. (T 607: 10)

The excerpts above show that Tom and Ryan recognised that music learning came easily for them; Ryan later added that his ‘ability’ allowed him to overcome the common difficulties players face. Similarly, despite experiencing many difficulties in the quality of her practice, Lyndal still felt confident about her ability to ‘hear what I need to do and I know exactly what I need to do, to make the sound that I want, and be able to play what I would like to be able to play’ (T 602: 23).

The comments below provide further evidence of the confidence in natural ability that tertiary students displayed. Their descriptions of musical ability showed that it was considered an innate, fixed individual attribute. It also inspired individuals to feel ‘able to do anything I wanted’.

*Damien:* Knowing that you can do something you are good at (T 614: 67)

*Sanja:* And so because my ear is really good I can hear something and then work it out without even reading the music (T 611: 27)

*Dan:* Drums came along quite naturally. (T 603: 22)
Adrian: I realised that I can do this too. (T 604: 79)

Jak: I don’t know why but I just understood it. (T 609: 67)

Louise: I was getting all these awards, I thought I am so good at this. I thought I would be able to do anything I wanted with it. (T 616: 9)

Inspiration, high achievement, and raised expectations are particularly evident in Louise’s comments.

However, the adults (i.e. the non-tertiary participants) presented qualified descriptions of their musical ability. Their ability did not develop into musicality. Comments recognising ability in music were hedged by hesitancy: ‘sort of’, ‘I think I was’, or by report of others’ appraisals:

Carol: It started off just something fun to do. It was, I’d never played an instrument before. As I progressed though it became apparent that I really liked it, and I was sort of good at it as well. (A 7029: 6)

Maria: So I think I was quite good at music straight off. (A 7034: 4)

Richard: [They thought of me as] having a natural ability for it. (A 7041: 44)

Peter: I had good long fingers and a musical ear I suppose. (A 7026: 3)

Tracy: I do have an ear for tunes. (A 7013: 47)

There was no comment by primary students concerning their own musical ability, ear or talent, despite the interview guides being the same as the adults’, and similar to the tertiary students’. The pilot focus groups (primary students) and the Stage 1 open-ended questions (primary and secondary) were re-visited to check for ability or talent codes. There were only a handful of coding references; two referred to ability as a genetic trait: ‘How you’re built in your body’, or if it is ‘in your genes’. One secondary student stated that music was ‘a talent that I’m proud of’. Possible reasons for the younger people’s lack of awareness or articulation of musical ability is considered in the discussion at the conclusion of the chapter.

‘I DON’T HAVE AN EAR’

At the opposite pole of musical ability were some participants’ perceptions of lack of talent. They had ‘no ear for music’, they were not ‘natural’, gifted or talented musicians, nor, by association, were they ‘regular practisers’. Many had persistent concerns about their ability to play in tune, to be able to sight read fluently, or to have sufficient skills to join others in ensembles. These concerns were less about competence and more about themselves as capable or able to ever play their instrument well. As much as she loved to sing, Rhonda below felt uncertain of her ability to succeed:

I: How will you know that you can sing?
Rhonda: I don’t know. I don’t think I ever will. I always feel like I have just got away with something after I sing. (A, 7010: 49)
The table below (Table 8.1) indicates the consistency with which adults described their musical ability in terms of negative social comparison, lack of confidence, low expectations, and lack of ability. The brief comments, like summaries, act as reasons for the nature or outcomes of their experience. For example, Florence (A 7016) seemed to know that she would not be as good as others; for others, never being a good sight-reader, achieving high marks or being aurally motivated were particularly negative and limiting descriptions of self.

**Table 8.1 Negatively oriented self-description by adults**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Participant ID</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I was never an A grade student as far as exams were concerned.</td>
<td>A 7011</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I wasn’t very good at it.</td>
<td>A 7034</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personally because I wasn’t a gifted pianist.</td>
<td>A 7003</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I didn’t think I had brilliant talent or anything.</td>
<td>A 7013</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And we thought we would never be as good as our cousin.</td>
<td>A 7016</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was never a great sight-reader.</td>
<td>A 7038</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t think I could ever do it [express myself] musically.</td>
<td>A 7026</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was never a particularly good practiser ...I would never say I was strong at it.</td>
<td>A 7014</td>
<td>23 &amp; 28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>But I felt like I didn’t have a voice because I was always told I couldn’t sing.</td>
<td>A 7010</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can’t say I was a natural musician.</td>
<td>A 7006</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I never had a good enough ear to learn to play things by ear...I went to the double bass saying, ‘I don’t play in tune, it doesn’t happen’.</td>
<td>A 7002</td>
<td>21 &amp; 44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>But I don’t really think I’m terribly musical....I don’t have a good ear for music.</td>
<td>A 7012</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’ve never been very good by ear for anything.</td>
<td>A 7037</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>But I don’t think I was ever especially clever at playing by ear or especially gifted at sight-reading.</td>
<td>A 7040</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was never a really natural at it...I guess my feeling it was not an innate gift of mine...I think I didn’t have a good enough ear.</td>
<td>A 7032</td>
<td>7 &amp; 3 &amp; 19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A handful of tertiary students were also doubtful of their abilities in music. Eric stated that ‘I always knew that I would never be a concert pianist, I never thought I would have the skill or the drive to’ (T 610: 9). His career seems bounded by his expectations of his possible self (Markus & Nurius, 1986). Other tertiary students showed an acceptance of their limitations, shaping their expectations through comparison to professional standards, and considering careers based on these hedged expectations.

**Louise:** Before I wanted to be like a big musician, professional concerts and stuff. Now I just want to get all my grades done...I know it would be really great to play in an orchestra one day, but I don’t think I’ll get there, I’m in the [university] orchestra now, and I thought that would never happen. (T 616: 9 & 50)

In a similar vein, three adults felt that limited talent had truncated their hopes of a music career. Vaughan, for example, explained that even though he had completed tertiary music studies, he never felt he was a good musician, and described himself as ‘never really a natural’, which stands in contrast to the tertiary students’ feelings described in the first theme (‘An activity where I shined’). He observed great differences between himself and his peers in aural skills and speed of learning; his diligence and effort enabled him to pass his degree, but he felt he did not
develop musically to the same level as his tertiary peers. Making comparisons with others very often has negative effects on music students (Sandene, 1997). In both excerpts below, it is possible to identify how Vaughan’s self-descriptions are quite different to most tertiary students in this study.

**Vaughan:** And then I decided I wanted to go back more seriously so I went back did HSC, and went on and I did a BMus all in classical guitar. But I wasn’t really a very good musician. I really loved it, but I didn’t have a good ear, I was never a really natural at it...I could never play by ear, I always used to struggle with learning things...I did OK in it, because I’m a good student. I got straight HDs when I did another degree, whereas in the music degree, I got through. So I guess it shows I was a really good student, and that’s what got me through rather than being able to listen to the music and be able to tell what key, and all those, and pick out all the themes and that sort of thing. (A 7032: 1)

**Vaughan:** With things like my guitar exams, a lot of my friends would be playing heaps of groups and doing things, and then a couple of weeks before the final exam, ‘Oh, we better concentrate on our pieces for the year.’ Whereas I’d be working on them for a good 6 months. (A 7032: 5)

Vaughan recognises the difference between loving music and being skilful in the performance of it; he is aware of the difficulty he had in accomplishing comparative and tertiary level standards. He also understands that his work patterns pushed him through the barrier of not having a good ear, although only insofar as completion of the music degree and not further into a vocation.

The two themes of talent described here were convincingly polarised; almost all of the older participants (i.e. excluding the primary students) found an opportunity in their discussions to give appraisals of their traits as musical or non-musical. There also appeared to be clear differences in self-description between the adults who were no longer learning an instrument and the tertiary students. Furthermore, whether expressed as abundance or lack, independent of level of experience or expertise, musical ability was seen as a powerful contributor to doing well in music.

Self-perceptions that were easily described by young and old were evaluations of competence, success and failure. As shown below, these appraisals were inextricably associated with emotion and self-description.

**PROGRESS AND PLEASURE**

*Progress and Pleasure* captures three sub-themes of perceived competence. Perceived competence here refers to “self-evaluative judgements about their ability to accomplish certain tasks” (Harter, as cited in Pintrich & Schunk, 1996, p. 82); it is how well they feel they have done something. In this study, participants’ descriptions of their accomplishment ranged from
feeling pleased at having ‘had a go’ and being ‘happy to potter’, through experiencing pleasure in proficiency, to feeling musically expressive and creative.

‘HAVING A GO’ AND ‘HAPPY TO POTTER’

Many participants enjoyed their learning, and for some, limited results were satisfactory and acceptable. By having spent some time learning, one could show that ‘you could play something’ and have ‘had a go’. Hilary explains that what she gained during her short learning period is not forgotten, and this, along with a certain show of good will to have tried at all, is sufficient for her:

Hilary: I can’t play big songs like Beethoven, but I can still play simple songs, so, yeah, even though I didn’t do it for like, 8 years, you still got stuff up here [indicating head] .. memory...And it doesn't matter if you stop; at least you’ve had a go. And so you can still say, ‘Yes, I have played an instrument’. (PD 191: 28 & 38)

Having taken lessons meant for Hilary that she would be able to play a few tunes on her viola if someone asked her, she would be able to say that she can play an instrument, and prove she had made an honest attempt at learning music. Mixed with a degree of naivety or literalness concerning the question, ‘Can you play an instrument?’, her response suggests she felt her willingness to learn was the most important aspect, and that an introduction to simple melodies was sufficient for her interest in music.

Many adults were able to describe this first degree of perceived competence more elaborately. Their comments showed that at the time, they were reasonably satisfied with their proficiency: they were ‘happy to stay at that point’, ‘happy just to potter’. This implied that although not always proud or thrilled with the outcomes of their learning, they felt their progress in general had been more or less satisfactory. These accounts were often partnered by summations of musical ability.

Cindy: Considering the effort… (A 7019)
Gordon: As far as that goes…(A 7023)
Albert: Fair to middling… (A 7035)
Bob: I can’t say I was a natural musician…Progress not very rapid. (A 7006)
John: But I would never say I was strong at it…Could have been faster. (A 7014)
Andras: I don’t have an especially good ear for tuning… Ready for the next hoop. (A 7040)
Richard: I seem to be able to do it without a great amount of difficulty…Somewhat fulfilled hopes. (A 7041)

Taken together, reflections on speed of learning, perceptions of performance levels and expectations constituted feelings of capability or competence. This degree of capability was sufficient for the activities they participated in, such as eisteddfods or exams, as well as to
justifying continuing lessons at that time. As Gordon notes below, such proficiency was an 
acceptable and useful tool.

*Gordon:* I could have taken it further in terms of how far I went. But yes, it was a successful 
thing as far as that goes... So what I have is a musical tool that I can still use. Took me where I 
wanted to go. (A 7023: 11 & 27)

Gordon suggests that he was reasonably aware of his progress, and was satisfied with the 
balance of goals (‘how far I went’, ‘where I wanted to go’) and outcomes (‘a musical tool’). 
Gordon’s accommodating attitude to his overall progress was characteristic of learners who 
were ‘happy to potter’.

**The Pleasure of Competence**

This second sub-theme of perceived competence shows that other participants experienced a 
进一步 degree of progress and enjoyment than those who had been ‘happy to potter’. 
Incremental progress, achievement and knowledge appeared to justify intentions to practice, 
whether this had consisted of going ‘over and over again’, or ‘putting in the hours’. Feeling 
capable or successful in playing the instrument was accompanied by positive emotions such as 
enjoyment, satisfaction and pride.

The feeling of competence described here included being able to play melodies, having pieces 
‘under my belt’, being ‘fairly proficient’, having ‘some competence’, and knowing ‘what I was 
doing’. Feelings of competence developed through the accumulation of positive experiences, 
whether at the micro-level of ‘getting it right’ and succeeding at playing a particular piece, or 
more broadly, feeling knowledgeable and accomplished. For example, a sense of competence 
and pleasure came from conquering the first steps of learning, completing grade books, learning 
pieces by memory, ‘playing complicated pieces’, winning eisteddfods, and getting ‘out of the 
rut’ of slow progress. Individuals felt competent by succeeding not only in the task (improving 
for example), but because the effort itself had been rewarded in positive ways. Rebecca (PD) 
noticed that ‘the more I practised the better I got’; Bella (PD) conceded that even when she 
suffered through the boredom of repetitive practice, there was some satisfaction in now being 
able to play the piece: ‘Sometimes it was boring if you did them over and over again but just 
still knowing them because you’ve been going over them [was satisfying]’ (PD 62: 13). Katie 
expressed this simply: ‘Cos when I first started I didn’t know what I was doing and then, I got 
better’ (PD 195: 12).

A further example is Timothy’s story of the unusual effort he once made to learn the music and 
impress his teacher, and of the resulting reward and pleasure derived from this achievement. 

*Timothy:* One week I actually practised 7 days, every day...Well, I had the book, and I decided 
that I would go on and do the next few songs and show her when I got there that I could play
them. That took me a while to learn it...I remember for one of them I got a sticker and she liked it. (PD 227: 20)

As Timothy’s excerpt shows, accomplishment was not easily won, for it was ‘very much a sweat of the brow thing’ (Bill A 7001: 34), and not always welcomed. Participants recalled questioning the need for the required diligence, although also reflecting that if as children they had worked harder, more progress would have been made.

As mentioned above, exams were particularly memorable markers of progress for many of the adults and tertiary students (only one primary student completed a formal exam):

*Louise:* I probably wouldn’t have known if I wasn’t doing the AMEB. Once I got a couple of As, then I thought, ‘Oh, now I can do that,’ and I would be excited about playing the new pieces, and doing the harder things. (T 616: 35)

Louise translated the success she experienced into high expectations for herself; she believed that ‘I would be able to do anything I wanted with it’.

Acknowledging a link between effort, competence and expectations, some tertiary students felt they were learning that successful, intensive high-quality practice gave confidence for future challenges. Following a poor exam result, Tom describes how he ‘realised how much better [he] was getting’ once he ‘kept doing them and kept doing [the scales]’. Having experienced the improvement, he felt that he would know how to address similar problems if they arose, and he gained a stronger sense of vocational direction from this experience:

*Tom:* If I kept on this path I’d be able to get somewhere which is what I want to, and I know that if I get anything wrong again, I know that it would be easy to pick it up because I’ve done it before. (T 607: 41)

Jak, a high-achieving tertiary student, explained how feelings could change through the development of proficiency. His early lessons (as a child) were ‘dreaded’ because he felt he could not yet master the instrument. His feelings about learning improved as he became more ‘in control’ of his playing:

*Jak:* I remember dreading going for lessons, getting into it; once I broke the back of being able to play, then I started to really like it because then it came more under my control. (T 609: 26)

Later he described his recent progress as ‘huge’, and that his need to practice ‘at 100%’ was his way of determining his career. Even though at higher levels of expertise ‘the level of improvement gets so small it’s harder to get over it’, working hard gives results, so ‘when you’ve worked really hard, then you feel rewarded’ (T 609: 33). Demonstrating further this connection between positive emotions and sense of competence in music, one participant stated: ‘For me enjoying it is tied up with success. So when I can play something well, I enjoy it’ (A 7012: 50). Edwina experienced a similar thrill when she could hear the difference in her playing.
as she worked on it: ‘It was when you really enjoyed it. When you could hear the difference in how you were playing it’ (A 7021: 66).

Experiencing this success and pleasure developed the confidence of learners; they knew what they were doing and were more satisfied with their achievements. Having ‘some competence’, they were able to look ahead: improvise on what they had learned, learn independently, or plan another exam. Below, Rhonda reflected that the preparation she made for her exam resulted not only in a high mark, but a long-lasting lesson about the power of preparation, and, as importantly, of competence:

*Rhonda:* I felt very successful, because I walked into the exam, and everything they asked me to do I did, perfectly, straight off, and I realised from my exam experiences that there were things in my life, that if I prepared properly for it, there was nothing I could get wrong. So I realised I was able to do things very successfully in my life. So, they were really great experiences for me. Very nerve wracking, I was very frightened, but it was the first time I had that experience of going into something and knowing what I was doing. (A 7010: 27)

**‘SongsToIKnow’: Musical Meaning through Competence**

The foregoing sub-theme of competence explained some of the participants’ understandings and feelings concerning the reciprocal relationship between ‘getting it right’ and satisfaction. The next shows that proficiency acted as a transformative agent; that is, feelings of competence transformed the physical and mental actions of playing into a musically meaningful experience for some participants.

For the primary students, the strongest expression of competence emerging as experiencing music meaningfully was ‘when you can actually play a song’ (Rebecca, PD 26: 35). Primary students used the word ‘song’ almost unanimously to mean a musical piece in their repertoire. To ‘play a song’ was to encounter or experience music. Finding a song that one liked and being able to play it was the ‘most enjoyable thing’ in the overall music learning experiences for many. The difference between making errors and finally playing the piece accurately was vast, and this transformed the music into a ‘song’ as Rebecca explains:

*Rebecca:* The most enjoyable thing was when you can actually play a song and not just play anything, because if you just play anything you don’t know what you’re going to play. (PD 26: 35)

Skye’s comments below corroborate Rebecca’s view, for when she is faced with music that has little or no meaning for her, she is uncertain about her abilities to learn it, and indeed avoids any encounter with that music.

*Skye:* I think it would probably be because you enjoy it and you would want to know how to play it rather than these boring songs that like, ‘I don’t know if I can play this’...so you don’t practise. (PD 53: 24).
She suggests that when the music is personally meaningful, interest and desire to learn how to play the music would occur spontaneously. Wanting ‘to know how to play it’ suggests mastery and volition, motivators of deliberate practice.

Nathan and Timothy had similar experiences of this combination of accomplishment with musical meaning. Nathan found his first lesson inspiring, for he ‘learned a little piece’ (PD 99: 3). Likewise, Timothy had a powerful sense of success when playing his songs: ‘I learned a couple of songs, but after that lesson, I had a sense of achievement that I actually did it’ (PD 227: 26).

When described by the adults in this study, meaningful musical encounters were even more clearly linked with fluency, accuracy and enjoyment. For example, Sarah’s experiences as a child demonstrate that once she had overcome the difficulty of learning the piece, and she had developed proficiency in it, she found deep musical pleasure.  

Sarah: I hated when I was first learning a piece but when I knew a piece, I loved it…once I knew them and I knew that I could play them well, I loved them even more. (A 7030: 92).

In this excerpt, she appears to be drawn to the musical experience, having to overcome early challenges to her thinking and will before she could experience competence and meaningfulness.

When respondents were able to play well - fluently, accurately, without mistakes or hesitation - they described feeling a musical or aesthetic satisfaction that offered more than a sum of parts:

Sid: When the song sounded good. When I played it well. When it all came together as a good piece at the end. And when I was really, had the notes spot-on, I always really felt powerful when the notes were played correctly and the whole song went correctly, and you got through it, and you felt like that was fantastic, I really felt like a great sense of accomplishment, satisfied that you had played well. (A 7008: 48)

Vaughan, Maria and Ann felt similarly:

Vaughan: When things were going well...playing really nice music...music I really enjoyed. (A 7032: 44)

Maria: Once you got a bit better…I did like the feeling of creating music…that’s what so exciting about music. (A 7034: 41)

Ann: One of the pieces was Grieg’s Albumblätt…I really loved it…And I played that perfectly…really pleased with myself. (A 7022: 52)

Experiencing this ability to create music (through reproducing a written score) was rewarding, enjoyable and satisfying; respondents loved the music resulting from their practice, and many like Ann above had special memories for pieces of music they loved. Carol describes the transformation of overwhelming black dots into a musical experience; first on the part of her teacher, and then by her own hands.

Carol: I look back now and I still remember the first easy books I had at the beginning and I compared that to the stuff I play now. I can remember sitting at the piano with that first little
book of really simple basic music, and listening to my teacher play, this beautiful Mozart and
Beethoven and all this classical piano music and thinking and reading the music, and it just
looked like this swarm of black dots. And thinking, ‘I am never going to be able to play that.
Like that is amazing.’ But I can play that stuff now. I really get a kick out of that. (A 7029:
56)

Tertiary students felt similarly, for example, Louise describes how her competence, ‘playing
that to the best you can’, is complemented by aesthetic fulfilment: ‘Playing and listening at the
same time, so there are two enjoyable things about it and it is working off each other, you are
playing better so you can listen to something that sounds better’ (T 616: 59).

Another example of the power of music to uplift the learning experience was tertiary student
Eric’s recollection. He described how learning some of Bach’s 48 Preludes and Fugues for the
first time was an encounter that led him to consider his vocation more seriously. In contrast,
Daniel used the musical encounter to shape his competence. He finds that his accomplishment
arises from allowing the ‘moment of the music’ to shape the feeling of the note he is playing,
and the power of this musical expression smoothes the technical challenge of sound-
production.

Daniel: Then where I am usually insecure, it won’t matter because I will be in the moment of
the music and I will just play that note in the feeling of it and it will just work. (T 606: 39)

Feelings of progress and pleasure then, were inextricably linked together; where there was
fluency there was often a musical moment that “let the future in” as Greene in The power and
the glory expressed it (G. Greene, 1940/2003, p. 12). The following sections describe a set of
perceptions that provided a contrast to feeling competent and satisfied.

DIFFICULTIES, DEFICIT & DESPONDENCY

Through the course of learning, challenge, setbacks and failure inevitably occur. For various
individuals, some setbacks were unsolvable and lasting. When difficulties were not overcome
through new information or alternative strategies, they became a deficit in musical knowledge
and skills. The following theme describes the problems individuals experienced, their feelings
of incompetence, and an associated want of musical meaning accompanied by many and varied
negative feelings.

LACK OF KNOWLEDGE & DIFFICULTIES

For the majority of participants, home practice was the environment most fraught with
difficulties, because, in their view, they lacked the scaffolding of the teacher. Although most
primary children had parents as advisors (as described in Chapter Five), this seemed insufficient
to overcome enduring struggles with reading and rhythm. Skill deficits were further emphasised
in group-learning situations where comparison to peers was inevitable. Patrick stated for
example, that ‘sometimes when I stuffed up I got really angry with myself ‘cos I thought, “That’s something that people in my group wouldn’t do, and I do it.”’ (PD 60: 29). Penny felt likewise: ‘I thought everyone would be like heaps better than me’ (PD 34: 26).

The greatest difficulty of musical instrument learning, highlighted by the primary students, was reading music. Some felt this was a direct problem of the teaching, ‘I was never taught to read’ for not being taught to read meant that you felt like you ‘were not being taught’ at all. The statements below give further examples of reading difficulties:

Swayne: I was never taught to read music so…I never really learnt the songs. (PD 53: 5)
Patrick: The time-frames [rhythm patterns], when you had to play that note and the next. (PD 60: 9)
Bella: They had all ups and downs and different notes that I didn’t know. (PD 62: 7)
Taya: I didn’t feel like I was being taught, because I couldn't read music. (PD 128: 9)
Timothy: But, after a while, if she played it and we stopped for a while, I couldn’t play it. (PD 227: 30)

Timothy’s comment above reveals that he was not learning to translate symbol into sound, but that he was learning aurally (by listening to his teacher play). However, because this appears to have been a tacit or unrecognised learning encounter, it is not fully exploited by the teacher, and Timothy’s learning seems to fall between the cracks of aural and visual learning, with predictable consequences.

Nathan’s comment below shows how a lack of skill or knowledge could be absorbed into self-knowledge, emerging as an ‘I am ...’ descriptor.

Nathan: [It was hard] because I was never really much of a music reader. (PD 99: 15)

Aside from the specific detail of reading music notation (pitch and rhythm), many other comments by children and adults were straightforward evaluations of their lack of knowledge: ‘I didn’t know anything’, ‘If it’s hard I can’t get it right’ (see statements below). Having these deficits in knowledge caused problems. Timothy stated that ‘it sort of got too hard and then, every time it got harder, I practised less and less and then it just got to a stage that I wasn’t practising at all’ (PD 227: 30).

Ben: Because I couldn't get the right one out (PD 9: 16)
Rebecca: A bit hard (PD 26: 90)
Skye: Really hard (PD 53: 5)
Patrick: Didn’t know (PD 60:9)
Bella: Hard to keep up (PD 62: 11)
Laura: If it’s really hard I can’t get it right (PD 73: 11)
Aline: Wasn’t learning anything (PD 154: 5)
Hilary: I couldn't get the right note (PD 191: 31)
Responses from the adults amplified those of the primary children; many were worried about intonation and sight-reading. In the excerpt below, Kaye recalls the vocal range being above her adolescent skill level, resulting in technical and musical failure and physical discomfort:

**Kaye:** I didn’t like the songs at all, because they were all pieces of opera, and they were just in a key that was way too high, and I didn’t like the fact that I would try and sing these pieces and get terribly out of breath or not make the note. (A 7009: 103)

The source of the difficulty escaped her, and she felt mystified by her lack of progress: ‘I think I was kind of confused, and was 16, 17, 18; how come I wasn’t progressing?’ Others also felt that they did not possess enough knowledge to make successful progress on their instrument:

**Rhonda:** Because I didn’t know how to fill in the gaps. (A 7010: 19)

**Fiona:** Just didn’t have that understanding as a child. (A 7012: 32)

**Maria:** But I think it’s actually understanding what needs to be done outside the lesson to improve. (A 7034: 34)

**Andras:** I think there was an expectation of me that I understood how you went about practising. (A 7040: 28)

Maria, Fiona and Andras above underscore that ‘understanding’ makes the difference between successful and unsuccessful practising.

Statements by one third of tertiary students concerning their limited progress had a different tenor however, although a lack of progress was rarely mentioned with respect to their school years learning. While some tertiary students like Annette and Zoë had worked relatively consistently through adolescence, others seemed to have relied intuitively on an aptitude and facility for music. This had placed them above their peers, and seen them through many challenges. However, the musical climate of the tertiary music institution (higher standards and substantial competition) was a shock to the ‘modus operandi’ of their instrumental practice. There were new consequences for the old ways of doing things for Lyndal: ‘I'm starting to not get away with it’ (T 602: 21), and for Tom: ‘In 1st year, I got stuck because I had been relying on the fact that I could play and then all of a sudden it started getting really hard, and I couldn’t do it’ (T 607: 4).

Mitigated progress appeared to be associated with uncertainty and possibly confusion about how to make good progress. Rafe (T) for example, demonstrated this uncertainty; progress was like a ‘strange spiral’, it was ‘up and down’; ‘you think you know something and you don’t’. Simon, whose progress ‘could be better, could be worse’, was a little like Lyndal, both making indeterminate appraisals of their playing:

**Lyndal:** At the moment I feel it is a bit slow, I'm not really sure. I’m obviously playing things that I couldn’t play at the beginning of last year, and I honestly don’t know how I got to that point. (T 602: 32)
Where tertiary students experienced substantial skill deficits or concerns with performance levels, this was always associated with their practice pattern and their previous experiences of music being an easy, effortless passage.

To compound the feeling of confusion and loss, a deeper problem was felt to be associated with technical deficiencies; several participants identified a lack of musical meaning in their learning experiences. There was a feeling that they were learning about music, rather than how to make music, and this led to frustration or annoyance. For example, Nathan felt he had missed out on the experience of the instrument:

*Nathan*: But the guy only taught me how to read the music and that. Out of the heaps of lessons I had, I think I only got a turn on the drums once. (PD 99: 4)

Edward seemed not to encounter any music; ‘I just wanted to learn how to play real songs not just little beats’ (PD 102: 22). Skye’s similar experiences suggest that she wanted to have sufficient competence to explore music, but the lack of guidance in music reading left her unprepared:

*Skye*: Well, because I couldn’t play a variety, as much as I could have, I couldn’t just walk into a shop and buy music and sit down and play. (PD 53: 10)

The children’s views on musical meaningfulness were supported by adults’ recollections. Betty described the appreciation of music her young son was gaining from lessons, something that contrasted strongly to her own experiences in formal learning; she felt that she had ‘walked away from 10 years of learning piano and didn’t have a broad understanding of it’ (A 7003: 3). Betty’s strength of feeling here suggests the effect is deep and lasting, as also expressed by Susanne:

*Susanne*: I remember the instructor trying to get me to play in time with the metronome, with the rhythm and I was so terrible at it, it was really *really* frustrating. I remember that, I remember thinking, ‘I wouldn’t do this, I would not play the piano to a metronome, this wouldn’t be something that I would do for pleasure.’ I remember hating it. (A 7031: 67)

Musical experiences thus were not available to counterbalance the technical components of the learning; individuals either could not express themselves as they wished, or experienced a void beyond the technical motor-skills of learning:

*Bob*: I just have this memory of being sat down in front of the piano, and...shown a scale, an octave...I was really too young, hadn’t been exposed enough to music to want to be in it I guess. (A 7006: 36)

*Rhonda*: But this teacher, her fingers, she was about holding my fingers in a very stiff position, and a very mechanical action with her fingers, I was more interested in what it sounded like, how the notes went together, so I found that very difficult, I couldn’t please her. (A 7010: 15)

The immediacy of the young people’s experience and their concrete ways of viewing the world perhaps aided the recollection of difficulties, making descriptions come alive with problems,
failure and attributions, yet the adult memories corroborated the children’s experiences, both in terms of the difficulties they experienced and the implications of this for their musical selves. When competence was absent, it was difficult to be musical, or to experience or express oneself meaningfully through one’s instrument. As noted in Chapter Six, effective strategies to alleviate difficulties were relatively rare. In these circumstances of meagre knowledge and absence of even low road practice, skill development came to a standstill and learners felt incompetent and inept.

**The feelings of failure**

Associated with evaluations of difficulty and deficit were a raft of negative feelings; the statements below show the scope of the children’s negative feelings associated with learning.

- **Frustration**: If it’s really hard, I can’t get it right, I get frustrated. (Laura, PD 73:11)
- **Annoyance**: Like if it was hard in the music, um, well I’d get a bit annoyed. (Penny, PD 34: 15)
- **Stress**: It was really stressful because I couldn't get the right note. (Hilary, PD 191: 31)
- **Boredom**: I found it more and more boring and little less fun. (Patrick, PD 60:27)
- **Lack of enjoyment**: Towards the end, I was just like, ‘I don’t really enjoy doing this’. (Edward, PD 102: 19)
- **Dislike**: [Liked the least?] The hard music. (Bella, PD 62: 11)

The adults echoed the array of negative feelings among the children. The absence of fun and satisfaction was a harbinger for disappointment and displeasure. Further, lack of enjoyment was often associated with boredom:

- **Fiona**: As a child, it was pretty boring I think. And not very fulfilling (A 7012: 32)
- **Sid**: On the other hand I knew that the more I practised the better I’d become, but I guess I focussed more on the negative thing and felt practice was thoroughly boring. (A 7008: 42)

Frustration arose as a key emotional response to the complexities and challenges in music learning. Even if lack of competence was not clearly expressed, it was implicit in expectations or actions, learners being frustrated by practice that never solved problems:

- **Sid**: I guess for the piano I got very frustrated and impatient with it (A 7008: 19)
- **Sarah**: I just couldn’t pick it up and play it. That really frustrated me. (A 7030: 45)
- **Rhonda**: Because I always struggled with performing on clarinet. Just thought I wasn’t good enough, bit unconfident. (A 7010: 24)

Maria’s excerpt below describes not only her lack of skill, but also the trauma associated with lack of strategic knowledge, and she describes how these feelings combined to result in maladaptive behaviour. She realises in hindsight how she could not cope with difficulties in
practice in spite of being ‘good at music straight off’, and the difficulties were accompanied by strong negative emotions and deflection away from the instrument.

Maria: But when I hit the plateau... I didn't know how to persevere with it... If I hit the wall, I just didn’t have the strategies of how to overcome that and then I’d get into most probably negative thinking, and then just give it up. (A 7034: 4 & 59)

Her experience and maturity, now, give her insight to see that she did not know what and how to implement effective strategies for change. Her ‘negative thinking’, like Nathan’s self-description earlier, points to negative appraisals of her own self-worth, and this is detailed in the next section.

**Feelings about me**

With little explicit reference, an underlying theme throughout evaluations of competence was self-esteem. Self-esteem is an evaluation people make of themselves or their efforts in a given domain (Austin, 1990; Cantwell, 2004). When people do well in a domain that is important to them, their self-esteem increases (Vispoel, 2000). If they do not do well in an important domain, they are likely to lose self-esteem; when the domain is not important to them, their self-esteem is less likely to be affected by good or poor performance (Vispoel, 2000).

Self-esteem formed part of the competence appraisals made by some individuals, and this was usually in the context of pessimistic descriptions of progress or skill. Two exceptions followed acknowledgement of success:

Louise: I guess this has given me something to make me feel good because I know I am good at it. Like it is my thing that I do, like when people ask me what I do, I say, ‘Music, I play the flute’, and they say, ‘Oh, that’s nice!’ (T, 616: 63)

These comments show that when Louise acknowledged her competence and ability, and felt socially acknowledged, her self-esteem was enhanced. The experience of competence gave rise to similar estimations for young Hilary:

Hilary: But when I got into it I felt, ‘Oh yeah, I’ve actually accomplished something.’ And it made me feel good inside. (PD 191: 17)

When participants could not push through the challenges, they often experienced negative feelings about themselves and their self-worth. May described how she would ask others for approval: “’Do you really think so, do you think I’m alright?’” (A 7007: 15), and this came from or augmented a ‘sense of inadequacy’ for her (A 7007: 10). Maria felt the same way: ‘I am sure there was a self-esteem thing that I always thought I was stupid or I wasn’t very good at it’ (A 7034: 39).
Comments from tertiary students showed how self-esteem could be lost. Nick and Simon had made music an important part of life; as their performances worsened, negative feelings increased.

**Nick:** Apart from that I'm not too bad…At the moment I am feeling good. Last year I was a bit depressed about it. (T 617: 45 & 48)

**Simon:** [Facing a challenge] I would put myself down a bit. (T 618: 38)

The intense feelings accompanying these statements - frustration, anxiety, depression – had the potential to flare into overwhelming negative self-esteem: simply, ‘I am no good’.

**Louise:** Just when my practice wasn’t going so well, ‘I will never be good enough; what’s the point?’ Just getting frustrated with it all sometimes. You get sick of it, all this work all this time. (T 616: 45)

**Dan:** And sometime it gets too much and it won’t be working out, it’ll be, ‘Oh, I'm s__t, I can’t do it’. Self-esteem drops totally, and I'm coping with that stuff a lot better now. I'm not sure what it is. I guess it is thinking about it in different ways. In some ways that pushes you as well. This feeling of down, it can push you, but also lead you to throw down your mallet, and slide under your bed. (T 603: 78)

Dan was the most articulate in his tertiary cohort regarding the inter-dependence of self-esteem and feelings of competence. Practice was easier when his self-esteem was high, and as others also experienced, self-esteem suffered when the task seemed overwhelmingly hard or a good outcome unlikely. He also suggested that his competence appraisals - ‘I can’t do it’ - could act either as a sustainer of persistence - ‘This feeling of down, it can push you [forward]’, or as a reason to disengage: ‘Throw down your mallet’ and ‘slide under your bed’.

In summary, difficulties in reading and rhythm often led to a lack of competence, a lack of confidence and lower expectations for the future. Frustration was a key emotion accompanying music practice, and setbacks were accompanied by low self-esteem when music was valued by the individual.

**DISCUSSION**

The analysis in this chapter has shown that self-knowledge existed in a rich and coherent pattern among young students, adults and tertiary students. Feelings of ability, competence and self-esteem were interlinked and emotions were strongly related to these perceptions, if not a part of them. Tertiary students felt ability in music was innate; they never really ‘thought much about it’. In their younger days, ability seemed more like railway tracks, directional but non-intrusive, almost invisible, rather than an attribute they deliberately chose to nurture and develop.

Adults were quite detailed in their descriptions of ability however; they described playing by or having an ear as an important component of talent or giftedness. With this view, this group of
less experienced music players were similar to a group of mid-range-experience adults in Flowers and Murphy (2001) who also, more than experienced music performers, emphasised the importance of ability. Likewise, Asmus (as cited in Asmus, 1989) found that ability was considered more important than effort for success in music by low-motivated students. In other words, the older participants in this study, who had also had less experience and skill than the tertiary students, felt that without the attributes of talent and ear, they had little control over the outcomes of their work.

There was little evidence of negative or positive perceptions of ability among the primary students (average age 11.5 yrs) in this study, while there was some indication of social comparison being an influential factor on perceptions of self. This may have been a reflection of the interview method with children. Where abilities have been measured in children, this has often been with sharper instruments, such as a structured interview in Bempechat and London (1991) or itemised scales as in Freedman-Doan and colleagues (2000), rather than what could be conceived of as a ‘blunt’ interview protocol depending upon an inductive analysis.

Nonetheless, the lack of a sense of musical ability among the primary students also follows developmental expectations; perceptions of competence can be indistinguishable from interest in the activity (Tracey & Ward, 1998; Wigfield et al., 1997), and consistent differentiation between ability and effort emerges only around 12 years of age (a premise of Nicholls’ [1990] developmental differentiation theory). Earlier in the study (Chapter Six), willpower statements were found to be strongly prevalent among primary students. In company with the lack of ability claims by the young people, the findings are evidence for Nicholls’ (1990) theory. In other words, young people are likely to consider ‘making an effort’ as the most important contribution to their learning.

The theme of A musical ear echoed and augmented the Beliefs in Music Ability scale in the first stage of the study. While musical ability appears to be believed as fixed by most participants (primary and secondary aged), it was nevertheless perceived as accompanied by effort, as Dick (2006) also found. Perhaps it is more common to attribute successful musical performance (in the Western music context) to ability than to effort (Arnold, 1997; Austin & Vispoel, 1998). These findings suggest that ability in music is perceived differently than implicit ability beliefs in other domains (Vispoel & Austin, 1995).

The findings emerging from this data attest to the power of competence to influence an individual’s emotions, self-perceptions, goals and expectations. Building on the earlier findings that music students focus on different levels of technique and music in their learning and that these levels reach into the experiencing and communicating of musical meaning (Chapter Six), this chapter reinforces the notion that feelings of competence facilitate strong positive emotions
and open a gateway to the experience of music. As evidenced by these findings and supported by others (Lindstrom, Juslin, Bresin & Williamon, 2003; Sloboda, 1999), the ‘musical experience’ is critical to ongoing attachment to music. A musically meaningful experience is one where the subjective experience of the music is more important than the content of the music (J. Brown, 2000). Competence in music learning was highly associated with a musical experience (although mainly through reproducing a written score), and this in turn was an exciting, pleasing or satisfying moment. The theme Songs I know demonstrated the strength of this association: ‘getting it right’ allowed players to engage with music in entirely different ways than just playing accurately. If music is considered as a discourse, a communication or language as Dewey (1925) and S. Langer (1942) suggest it might, if there is compromise in its grammar, syntax or vocabulary (faulty rhythms, incorrect pitches or poor sound quality for example), it cannot act as a discourse or communication, for “meanings do not come into being without language” (Dewey, 1925, p. 299).

Descriptions of a compromised discourse were frequent; poor outcomes and being unable to solve musical or technical problems were accompanied by a wide range of negative affect in the Difficulties, Deficit and Despondency theme. Primary students’ difficulties were specific and ranged over three areas of pitch notation, rhythm and sound production, with reading music and transferring reading to fingering as the most debilitating problem amongst them. Music reading was clearly an important issue for the adults also, and this could suggest that many students are finding difficulties from the earliest days of their learning, as instrumental learning methods used in Australia are almost exclusively notation-based. A deficit in reading in band environments may well be masked, unknowingly or not, by the use of strategies such as memorising or referencing from others.

The feelings of incompetence were accompanied by uncertainty in strategy use or focus of practice, and associated with a wide range of negative affect. Further, unrealistic expectations of practice invited despondency. Perfection in musical meaning or technical performance is a highly subjective assessment; when students applied this standard to their own developing skill, they felt frustrated and lost self-esteem. This implies that they had a high value for music, for individuals who value music are likely to lose their esteem if they do not attain their performance ambitions (Vispoel, 2000).

Hence the effect of competence on a learner is powerful. Self-processes and achievement have a reciprocal influence on each other (Rosevear, 2002), suggesting that the more successful mastery experiences children have, the more their sense of self in music is strengthened, and this strong self (I am good at music, I am able to play well), in turn influences their achievements.
The evidence here represents evaluations of progress made in retrospect, and at varying distances from the learning period. How exactly these evaluations of learning correspond to evaluations made by participants at the time of their learning and practice is not possible to claim. However, it is more likely that participants’ recall is within range of their school-years’ beliefs than not, for Ross (1991) states that reorganising or restructuring of autobiographical memories is much less prevalent than is commonly believed; that is, these competence reflections are likely to be reasonably accurate representations of their childhood learning. Supporting this argument, Markus, Cross and Wurf (1990) suggest that felt competence is an “essential aspect of actual competence” (p. 206).

When playing well was important, competence perceptions provided ongoing evidence that progress was possible and that the student was being successful in their goals. Such perceptions are powerful predictors of achievement, effort, goal setting and individuals’ sense of self-worth (Wigfield et al., 1997). Throughout the study, high competence valuations were associated with positive affect: enjoyment, satisfaction, and pleasure. These positive activating emotions influence motivation to learn (Pekrun, Goetz, Titz & Perry, 2002), by sustaining willingness to continue and persist in the activity (Reeve, 1989). Other researchers in music performance education have found similar relations; Chandler, Chiarella and Auria (1987) for example, found that music students’ satisfaction with their performance was associated with longer learning and increased practice.

The analysis undertaken in this chapter is grounded in the salience, variation and depth of the themes based on the data categories. The themes woven together represented strands of self-processes that were important ways of experiencing and presenting self in music. Where the fifth chapter picked up the participants’ feelings about music, this chapter has brought together their feelings about themselves. As components of the musical self, these themes are also characteristics of the affective domain of learning as described in Cantwell’s (2004) framework outlined in Chapter One. The self is the link between emotional changes (moods, emotions and feelings in response to the learning experience) and behavioural change (Salovey & Rodin, 1985). Most of the self statements by individuals in this study were personal, descriptive and comparative estimations, and therefore seemed to reflect the notion of musical self-concept, a construct described by Vispoel (1996) as containing descriptive, evaluative and affective perceptions of self. Vispoel defines musical self-concept by skill appraisals (alone and in comparison with others), confidence, inclination to welcome learning in music, perceptions of ability and expectations for future performances. Musical self-concept is not new, yet it is relatively unexplored in the retention-attrition literature, and this chapter has shown that it is a qualitatively rich and broad concatenation of thoughts about self that influences individuals’ perceptions of events and shapes their expectations. Vispoel (2000) notes that the development
of musical self-concept is not fully understood and further research is needed in the area. The findings of this chapter make some headway in this endeavour.

**Conclusion**

The analysis in this chapter focused on a range of individual differences in awareness of the musical self, where individuals were highly responsive to their perceptions of ability and perceptions of competence or skilfulness in music. In particular, perceptions of competence were critical to an individuals’ experience of musical meaning, due to the cyclical relationships between competence, pleasure and motive to learn. Musical self-concept is a highly detailed, descriptive and useful construct to apply to music learners, and especially in the qualitative sense. It embraces many concepts that have relationships with other theoretical constructs, but in the framework of the musical-self, these combine to provide a comprehensive picture of the musical ‘me-ness’ of a unique and emotional individual. It allows researchers and teachers to see many of the important influences on learners and to be able to identify the vulnerabilities of individuals to negative self-esteem. Both the quantitative psychometric measure (MUSPI) used by Vispoel (1996) and the qualitative data in the form of a musical self presented here identify multiple strands of self-knowledge of musical skill and ability. The quantitative measure, for instance, picks up instrumental versus non-instrumental self-concept, and the qualitative data in this study picked up a range of fine-grained patterns of aural and reading abilities.

Building on the findings of this chapter, the final analysis chapter ahead examines the ways in which individuals reasoned, judged or decided to cease formal instruction, contrasting this with an analysis of the persistence distinguishing the tertiary students.
Chapter 9. The Conditions of Participation

Introduction
The previous chapter portrayed the descriptive, evaluative and affective perceptions of the musical self. It was argued that these are important in understanding the subjective experience of musical learning because the self is the link between emotional changes and behavioural change (Salovey & Rodin, 1985). This chapter will show that subjective evaluations were central to participants’ decisions to continue or give up their learning. In particular, the analysis examines how the emotions of daily learning fluctuated and settled to become a stable characteristic of the individual’s engagement with music.

As was argued in Chapter One, emotions felt by music students have for the most part been considered as covariates in relationship with participation (e.g. M. Brown, 1996; Frakes, 1984; Yoon, 1997), or identified as boredom and dislike of learning (e.g. Bushong, 2005; O’Neill, 2001). Although suffusing most music learning experiences, emotional responses have been viewed as ‘given’ and implicit, rather than as foreground detail to be explored. However, “emotions are personality processes that give meaning and significance to human existence” (Izard, 1991, p. 41). Limiting the study of emotional response in learning to its degree of correlation with discontinuation overlooks the significance of the interplay of emotions with cognition in the learning process.

Furthermore, the interaction of emotions and cognition demonstrated in the previous chapter was not unforeseen, because Western classical music is both demanding on the performer and a source of aesthetic or emotional expression. Each composition is comprised of its distinctive melodies, rhythms and harmonies as written by the composer. The performer’s ability to represent these parameters accurately is a measure of skill that in turn arouses affective experiences of many kinds (Jackendoff & Lerdahl, 2006), not the least being the performer’s own emotional experience of the performance.

The preliminary section of this chapter discusses the role of emotion in learning in order to understand its role in musical learning and more pointedly in intentions to participate, whilst the remainder of the chapter examines the contexts of negative emotions and how individuals responded to these contexts.

Emotions as Part of Learning
Research into the relationship between motivation, cognition and affect has recently focused on the role of affect in learning contexts (Boekaerts, 1993; Carver & Scheier, 1990; Izard, 1991; Linnenbrink, 2006; D. Meyer & Turner, 2002; Pekrun et al., 2002; Schutz & DeCuir, 2002).
The research suggests that decisions to participate in activities are monitored by the appraisals individuals make of their rate of progress towards their goals (Carver & Scheier, 1990), and these appraisals are, in the first instance, emotional responses (Schutz & DeCuir, 2002). In the learning context, appraisals generally consist of responding to evaluations of progress towards learning or mastery goals, to judgment and comparisons of performance and to fulfilment of expectations or beliefs about self (Pekrun et al., 2002; Schutz et al., 2006). Individuals will decide on their action after making an evaluation, and will act with the intention of protecting their self-worth (Covington, as cited in J. Middleton & Toluk, 1999). When the event or information impacts on their self-worth, it becomes emotion laden or hot, and stress ensues (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Emotionally laden or hot information represents the subjective meaning of that experience (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

Participants’ emotionally laden descriptions of learning therefore became significant in flagging the most meaningful aspects of their learning experiences. Emotions suffused the themes that were described earlier in this thesis. Affinity for music was characterised by positive affect (identified in Chapter Five), and appraisals of learning goals, outcomes of practice strategies and progress (identified in Chapters Six, Seven and Eight) gave pleasure or disappointment. The presence of emotions in association with these themes suggests that positively-valenced emotions demonstrate satisfaction of goals, expectations or beliefs, and in contrast, negative emotions reflect appraisals of dissatisfaction. These negative feelings are important because they are associated with decisions about participation, as well as pointing to ways in which affinity for music is attenuated or weakened.

**THE CONTEXTS OF NEGATIVE AFFECT**

This section first details the coding categories providing the basis for the analysis, then demonstrates the predominance of negative affect in the study, and how it came to be an important phenomenon associated with withdrawal from formal instruction.

The thematic interpretations in this chapter evolved from patterns among the coding categories of Processes (Discontinuation, Persistence, and Outcomes of learning) and Attitudes, including emotions. The coding categories for emotions were adapted from Pekrun et al. (2002). The emotions were categorised as task-related emotions, which encompass feelings about the task at hand, feelings about the task to come and feelings about the completed task (Pekrun et al., 2002; Table 9.1). Although frustration was not included in Pekrun et al.’s list, Wiener (1986) stated that frustration is a primary emotional response to failure, no matter to whom or what the individual attributes the failure, and this feeling was frequently experienced by participants in this study.
Table 9.1 Task-related academic emotions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Negative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Process</td>
<td>Enjoyment</td>
<td>Boredom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Frustration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prospective</td>
<td>Anticipatory joy</td>
<td>Hopelessness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hope</td>
<td>Anxiety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retrospective</td>
<td>Joy about success</td>
<td>Sadness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
<td>Disappointment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pride</td>
<td>Shame &amp; guilt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Relief</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Adapted from Pekrun et al. (2002)

Most participants expressed a variety of negative feelings. Despite the positive feelings also experienced, the most frequently cited feelings about playing an instrument were boredom, frustration, disappointment and lack of enjoyment. Boredom was expressed in most part by the children; frustration and disappointment by almost all, particularly in relation to slow progress and unfulfilled expectations of music. Participants described lack of pleasure variously as dislike, losing enthusiasm or interest, feeling ‘turned off’, resenting practice, and lacking will to continue.

However, there was more than just the presence of negative emotions in response to slow progress and unfulfilled expectations. It was common for individuals to stress the valence of the affect itself as a primary reason for giving up their lessons. From the viewpoint of many, negative affect was sufficient cause for discontinuation. Not only did negative feelings permeate encounters with learning, as described in the previous chapter, but these feelings of frustration, dislike and unhappiness, as “outcome-dependent” affects (Weiner, 1986, p. 121) also became ‘reasons’ for giving up learning. As will be shown however, negative emotions as reasons for discontinuing were embedded in three particular contexts. The three contexts directly associated with ceasing formal instruction that are thematically developed below concern individuals’ appraisals of i) progress and achievement, ii) the meaningfulness of their musical experiences, and iii) their perceptions of social support from parents, teachers and peers. Two minor themes focusing on barriers to music learning emerged from a set of reflections on childhood learning gathered from the adult participants. Some felt that their childhood influences were too restrictive, while others felt they had ‘missed out’ on something special. Both these childhood themes pointed to social support as significant to fostering an initial interest in music, and critical to continuing participation in formal instruction.

**Negative Feelings in the Achievement Context**

Individuals’ evaluations of their progress and competence in playing their instrument were found in Chapter Eight to have a profound impact on feelings and expectations. The need to
know and to understand is conceived by Maslow and Lowery (1998) to be a growth need that motivates individuals to seek out knowledge and understanding. Similarly, the need for achievement is believed to underpin mastery and performance goals (Elliot, 1999). Hence, participants’ evaluations of competence were indicators of their progress or fulfilment of these needs, in terms of their learning-focused goals (Maehr & Midgley, 1991), their aesthetic goals, or their expectations and beliefs about their ability to succeed in practice and performance tasks (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000).

In this context of needing to understand and to be skilful in music then, many learners experienced frustration and anxiety at their inability to satisfy even their micro-goals of reading the notes, understanding rhythm patterns, or sounding the instrument satisfactorily. Almost all primary students cited their feelings about task difficulty as a reason for giving up; Skye for instance complained of the worry of trying to catch up on her lack of knowledge: ‘It just got too hard, that I got very stressed from practice because I wanted to do more of the basics’ (PD 53: 10). The children were highly conscious of their level of skill in view of the challenges of the learning and used these as justification for discontinuing.

- **Rebecca**: Too hard to play the instrument
- **Skye**: Got too hard, not knowing the basics
- **Patrick**: Behind the others and too hard to catch up
- **Bella**: Too hard to keep up, didn’t like the hard music
- **Nathan**: The practice was getting a bit too hard
- **Edward**: Didn’t understand it
- **Taya**: Couldn’t read music (first instrument)
- **Timothy**: Couldn’t read music

Adults also felt that their lack of progress and feelings of incompetence contributed to their decisions to discontinue. They felt they were not good enough to just ‘sit down and play’ or to join other ensembles and did not develop important skills such as sight-reading.

- **Kaye**: It was too much of a hard task with very little enjoyment. (A 7009: 59)
- **John**: It wasn’t worth continuing as I was, I wasn’t progressing or anything. (A 7014: 10)
- **Steve**: Basically I couldn’t stand the sound of the practice of the violin….it was that lack of real progression that was one of the factors; I didn’t want to go on. (A 7027: 11 & 83)
- **Maria**: And by grade 3, I was just bumming out. And I’ve actually got my reports and things like - ‘not ready to do the exam’. (A 7034: 4)

‘Getting it right’ did not come as easily as was expected, problems were unsolvable, and playing became too difficult and unpleasant. Technical difficulties, displeasing sounds and plummeting exam results were forerunners of discontinuation. These setbacks were often accompanied by
‘negative thinking’ and a lack of confidence; for example, one participant did not feel that she ‘really had that much to contribute’ to music anyway.

Finding their progress to learning goals threatened by technical difficulties or their own lack of will to practice, tertiary students too experienced frustration, fear of failure and thoughts of discontinuation. Jak elaborated on why he felt like stopping:

*Jak:* Yes, I sort of had this thing: I was working so hard, and I wasn’t getting any results. And because the level of improvement gets so small and smaller, it’s just hard to sit back and notice it, and it is frustrating. (T 609: 50)

Jaks’ progress was much less than he expected, and as Carver and Scheier (1990) predicted, this gave rise to frustration and thoughts of discontinuing; he developed a ‘thing’ about his playing, which may be interpreted as rumination accompanied by anxiety (Thompson, Webber & Montgomery, 2003). This rumination most likely revolved around his expectancy or sense of control over his progress: ‘Will I be able to do it?’ (Schutz & DeCuir, 2002; Pekrun, Elliot & Maier, 2006). However, he adjusted his expectations through reflection (‘sit back and notice’), by the use of volitional strategies (he described it later as ‘discipline’), and kept himself on-goal and engaged.

Daniel too explained that the failure to accomplish his technical and musical goals was a motive towards discontinuation:

*Daniel:* It’s like everything you go for in that moment, you’re trying to do something, and it just doesn’t happen. You try and try repeatedly and it just doesn’t happen. So you just want to give up and do something else. (T 606: 50)

This excerpt suggests that Daniel was evaluating something more than his technical and musical goals. His sense of self suffered when his progress was slow (Pomerantz & Rudolph, 2003), and as Daniel himself suggested, this foreshadowed disengagement.

Some tertiary students also acknowledged that as a child and even at the tertiary level, they had avoided the mental effort of practice, and had considered discontinuation of their instrument as an option.

*Sanja:* Maybe in Yr 9 or 10 I wanted to quit piano, I was trying to do 8th grade and it was hard....I did do it and did it well, but I just wasn’t prepared to put the work in that I should have, so I knew that I could do it pretty easily if I practice. But I wasn’t practising, so that was my motivation for quitting. Just because it was more work than I wanted it to be. (T 611: 49)

Therefore, when learners’ goals and expectations were not being fulfilled, participants felt badly about their lack of progress and inability to achieve as might have been hoped for or even naïvely expected. As was found earlier in this study, the children’s and adults’ expectations or ability beliefs were commonly less positive than the tertiary students, and although the nature of this analysis cannot suggest causality, evidence from previous research shows that negative
emotions arising from mistakes or failure influence learners’ ongoing expectations and beliefs in a pessimistic manner. Wright and Mischel (1982), for example, found negative affect to negatively influence learners’ expectancies and competence perceptions, and Turner, Thorpe and D. Meyer (2002) found negative feelings after failure to have direct negative effects on beliefs and behaviours such as self-efficacy, preference for difficulty, and deep strategy use. Feelings such as frustration, worry and boredom in learning had quite immediate and serious implications for learning beliefs and behaviours. Many of those who had finished learning before the end of schooling in this study claimed that negative affect in conjunction with poor outcomes caused their disengagement from learning. In contrast, the worry, stress and frustration of poor achievement or practice outcomes may have prompted thoughts of discontinuation by tertiary students, but this did not happen. Their persistence in the face of negative outcomes and feelings is discussed later in the chapter.

The next section describes one reason why some adults felt they were unsuccessful in their musical achievement.

*The simplicity of childhood*

This childhood sub-theme emerged as adult participants reflected on life as a young music student; there was a sense that much about daily musical activities was not clear or obvious to them. Some adults attributed this to their age; they felt that when one is young, learning an instrument is not easy; to concentrate for long periods in practice, or to pursue practice without assistance. When one is young, there is less understanding of what learning is, and why one has to practise in certain ways.

*Renée:* When my parents and my grandparents would say, ‘Oh, it’s so lovely that you can sit down and play the piano’, I took it for granted, because I thought anyone could do that. And they said, ‘No, it’s because you’ve had lessons that you can’, and I couldn’t see that: ‘All I do is sit here and play keys, anyone can do that.’ (A 7038: 49)

As children, it was difficult to ascertain progress, they did not see the reason for practising and they found it hard to distinguish between wanting to do something and then following this up with persistent action; the novelty that made practice an adventure in the earliest days on their instrument soon faded into bleak routines of repetition, as discussed in Chapter Six. Many adults could not see the benefit of practice in their early days.

*Renée:* Yes, I couldn’t see any long-term benefits when I was that young I suppose. (A 7038: 49)

*Andras:* I think I had less of a concept of what practice was about. (A 7040: 28)

*Richard:* Because I couldn’t get it right at the time, whereas now I can take a step back. (A 7041: 66)
In retrospect, childhood was as if blinkered – some reflected that they never got to see the big picture about music learning.

Betty: I learned every year, 8 or 10 pieces to pass the exam and I wasn’t looking at the bigger picture. And that now is the difference. So I walked away from 10 years of learning piano and didn’t have a broad understanding of it. (A 7003: 3)

As children therefore, these individuals did not or could not make the link between specific or deliberate practice with long-term skill development and meaningful musical experiences. Parents compounded the problems by demanding practice be done, expecting natural interest or ability to be sufficient. Andras for example, felt that there was, misguidedly, ‘an expectation … that I understood how you went about practising.’ (A 7040: 28).

Fiona (A) below clearly articulates the difference between her early days in music and her later learning experiences; she feels that understanding practice needed a maturity of mind that she did not have at the time. She also suggested that practising was a boring routine of repetition, and that results from practising were typically drawn-out and not immediately apparent to a child.

Fiona: As a child it was pretty boring I think. And not very fulfilling because I don’t think I had the maturity to really understand what was meant…[Now] I know when I get to a difficult passage there is no substitute except just to play over and over and over and over that, and that eventually I will get there. I just didn’t have that understanding as a child, and I couldn’t really see the benefits of doing it, whereas these days I do it quite voluntarily and happily. (A 7012: 32)

This simple view of learning may also have been associated with the intuitive nature of the child. When a child, many would not play ‘over and over and over and over’. The repetitive nature of practice appeared to be unacceptable to many children - ‘I don’t think I really always understood why I was doing the 59 versions of scales’ (A 7040: 25). This view also mirrors the dislike of practising cited earlier by the primary students. Fiona suggests that now she understands this repetition to be necessary, where she could not see that before. Tertiary students confirmed these sentiments of childhood; they felt that they too had gone through periods of lack of understanding or refusal to learn a certain way: Tom recalls his teacher saying: “This is what you have to do to get somewhere”, and I didn’t see that cos I was a kid’ (T 607: 13).

As suggested by Tom and Fiona above, another blind spot in childhood learning was ‘seeing’ the point of practice or learning. Comments by another participant suggested that she did not have a direction or purpose in her learning during her childhood.

Maria: It’s like, ‘Why do you play music and what are you interested in when you are playing music?’ And I think as a child you don’t really know. (A 7034: 73)
Again, responses from tertiary students helped to explain. When one is young, one is generally not aware of one’s self as ‘good’ at the instrument; one just is good at it. Tom reflected that as a child, he had a different purpose for playing music than his teachers or parents: ‘As a young kid when you play something you don’t do it as practice’ (T 607: 23); experiencing music, not learning music, was his childhood goal. Daniel expressed a similar sentiment:

Daniel: I had no idea; I didn’t have any kind of driving ambition or anything like that. It was really like a new world to me. (T 606: 12)

Lack of understanding in childhood and adolescence also led to conflicts between personal expectations and reality. As was discussed in Chapter Five, children’s beliefs about learning may be concrete and simple, yet such beliefs conflict with the reality of progress, which was far from the instant results expected.

Albert: One is that you have to practise; I wasn’t instantly playing well, which was a disappointment to me although it was logical that you have to learn...And that was part of my problem of course, was wanting instant gratification with it, and not quite being prepared to put in the time and work on it. (A 7035: 4 & 16)

Kaye: I wanted things instantly, so perhaps it was my age as well, but because it didn’t happen instantly, that was kind of difficult. (A 7009: 29)

Instant learning beliefs thus inevitably clashed with the reality of learning that was slow, painstaking and effortful. However, there were further consequences of slow progress, and these are detailed below.

**NEGATIVE FEELINGS ABOUT MUSICAL EXPERIENCE**

As explained in the previous chapter, when progress was slow and difficulties encountered, experiencing music was troublesome and negative feelings proliferated. There were three predominant expressions of these feelings that acted as reasons for ending formal instruction: the feeling of a musical void, feeling no connection with music and the feeling of missed opportunities.

**The musical void**

Musical expression - ‘to be able to play a song’ - was conceptualised earlier in this study as expression through a “language of feeling” (S. Langer, 1942, p. xix), and meaningfulness in music explained as an experience of that communication. Musical meaningfulness may also include the experiencing of symmetry, beauty and the aesthetic (Maslow & Lowery, 1998). Music students express this as ‘playing with feeling’ and ‘communicating emotion’ (Lindström et al., 2003). The need to experience or communicate the symmetry, beauty or aesthetic of music was most passionately articulated by the tertiary students while children and adults felt ‘songs’ and the accompanying joy were the longed-for consequences of competence.
The difficulty however is that communicating songs requires an accurate and fluent grammar (i.e. technique; Sloboda, 1985). Although not often acknowledged in teaching practice, instrumental players need a degree of technical efficiency to “exercise interpretative judgement and make musical decisions” (Swanwick & Cavalieri, 1999, p. 5). Not having the technical skill with which to make musical decisions gave rise to frustration, unhappiness and disappointment, and contributed directly to decisions to discontinue.

For example, Skye’s comments about reading difficulty show that she could not learn her songs; she later stated that she could not learn new music either, because her learning style is by ear. Not having an aural model for learning, nor skills to translate the music notation into her own aural model, Skye was precluded from further musical experience.

*Skye:* I was never taught to read music so it was really hard for me, cos I play by memory, so…I never really learnt the songs. (PD 53:5)

When Aline was placed with younger and less experienced players, she did not have a meaningful musical experience:

*Aline:* Well it got boring. It was exciting when I was like in Year 2, but not when you're in Year 5. You want to actually do other stuff. Sometimes she'd teach me a new note, but I knew them all by then. (PD 154:9)

When learners might have had a degree of technical efficiency, some felt they were not involved musically. As an example, John restarted his music lessons as an adult, wishing to do ‘music for music’, yet found he was required to do ‘a lot of exercises and scale work and a lot of technical things’ (A 7014: 6); he subsequently ceased lessons. In a similar vein, Edward wanted the teacher to ‘actually teach me to play some real songs’ (PD 102: 21), and Michael wanted to learn to play music that was not ‘all boring’ (PD 127: 6). Richard suggested that to have been presented with alternative repertoire by a teacher who was sensitive to his affinities would have facilitated his continuance: ‘I don’t think I ever had anyone who quite had my passion for it , but the content and the structure of lessons ‘certainly turned me off’ (A 7041: 21). One adult expressed the void as lacking the ability to create music, ‘something to express my feelings’, which made taking formal lessons pointless:

*Peter:* One of the things I was really ticked off with was - I might be able to play music properly - but I could never create it. If you understand. It got me. Something to express my feelings. And if you can’t do that then there’s probably no point. (A 7026: 46)

Diana, like Skye above, spoke of how she thought in sound, yet could not translate this into a musical experience because it was not pedagogically supported:

*Diana:* [When I was a child, I wanted a teacher] who could be on my wavelength, and understand what I was thinking about. Wanting to listen to the notes, and hearing sound, and work it out in my head. (A 7042: 19)
The accurate accomplishment of reproduction of written music was an important first step in making sense of learning, a step that had an emotional resonance for participants at the same time as initiating them into the tradition of music performance as reproduction of a score. As shown in the previous chapter, it seems teachers did not encourage the exploration and manipulation of sound materials (Swanwick, 1999) when they were focused on reproduction of music by visual decoding ahead of learning to think in sound (Serafine, 1988). This had repercussions on students’ intentions to continue learning.

**No connection with music**

As clear as the affinity for music was for so many of the participants in this study, so too was the lack of connection described by non-tertiary individuals as their reason for giving up formal learning. Brief, factual statements of lack of interest indicated music learning did not give the ‘whatever I was after’ factor (Skye). Music became boring, and practice was no longer enjoyable. All aspects of learning could become ‘annoying’: exams, lessons, practice. If it was not going to be enjoyable, it seemed ‘pretty sensible to give it up at that stage’ (Edwina, A 7021: 11). Even if individuals were not sure why they stopped, music was no longer scheduled into daily activities. Sarah felt ‘I can’t do this any more’. Individuals who lost interest never ‘really quite got into it’ (Albert, A 7035: 3).

Connection with music did not blossom as interest in music ‘trickled away’, was of little relevance and had few rewards: ‘it’s not really doing anything for me’ stated Sandra (A 7037: 39). Susanne’s loss of interest was strongly associated with negative feelings and given as a substantive reason for discontinuation:

_Susanne_: It was mainly that I didn’t practice from lack of interest and Mum really coming down on me, and I was forced to practice, and as a result didn’t really want to. (A 7031: 54)

Several participants did not connect with the sound of their instrument. This was displeasing for Rebecca: ‘I didn’t really like the sound of the piano’ (PD 26: 20), Kathy thought she might prefer the sound of the trumpet (PD 9: 06) while Patrick had wanted to learn saxophone and not clarinet.

Three tertiary students described this general lack of connection almost brutally – having ‘chucked it in’, they thought of looking for another passion that might ignite their interest: ‘The idea of just maybe finding I like; something completely different’ (T 619: 31). Other adults described their diminished interest once school was finished; there being no supportive structure such as school programs or exams outside the school environment, no further reason for continuing formal instruction existed. The lack of supportive structures was also a feature of some participants’ childhood environments and this is described below.
Missed opportunities in childhood

As adults looked back at their musical learning, there was an impression given by some that they felt they had missed out on something that ‘might have been’; a realisation that life might have taken different turns if music had been an option to follow. As a child, there had appeared to be exciting possibilities, but the realities of life led to the closing of these doors. Experiencing the joy and pleasure of music at a later stage in life stimulated regret for the lack of ‘pleasure and fun’ in the early years as Susanne noted:

Susanne: I think, ‘Oh that would be lovely and it would be so relaxing to just play now, and play for pleasure and fun’. Which is not really what it was at the time. (A 7031: 27)

Rhonda explained her loss as something she ‘just didn’t get the hang of it. It was something I was missing’ (A 7010: 9).

May, who had recommenced her violin studies by the time of the interview, discussed how she had felt she was missing out when younger. She felt she had been a talented child, but because of the circumstances she found herself in, she was unable to fulfil this talent; she would have loved to live in a ‘musical world’, but was not really given permission to do so.

May: I found that I could lose myself in that musical world, if I were given the permission as a child, or if I gave myself that permission to spend time, I could have written off a whole day, just playing out tunes, trying out little things on the violin. (A 7007: 40)

Jak’s comments about his teaching reinforced the notion of the excitement of new opportunities: ‘I think that’s why a lot of kids do start, they see it as a whole new world which they don’t know about and they find that exciting’ (T 609: 75).

The essence of these adult sentiments mirrored a statement by primary student Edward, who felt he had been denied access to music, and had never found out how he might have fared:

Edward: I don’t know if I could have become really good or not really good at it because I didn’t really go for that long, so I don’t really know how I really feel about stopping. (PD 102: 21)

Another dimension of missed opportunities was evident in May’s excerpt above and others below. Rhonda’s excerpt shows that family played a determining role in the quality of the musical journey.

Rhonda: We didn’t have the support either, because I think Dad would sort of stand over and watch, or he would be sitting in the other room, and say [shouting] ‘G sharp’, and I would go, ‘Ooohh’, my God, you know….. (A 7010: 6 & 9)

Bob reflected on his lack of immersion in music as a child, and he mused that personal meaning or experience of music would have illuminated the learning for him. He also identified a factor rarely touched on by others. He suggested that immersion in a musical culture was vital to both his will to participate and his ability to do so.
Bob: I was really too young, hadn’t been exposed enough to music to want to be in it I guess. If, probably if I’d come from a musical background, it would have been different, but to me this piano thing was all a bit beyond me. (A 7006: 36)

In sum, for the participants in this study, being denied access to a first level of meaningfulness was to feel denied access to the musical world and to what might be known through music (Ludemann, 1999).

The following section expands on the social context referred to by Bob above. Two sub-themes elaborate on the ways in which the social world of the music learner contributed to the push and pull of motives to participate.

**Negative Feelings in the Social Context**

Just as social interaction inside music settings strongly influenced affinity and self-regulation (described in Chapter Five), social interactions inside and outside the music setting could have a negative influence. Peers on the ‘outside’ were credited by some as cause for their eventual discontinuation, while a mismatch between student and teacher or school objectives was another reason for discontinuing.

**Is it ‘in’ or is it ‘out’? Music learning and peers**

According to the earlier findings in this study (Chapters Three, Four and Five), affiliation with others inside music was important to many music students. Students looked to parents and peers for advice and encouragement, and the more experienced and advanced players searched for connection with musical peers. Peer affiliation encourages a sense of belonging (Anderman, 1999) as well as self-esteem (R. Ryan et al., 1994). However, the presence of negative feelings in the social context suggested that a sense of affiliation with peers inside the music setting was not being realised. As a reason for discontinuing, some students preferred to be with others outside the music setting, perhaps as a relief from rehearsal, or because the individual had not made friends inside the music group:

- Nathan: I just sort of got annoyed a bit, because it was usually in play time, in lunch, so I’d never really get time to play with my friends. (PD 99:9)
- Taya: Because none of my friends or anything were in it, I found it a bit lonely, and I missed out on some [rehearsals], because I wanted to go play with some people. (PD 128: 9)

Friends who did not have musical interests exerted a covert or tacit pressure on students to withdraw. Most of the people in Steve’s (A 7027) social set, for example, ‘had no musical things at all’ and so too for Zoë and Susanne:

- Zoë: When I was a teenager, I did [feel like stopping], because that’s when you suffer most from the social pressure. And because I didn’t have any friends. I went to a school…where the people there and I did not have anything in common. (T 601: 40)
Susanne: None of my friends did it...I was more interested in socialising, and not putting in the hours to practice. (A 7031: 5 & 19)

Moreover, when the wider school environment favoured academic and sporting activities, it was difficult to maintain musical interests, for music became an ‘isolated interest’ as peers ‘dwindled away’ from music.

Having nothing in common with peers was a pressure that also weighed on tertiary students when peers questioned the value of the effort that the individual applied to their work. Below, Rafe discusses experiencing both these types of pressure in his life; in childhood when learning violin, and in late youth when learning classical guitar.

Rafe: If anything friends would probably [be] the least, a negative force, a constant question, ‘Why do you spend so much time and effort into something like this?’ But I don’t think it’s music, it would be anything. If you’re an artist it would be the same thing. That’s probably why I quit playing the violin when I was young, just the peer pressure. (T 619: 36)

Adolescence seemed too important a period in which to lose respect or companionship, and as Susanne above and Albert below indicated, the social isolation necessary for practice was not welcomed.

Albert: But I never really quite got into it. I think that I wasn’t quite prepared to separate myself from other people - it was a very social time for me - separate myself from other people for the time it would take, to just isolate, concentrate on what you are doing, and become good at it. (A 7035: 4)

There was a further reason for a lack of social cohesion: the varied skill levels of musical peers. For example, Patrick and Bella struggled to keep up with others in the band; for Patrick, making mistakes was ‘something that people in my group wouldn’t do, and I do it’ (PD 60: 29). Aline provided further evidence that matching the ability levels of peers was important; after 2 years of lessons, she was placed with ‘the beginners and I really hated it’. As Aline’s comment shows, negativity follows dissatisfaction with social cohesion or affiliation (Furrer & Skinner, 2003).

There was also a muted indication of gender-oriented negative attitudes to music.

Steve: Piano was viewed as something that was very much effeminate ... there was a lot of peer pressure to not play the piano any more. (A 7027: 25).

Graham: There were a few musicians, there were also some funny kids who played tennis and things like that. (A 7004: 3)

Sid: After talking to friends and peer pressure and all sorts of things, I just gave up the whole idea of playing violin, too girly, not what a guy should be playing. (A 7008: 14)

Albert: In the context of school, just peer pressure would stop you doing something which was seen as a bit wet from other boys. (A 7035: 42)

These comments show that the children were influenced in their choice of instrument and interest in music, being warned against violating a perceived schoolboy ‘norm’.
Lack of encouragement from important adults

Affiliation with people other than peers was also important. Some longed for encouragement at the family, teacher or school level. Lack of encouragement was seen as a disappointment, and a trigger for discontinuation. There was a general view among adults that childhood learning would have continued for longer if students were encouraged or if schools provided opportunities for social interaction through music or at least a valuing of those who did play an instrument.

As an example of the effect of encouragement at the family level, Steve described how the fluctuation in his motivation for music mirrored the changes of his family structure. His grandmother had encouraged and advised his learning throughout his childhood. When she moved house, ‘there was one less reason for doing it’ (A 7027: 31). The excerpts below also point to a perceived absence of encouragement.

Sid: I guess I was disappointed I wasn’t encouraged much, as I could have been but then, it was basically up to me to take it up and to play. (A 7008: 69)

May: I think for me, I was probably one of those kids who really needed an outside voice to say, ‘Look, please don’t give up your violin’. (A 7007: 23)

Peter: But [my mother] never put the time in with me, so I didn’t have an audience, to make the story short, so there was no point for me doing it. (A 7026: 17)

Many individuals also found it hard to draw encouragement from their teachers, and for some this crystallised as a rationale for giving up. Students felt that disagreement, humiliation or seemingly unjustified discipline was anathema to positive relations with their teacher. For example, Aline resigned from band (and lessons) when ‘the conductor sent me out of the band…when he said that it was my fault’ (PD 154: 24). Ben too settled on teacher problems as a reason for discontinuing. However, his comments also suggest that his teacher was not focused on him or on the quality of his musical experience, but on the completion of the task.

Ben: [The teacher] was kind of mean…All the scales on time and perfect…She didn’t really care whether we got it wrong; she did but she wouldn’t care if we were tired or stuff, she’d just want it done properly. (PD 12: 23)

Having to prepare for a testing or dogmatic teacher was confronting and discouraging, and Edwina (A) found she had to make a decision about her commitment:

Edwina: I had a teacher that was fairly exacting about what she wanted to hear in my playing and if I didn’t practice, then I couldn’t have that, so there really didn’t seem to be a lot of point in continuing if I wasn’t going to get anything out of the lessons. (A 7021: 8)

Maria’s experience with her teacher echoed others; a sense of discouragement and dislike arising from interactions that were felt to be too harsh.

Maria: And I felt at times that if I didn’t do well, the way the teacher reprimanded me made me feel not very good…if I had a teacher that I connected to, because I was one of those kids, that if I felt the teacher liked me I usually did well in the class, but if I felt the teacher didn’t like me, I most probably didn’t do very well.. (A 7034: 11 & 37)
If teachers held an authoritarian attitude, this was accompanied by a feeling of pressure; trying to get it right for teachers, feeling under pressure to produce something one didn’t understand, and failing to produce it. Tracy below explained how the teacher’s approach influenced her and her siblings:

_Tracy:_ And the nun was very cross and strict, and she got cranky a lot. When we made a mistake she would rap our knuckles. She was kind of a cranky thing you know. That turned me off. My sister too. We all found that, the three of us. Turned us off learning. (A 7013: 11)

Several others had experienced a ruler-wielding, knuckle-hitting teacher and felt that this distracted from developing a healthy relationship with learning music. Lyndal gave up the piano in favour of cello some years later:

_Lyndal:_ I hated it, and my piano teacher, believe it or not, was one of the ones who used to rap me over the knuckles with a pencil. (T 602: 3)

Many participants explained that they felt constrained to obey, follow or tolerate conditions that were not satisfying or fulfilling. Such conditions included practice, music repertoire, and teacher demands. For instance, the adults felt that music practice and repertoire were not student-centred, that their progress was not evaluated individually nor specific interventions or curriculum planned. They also described a sense of not being consulted; it seemed that enjoyment of music was not considered a factor in their learning, and that teacher perspectives on music practice and repertoire were not aligned with student goals.

_John:_ I have found that, of my limited experience with teachers, that often they are quite focused on getting the technical skills progressing the student, opposed to necessarily thinking about what the student would enjoy doing, and taking into consideration when a child is not progressing as fast as they would like, maybe thinking, ‘Why is the person not progressing, am I trying to get them to do music and exercises and the technical work too much. What is the child wanting?’ I can’t really remember ever having it discussed with me, ‘What do you want to do?’ (A 7014: 13)

_Diana:_ One who could be on my wave-length, and understand what I was thinking about. (A 7042: 19)

John’s point, echoed by Diana’s, highlights the dominance of technique over enjoyable repertoire, the lack of recognition of the individual, a lack of reflection on teaching by the teacher, and a lack of interaction with and empathy for the child.

Other indications of the lack of value for music in the school environment were the facilities; ‘quite literally a broom cupboard’ for a beginning viola class (A 7035: 4), ‘meaningless’ primary school bands (A 7027: 67), teaching ‘all over the place’ (T 619: 9) and a general lack of opportunity. Bill explained the difficulty of maintaining his practice and interest in such an environment:

_Bill:_ I went to a boarding school...There was a piano in the dining room, and I was allowed access to that. But without an actual teacher - this is about 7 miles out of town, you couldn’t go in for lessons really...So I was left on my own, and I can always remember doing my best
to keep up with something which was quite challenging, I think it was *Norwegian Rhapsody*, a
great long, chords and things, and I thought, ‘If I could keep that up, I could keep going’, but
eventually - I didn’t have a practice regime as such, I just went when I could, whenever
available - and it just became fewer and fewer and so I wasn’t able to, I lost it after that. (A
7001: 12)

The lack of suitable support is starkly represented in Bill’s account and his excerpt not only
describes the adverse influence of his school environment, but also identifies the impact of
musical meaningfulness addressed earlier in the chapter. The musical appeal of his long-
remembered *Norwegian Rhapsody*, as well as the desire to master a challenge, inspired him to
persevere for a time. However, it would have been difficult to develop new skills and
experience music when his practice was unregulated and unsupported.

From the analysis of negative feelings in the social context described above, two aspects of the
social environment were particularly problematic and persuasive with regard to intentions to
participate; one being the quality and place of friendships, the other being the focus and
attention of important adults on the child as learner. Together, negative feelings in the three
contexts of progress, musical experience and social interactions brought about for many the end
of the formal music learning journey.

**THE INFLUENCE OF TIME ON CONTINUING PARTICIPATION**

The foregoing section has detailed three important contexts as triggers or prompts to discontinue
learning; these contexts were achievement, musical meaningfulness and social interactions.
Some participants felt negatively in all three contexts, others only in one; some participants felt
these contexts as strong and immediate pressures, while for others, disengagement was drawn
out. The following section identifies three ways in which discontinuation ‘happened’ to
participants.

Two processes demonstrated that the influence of negative affect in relation to the three contexts
of achievement, musical meaning and social interactions was gradual and or cumulative. One
process was of *resolving influences* that impacted unhelpfully on learners’ commitment to
learning music. A second, more positive, process of disengagement was of *persuasive
alternatives*, where alternative activities presented as more attractive options for enjoyment and
time-use than music practice. A third influence was the *critical incident*, which initiated
immediate disengagement from music, whether covertly through mental withdrawal, or overtly,
through immediate withdrawal. The influences operated within the three contexts either singly
or together, adding layers of ‘push or pull’ to the learning period. The dynamic operation of
these influences is demonstrated in the following section.
Resolving influences

For many participants, disengaging or withdrawing from learning was not a deliberate or planned conclusion. Rather, for some, the influence of experiences within the three contexts of achievement, musical meaning, and social interactions was gradual and pervasive. The rationale for withdrawing appeared to be built on cumulative negative appraisals over days and months of practice time, lessons and rehearsals. The resolve to disengage from music learning was strengthened by repeated contact with knuckle-rapping teachers, not making sense or meaning out of the repertoire, or continually envisaging greener pastures in the playground.

The multiple contexts of negative feelings for the primary students and the adults are displayed in Table 9.2. For 8 individuals, negative affect suffusing three contexts over time had an influence on decisions about continuation. As an example, describing his experiences in learning drums, Nathan felt that he had experienced neither music nor instrumental technique; he was rarely part of band rehearsals and missed his friends during the lunchtime rehearsals on the odd occasion he did attend. Other combinations of contexts occurred, for example, negative interactions with peers, parents or teacher were experienced alongside feeling badly about achievement (Taya and Steve) or in missing a connection with music for example (e.g. Rebecca, Albert and Susanne). For others, having negative feelings in one context alone was sufficient to discontinue (e.g. Bella, Timothy, Kaye, Gordon and Maria).

Persuasive alternatives

The presence of persuasive alternatives was evidence of the multiplicity of activities and interest in young people’s lives (shown in the 5th column of Table 9.2).
Table 9.2 Reasons for discontinuation by primary students and adults

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negative feelings in context of</th>
<th>Persuasive Alternative</th>
<th>Critical Incident</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Achievement</td>
<td>Social</td>
<td>Musical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>154 Aline</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7037 Sandra</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 Patrick</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>99 Nathan</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7026 Peter</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53 Skye</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7007 May</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>128 Taya</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 Rebecca</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>102 Edward</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>7002 Miranda</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7005 Barbara</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>191 Hilary</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7034 Maria</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>7006 Bob</td>
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<td>12 Ben</td>
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<tr>
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<td>7001 Bill</td>
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<td>34 Penny</td>
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<tr>
<td>7022 Ann</td>
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<td>7040 Andras</td>
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<td>9 Kathy</td>
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<tr>
<td>127 Michael</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>7032 Vaughan</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7012 Fiona</td>
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</table>
As alternatives to music, other activities gained importance or weight as young people felt less inclined to be involved in music. These interests operated as purposes to engage elsewhere, and effectively required participants to limit their time in music to service a gradual re-orientation of goals and interests. Not having ‘enough time to practice’ was an indication that another interest was more persuasive than music. Sports, dance, drama and academic commitments were the strongest alternatives; these activities claimed priority over music practice generally in terms of time allotment, and finally these alternatives became ‘reasons’ for discontinuing.

For example Ben (PD) found his music practice mitigated by sport training, through fatigue and loss of time: ‘I had all these other sports I was doing during the day and I couldn’t get practice done and I didn’t have the time and I got all exhausted after coming back from sport’ (PD 12: 5). At the same time, he felt he had a ‘mean teacher’ (resolving influence in the social context) from whom he wished to escape.

Steve’s gradual orientation to sport away from music is a further illustration of the nature and importance of other, persuasive influences. He also felt peer pressure to move away from music (resolving influence in social context), as well as feeling unhappy with the results of his practice (resolving influence in the achievement context). Ceding music practice to academic pressures was not unusual for participants, and several adults attributed their discontinuation to the need to prioritise academic study; for two in this group, music was not offered at Leaving Certificate or HSC level, and it was ‘too much bother’ to practise for something that ‘wasn’t going to get counted’ in the GPA (7003: 9).

At the same time as academic pressure presented a persuasive alternative however, others who took this decision experienced further difficulties as detailed for Steve above. Richard for example experienced a lack of musically meaningful repertoire and Gordon’s achievement declined (see Table 9.2).

A final event held some power to trigger discontinuation: the critical incident.

**Critical incidents**

Critical incidents are...

… not ‘things’ which exist independently of an observer and are waiting discovery…but like all data, critical incidents are created. Incidents happen, but critical incidents are produced by the way we look at a situation: a critical incident is an interpretation of the significance of an event (Tripp, in Angelides, 2001, p. 431).

The critical incident therefore represents an individual’s perception of the event, when in this perception the event marks a significant turning point. There were a handful of occasions where learners mentioned a specific incident that became a catalyst for discontinuation. Critical
incidents acted to quell enjoyment in music, even when resolving influences or persuasive alternatives were already at work.

For example, Aline (PD) had already lost pleasure in her music through an accretion of resolving influences, so that the critical incident (feeling humiliated when thrown out of the band), was the last straw. Other critical incidents were related to performance (achievement) among primary students, adults and tertiary students. For example, Rebecca (PD) was required to perform on an unfamiliar keyboard and she decided to stop lessons following the event. For Maria (A), exam failure was a trigger for withdrawal. However, critical incidents and negative feelings had the power to trigger discontinuation in some and not others.

THE NATURE OF PERSISTENCE

The analysis in this section juxtaposes tertiary students’ discussion of giving up their playing with their discussion of ongoing commitment to learning their instrument. The major coding categories developed from the text and used in this analysis were the process codes of Persistence, Discontinuation and Motivation. The analysis identified steps students took to overcome challenges, and the reasons they gave for their persistence.

OVERCOMING CHALLENGE

As indicated earlier in this chapter, the strongest trigger for discontinuation for tertiary students (whether in school-years or at university) involved a perception of lack of competence or progress. This suggests that at some points, the students had experienced challenges or problems that were almost too difficult to conquer. These were significant periods because the depletion of self-esteem and contemplation of discontinuation created a serious crisis for the student.

The potency of this disruption was explicated by Daniel (T 606), who stated that his sense of purpose and vocation lay in his instrument. He felt the sense of failure extended not only to the cello, but also to his sense of self. Louise (616) and Simon (618) experienced a similar self-questioning – ‘I’ll never be good enough, what is the point?’, when faced with frustration, technical difficulties or poor outcomes. Tom explained that when learning was challenging, he felt like giving up, although he eventually saw this as a ‘bit of a copout really’ (T 607: 44).

Considering what it was that persuaded them to continue, tertiary students explained that when they experienced this turmoil in their learning, most took intentional steps to overcome the challenge to technique, self-esteem or their possible futures. These included:

Focus on the music
- A focus on the aesthetic, to get ‘beyond oneself” (Daniel, T 606)
Dogged persistence

- ‘Just keep trying’ (Adrian, T 604; Tom, T 607)

Refocus the attitude, come to more realistic expectations, question oneself

- ‘I was the one who wanted to do 8th grade, so it was my goal, except I wanted it to come easily.’ (Sanja, T 611: 50)
- ‘It’s actually good for me.’ (Damien, T 614)
- ‘You’ve got to ask yourself why you are doing it.’ (Tom, T 607: 19)
- ‘But when you realise the reality [of being good] I guess you either give up or strive for it more’ (Sanja, T 611: 52)

As hinted at by Sanja, behind these steps to refocus were motives of passion or emotional involvement in music and a belief in ability, motives that mobilised volitional strategies and led to successful outcomes. These are discussed below.

**The Grounds for Persistence**

**Passion**

The strongest motivating agent for continued involvement was the level of emotional attachment the student had developed with music; going beyond meaningfulness to a deep personal significance, tertiary students felt that their love of sound, combined with their desire of mastery, were the most important signifiers of their intent to continue. This emotional or personal link to music appeared sacrosanct. The love of the sound of their instrument and of the instrument itself, treasured for its craftsmanship and personal significance; the love of music and the feeling that there was so much to explore in music, were powerful sustaining factors.

Tertiary students were attached to music, to chamber music, to performing and to mastery. For example, Annette (605) continues her learning in music because she is drawn to the sound of the instrument and to the ‘indescribable’ quality of music; she loves chamber music and feels she has never known life without music. Eric (610) keeps going because having come ‘this far’, he feels he understands more than before; along with a sense of accomplishment, he feels he has a special understanding of music. For Adrian, the world was always expanding: ‘There’s just so much there, always something new to look at. There’s so much interesting stuff to learn’ (T 604: 86). Zoë found that ‘I’m not happy unless I can practice properly just because it’s a thing I’ve been doing my whole life’ (T 601: 20).

**Self-beliefs**

As touched on in the description of the musical self (Chapter Eight), tertiary students stated that knowing they were good at music, wanting to achieve more, and feeling that they could develop a future through music were powerful maintaining thoughts. As Damien stated, to give up
would be ‘unfair on yourself. You would not be doing something you wanted to do’ (T 614: 51). Daniel also wanted ‘to get up there and see what I am capable of. I want to seize on that challenge’ (T 606: 55).

Louise found that through her music, she was able to bring about things in her life which she enjoyed: teaching, some performing; and she continued for the possibilities that beckoned: ‘So it’s making things happen, that I think would be nice to do’ (T 616: 50). Ryan felt that his achievements gave him a sense of self-esteem that he did not seem ready to abandon:

Ryan: That’s the thing. It’s something I’ve stuck by because in a funny way, it’s given me a boost in a lot of ways, self-esteem, it’s something I’ve achieved in. (T 613: 39)

No other option

In addition to responses that connected emotion and music to the self, four tertiary students felt there was no other skill for them to fall back on, that music was their only option (Lyndal, Louise, Simon and Jak): ‘But I kept coming back to it because it’s the only skill I know and it seems that I do really love doing it’ (Lyndal, 602: 49). There was a feeling that one had come so far already: ‘I think part of it is, the skill that I have, you have to work for it but I've got this far’ (Eric, 610: 51). Nick described it now as a ‘habit’; it would be like the loss of an investment if one were to discontinue after so many years of dedication and persistence.

The role of others in persistence

All tertiary students credited other people for providing support in different ways over the years, in particular acknowledging the role of teachers and family in encouraging persistence. This acknowledgment provides evidence that the encouraging and supporting behaviours described earlier in the thesis were directly linked to student persistence.

As described earlier, supportive actions from peers, parents and teachers included encouraging, advising, and providing role models. Ryan described his return to music after some time off; by implication, his peers were modelling the music life he felt he should return to:

Ryan: I was sitting there watching everyone; I thought, ‘Yes, I really should get back into this.’ (T 613: 52)

Specialist instrumental teachers also provided a mentorship and approval that contributed to student persistence:

Lyndal: The music director was very supportive of getting me started again, and helping me get as much from everyone around me as possible. (T 602: 56)

Zoe: My teacher was very patient and she did provide such musical stimulation in my lessons that I wanted to go back to the lesson and I knew that she would accept anything I did, within reason, so if I could squeeze in 2 hours a week she would accept that and work with it. (T 601: 42).
High school music programs and teachers were also credited by four tertiary students as providing a strong backdrop to the maintenance of their interest over the long years of secondary education.

**DISCUSSION**

This chapter provides a link and response to the findings of the fifth chapter, where the emotional attachment of affinity was found to be the connecting agent between a music student and their learning. In this chapter it was found that filtering cognitive processes through the emotional, musical self, acted to draw some individuals away from music learning and to forfeit further connection with music. Moreover, the contexts for this disaffection were not dissimilar to those contexts that favoured the development of an emotional connection with music learning. Subjective experiences of negativity arose from a lack of accomplishment, from the disparity between playing music and a musical encounter, and from the nature of the social interactions with important others such as peers, parents and teachers.

The findings in this chapter also resonate with some of the findings of the previous chapter, where individuals’ evaluations of their learning were analysed. There, the difficulties and deficits experienced were associated with pessimistic feelings; the analysis in this chapter has intended to explain the role of those emotional reactions, and to show the implications of the difficulties and deficits. The children and adults in this study found that the negative feelings resulting from thwarted expectations, goals or needs were strong enough to become reasons for discontinuation, where the tertiary students used the same difficulties as opportunities to reorient their attitude or their work strategies. It was not the difficulty that led to discontinuation; it was the learners’ subjective interpretation of this blockage and their need to move away from these negative feelings by discontinuing the activity that incurred the distress.

*The musical context of disengagement*  
From the lifetime perspective offered by the adults in this study, it seemed that the prospects of exploring music were swamped by the pressures of developing sufficient skill to encounter music, and these prospects were later interpreted as missed opportunities. In addition, the recollection of a foggy sense of rationale for practice that characterised the *Simplicity of childhood* theme suggested an absence of the metacognitive awareness necessary to effective learning (as also discussed in Chapter Seven). The absence of the ‘big picture’ in music learning may reflect the developing cognitive processes of the child, which with hindsight the adults were perspicacious enough to identify. Schunk and Miller (2002) suggest that thinking becomes more accurate and specific as children develop. It could be that when a lack of metacognitive
awareness goes unnoticed by teachers, in hand with lower perceptions of a musical self or an insecure aural vocabulary, children find it hard to discover a purpose to learn.

Primary students and adults often complained of the music repertoire being off their ‘wavelength’, at the same time feeling that if they had understood the music, been familiar with its language or syntax, then they might have been more easily drawn into learning. The meaningfulness that tertiary students drew from their learning was what many children and adults yearned for. Despite the longing, many withdrew from learning in the face of a lack of making musical sense and meaning from their experiences.

The social context of disengagement
Many also felt dislocated from music by dint of their social interactions, most strongly that of teachers and peers. While the primary students were likely to say that their teachers were ‘mean’, discontent with teachers most strongly emerged as a mismatch between perceived teachers’ goals and students’ own learning goals, particularly in relation to genre studied, structure of the instruction, and its pacing. This mismatch points toward the notion of freedom of choice or autonomy.

Autonomy has a substantial literature in student learning (B. Patrick et al., 1993; Reeve, Jang, Carrell, Jeon & Burch, 2004; R. Ryan & Connell, 1989; R. Ryan & Grolnick, 1986). Freedom to choose an activity is associated with deeper learning and stronger interest in the subject (Grolnick & R. Ryan, 1987). When a person feels undue restriction, they are likely to feel negative emotions (Pekrun et al., 2000). For example, students can feel anxious about set curriculum and tasks (Lazarus, 1991) and there was strong evidence of unease in this context among participants.

For example, some participants indicated that their teacher’s instruction did not allow for personal repertoire preference, as noted in the Musical void theme. Participants also indicated that their instruction was often not suited to individual differences or needs. Swanwick (1991) classifies these two dimensions of teaching as ‘classifying’ and ‘framing’. Both can lend more or less choice or autonomy to the student and both contribute to how and what students learn. In this study, participants’ responses to these two dimensions of teaching help show how students learn as well as how teaching might be adapted to individual needs.

Furthermore, in situations where learning is quite narrowly focused and perceived to be unaccommodating to student needs, the teacher interaction could easily be perceived as unfriendly. Warmth is much esteemed in instrumental music teachers (Davidson et al., 1998); the authors found that continuers perceived teachers to be friendly, while discontinuers found them to be less than friendly. When teachers lack warmth, motivation can decline (Feldlaufer, Midgley & Eccles, as cited in Wentzel, 1999). Negative feelings or distance in teachers can flow
through to students (D. Meyer & Turner, 2002), and in the present study, when students experienced cool or indifferent teachers in addition to a restricted curriculum, they were dissatisfied about music learning and inclined to discontinue.

Tertiary students’ reflections did not encompass autonomy concerns. It is likely that concerns such as choice of repertoire were resolved or circumvented as individuals grew in their affinity with music and their sense of musical-self intensified. Overall, the tertiary students claimed a history of positive interactions with their social companions, whether peers, teachers or families. When there was conflict, resilience derived from an increasing commitment and affinity with music was able to sustain the continuer in their engagement: Ryan stuck with it despite the ‘flak’. Interactions with others were sought-after opportunities as students became more proficient, and over time, membership of the music-student body represented membership of the in-group. Claims for autonomy would have been supported and fulfilled and did not generate the negative affect that was typical of the primary students in this study. On the other hand, the proximity of the children to their memories of student-teacher interactions lends some veracity to the highly flavoured recollections of teacher interaction, and such recall suggests that a constant give and take of curriculum framing is key to finding balance in young people’s perceptions of personal control inside a scaffolded environment.

The influence of the school and peer cohorts also provided significant input to students’ connection with music. One of the mechanisms for this belonging or connecting is identified in the academic literature, where school belonging emanates from peer respect and valuation of individual contributions (Anderman, 1999). Participating in extra-curricular groups such as music helps a student feel they are a valued member of the school community (Eccles et al., 2003); in music, teamwork and social relationships are particularly prized (Ebie, 2006). Ensemble work give participants a further opportunity to apply and develop their understandings of learning (Reid & Petocz, 2007) in search of coherent and meaningful musical experiences.

However, in the present study, there was a clear sense that the school and its community were not always experienced as a “supportive, accepting social group” (Andermann, 1999, p. 91), and in this study, as also in Cuzzocrea (2002) and Koutz (1987), lack of participation was accompanied by a lesser sense of belonging or connectedness to the music group. It appeared that for some students, music playing and its participants took on characteristics of the ‘out-group’ (Bruce, Curtis & Johnston, 1998), and to be a member of an out-group was to risk respect and self-esteem (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Children, adults and tertiary students discussed the social pressures of being a musician or music student, whether the pressure came through gendered stereotypes as experienced by some men in the study or through others’ non-acceptance of music performing being a ‘normal’ activity. The influence affected some
decisions and not others. For the children who protested loudly at missing friends, such protests could have been diversionary tactics, moving away from concentration and discipline in the music-room to the relative freedom of roaming with companions. In early adolescence, the peer group provides affiliation and relatedness, either in maintaining a status within the group or developing an intimacy or rapport with others (A. Ryan, Hicks & Midgley, 1997). It was clear that when favoured peers were not alongside music students, then social goals such as status or relationship goals (Anderman, 1999) were thwarted. In point of fact, social status goals tended to deflect learners from music and when social status goals were not fulfilled (vis-à-vis music being an out-group), negative feelings emerged.

When music was not valued within the school environment, some students felt left out and aimless. Negative outcomes in the transition from junior to middle schooling have previously been noted (Anderman, 1999; Hartley, 1996), and some found this transition to mean less support and value for music and less musical interaction amongst peers.

Continuing engagement
A foil to stories of difficulty and deficit was the portrayal of tertiary students’ re-orientation to musical goals following disruption to their commitment. This reorientation was in company with their passion for music and beliefs in their ability to do so. Their descriptions of the powerful drive to play music, emanating from within their subjective self, endorses the phenomenon of affinity as explained in the fifth chapter. Despite their failures and the ensuing collapse of self-esteem, affinity for music kept them connected to their music education. Their self-beliefs, based on previous successes and failures in music, fostered renewed hopes. At the same time, the investment they had made in learning music seemed too onerous to forgo. In this study, this investment consisted of increasing commitment to learning through effort (volition) and time. Commitment can be defined as a ‘restriction of freedom to act’ (Oxford Dictionary, 1939), the restriction here consisting of a volitional constraint on time, practice methods, and emotions in the practice room (Pintrich, 1999).

Conclusion
This chapter completes a circle by showing, as other researchers have shown, that relations between emotions and behaviour are bi-directional (Ainley, Hidi & Berndorff, 2002; Elliot, 2005; D. Meyer & Turner, 2006; Pekrun et al., 2002). The choices and decisions individuals make are based on the emotions they feel because of their appraisal (Clore & Huntsinger, 2007; Salovey & Rodin, 1985; Schutz & DeCuir, 2002), and people respond emotionally to those things that have meaning or significance for them (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Feelings about music and learning influenced the way individuals went about their learning (e.g. dogged
persistence or gradual withdrawal) as well as being influenced by such behaviours (e.g. feeling pleased with effort and outcome). Participants most often commenced an instrument with feelings of anticipation and joy, yet many found the flux of emotions associated with learning, negative feelings predominating, to be a powerful influence on their intentions to participate.

This chapter thus unifies the thematic structure of the thesis by turning back to the notion of meaningfulness and significance as a crucial encounter in the learning experience. Dewey (1925) expressed the view that where learning is not meaningful, no knowledge can arise, and this was the litany of many learners. Negative emotions followed appraisals of lack of success or satisfaction in playing as well as non-fulfilment of relatedness needs; these emotions in turn influenced individuals, over time, to gradually withdraw their intentions to engage in purposeful practice, avoiding the problem momentarily (resolving influences), or changing goals (persuasive alternatives). One important outcome of negative affect then was in neutralising the internalisation of affect for music learning; this proposition is one that with others provides an explanation, in the penultimate chapter, of affinity as the agent of participation in instrumental music learning.
PART IV
CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY
Introduction

Engagement in the arts has been shown to have considerable impact on individuals’ lives, influencing academic achievement, socio-emotional development, and personal, emotional and aesthetic satisfaction (Hunter, 2005). Furthermore, the study of music gives individuals the opportunity to learn new ways of communication, self-expression (Winner & Cooper, 2000) and understanding (Ludemann, 1999). Given that there is also great challenge in studying music, considerable investment is at stake – particularly at an individual family level – in developing young people’s musical skills, whether that be in the form of singing, playing an instrument in a band or as a solo performer. No matter what level a particular interest in instrument learning, a lifelong and active involvement in playing music is most likely if the development begins during childhood. This study was prompted by the practical concern about and implications of withdrawal from participation in formal instrumental music instruction by young people in their school years. Rates of music-lesson attrition of up to 35% are not uncommon. Continuing involvement depends greatly on musical experiences that are “mentally and emotionally engaging” (K. McCarthy, Ondaajte, Zakara & Brooks, 2004, p. xvii), and the attrition rate would suggest that for many children, music-learning experiences are far from mentally and emotionally engaging. Indeed, reports in the literature of boredom and disinterest testified to mental and emotional disengagement (Damrad-Frye & Laird, 1989).

The question is then, what is it that sustains young people’s participation in musical learning? This study has examined the involvement of individuals in musical learning, capturing their concerns, perceptions and understandings, and offers an interpretive account that connects individuals’ experiences to a broader, conceptual explanation of participation in learning.

This chapter will summarise the findings of the study in relation to the research questions posed in Chapter One. The summary consists of 3 sections. The first section summarises the quantitative analysis in response to the research questions in the first stage of the study; the second section summarises the qualitative analyses in response to the research questions in the second stage of the study, while the third section advances the analysis to answer the mixed method question and provide an answer to the overarching research question by way of an explanatory theory of participation in learning.

Prior to addressing the research questions, the literature and conceptual framework that informed the study are briefly reviewed.
PREVIOUS RESEARCH

In Chapter One, a conceptual scaffold was described that captured influences on retention and attrition as elements of three dimensions: the social, individual and contextual dimensions. This scaffold emerged from the literature review as a way of representing important sets of influences on individual music performance learning and on retention and attrition as found by other researchers. The review of previous research on retention and attrition in instrumental music instruction detailed in Chapter One found that continuing participation in learning is associated with a constellation of factors in these three dimensions, such as attitudes (M. Brown, 1996; Frakes, 1984; Hallam, 1998; Hurley, 1994; Morehouse, 1987; Pitts et al., 2000b), parental involvement (Bushong, 2005; Cannava, 1994; Corenblum & Marshall, 1998; Davidson et al., 1996; Frakes, 1984; Hallam, 1998; Pitts et al., 2000b; Sloboda & M. Howe, 1990), attitudes to teachers (Davidson et al., 1988; Morehouse, 1987; Sloboda et al., 1996), amount of practice (Hallam, 1998; Sloboda & Davidson, 1996), and self-regulation (Pitts et al., 2000a, b).

However, conclusions drawn from the review, and from which the research questions and design of the study were developed, showed several important gaps. Two significant absences were the perspectives of former participants in childhood learning, and an understanding or explanation of ‘loss of interest’ or ‘boredom’. While it is known that discontinuers practice less, are less self-regulated, and dislike practice, what was not clear was in what ways the practice and learning experience itself might have influenced feelings of interest and boredom, and in what ways these feelings might have induced individuals to discontinue their learning. In other words, the negative affect and subjective appraisals of music performance learning needed to be unravelled and contextualised in search of understanding. In a similar vein, although the significance of music to adolescents has been established (North et al., 2000), the meaning derived from music-making experiences has rarely been explored in retention-attrition research. Further, Hallam (1998) noted that attrition from learning appears to be a more complex phenomenon than retention; for this reason perhaps, there are few studies that take a theoretical stance or attempt to integrate or synthesise research outcomes in the field.

As a first step towards understanding the nature of experiences related by the participants, Cantwell’s (2004) framework of individual learning was used to underpin the analysis and interpretation of individual engagement with learning. The framework illustrated the relationships between doing, thinking and feeling in the context of individual learning; this framework has previously been used in studies such as interpreting music performance learning by Cantwell and Millard (1994), and Sullivan and Cantwell (1999), understanding music composition (Cantwell, Jeanneret, Sullivan & Irvine, 2000) music performance assessment (Cantwell & Jeanneret, 2004), and medical education (McMullen, 2006; ten Cate et al., 2004).
The research questions were formulated to examine how music students experienced their learning, and how their subjective experiences of learning might explain their participation in musical learning. The overarching question that guided the study was:

In the context of participation in instrumental music education during childhood and youth, what is the nature of individuals’ experiences of learning, and how do their perspectives, perceptions or understandings of learning influence continuance of formal instruction?

The design of the study was a sequential explanatory design (Creswell, 2003) chosen for its pragmatic attributes. It was felt that the use of mixed methods as complementary methods (J. Greene et al., 1989) would facilitate the exploration of the new domains of subjectivity and individual learning in music, and at the same time establish that there were not confounding differences between those who learned for different lengths of time, nor between participants in this study and other research participants.

The overall sampling strategy involved younger and older participants, all of whom had learnt a musical instrument during their childhood or youth, although a small cohort who had never learned an instrument was also included for comparison purposes. Some participants had learned an instrument only during primary school years; others participated in instruction during their primary and or secondary schooling, while others had continued instruction in a tertiary setting. This meant that study participants varied in their amount of experience, depth of involvement in musical learning and accomplishment. The cross-generational sampling design was an important way of intensifying the focus of the enquiry on learning during childhood and youth.

The quantitative method in Stage 1 aimed to explore both dispositional and situational characteristics or attitudes, and made comparisons between primary and secondary school students who had participated in learning for different lengths of time, and included some who had never learned an instrument.

The qualitative method in Stage 2 sought to then situate these differences in the contexts of the individual and social dimensions, both through participants’ subjective perceptions of learning, as well as through a second-order interpretation of these experiences in the light of what is known about learning.

The third stage of the enquiry is an integrated synthesis of the findings from the two methods built upon the literature and is described in this chapter. The third stage aims to explain the meaning of music learning experienced both by those who stayed in music learning and those who did not.

The major findings of each stage of the study will now be summarised.
SUMMARY OF STAGE 1

The participants in Stage 1 of the study were 376 primary and secondary school students who were either enrolled in lessons at the time of the study, who had discontinued their music study, or who had never learned an instrument. The aim of the quantitative component of the study reported in Chapters Three and Four was to identify the attributes of the school students, to examine a range of factors that had been previously associated with attrition in other studies, as well as to identify aspects of the affective dimension of learning theorised to exist among those who participated longer than others. The main quantitative question was:

What dimensions of the learning experience are associated with participation in music instrument learning for school-age students in an Australian context?

The sub-questions were formulated to reflect different elements of the individual, social and contextual dimensions. Chapter Three reflected background elements in the three dimensions that were thought to influence students’ experiences of and attitudes towards music learning, while the fourth chapter examined more immediate factors in the three dimensions that were felt to compose students’ concrete experiences of practising and learning. The background questions answered in Chapter Three were:

Do continuers, discontinuers and non-learners differ in their family’s musical background?
Do continuers, discontinuers and non-learners differ in their liking for music, their activity in music, and their beliefs about music learning?
Do continuers, discontinuers and non-learners differ in their general satisfaction with school and personal life?

Overall, this group of Australian students appeared similar to primary children and adolescents in other studies, maintaining similar preferences for music repertoire and listening patterns (North et al., 2000), and similar patterns of enrolment (O’Neill, 2001). Most students seemed to be fairly satisfied with their life in general, and this was not related to their interest in music. With regard to background elements of the individual dimension, the collective measures of Interest in music revealed a consistent pattern of relationships to participation. Music was well-loved, having a high personal meaning and relevance for all the students in this stage of the study, although each group of continuers, discontinuers and non-learners had different degrees of interest in music. Continuers were the most interested students; they felt more strongly about music, more frequently participated in ensembles, shared music with a wider range of people, and had a broader set of musical tastes than all other students. While discontinuers appeared to be less active than continuers, having ceased their lessons, and fewer participating in groups, they also had a strong love for music and definite music preferences. The findings also demonstrated how individuals used their music for personal or intrinsic purposes (the Music...
Affect scale, Listening to music-self item). Overall, the students who had never learned an instrument were the least interested and active in different aspects of music, although music still had a strong appeal.

An important finding was that continuers, discontinuers and non-participants did not differ in their beliefs about musical ability. Of interest was an indication that younger students felt that music ability is a fixed attribute. Implicit beliefs in music ability have not yet been examined among school-age students, and this research provides a first step in understanding perceptions of ability from this particular theoretical perspective. Encouraging young people to examine their beliefs about music ability may help them look towards their potential to increase their ability or capacity in music performance (Dweck, 1986). It would help to build up their beliefs in incremental ability, rather than allowing beliefs to freeze as rigid attributions to innate capacity.

Several measures showed how students used and felt about music inside the social domain: listening with others, participating in music groups, and perceptions of others’ attitudes to instrumental music learning. The embeddedness of music in social interactions was highlighted by the Family Background variable, which reflected that continuers came from a background where music was more salient either through a family member’s capability in playing, in music reading, or in having instruments in the house. This involvement with family and the implicit transference of importance, customs or values was also found by Yoon (1997) and Dai and Schader (2001).

The findings here suggested that young people were involved in music in ways that were subjective, emotional or self-expressive through listening and playing, as well as in ways that reflected the here-and-now of their daily lives and interactions with the people surrounding them. This two-fold activity in music reflects those factors found by North and colleagues in their series of studies with English and American adolescents (e.g. North et al., 2000). The distinctions between fulfilling emotional or personal needs and fulfilling social or belonging needs highlighted by those studies are also evident in the ways in which the young people in this study engaged in their music listening and playing. This research shows that music for these young people was both an internal, self-growth involvement, as well as a way to engage with their culture and customs. Continuers, discontinuers and non-participants not only differed in their involvement in the individual and the social dimensions, these dimensions co-occurred such that where individuals were more involved personally with music they were also more involved socially. That these findings are true of the three groups of students in this study, including non-learners, builds on the findings of North and colleagues by showing how valuing music translates into active involvement and participation. To encourage youth to participate in
music, individual and social factors need to be facilitative from the earliest days of young people’s lives.

The research questions in Chapter Four narrowed the focus onto the young people who were or had been enrolled in music lessons. Of interest were students’ feelings and perceptions with regard to selected aspects of practice and learning. The research questions for this section were:

- Are there differences between continuers and discontinuers in their music enrolment choices, or their reasons for commencing their lessons?
- Do continuers and discontinuers differ in their perceptions of self-efficacy in musical instrument performance?
- Do continuers and discontinuers differ in their emotional or affective responses to practice?
- Do continuers and discontinuers differ in their perceptions of social support from parents, teachers and peers?

Establishing the similarity in base levels of musical experience for these students compared to adolescents of similar ages and experiences in Australia, England or America was an initial objective. This was established on measures including instrument played (Pitts et al., 2000b), length of learning (Govel, 2004; Hallam, 1998), starting age (Hartley, 1996; Jorgensen, 2001), and motives for learning (Pitts et al., 2000b).

Concerning feelings about or attitudes towards practice and learning, two elements were considered; one, participants’ evaluations and affective responses to the routines of practice and performance; the other, their perceptions of social support surrounding their learning. These dimensions were found to exist through the development of reliable instruments which also measured the extent of these dimensions. Two main patterns of responses emerged; continuers held more positive attitudes towards their individual learning and their social support while discontinuers felt less positive about these dimensions of learning.

Positive attitudes have previously been associated with continuing participation, where these attitudes were conceptualised as intentions to practice (Hallam, 1998), and positive or negative attitudes (M. Brown, 1996). Morehouse (1987) indicated that the valence of attitudes to several social and learning aspects were important to retention and attrition of students, although no higher-order synthesis of these factors was suggested. Other personal appraisals of music learning such as self-efficacy have been shown to be strongly linked to motivation and achievement (McPherson & McCormick, 2006; Merrick, 2006; Nielsen, 2004), although Stewart (2002) noted no differences in self-efficacy perceptions among those who learned and those who did not. Understanding how students feel about practice is an important precursor to understanding their achievements in exams and performances. The present study specifies attitudes to learning as feelings about music performance (in the Self-efficacy scale), as well as
mastery of and confidence in practice knowledge, thus probing into the activities that are behind successful performance.

In conclusion, identifying elements of the social, individual and contextual dimensions helped to frame the nature of the learning experience, and it was evident that continuers and discontinuers had significantly different experiences within these dimensions of learning. Investigating the interactions within these three dimensions revealed the importance of individual perceptions and evaluations of the learning process, as well as the importance of social empathy, acceptance and relevance. These factors are significant to lifelong learning and enjoyment of music (Busch, 2005) and are thus important to explore. How might these differences be described or explained by individuals who are still involved in learning music, as well as those who used to participate? Further, what are the contexts and consequences of these experiences? These questions were investigated in the subsequent stage of the study.

**SUMMARY OF STAGE 2**

The aim of the second stage of the study was to explore participants’ accounts of music learning, engaging primarily with their perceptions and understandings of their experiences. The data was drawn from 66 individual interviews with children (17 primary students), young adults (17 tertiary students) and other adults (32 adults in the community). Three dimensions of the learning environment were described in the first stage of the study; however, individuals’ accounts of their situations, actions, interactions and understandings have the power to explain these dimensions from the ‘person-in-context’ perspective (Larkin et al., 2006), itself little explored. The qualitative questions asked how and why the dimensions identified in Stage 1 were important in the learning experience, and searched for patterns or links between these dimensions among differing groups of learners. Two broad questions were formulated to direct this more ‘grounded’ analysis:

- What is the nature of the subjective experience of learning?
- How do learners themselves define their experiences of learning in the differing dimensions?

This Stage 2 summary draws on the five chapters that presented the qualitative analysis, each chapter representing a different aspect of the learning experience. In Chapter Five, the notion of affinity was conceived to represent the affective connection that individuals had with music and with learning. Affinity was found to be promoted or stimulated by social interactions of a supportive nature. Chapters Six and Seven outlined elements of cognition and metacognition that stood out as significant understandings and knowledge to individuals. Integration of these elements of individual learning revealed patterns of learning that characterised clusters of
individuals across youth and adults, learners and former learners. Chapter Eight examined the quality and nature of reflections on self and suggested that these evaluations combined to represent for individuals, their musical self. The ninth chapter found that those who withdrew from lessons cross-referenced their feelings about learning and about themselves when considering their continued involvement in music, and earlier experiences of deficit and difficulty became salient in these decisions.

**The Phenomenon of Affinity**

A key finding in this research was the identification of the phenomenon of affinity as a process of internalisation of a connection with music. As the summary below identifies, the connection between an individual and music can exist at varying degrees of intensity, but it always accompanies active involvement in music, as well as being present in music listeners. Affinity is neither an ability nor a capacity, but an outcome of thinking and feeling about music that acts as the connection with music and therefore an arbiter of involvement. The phenomenon of affinity for music was able to account for the personal, significant and emotional feelings of connection that individuals described they had with their music and music learning. Affinity represented the meaning that music held for individuals.

The notion of an increasingly internalised affect for music arose through the varied descriptions of feelings for music. The taxonomy of educational objectives in the affective domain developed by Krathwohl et al. (1974) was used to understand and frame feelings for music. The phenomenon of affinity was evident at four qualitatively different degrees, and the degree of affinity felt by an individual was also related to their pursuit of formal music instruction over time. The phenomenon has similarities to the concept of interest (Hidi & Renninger, 2006) and this and other literature is discussed in the closing sections of the chapter. The phenomenon of affinity provided an understanding of how feelings about music and learning arose, and it was linked with individuals’ attitudes to continued participation in music learning.

A first degree of affinity was embodied in the Explorer where discovery was generally an entry point for beginners. It was a time characterised by feeling that music was fun and novel, a good thing ‘to try’. Affect was usually positive and optimistic and this degree of affinity was characteristic of almost all the primary students who no longer participated, as well as a common starting point for others who found deeper connections with music. A second degree of affinity was evident among the Early engagers. Indicators of this degree of affinity were an enthusiasm for music and an emphasis on a need for aural satisfaction and musical experiences. A third degree of affinity was characteristic of the Music lovers, who valued music more, felt a stronger attachment to music and demonstrated greater consistency in reengaging in practice.
and lessons. *Music lovers* were also among those who discontinued their participation and retained their deep connection with music. Most *Music lovers* had described the development of their connection with music through discovery and enthusiasm (i.e. the previous two degrees). The *Musicians* were individuals who demonstrated a strongly internalised, intrinsic focus of attention on active music learning and performing. This degree of affinity was most often associated with tertiary students, though some adults had resumed learning for the same reasons. Most *Musicians* had described the development of their connection with music and their need to be actively involved in performance through discovery, enthusiasm and loving music.

Degrees of affinity with music could be observed in individuals by the presence of positive or optimistic and affirmative feelings for music learning, and by expressions of increasing subjective relevance, such as descriptions of the importance of music, its personal meaning, significance or benefit to the individual. It could also be observed by the consistency with which the individual reengaged with music activities such as practice or ensembles. The definitions of the degrees of affinity with music as summarised in Chapter Five are reiterated here (Figure 10.1), adapted from Krathwohl et al. (1974).

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<th>Degrees of affinity with music</th>
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<th>This study’s definition</th>
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<td>connecting with others.</td>
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<td>Discovering music-Explorers</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Active participation; reacting;</td>
<td>Wanting to play; loving</td>
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<td>willingness to respond;</td>
<td>the sound; a family</td>
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<td>developing interest.</td>
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Figure 10.1 Degrees of affinity as an internalised aspect of self
**Patterns of Learning**

A further key finding of this research concerned the ways in which individuals engaged in their learning. Described in the learning psychology literature as learning approaches that may be adaptive or maladaptive (Ainley, 1993; Cantwell & Moore, 1996; Dweck, 1986), the patterns of learning that were found to be typical of the learners in this study were important windows into understanding success and failure. The research reported here sits beside Hallam’s (1995a; 1997) analyses of learning and practice by showing links between some of the important dispositional or presage (beliefs) and process (self-regulation and strategies) factors contributing to outcomes of practice. The findings thus extend what is known about learning in music performance education by linking beliefs to behaviours, and both to achievement and affective outcomes.

The analysis first identified epistemological and volitional beliefs and strategies that then were associated with learners’ practising behaviour and actions. Beliefs about the nature of music knowledge and learning were powerful directors of individuals’ learning goals (Bråten & Strømsø, 2004; Smith, 2005). Some learners felt that music was a logical although complex type of knowledge that consisted of building blocks or steps, and was code-like or language-like (as in Schommer, 1998). Many also realised that learning how to practise was an important aspect of music learning, although for some adults this realisation did not come until after they had ended formal instruction. Believing that one had to learn how to practise was a forerunner of self-regulatory skills; one had to learn about goal-setting to learn skills over time (McPherson & Renwick, 2001). Complaints of lack of time indicated that the notion of time was understood to be inexorably tied to skill development (Zimmerman, 1998). For others, learning music was regarded less for its complexity and more for its perceived simplicity. For those who held simple beliefs, acquisition of knowledge appeared a certainty at the outset of instruction, although reflections of the adults and tertiary students indicated the frustration and dissatisfaction that accompanied these beliefs (Kardash & Howell, 2000).

The second driver concerned the use of volition as a metacognitive tool to remain on task. Primary students’ perceptions of volition centred on ‘trying hard’ and ‘trying harder’, where older participants described needing the ‘will’ to continue with the ‘hard yards’ of learning. A lack of will to engage with the ‘physically challenging’ and ‘challenging mentally’ nature of music practice was evident through descriptions of ‘forgetting’ (primary students), avoidance and procrastination (tertiary students) (Schommer, 1990; Wolters, 2003). Doing things ‘when I wanted’ was one way of avoiding teacher-structured practice routines. Using practice time as an entertainment was not an uncommon custom among participants of all ages (Pitts et al., 2000b), and often took the place of routines of skill-building over time.
But regarding epistemological and volitional beliefs as separate constructs or variables applicable to certain groups of individuals does not show the consequences of these beliefs. These consequences were evident in individuals’ intentions and actions. Smith (2005) showed that epistemological beliefs influence goal types and use of strategies, and the present study showed that learners with certain beliefs were also more likely to practise in particular ways, these practice strategies bringing about success, mitigated success or failure in the ‘micro-goals’ of practice. (The relationship of the epistemological and volitional beliefs and strategies to learning patterns is illustrated in Figure 10.2.)

In answer to how learners engaged with the tasks of learning, three patterns of learning mode or engagement, embodying differences in metacognitive skilfulness, emerged from student descriptions of their beliefs, their on-task persistence and how they practised. Whilst not all learners fell distinctly into these three patterns, the three patterns of engagement that did emerge most strongly had dramatic relationships with feelings about learning music as well as progress. Members of each group of primary students, adults and tertiary students figured in each of these profiles.

The constructive learner profile consisted of relatively complex beliefs about music and about learning, beliefs in the need for volitional strategy, and a range of practice strategies showing planning, in-situ monitoring and attention to detail. As for Ainley’s (1993) committed and engaged students, the way in which constructive learners undertook their learning generally gave more consistent and positive outcomes. Constructive learners described having an understanding of the depth and complexity of music learning and knowledge, and were prepared to make an effort in their practice, thinking about their practice in more ways than simply playing through pieces. Skill development was more likely to have been successful for
constructive learners, as the learning was planned and monitored for errors, a key process of self-regulation (McPherson & Zimmerman, 2002).

Termed as metacognitive skilfulness in the learning psychology literature (Cantwell & Moore, 1996), participants described the implementation of strategies to correct the error or adjust the learning goal when challenges to skill and will occurred. Because constructive learners sensed or understood the complexity of music, they also had a wider view of music practice strategies that encompassed a broader range of practice activities (Cantwell & Millard, 1994; Sullivan & Cantwell, 1999). Musical scores tended to make sense, and ‘songs’ and repertoire emerged as musical experiences, boosting self-esteem and potentiating affinity for music. Constructive learners were found among primary students and adults, as well as among tertiary students.

The expedient learner profile consisted of simple beliefs, inconsistent volition, an overall lack of self-regulation and predominantly low-level strategies (e.g. repetition, play-through, avoidance). The expedient learner experienced learning in quite a different way to the constructive learner, although similar to students in other studies who also were not strategic and less than willing (Alexander & Murphy, 1998). Learning for these individuals was a far more inconsistent activity, the most striking aspect being their lack of intention to master their instrument. That is, whilst most expedient learners were explorers, they tended to explore music only through their own means of musicking, rather than working towards skill development and achievement of fluency. Reid (2001) suggested that a simple conception of music learning views music as a “series of technical problems that have to be individually solved” (p. 30). In accordance with Reid’s observation, and similar to Ainley’s (1993) disengaged students, when expedient learners did practise, they tended to use low-level strategies and be focused on the micro-goals of notes and rhythm patterns, with little metacognitive monitoring of progress, or of emotions in the face of challenge.

The impetuous learner had mixed epistemological beliefs with a high sense of volition or will, but generally lacked self-regulatory skills (planning and monitoring). The impetuous learner profile showed very clearly the power of the will in combination with naïve beliefs about music, these beliefs being associated with a lack of metacognitive control. Although determined, impetuous learners demonstrated a lack of self-regulation or metacognition, and relied predominantly on low-level strategies. Committed learners in Ainley’s (1993) study also frequently used lower level strategies. A lack of metacognitive control critically affected the quality of impetuous learners’ practice outcomes, engendering frustration and low self-esteem. Although music was held to be important by these learners – most were music lovers – they were not able to experience music performance at the level they might have liked, in great part because of their lack of strategic control. Whether this concerned the micro-goals of practice and knowing how to approach difficult passagework or sound production difficulties, or more
macro-goals of preparing for examination, these individuals found it hard to control their behaviour and emotions to cope with the challenges. Although music was engaging for them – subjectively highly relevant – they were often frustrated in their experience of musical meaningfulness.

In sum, three key learning patterns were found to be associated with music performance learning. The findings extend current understandings established by Hallam (1995a; 1997) and Sullivan and Cantwell (1999), and display patterns similar to those in the academic learning context (Biggs & Collis, 1982; Cano 2005; Cantwell & Moore, 1996; Lourdes & Francisco, 2007).

**The Musical Self**

The research also found a window into participants’ subjective perceptions of their learning to be their *musical self*. Aspects of competence and ability were perceived as intra-personal attributes or descriptors through which were filtered reactions to practice outcomes. Compared to the tertiary students, few children and adults evaluated themselves as musical, while many had perceptions of lack of skill and ability.

The musical self constructed here was similar in most respects to the well-established construct of musical self-concept (Austin, 1990; Greenberg, 1970; Vispoel, 2000). The *musical self* was a powerful concatenation of participants’ feelings and thoughts about their abilities, confidence and success in music. These feelings influenced learning outcomes by providing emotion-filled evaluations of past and future engagements with learning.

Being ‘good at’ an activity is likely to be a reflection of competence and of perceived ability (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000); in this study these competence and ability beliefs were the most compelling elements of the gestalt *musical self*. The younger school students in the first stage of the study demonstrated slightly less confidence in the malleability of musical ability; this was accompanied by little acknowledgement of musical ability (‘having an ear’) by primary students in the qualitative stage. While the idea of having an ear for music appeared to be a popular dichotomous synonym for innate talent or ability, only the older participants (adults and tertiary students) were cognisant of this attribute. The lack of awareness or acknowledgement of musical ability was also noted by tertiary students to be a characteristic of their youth; they felt that as youngsters, they were more or less unaware of their ability. However, estimates of competence were relatively emphatic and highly varied, whether positive or negative, across the full cohort. Where progress was made, pleasure, satisfaction and achievement ensued. Where progress was slow and achievement limited, being unable to read the music for example, a range of negative feelings arose.
Perceptions of competence related directly to learners’ perceptions that learning was making sense and making meaning to them, as shown by the themes of Happy to potter and Songs I know. Being aware of a reliable competence was inextricably linked with increasing self-esteem and feeling good about one’s self. Not being ‘good enough’ however, was not only a reflection on musical competence, it was embedded in a larger sense of self-worth: ‘I was not up to scratch.’ Primary students were very much aware of what they had not achieved and of the impact of such deficit on their ability to play fluently, their ability to make sense or to gather meaning from their activities. Their descriptions of skill were full of deficits: ‘I could not read…’, ‘I could not play…’, ‘I did not know…’ Frustration, boredom and disappointment were rife.

Self-evaluations were particularly vulnerable to the realisation of this disappointment, deficit or failure. Self-esteem is an important component of self influencing commitment to learning (Austin, 1990; Eccles et al., 1989; Sandene, 1997; Schmitt, 1979), and it seems this component of self initiated withdrawal to protect self-worth. When self-esteem was low, thoughts of discontinuation arose, despite affinity and previous commitment to learning, as evidenced by the tertiary students. In fact, just as Vispoel (2000) predicted, self-esteem varied more among those who had a high affinity for music – the musicians – whether they were adults or tertiary students.

Surprisingly though, a frail sense of musical self did not always detract from an affinity for music. Even when some learners realised that they did not have a good ear for music, their affinity for music did not necessarily fade. Many music lovers were among those who acknowledged their lack of ability and competence, and although moving away from formal music performance instruction, they nevertheless retained a strong emotional response to music. Importantly then, maintenance of affinity depended on more than a strong musical self-concept.

**SOCIAL INTERACTIONS**

Although much of the analysis of the social dimension identified the nature and processes of social interactions at the individual level, there were indications that these individual interactions were embedded or referenced to specific musical cultural worlds for participants. This research has identified two important social environments for music learners; in the first instance, belonging to a family who wanted to share music, a family culture; second, belonging to a social group, not for social status reasons but for affiliation reasons, for the desire to share music (Dillon, 2007). Both these intimate and cultural aspects are discussed in the paragraphs below.
The family home is the crucible in which values, beliefs, knowledge and patterns of behaviour are formed through warm and reciprocal relationships with parents (Cutrona, Cole, Colangelo, Assouline & Russell, 1994). These patterns of relationship form the basis for a child’s later interactions with other activities and people in wider society. While previous research has shown emphatically that family environments are crucial to a child’s music development (e.g. Chadwick, 2000; McPherson, 2009), the present study has found strong evidence for the role of the parent in teaching or modelling value for learning alongside that of value for music. This research provides evidence in the music education context for Schunk and Zimmerman’s (1997) model of the social origins of self-regulatory competence.

In a favourable family environment, parents created a culture of belongingness and warmth around music; in the early days by encouraging and coaching, in later days by giving practical support. Parents promote interest and positive attitudes to learning by being ‘interpreters of reality’ for children, understanding and explaining children’s perceptions of competence (Jacobs & Bleeker, 2004), by providing opportunity (Russell-Bowie, Yeung & McInerney, 1999), and by being involved in the activity (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995).

Where a child had family members (grandparents, parents or siblings) who played or used to play an instrument, and who listened to music with them, it was more likely that the child developed a warm relationship between family members about music. These relationships included feelings about music itself, whether explicit, ‘we are a family who like music’ or implicit, sharing CDs, going to concerts, singing together for example. If the child had a parent who encouraged and assisted with practice, crucial information about the value of effort, problem-solving and self-regulation was transmitted through positive encouragement or firmly disciplined practice routines. Through family interactions and provisions, the child may also have had opportunity to build up a store of implicit knowledge and experience that acted as an aural knowledge base to inform sound, timbral and musical taste or preferences.

When learners complied with parents, their volitional, self-controlled behaviour served to sustain their interests during the discovery phase. Most of the tertiary students described being motivated by feelings of belonging from the start. Thus, in the micro-system of family that had been children’s habitat, the early seeds of positive affect for music would have been laid. For most participants, either family traditions or parents as initiators were important influences, and other researchers have also attributed the ongoing success of young musicians in great part to their parents (Chadwick, 2001; Kirchhubel, 2003). Where circumstances differed, there was less likelihood of that family environment being able to foster the beginnings of an attachment to music through exploration and discovery.
While parental interactions were an important early influence on the internalising or intensifying of an affinity for music and music-learning, active relationships with musical peers and colleagues were vital to ongoing participation in music. Participants described extending their musical activities into school and church, and broadening their social networks into other groups of people who held similar interests in music. Bruner (1990) suggests that individuals are responsive to the kinds of people among whom they find themselves, and in this study, it was clear that high affinity individuals sought out similar others because of their interests as well as being influenced by these others (for example, as role models and mentors). Thus, as affinity for music developed, the peer group provided a sense of belonging and cultural identity, the individual either maintaining a status within the group or developing an affiliation with others. These social ‘intimacy goals’ (R. Ryan et al., 1994) are critical to healthy development (Baumeister & Leary, 1995).

When there were social status goals (R. Ryan et al., 1994) however, these detracted from music, and belonging to a music group could relegate an individual to an out-group. The same motive – to identify with others, to belong to social groups – was a motive that drew learners away from music; their in-group was outside the music environment, and the disjunction between activity and social group pulled learners away from a musical environment. Practice and rehearsals were disliked and avoided if friends were outside these environments. Social status goals generally then pulled an individual away from music, and when social status goals were not being fulfilled (vis-à-vis music being an out-group), negative affect ensued.

Perceptions of teachers varied widely across the study. For some, they opened doors to musical worlds – Zoë’s ‘violin mother’ for instance. For others, they were the epitome of the wicked witch – mean, knuckle-whacking and insensitive. Teacher interactions were conceptualised as different in degrees of framing and classifying of the content and structure of lessons, following Swanwick (1991). When individuals felt that their boundaries or expectations of the curriculum or lesson structure were overstepped, then evaluations of teachers were quickly and emotively formed, much as other researchers have found discontinuers’ perceptions of teachers to be ‘black and white’ (Davidson et al., 1996; Moore et al., 2003). A new viewpoint revealed by this research showed that the youngest participants in this study complained of ‘not learning anything’ from their teachers; such learning experiences then being meaningless and depleting confidence and self-esteem. It would be of interest to explore further this perception in future research.

The constrained nature of some individuals’ learning environment (both at home or at school) was strongly expressed by the adults, and the situation of the child, to their mind, was akin to a sense of powerlessness in the learning environment. Perhaps as older and more experienced
voices, these statements might pass as more persuasive and acceptable descriptions of a non-facilitative environment than might young people’s complaints.

Where learners’ musical experiences did not fit their cultural expectations, specifically, where band music and AMEB repertoire did not correspond to the learners’ preferred or most dominant (musical) cultural context, there was less enjoyment, as also experienced by other Australian students in band programs (Pitts & Davidson, 2000). Where schools provided inadequate space for teaching, or prioritised sporting programs, other cultures were being defined. Dillon (2007) emphasised the importance of a shared, social experience of music. In belonging to a culture – whether family, school or peer – shared experiences sustain meaningfulness. Sharing in music experiences allows participants to experience a sense of communication in music with others.

**DECISIONS TO CONTINUE**

Enquiring into participants’ reasons for ceasing formal instruction (Chapter Nine) revealed a set of reasons or processes that have not previously been identified as decisive to discontinuation. Previous research in academic settings has indicated that emotions in learning are in response to satisfaction or thwart of goals (Pekrun et al., 2002; Pekrun et al., 2006). In this study, it was found that many of the children’s and adults’ negative responses were to become habitual feelings that accompanied their practice and involvement with music. Although the fact that those who withdraw have negative attitudes to practice is not new (M. Brown, 1996; Frakes, 1984), this section of the analysis revealed in what ways these negative attitudes arose, and how these negative feelings worked over time to influence decisions about continuing. In this study, negative feelings arose in the context of achievement, where learners were not able to make sense of their learning; in the context of musical meaning, where learners were not able to experience musical, aesthetic or affective responses to music; and in the context of social interactions, where music was not a common activity or interest among valued peers, or where the music genres did not fit within the most valued social contexts of the individual.

**STAGE 3: INTERPRETIVE SYNTHESIS OF STAGE 1 AND STAGE 2**

Together these findings suggested an explanation that might reflect how individuals develop, sustain or lose connection with their music learning. This answers the mixed methods question: ‘How might participants’ subjective experiences of learning help to explain differences between those who continue and those who withdraw from learning?’ by revealing the processes and contexts that contributed to differences between individuals who continued participating and those who did not. The first stage laid the foundation for the second by establishing the
dimensions of music learning most relevant to continuing participation, while in the second stage, the contexts and processes that underlay these dimensions were explained through an interpretive account of participants’ experiences. The Stage 3 synthesis presented below answers both the mixed methods question and the overarching research question,

What is the nature and quality of students’ learning experiences and how might these learning experiences relate to students’ participation in formal music performance instruction?

As a synthesis of the two stages, a set of propositions was developed to explain the relationship between students’ learning experiences and their decisions to participate. The remainder of this chapter presents an explanatory theory of these claims. The final sections of the chapter discuss this theory of participation in the light of previous research into the retention and attrition of music students from formal instruction. Before the concepts and propositions of the theory are described however, it is important to first consider the larger picture of the domain of music performance education in which these propositions are embedded.

**The Assumptions of the Domain**

A first assumption is that music is a powerful social and cultural phenomenon and can be used in many different ways according to cultural and individual needs. It provides opportunity to experience and express aesthetic needs, as well as providing opportunities for entertainment and social cohesion (Hargreaves & North, 1999; Merriam, 1964; Olsson, 1997). Because music is a cultural phenomenon (Vella, 2000), and because it invites a subjective response (Lehmann, 1997), music is intrinsically value laden, and discourse on motives to learn and participate in music performance needs to take this into account. The intrinsic value of music makes it substantially different to values inherent in academic or school work, beckoning theories and philosophies that are indigenous to the domain of music.

Another core feature of the domain is the impact or effect that music has been found to have on those who participate. Whether researchers are measuring intellectual or psychological characteristics, in western English-speaking societies, participation in music has been shown to have a profound impact on young people’s psychological development (Hallam, 2005; Hunter, 2005; K. McCarthy et al., 2004; McNeal, 1995) and to a lesser extent, on the well-being of adults and older people (Batt-Rawden & DeNora, 2005; Connolly, 2002; Hays & Minichiello, 2005).

However, as Bowman (2005) suggests, musical activity is not “unconditionally good” (p. 125), and the benefits of participation in music may well be tempered by the quality of these experiences, as well as by individuals’ perceptions of how these experiences benefit their well-being. People respond to events or situations through their perceptions of the environment or
situation, not the event objectively. This view of learning is held by theorists who believe that individuals construct their meanings from their perceptions of events (Bruner, 1990; Scruggs, 2009). Constructivist learning theory posits that “learners construct their own knowledge by looking for meaning and order; they interpret what they hear, read, and see based on their previous learning and habits” (Thanasoulos, nd). These interpretations act as filters through which the experience becomes each individual’s reality; thus participation in music may not be unconditionally good, as not every individual will find their well-being served by the experience.

Looking further back into human psychology, some of the fundamental drives that are proposed to direct human thoughts and behaviours have been meaningfully applied to learning, and can be specifically applied to learning in instrumental music. Two groups of needs are pertinent: the need to achieve, know or understand and to avoid failure, as well as the need to experience beauty, aesthetic and symmetry (Maslow & Lowery, 1998). The need for achievement and the need to avoid failure is at the origin of achievement goals or goal orientation (Atkinson, 1957; Elliot, 1999), and researchers have successfully applied goal orientation theories to instrumental music learning (Smith, 2005). Importantly, the need to avoid failure and to achieve is a way of preserving psychological well-being (Covington, 1984). People take steps to avoid failure if this failure is perceived likely to affect their self-esteem. The failure may cause emotions to erupt as a result of appraisals that represent the objective outcome (success or failure) as well as appraisals of the subjective cause of the success or failure (Pekrun et al, 2006; Weiner, 1985). In other words, individuals respond to the meaning of the event or the outcomes.

Second, exploration of the need to experience the aesthetic in music has primarily been left to the domain of philosophy of music education (D. Elliott, 2000; Hallman, 1965; Ludemann, 1999; Panaiotidi, 2003; Reimer, 2004), although studies on expression in music performance have identified different responses and structures for aesthetic reactions (Jackendoff & Lerdahl, 2006; Juslin, 2003). Of relevance here is Jackendoff and Lerdahl’s (2006) hypothesis that an individual’s understanding of music is the origin of their affective response and experience of musical meaningfulness. In other words, for music to mean something, an individual must first understand what they are listening to, even if this is tacit knowledge and not readily articulated.

Finally, an important assumption of the music education domain is that there is no definitive answer to the ‘nature or nurture’ debate, but that both aspects have an influence on the development of skill and connection with music learning. The nurture aspect of music education can provide circumstances that favour the development of affinity, although there are many times when the environment may not favour the development of affinity even when innate ability is observable (Gagne, 1999; Sloboda, 1990, 1991, 1994; Welch, 2005).
The following section turns to the details of the theory of participation in learning. The theory is a synthesis of the findings of the research and attempts to show how individuals develop, sustain or lose connection with learning their musical instrument.

**A Theory of Participation in Music Learning**

Affinity for music, representing the subjective meaning of music to the individual, serves to keep an individual connected to music, and is a necessary condition for sustaining participation in musical learning. Affinity for music will develop where learning is musically meaningful and where affective responses to learning and to music are predominantly stable and positive. Musical meaning will develop where music makes sense, and where there is a match between music, the individual and their socio-cultural environment. The individual elements and their interactions are shown in Figure 10.3, then outlined and discussed below.

![Diagram of Participation in Music Learning](image)

*Figure 10.3 The explanatory theory of participation in music learning*

**Affinity for Music**

Affinity describes the quality of a relationship between the individual and music. An affinity for music constitutes the degree of significance, value or meaningfulness held in music by an
individual and is characterised by varying intensities of positive affective states. In the context of music performance education, there are two essential criteria for the development of affinity (shown in Figure 10.3). One is that music learning and playing is musically meaningful to the student, and the second is that positive affect suffuses the learning period. Affinity will develop as musically meaningful learning and positive affect occur because feelings towards music and music learning become more and more internalised as learners continue to be involved with music learning in meaningful and satisfying ways. An increase of affinity with music learning and playing means that this domain of activity becomes increasingly subjectively relevant: more meaningful and significant to the individual. An affinity for music thus accompanies and facilitates the learning of music, by being a connecting agent between the individual and the activity. Having a high affinity for music does not mean that an individual would be ipso facto enrolled in learning. Affinity is a necessary condition for music learning, but engagement in formal music instruction does not always accompany affinity.

Musical meaning and stable positive affect are two conditions for the development of affinity. What is musically meaningful learning, and how does learning make or lose its musical meaning? This is explained below in terms of learning making sense and of the socio-cultural fit.

**Making Musical Meaning**

The first condition for the development of affinity is the making of musical meaning. The link between making musical meaning and decisions to continue or withdraw was identified in Chapter Nine when many non-tertiary participants, along with feeling that music did not fit into their socio-cultural locale, for the most part felt their lack of fluency had led to a musical void. The expression of music and possible selves looked forward to in the early exploratory weeks and months as described in Chapters Five and Eight did not eventuate; instead, ‘boring old songs’, ‘little beats’ and technical exercises were vehicles of disappointment. When learners were able to play ‘a song’, satisfaction and hopeful expectations for future encounters with music ensued. For younger or less experienced players, a song was a musical encounter; for more experienced players, musical encounter and meaningfulness were experienced through more complex musical works. As was established in the first stage of the study, what mattered to individuals was the experience of form, melody and harmony in space-time, and this before graded levels of achievement.

An individual’s capacity to respond to form, melody or harmony is based on an implicit or explicit understanding of musical grammar (Jackendoff & Lerdahl, 2006). When music does not make sense the student is unable to (aurally) realise musical coherence during the playing. He or she cannot grasp form, harmonic structure or rhythm patterns, because all have been disrupted.
in some way by error, replay or hesitancy. Jackendoff and Lerdahl (2006) also refer to the occurrence of affective responses to music through music’s relationship with physical gesture and motion, such that people respond to musical events on larger or smaller time-scales. When rhythm patterns and beat are disrupted through lack of familiarity or errors, then learners will find great difficulty experiencing the physicality of their music, losing another opportunity for affective response.

Another explanation of this musical loss can be given by drawing on Swanwick’s (1991) explanation of the cyclical nature of the musical experience. Four elements grow from each other in any individual’s experience of music; responses to the properties of musical sound (e.g. pitch, duration) facilitate perception of the expressive character of the music, which then facilitates awareness of form and structure. Meaning or value for the experience come out of this awareness. Through this model of musical development, Swanwick demonstrates that some experience of mastery is necessary to stimulate imagination and meaning.

Since the musical self was involved in affective judgements and self-description, it was implicated in the learning process as being the arbiter of meaning. The musical self ‘noticed’ whether the musical experience was meaningful, positive feelings bringing music closer to the self, negative feelings pulling away. The degree of meaningfulness was an interpretation by the musical self of the musical world of learning (Markus & Nurius, 1986). Musical self-concept developed in hand with affinity; as achievement and aesthetic needs were satisfied, then the sense of self as musical was enhanced, self-esteem was energised by competency and fluency, and meaningfulness of the learning experience intensified.

_Making Sense of Learning_

In the process of understanding participants’ evaluations of success and failure as perceptions of competence, as discussed in Chapter Eight, the themes of progress and pleasure, and difficulties and deficit, arose. The degree to which learners were able to achieve fluency and accuracy in their playing was the degree to which their own music-making made sense to them (Kopiez, 2002). Swanwick (1994) addressed this competence as _fluency_ in handling sound in space-time and pitch. Fluency contributes to meaningfulness because through fluency of musical language, individuals are able to enter into discourse and communication (Dewey, 1925), either reflectively within themselves or sharing it socially with others.

However, convergence of failure and difficulties in learning contributed to a lack of musical meaning in two ways. Failure and difficulty meant that learners were not able to develop their technical skill base (i.e. competence). This lack of mastery was established in the first stage of the study and contextualised in the second through the competence themes. When music learning did not make sense learners could not play the music to excite their imagination or
intuition (Swanwick, 1994). The individual also had to cope with negative reactive appraisals (Carver & Scheier, 1990) that then became associated with the task or the situation, becoming habitual, encoded memories of affect suffusing further encounters with music and learning (Woike & Polo, 2001).

The Socio-cultural Fit
The social interactions described earlier in the first and second stages of the study represented influences on affinity and learning, and, in much the same way as Bronfenbrenner (1979) and Rogoff (2003) suggest that culture is a set of processes, these interactions formed part of the individual’s culture of music and learning. Cultural context determines the function, content, and form of musical expressions (Blacking, 1973) and therefore musical meaningfulness arises in a cultural context (Vella, 2000). Blacking (1973) suggests that experiences of music are a part of the social group who play it: sing-alongs in family traditions, chamber music in the art music tradition, and contemporary popular music in school/peer culture for example. Where family traditions correspond with school and social settings, this provides a strongly supportive context (Pitts, 2009). The present study has shown that when individuals did not have the family background nor identify with others in these settings, they were less likely to stay connected to their music. The strength of the social sharing and connection facilitated affiliation with others at the same time as offering a locale in which to embed experiences of music. The act of sharing music with others helped to form a culture that influenced and was influenced by the participants in that culture (Rogoff, 2003).

Stable Positive Affective Judgements
The second condition for the development of affinity is the occurrence of stable positive affective judgements. While emotions or feelings in response to difficulty or conflict of beliefs occurred and varied, the predominant feeling accompanying affinity for music, developed over the learning period, was positive. Emotional responses can become stable by the nature of human information processing. Emotions become cued to settings, events, or memories, becoming habitual responses (Pekrun et al., 2006) that are stable, enduring and resilient (Cantwell, 2008). When feelings toward the domain of music learning and playing are relatively stable, then interference of negative feelings through failure or other evaluations is transitory and overcome through volitional control of negativity (Corno & Kanfer, 1993).

The suffusion of affect throughout participants’ stories of learning indicated that its antecedents and consequence were associated with the making of sense and meaning through fluency and competence. The first stage of the study showed these feelings directly related to practice mastery and confidence. Affect is in response to the meaning or significance the event has to
individuals (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), and appraisals are influenced by the way people look at the world (Schutz & Davis, 2000). Positive emotions therefore represent the individual’s perception of benefit or well-being for the self, this contributing to self-worth or self-esteem. Where positive feelings emerged, whether through task mastery, fulfilment of expectations or in feeling a connection with the socio-cultural setting, music learning was felt to be important or significant to the individual’s sense of self. Where negative feelings emerged, meaningfulness leached from the learning opportunity.

To summarise, the theory explains that affinity for music emerges through positive and musically meaningful activities. Musical meaning comes about in two ways: first, where music has made sense to the learner and the form and structure of music become apparent and appealing to them; second, when social interactions are supportive and the musical repertoire is integral to the culture to which the learner belongs. At the same time, the flow of emotions through the learning interactions becomes a consistent pattern of emotion that recurs with reengagement with the instrument. Stable positive affective judgements, along with experiences of musically meaningful learning, will contribute to the development of affinity. As a connecting agent between the individual and the activity, affinity for music facilitates the learning of music. Having a high affinity for music does not predict that an individual would be enrolled in formal instruction for many music lovers were not active music-making participants. However, affinity is necessary for sustained participation in music learning.

**EXPLANATIONS OF EMOTIONS IN LEARNING**

An important step in proposing this explanatory theory of participation is to evaluate this theory in the light of existing research and to show how the proposed theory may help to explain some of the findings in the retention and attrition literature. Several theoretical frameworks support the propositions. There are conceptual similarities to *Expectancy X Value* theory (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000) and the *4-Phase Model of Interest* (Hidi & Renninger, 2006) and in the instrumental music domain, to recent work by Sichivitsa (2007) and Dillon (2007).

In *Expectancy X Value* theory (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000), expectations and value for a task influence student motivation for the task or activity. According to this model, value is multidimensional, consisting of intrinsic value, attainment value, usefulness and cost. Along with expectancies for outcomes, value drives individuals to participate or undertake activities. Task value has been found over the course of many studies to be a powerful predictor of learners’ enrolment choices, that is, whether to continue or not (Meece, Wigfield & Eccles, 1990; Wigfield & Eccles, 1992; Wigfield et al., 1997). Eccles and Wigfield (2002) suggest that theories of motivation based on value, such as self-determination, intrinsic motivation, interest,
and goal theories, are theories that are based on ‘reasons for engaging’. It was earlier argued that value is often considered alongside interest by a number of researchers (e.g. Wigfield & Eccles, 1992), as well as being an integral component of interest itself (Hidi & Renninger, 2006). Similarly, Brophy (1999) suggested that values are more important in activities that are primarily intrinsically motivated than for tasks that are less so. Since in many cases learners themselves decide to learn an instrument, and they can make free choice almost on a daily basis to engage in that learning, musical instrument learning represents one such intrinsically motivated activity, and thus is considerably vulnerable to value-driven motives for participation.

Along similar lines, Pintrich and DeGroot (1990), in an early yet influential study, identified three motivational components that were positively associated with strategic self-regulation and achievement. The three components of the Motivated Learning Strategies Questionnaire (MLSQ) were expectancy (‘I can do it’: self-efficacy and ability beliefs etc.), value (‘Why I do it’: interest, goals and beliefs about the task), and affect (‘How I feel about it’: learners’ reactions to the task). Importantly, researchers using the MLSQ found that higher levels of intrinsic value for music were associated with greater amounts of practice and higher quality practice (McPherson & McCormick, 1999).

The notion of affinity comes closest to the concept of interest as most recently discussed by Hidi and Renninger (2006). Interest too is regarded as a construct that may become increasingly internalised over time and experience, and in particular, interest toward the object or event has both affective and value dimensions. The concept of interest in psychological processes has a long history, and its role in education has engaged the minds of many scholars. Its primary importance relates to its role as the filter between the experiential world and the individual; interest allows the brain to attend to or select some information out of all available at any one time (Geake & Cooper, 2003). Empirical research in interest has focused on differences between interest that is situational and context-specific, and interest that is individual or internally located and regulated (Hidi, 1990; Mitchell, 1993; Schiefele, 1991). Associated with these levels is a range of affective, cognitive and metacognitive factors that determine aspects of learning such as curiosity, self-regulation, response to challenge, and learning strategies. Hidi and Renninger have proposed a four-phase model of the development of interest that takes into account the two distinct forms of interest, and in which the range of interest development is proposed to move from triggered situational interest, though maintained situational interest, into emerging individual interest and finally into a well-developed individual interest. They suggest that in these later phases, individual interest is more like a disposition than a psychological process. The authors further propose that individuals may enter the phase at any level, and that interest may also regress to a previous level. The developmental aspect of the model refers to the qualitative change in interest and not to the chronological, psychological or cognitive
growth of individuals. Early phases of interest are best measured by ‘liking’ of the interest-object, while later phases are gauged by positive affect, as well as stored knowledge and recurring engagement.

An important difference between the four-phase interest model and the phenomenon of affinity may be the power of affinity to be a potent, internalising influence that is not only gauged by positive affect, but more powerfully blossoms as self-identity as a musician. In this way, affinity may be a phenomenon that is indigenous to music with possible applications to other activities that have aesthetic or communicative origins.

There is certainly a possibility that affinity for music is a genetic disposition or propensity, but this seems not to draw away from the developmental or internalising nature of affinity, suggesting instead that this original affinity is there to be developed to its full potential; at this point of the research, identifying oneself as a musician appears to be the most internalised point of affinity development for music learning and playing, but further research might suggest a more transcending development, as suggested by Maslow’s (1943) conception of self-actualisation or self-transcendence.

In the music domain, two researchers have theorised and tested the notion of value or meaningfulness in attempts to find indigenous theories of motivation in music. Sichivitsa (2003, 2004, 2007) tested an existing theory of retention (drawn from academic learning) and refined it across three different music student populations including primary, middle and tertiary levels. Across all three studies, she found that value for music was the strongest factor influencing learners to re-enrol in their music classes (choir and general music). In younger learners, parental support for music was an important influence on learners’ value for music, and for all groups, satisfaction with progress and music class also influenced value for music. She also noted that the subjective meaning of music was more important to learners than actual events or outcomes.

Dillon (2007) using a different methodology from much of the music literature based on academic learning theory, started out with the intention of investigating the meaning of music to young people. Through the interpretive paradigm, where both the participants’ and the researcher’s subjectivities contributed to the findings, he uncovered layers of meaningfulness that acted as structures through which the ideal of “learning as transformation of self” (p. xiii) was enacted. His work suggests that there are multiple layers of meaningfulness that contribute to an individual’s experience of music learning; importantly, this meaningfulness in itself is essential for ‘experiencing’ music and the development of self-identity. Dillon frames his findings as an “emergent theory of meaningful engagement” (p. xii). He suggests that meaningful engagement occurs at three levels that together make a flow channel of experience.
First, personal meaningfulness occurs where a person is able to be “expressive with sound in time and space” (p. 163) as well as able to critically reflect on the personal meanings of music. Second, the social meaning of music is posited as an essential way in which engagement with music occurs, through sharing of music-making, sharing of meanings through collaboration, and the widening of cultural experience. This last leads into Dillon’s third layer of meaningful engagement – cultural meaning – which reflects the ways in which music transforms individuals as well as the ways in which individuals transform their community and culture through their music practices.

The present study, alongside the work of Dillon (2007) and Sichivitsa (2007), shows that affective, subjective experiences of music learning can be validly captured through different methodologies, and that the quality and nature of the subjective experience of learning an instrument is strongly related to individuals’ commitment to and engagement in learning.

One test for an emerging proposition or theory is to learn to what extent it can explain other findings in the domain. How might this theory of participation in learning relate to previous explanations of retention and attrition? A further test is to consider how the theory might predict learning outcomes for enrolled music learners and how the propositions of the theory might help to improve the context and content of instrumental music instruction. The following sections address these two questions.

**Previous Explanations of Continuation andAttrition**

Description of affective judgement permeates many of the studies analysed in the literature review as it does the present study, although in the literature, most affective judgements were represented by ‘attitudes’ to music or music class. With regard to behavioural intentions, attitudes are decisive (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975), and throughout the literature, negative attitudes to music were associated with withdrawal (M. Brown, 1996; Bushong, 2005; Driscoll, 2009; Frakes, 1984; Hallam, 1998; Koutz, 1987; Morehouse; Pitts et al, 2000a, b; Sloboda & Davidson, 1996; Stewart, 2002). Very often, dislike, lack of interest and boredom (as a descriptor of affect) were given as immediate and unequivocal reasons for discontinuing. For example, Bushong’s (2005) discontinuers disliked practice, and were bored and frustrated. More than a third of Australians aged 5-34 years said they lost interest (AMA, 2001). Likewise, throughout, positive attitudes were linked to continuation. Cannava (1994) pointed to one reason why attitudes were more positive and learners persisted in their learning: when learners were able to choose their instruments, then they were more likely to have had an opportunity to have heard the instrument and develop a range of aural/timbral preferences. The findings of the impact of negative affect in previous studies thus is highly similar to the effect of negative
feelings in this study, and having been shown to influence commitment to learning in similar ways, positive and negative attitudes to music are proposed to be indicators of affinity.

The relationship of making sense and musical meaning to withdrawing or disengaging is foreshadowed by the many studies where a lack of competence, achievement or progress was found to contribute to or was associated with attrition (M. Brown, 1996; Evans, 2009; Govel, 2004; Morehouse, 1987; Pitts et al., 2000b; Rogers, 1989; Sloboda & Davidson, 1996). An extended range of variables reflecting poor outcomes and skill deficits existed (with implications for competence perceptions and meaningful learning), consisting of poor music reading (Allen, 1981), lack of perceptive ability (Mowery, 1993), lack of understanding (Rogers, 1989), lack of cognitive monitoring (Hallam, 1998), and lower school or musical achievement (M. Brown, 1996; Frakes, 1984; Hallam, 2001; Klinedinst, 1991; J. McCarthy, 1980; Sloboda & Davidson, 1996). It is likely that for learners in these studies, music playing was fraught with difficulties in sound production, use of space and time and notational literacy. These deficits would have led to hesitancy in playing, errors in reproduction, much of this blocking the way to a subjective appreciation of the music playing: no joy in playing and hearing ‘songs’ like the Little Bear or Grieg’s Albumblätt.

That musical meaningfulness is embedded in the socio-cultural context is not new. What this study has revealed however, is that it is by the agency of parental support, peer context and teacher curriculum that meaningfulness is negotiated. The degree of fit between the parent, the child, the peer group, the teacher provisions and music has a great influence on the meaningfulness of the music to the child. Where music is a part of the family, then affinity is given a first impetus (Davidson et al., 1996; Chadwick, 2001; Graziano, 1991; Moore et al., 2003); where peers are also involved in music, music-making can be shared and discourse entered into (Dillon, 2007; Furrer & Skinner, 2003; Swanwick, 1994); where teachers provide resources that are the repertoire of the current discourse, then socio-cultural fit will facilitate an integrative experience of musical meaningfulness. Thus although it is known that parent support is vital to persistence and commitment to musical instrumental learning (McPherson, 2009), the findings of this study show why this is so, in terms of this support transmitting family values for both music and learning (e.g. self-regulation). And as Bronfenbrenner (1979) described, the patterns that are set in this early micro-social-culture are patterns that set the trajectory for later development.

The notion of socio-cultural fit also explains the effect of teachers on learners’ motivations; not only is it known that teachers influence student goals or purposes for work in the studio (Ames, 1992), the evidence here shows that teachers are viewed as controlling constructors of the curriculum through framing and structuring (Swanwick, 1991). Competence and knowledge in teachers is valued (Carmen, Enrique & Baltasar, 2000) and the balance of these in the classroom
defined as pacing and intensity of student-teacher interaction (Madsen, Standley & Cassidy, 1989; Siebenaler, 1997). A handful of studies have however observed the nature of teacher framing and structure with unhappy findings (Persson, 1994, 1996a, b; West & Rostvall, 2003). When teacher curriculum and pedagogy do not match student expectations or current values for music, there is a tendency to blame the teacher, who stands as a proxy for the curriculum. This may help to explain the lack of affiliation with teachers described by discontinuers in Davidson et al. (1996).

Parents and teachers then, provide learners with the first steps towards musical discourse and meaningfulness: elements of fluency and expression through teaching self-regulation, and elements of affect, meaning and personal relevance through affiliation. As peer context permeates the child’s culture through the middle years of childhood, there is an opportunity for the emerging fluency to become a vehicle for sharing and collaboration. Dillon (2007) articulated this collaboration and sharing as an essential layer of meaningfulness among his learners, and other studies have similarly found that sharing and collaboration are important to music learners (Best, 2004; Cope, 2002; Davidson & Good, 2002; Hays et al., 2000; StJohn, 2006). Despite this, in general it is an understudied phenomenon particularly in the attrition-retention field. Royse (1989) described how the continuers in his study felt ‘needed’; Olsson used the phrase ‘social destination’ to describe the peer culture and the importance of peer influence on music preferences (also North et al., 2000). As Eccles and Wigfield (2002) concluded, it would be ill-advised to ignore the influence of contexts in learning, and because music is so much a cultural expression (Merriam, 1964; Vella, 2000), and cannot be “considered apart from the social group who play it” (Blacking, 1973, p. 53), there is a strong case for considering not just the ‘social context’ of parents and peer influence, but the implications of these as cultural influences.

The musical self as the receptor or holder of meaning, as the place where meaning was recognised, was an important arbiter of learning. As the musical self gauged competence and ability, affective responses shaped self-esteem and meaningfulness. Markus (1977) explains self-schemas as being “cognitive generalisations of self, which organise, summarise and explain behaviour” (p. 63) in the particular domain. The construct of musical self-concept however is fleeting; the variation of definitions through the music literature makes it difficult to pull together a robust set of relationships. Even though Vispoel’s (1994) work is at least a decade and a half old, there is little use of his instruments, nor a sustained discussion on the construct. Perhaps because self-efficacy has so usefully translated into instrumental music learning, there has been less need for the more comprehensive construct that Vispoel (2000) has developed. As noted earlier though, the self-concept remains an informative theoretical construct that encompasses descriptions and schemas of self grounded in a social context, and it represents the
site of dynamic flow and feedback of affect, meaning and worth. When taken at this global level, the *musical self*, as self-esteem (as here and in Rosevear, 2002, 2003; Schmitt, 1979); as self-efficacy (as in Sichivitsa, 2004), as perceived competence (as here and in Rosevear, 2002, 2003), or as ability beliefs (as here and in Sichivitsa, 2003), takes the role of recognising and evaluating the meaning of music to the individual. The value of music to the individual then influences their motivation to engage in the activity, nourishing their affinity with it – ‘Do I like music enough to practise it?’ Frakes (1984), Klinedinst (1989), Rosevear (2002) and Schmidt (2005) found their constructs of self-beliefs were positively associated with motivation and achievement, and both Hurley (1994) and Sichivitsa (2003) found ability beliefs to be a strong predictor of persistence.

**Predicting Enrolment Choices**

Lastly, how might the theory of participation in music learning predict the learning trajectory for enrolled students? Three scenarios of first-year learners might help to illustrate this.

Having started lessons earlier in the year, Sam finds he is struggling with sound production and reading; he is not making sense of his learning. He also sees that some of his friends have left the band to play cricket at lunchtime. Both these outcomes in the achievement and social contexts raise negative feelings for Sam, and do not contribute to the development of musical meaning; although he was at first looking forward to learning, he now wishes to stop.

Kaz also started lessons at the beginning of the year, and although she has some problems with reading and sound production, she also enjoys band rehearsals because her friends also attend, and she generally enjoys the music they rehearse. In this way, Kaz, experiences positive feelings as well as negative, but finds the experience meaningful enough to gain some value and attribute personal significance to being a band member. Depending on maintenance of this balance between her fluency and social connectedness, she may continue to explore music and become more enthusiastic in the years to come as music becomes more meaningful to her. If one was to become a resolving negative influence, she would likely discontinue to protect her self-worth (Covington, 1984).

Celeste also commenced lessons at the beginning of the year. She enjoys her learning and finds that with some effort, and family help with practice, she is able to play her songs reasonably fluently. Because of the social connectedness she feels with her family, the sense she is making of her learning, and the emerging musical meaning, her experience is a meaningful one suffused with positive affect, and she is more likely than Kaz or Sam to continue with her lessons. In this way, she would most likely develop enthusiasm for and love of music.
For each of these learners, when music is meaningful and accompanied by positive affect, then affinity for music is likely to develop and they are more likely to continue their involvement over time. Where there is negative affect suffusing the learning, arising from a lack of sense-making, meaning-making or social connectedness, then it is likely that affinity will not develop, but stagnate or evaporate.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has reviewed the aims and purposes of the research described in this thesis, demonstrating a need to examine individual learning processes in music performance education in order to understand how meaning and experience influenced intentions to learn. Previous research has shown that social, individual and contextual aspects of the learning experience are important to successful and enjoyable learning, although the subjective experience of learning, at the heart of individual responses to music and cognition, was not deeply understood. This research has contributed to music performance education and the field of retention-attrition studies, by providing an explanation as to how and why some individuals stay connected with music, learning for longer and more enjoyable periods than others.

The summaries outlined the research questions and the major findings of each stage of the study, showing that there were differences and similarities between individuals in how they felt about music, and how they undertook their learning. The synthesis given in Stage 3 of the study, representing the integration of the methods, gave an explanation of why some individuals continue to learn over the course of their childhood and youth, while others disengage and withdraw at different times in that same period. The final chapter ahead takes a wider look at how the conclusions of this research might inform music performance pedagogy, teacher training, and curriculum.
Chapter 11. Conclusions and Implications

Introduction

This study has approached the question of sustaining participation in instrumental music education from the learners’ perspective, inquiring into the nature and meaning of the learning experiences for individuals involved in learning an instrument for different lengths of time during their childhood or youth. Understanding music education in this view helps to move the focus off the ‘transmitting of values’ characteristic of music education to examining the value individuals have for their own learning (Westerlund, 2008).

The research reported in this thesis has found that the value, significance or affinity that individuals develop for their music learning is arrived at through meaningful learning experiences that are cognitively, musically and socially satisfying. A pragmatic approach to the study problem was applied through a mixed methods sequential explanatory design that was devised to explore the nature of individuals’ experiences of learning, and how their perceptions of learning influenced continuance of formal instruction. The selection of participants for the study was intended to foster a rich and varied description and exploration of musical instrument learning during childhood and youth. The thrust of the analysis focused on the ‘lived experience’ of the participants, analysing this in terms of the structure of these experiences, the meanings these experiences held for the participants, and the interpretation of these as meanings connected to psychological phenomena.

This final chapter identifies the implications the theory of participation has for the practice of instrumental music teaching. Scholars such as Dewey (1925), Bruner (1990) and Csikszentmihalyi (1993) have identified meaningful learning as key to the development of knowledge and the love of learning, and the wealth of literature on motivation for music demonstrates the importance attributed to motivated learning by scholars and practitioners alike (Ericsson et al., 1990; Hallam, 2002; O’Neill & McPherson, 2002; Thomas, 1992). Similarly, an understanding of the role affect plays in learning has been an important research agenda of recent times (Ainley, 2006; Isen & Reeve, 2005; Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2002). The concept of affinity provides a way of understanding how and why music students become attached to their learning and continue to be so, illustrating the importance of considering both the individual and their context (Beltman & Volet, 2008; Buckley et al., 2004; Evans, 2009).

The concept of affinity and the theory of participation can help teachers explore the complex interrelationships between subjective, aesthetic, or emotional experiences and objective skill development in music performance education. The practical usefulness of the findings of this research lie in how well the information can help teachers to structure their lessons and work
with students, how well it can help schools and music departments to plan the type of music programs they promote in school, and how well it can help institutions of higher education to prepare teachers for future students. The discussion to follow therefore centres on how the findings of the present study can inform pedagogy, whether at the individual teacher level or at program development level in higher education. Prior to this though, the major findings of the research are summarised, and two issues of concern to student learning are discussed.

The major findings of the research reported in this thesis may be summarised as follows:

Affinity for music learning is a phenomenon fostered by consistent positive affect and musically meaningful learning. Affinity for music was the agent for an individual’s connection to music, and was a necessary condition for continuing participation in musical instrument learning.

Musically meaningful learning occurred when learners were able to make musical meaning from their practising. A musically meaningful experience is one where the subjective experience of the music is more important than the content of the music. Musical meaning came about through music making sense and a relevant and empathic socio-cultural context.

An empathic and relevant socio-cultural environment consisted of families who nurtured value for learning and for music, of peers who shared a common interest in music activity and preferences, and of teachers whose pedagogy was student-centred.

Individuals made sense of learning when they were able to play their instruments fluently. Making sense of learning depended in great part upon patterns of learning.

Three patterns of learning beliefs and behaviour characterised many of the individuals in this study, the constructive learner, the expedient learner, and the impetuous learner. Each of these learning patterns consisted of different combinations of epistemological and volitional beliefs, along with associated practising behaviours and outcomes.

The musical self encapsulated competence and ability beliefs that individuals felt described their past, actual and possible selves as music players. The daily rise and fall of emotional reactions to goal satisfaction and thwart were filtered through this self-concept. The musical self was the arbiter, judge or interpreter of meaning or significance of music to the individual.

**SOME UNEXPECTED FINDINGS**

That there were a number of individuals who found they had a good ear and also were not long involved in music learning was surprising (described in Chapter Eight). Playing by ear and
strong aural acuity might logically be assumed to be an advantage to music learners (Haroutounian, 2000), but the evidence in this study suggested that for some it was a disadvantage, as this ‘natural ability’ conflicted with teaching methods and settings. Many such players fell by the wayside. Although there was a conspicuous effort made through this research that withdrawal be not perceived as a deficit or a wrong turning, these learners’ experiences might suggest that they were turned off music learning, suffering poor outcomes and negative affect, when a different teaching approach might have facilitated their learning (Mainwaring, 1951), giving space for affinity to intensify.

Second, the dichotomy of musical ability as ‘having an ear’ or not, was a striking feature of individuals’ self-concept. In contrast, the mid-point group mean of the Beliefs in Musical Ability scale showed a fairly neutral attitude to the development of musical ability. Perhaps the qualitative method allowed a more grounded, practical description of musical ability to emerge, a description that was clearly a polarised one. Tertiary students and adults were united in using the ‘musical ear’ as a description for success and failure alike, demonstrating that tertiary students’ further experience or expertise did not distinguish them from less experienced adults. These distinctions are the grist of the nature and nurture debate (Gagne, 1999; Sloboda, 1990, 1991, 1994; Welch, 2005), centring on musical skill as a developmental capacity or an innate potential. Perhaps folk myths regarding musical talent as ‘a gift’ are intransigent. Alternatively, the participants’ voice might suggest that current music education practices, consisting of band participation and musical score reading, foster an imbalanced attitude to learning instrumental music. Music reading requires fairly detailed cognitive processing, and band programs can exclude those who find it easy to ‘play by ear’ as well as those who find reading a challenge. It may be that those who succeed in this environment consider themselves musical, while others with commensurate aural skills withdraw when they do not pass the same benchmarks. There are many more ways of making music with an instrument or voice than reading and reproducing a musical score (Merriam, 1964).

Third, learning patterns exist in the academic learning literature (generally as ‘approaches to learning’, e.g. Biggs, 1987), and this study revealed similar powerful patterns of beliefs-goals-behaviour in music performance learning. Of interest was the association of the expedient and impetuous learning profiles with tertiary students, who might be assumed to have developed self-regulation, abstract or relational thinking about practice (Biggs, 1992; Nielsen, 1999, 2001). That many of these young adults still were expedient or impetuous in their learning reflects a possible deficit in the pedagogy that has informed their progress to date (Jorgensen, 2003), and does not augur well for their future progress. Perhaps as for other expedient learners in the study, their affinity with music may not intensify if their learning is suffused with negative appraisals of competence; there was evidence in this study of the loss of self-esteem as a result
of poor outcomes when students valued the activity (Austin, 1990). The theoretical perspective of ‘approaches to learning’ has only been lightly touched on in studies of music performance learning, but it seems that the field would be ready to explore learning approaches and individual differences more deeply, for there is already a convincing body of research about self-regulation, metacognitive processes and achievement with which to design such studies (Austin & Vispoel, 1998; Hallam, 2001; McPherson & McCormick, 2006; Smith, 2005). This research has shown, as Sloboda (2001) has already noted, that musical skills and learning are ready for a ‘componential analysis’ to account for individual and contextual differences that influence practising behaviour and outcomes.

**IMPLICATIONS FOR MUSIC PERFORMANCE EDUCATION AND STUDENT ENGAGEMENT**

The findings of this study may be helpful to music performance education in a number of ways. Overall the nature of the study and its outcomes suggest that to facilitate student musical and technical development requires an understanding of what and how to think in relation to the reading and execution of pitch and rhythm, and the production of sound on the instrument. The findings also indicate that subjective responses, consisting of emotionally connecting with music as well as making emotion-laden appraisals of one’s own development, are the central point of reference for decisions about engagement. The meaning, value or significance of music learning becomes wrapped up in these responses. The common thread that united the wide variation of individual differences among participants was the notion of musically meaningful learning. Several linked issues are posed here.

**PURPOSES OF MUSIC EDUCATION**

As a first point, this research has shown that purposes of music education are important to students, and whether or not they articulate these various purposes, educators could nurture affinity by understanding differences in aims. Consideration could be given to making a distinction between purposes, such as whether to educate young people as music makers, or as music appreciators and music lovers. Walker (2005) advocates this when he suggests that a “worthy function for music in education” (p. 135) is to prepare individuals to make informed choices in music. More specifically, Reimer (2005) suggests that music education be for the purpose of fulfilling “our cultures’ musical needs” (p. 139). Thus participation in music performance per se may not be a sufficient or sound means of music education. When students encounter music education that gives a strong aural grounding and a solid knowledge base through Dalcroze, Orff or Kodaly-based programs for example, they would experience a period
of growth, exploration and discovery of music. Such an education gives a baseline musical experience to individuals that might serve as a stepping off point for music lovers as listeners and ‘consumers’. It would also provide the opportunity for the sharing of musical discourse among peers that could contribute to the growth of a (possibly new) musical culture amongst its participants. Only then could a subsequent (and optional) step be the development of specific instrumental skills with specialist music instructors, for music performance education requires too much effort, concentration and commitment to serve as only as entertainment to the learner.

**The Pedagogy of Music Performance Instruction**

As a second point, this research confronts the traditions of music teaching practice. The pedagogy of classical music performance education is rooted in 19th Century canons of implicit performer knowledge, yet it may be that these revered traditions alone do not supply the student with the material needed to build their own learning in the culture of their own time. The pedagogy of music performance education is based on European culture, which in the past provided more opportunities for general music education and development of music ability and cognition through enculturation than is the case for Australians now (Southcott, 2007; Stevens, 2003). Teaching in the Conservatoire mode is essentially a ‘transfer’ from teacher to student of an explicit body of knowledge (Vella & Jenkins, 2007), although much of teachers’ knowledge is implicit and tacit (Ethell & McMeniman, 2000; Smith, 2001), such that students do not ‘learn how to learn’ (Hallam, 1995a) but only what to learn. Institutions of higher education could reflect recent understandings of ‘authentic’, ‘student-centred’ learning (Paul, Teachout, Sullivan et al, 2001; Wiggins, 2007) in their curriculum for specialist instrumental music teachers. Just as classroom teachers are required to understand learning psychology, so too could this information be available to teachers who instruct future music makers.

The information in this study, along with previous research, could go some way to providing the foundation for a pedagogy for instrumental music teaching (for example, see Hallam, 2006; J.M.StGeorge, 2003). Understanding how learners think, and how musical learning can best be accomplished through thinking, is foundational to such a project. The information emerging from this study of how and why students engage with learning in the ways they did augments the limited amount of research in the music performance education field to date (Cantwell & Millard, 1994; Sullivan & Cantwell, 1999; Hallam, 1997; Reid, 2001). The analysis of beliefs, attitudes and intentions of learners yielded patterns that were clearly associated with outcomes of sense-making and music-making, and together with previous research, this information can provide an evidence-base for teaching practice.
A further advance in the field made by this research lies in discerning the importance of the subjective perceptions of learning. Interpretations of learning were based on making sense and meaning of the music at hand. The sections below suggest what might be of salience to instrumental teachers when their goal is to facilitate the technical and musical development of their students.

To bring musically meaningful learning to the fore and facilitate student growth, two paths (among many possible) are suggested. One would be to aim to show the student how and what to think, leading them towards fluency and musical meaning. As participants in this study suggested, we should not expect students to ‘just know’ what to do to improve. Folk myths of ‘practice makes perfect’ should be eschewed and students could be shown how to use their thinking to approach and activate fluency. A second path would be to bring the musical meaning to the student; to provide general music classes that offered exploration of pitch, harmony, rhythm and timbre, as well as to provide an instrumental repertoire that acknowledged some of the student’s purposes for music. This is not to say that these goals are not already part of teaching practice; the popularity of the wind band programs in schools around the nation suggest that social interaction for example is acknowledged as an important factor in student learning. As this study has shown however, if one aspect such as social interaction is at the expense of another such as the development of fluency, then musically meaningful learning is less likely and withdrawal more certain.

**Teaching for Fluency**

The first path suggested above implicates fluency as a central concern for pedagogy. Students were found to care very much about their learning outcomes; making sense or being fluent was as important as finding companionship and familiarity in music settings. Being fluent in playing the instrument was significant because it was the gateway to making music, an entrée into music playing as a meaningful activity. Few prior studies have articulated the importance of competence (fluency) or of the musical experience to student learning (for exceptions, see Dillon, 2007; Swanwick, 1999), or how compelling this musical experience is in relation to a student deciding to continue or discontinue their learning.

As a pedagogical concern then, fluency is derived from the dynamic and malleable set of feelings, beliefs and attitudes that affected how participants undertook their practice. Teachers are normally the first to see student’s learning beliefs and behaviours in action, and they can act to advise and facilitate the student’s growth. When it is understood that students may unknowingly hold a range of beliefs about learning or about music which may be more or less effective with respect to music learning, it may help to advise students of these learning processes. For example, if a student was to understand explicitly how playing a musical
instrument is a result of time, strategy and consistency, then beliefs in simple knowledge and instant learning may be diverted to make way for a more sophisticated understanding of learning (Schommer et al., 1997), which could then foster more reflective strategy use (Smith, 2005) and better outcomes such as fluency and competence.

In addition, when it is understood that metacognitive skillfulness is central to effective learning, it may be easier for teachers to see in what ways students might be struggling with their learning. Garner (1990) suggests to look for signs that might be influencing poor strategy use in learners: poor monitoring (aural acuity), meagre knowledge base (not able to recall correct information, such as fingering, length of note etc), and primitive routines that ‘get the job done’. Such primitive routines might be recognised in the ‘play-through’ routine. The practice is accomplished, as per instruction, but little learning has taken place because of the approach. Play-through routines may also take place because poor aural monitoring and a meagre knowledge base are in place.

To help students with their practice, it would seem important to provide them with logical and clear explanations of sound production, reading and rhythm, as well as strategies to apply this information at home without assistance. Not only should students be aware of mental rehearsal strategies, but also when and how to use these strategies. As the patterns of learning in the Expedient and Impetuous learner profiles suggested, when strategies are applied inconsistently or without monitoring and reflection, deficits and breakdowns are more likely (Duke, Simmons & Cash, 2009). In particular, the myth of ‘practice makes perfect’ needs to be explicitly addressed with students of all levels, for the research suggests that it is a pernicious message that engenders frustration and self-doubt, and left unexamined, is pedagogically perilous. Learning an instrument is a balance of mental and physical activity, and the emphasis on practice accumulation is a misleading one at all levels of skill development.

Teaching for Meaning
The second path suggested above consisted of bringing meaning to the student. The research undertaken in this thesis consistently showed the significance of meaning to learners. Musically meaningful learning consisted of making sense of music, and experiencing music as relevant to the learner’s social context. It may be of some importance to address the personal meaning of music much earlier in pedagogy, both by using material that is familiar to children, and by expanding their familiarity with a wider range of genre, form and instrumentation in the earlier years of musical education. Non-tertiary participants’ lack of familiarity with the language of music suggests that the aural component of music, thinking in sound, is not addressed sufficiently strongly in instrumental pedagogy to provide a robust framework or language with which a young musician might work. This is in spite of music scholars such as Pestalozzi,
Kodaly, Orff, Mainwaring (1951), Hallam (1998) and McPherson (2005) who advocate such an approach, as well as the availability of technology that enhances the opportunities to work aurally in instrumental music lessons.

At the same time, it would be reasonable to emphasise the importance of shared music-making and music-making of the informal nature undertaken by young people in studies such as Moore et al. (2003). Not only might this informal music making be encouraged by teachers, so that that which already takes place is sanctioned, but it could be provided in the early days of the young learners. Since much of music making in Australian music performance education is in the context of reproducing written scores, teachers could provide, as a foil, scaffolded opportunities for informal ‘musicking’ to occur. Cope’s (2002) study of community fiddling suggests that this learning is effective. Green (2002) too noted how enculturation and informal learning were successful ways in which to engage in learning for some. These learning situations might be termed ‘authentic learning’ contexts as referred to by Paul et al. (2001). For the individuals in Green’s study, informal, authentic learning led to a lifetime of learning, even when school-years formal learning had been slow in progress and for the most part abandoned. Ideally, then, learning might be enhanced as much through informal or experiential learning contexts that foster playfulness (Rathunde & Csikszentmihalyi, 1993) as occurs in more formal contexts of instruction.

**Teaching for Connection**

This research has revealed an aspect of learning that has been relatively obscured in accounts of instrumental music learning, perhaps because a ‘given’ or assumption of the music learning environment, namely, the way in which emotions are processed and influence learning. The normally unarticulated interplay of feelings and thinking had far-reaching effects on participants in this study, affecting their capacity as music-makers as well as their appreciation for music. The research here has suggested that fluency and musical experience were often accompanied by positive emotions. Similarly, findings by Craig (2009) showed participants responding emotionally to music that was also meaningful to them. Affinity for music is a phenomenon that is constituted of this interplay between affect and cognition.

Perhaps consideration of emotions in music learning at the teacher-student level has been more about prioritising the affective-aesthetic-taste response to music (Price, 1986), that is, liking the music or not, above the fluctuating emotional responses to the tasks and evaluations of music learning. What might be of help in teaching and learning is to be aware of these two sources of affect and address the emotional responses from each in different ways. For example, it would be important to select a task that is within the technical grasp of the student when introducing a new genre of music to them. Or a teacher could select a familiar and well-liked piece of music
and add the new techniques to the piece. It would also be important to provide genres, styles or idioms in the repertoire that corresponded at least in part with student preferences. The point is that to some extent, the possible sources of emotional responses be separated out. It is more likely that fluency will promote the meaningfulness of the music, whether familiar or strange, than will replay, hesitancy or breakdown. Satisfaction or enjoyment from one source, for example, the affective-aesthetic-taste response, might then be balanced by challenge in learning task.

At stake is the emotional or affective tenor or quality of the learning experience itself. For affinity to be fostered, or for the development of other qualities of learning experience such as flow (Bakker, 2005; Csikszentmihalyi, 1990: O’Neill, 1999) or intrinsic motivation (Isen & Reeve, 2005), attention needs to be paid to the balance of challenge and skill throughout the learning tasks in order to promote positive affect. Competence alone does not predict intrinsic motivation (Waterman et al., 2003), interest (Prenzel, 1992; Schiefele, 1991) or affinity; rather it is the subjective experience of meaningfulness that constitutes the connection between individual and music.

**Future Research**

This research has shown that the way in which students undertake their learning is of immense importance to their outcomes and in turn, their feelings. It would be of great value to clarify the existence, variation and outcomes of the identified learning profiles, firstly through case studies, and then through larger quantitative assessments of these patterns of learning. The research has shown that it would also be important to conduct these studies across mixed groups of players, for maladaptive practice methods were, perhaps surprisingly, clearly evident in tertiary students, as well as those who had not reached such high levels of accomplishment. Zhukov (2007) undertook an observational study of tertiary students’ learning styles, and employing a similar methodology to further investigate patterns of learning would be useful.

The phenomenon of affinity could also be further empirically validated among groups of listeners, audience members, players and students. The degree of affinity for music was not a consistent point of difference between shorter and longer term learners, until the fourth degree, *Living for music*. Affinity for music was a phenomenon that could remain as a lifelong connection with music, as for *Music lovers*, and it was only the *Musicians* who went on to *live* through music performance. There may be further levels of affinity that might describe deeper and longer lasting levels of involvement, perhaps among career musicians. It also would be interesting to know if those tertiary students in this study who appeared not to identify themselves as musicians, continued their close involvement with performing music, or branched
into other sectors of the music industry. It may also be possible to more clearly discern at what point the affinity of the performing music lover branches off into the less active listening music lover.

The Mastery Scale and the Sufficient Knowledge Scale developed in the first stage of the study were instruments that had acceptable psychometric properties, and the items included clearly tapped into students’ feelings of mastery, as well as doubt and impoverished knowledge base. The Mastery scale was not as strong as the knowledge scale however, and it would be important to develop a scale that more successfully taps into students’ sense of practice confidence, mastery and accomplishment to understand how they feel about this important, self-directed, daily activity.

Since there was so much of learners’ interviews that was redolent of a metacognitive gap, it would also be helpful to develop a research instrument that could more accurately reflect the aspects or reasons for doubt, rather than the feelings themselves. While self-efficacy reflects an individual’s prospective thoughts about a particular task, the Sufficient Knowledge scale tried to tap into a more general sense of efficacy for music learning, a sense of confidence in the knowledge the student had, and the ability to apply it when required. Such a scale could also be a helpful instrument for teachers in studios to administer, insofar as it could indicate how students are feeling about their home practice tasks.

In a similar vein, it would seem important to conduct a more in-depth study of dependent help-seekers, to identify whether they are looking for a ‘quick-fix’ or whether they are having trouble identifying the problem and finding strategies to remedy it. Costa-Giomi et al.’s (2005) study was one important glimpse into this doubtfulness, and Garner’s theory of settings (1990) suggests that help-seeking behaviours may emanate from any of several cognitive and social situations.

An important finding in this study was the number of short-term learners who also stated that they felt they had a ‘good’ ear, and for this reason they took up music study or it was recommended to them. The evidence appears to be that at least some of these ‘aural’ learners were struggling with the teaching curriculum or method, and finally abandoning their lessons. Yet, aural acuity is critical to successful monitoring of pitch errors, as well as to nuanced manipulation of timbre and space-time, and most professional players have prodigious memories and pitch recognition faculties (Madsen & Madsen, 2002). It appears contradictory that these learners should be those who cannot progress. Studies that explore this enigma could help educators better understand music cognition and learning, with the ultimate aim of being able to facilitate the progress of those who learn ‘differently’ within the curriculum and pedagogy.
**LIMITATIONS**

This study was limited to primary and secondary students at schools with established music programs, as well as students at one tertiary institution and adults in a regional area of Australia. The challenges of obtaining a high response rate in the schools highlighted the elaborate processes of gaining access to students in schools and of the many possible break-down points in this process. Written consent must be obtained before administration of the research, and typically, these forms are delivered to the student for delivery to parents, and then returned by the student to the class teacher. Across the eight schools, response rates varied from 23% to 81%. This response process seemed to be strongly influenced by three factors: the benefits of research, communication between researcher and researched, and cultural values.

Deyhle et al. (1992) propose that institutions and individuals make their decisions to participate in research based on certain ethical values, and that such positions may be used to accept or refuse the entry of the researcher to the school. The *utilitarian* value suggests that potential participants – children and their families – weigh up the costs and benefits of participating in the research before making a decision to participate. It may be that the cost of 20-30 minutes of school-lesson time appeared be too large for an activity that would not directly affect students. Additionally, research and its elaborate processes may be an unfamiliar concept to many families. The Invitation letters contain obligatory ethical statements of confidentiality and right of withdrawal or complaint set in a tone of legalese and litigation, and this tone may have been forbidding. It would have been helpful to have guidelines that allowed for modification or user-friendly presentation of Information Statements, without omitting ethical obligations.

Communication between parties may also be difficult. A letter sent home to parents via the student has several ‘loss’ points; getting the letter home, gaining parents’ signature, and the return of the letter. Several times head-teachers warned the researcher (too late for this project) of the difficulty in eliciting response to letters home, whatever their nature. Researchers in schools, particularly student researchers, are for the most part dependent on school staff to ensure the progress of the research through the school, who often have the feeling of being over-researched. Rosevear (2003) too encountered varying consent rates with differing levels of cooperation by the Australian schools in her music research.

Lastly, and importantly in the Australian context, recent research indicates that music education in the primary classroom continues to be ‘squeezed out’ of the Key Learning Areas in NSW (Stevens, 2003; Temmerman, 2005) and such a troublesome pattern has a long and documented history (Paterson, 2003). As indicated in Chapter One, rural areas or those with low socio-economic base (such as the region under consideration) have less music in their classrooms than in urban areas (Jones, nd). Thus although music programs were offered to children and parents...
in the selected schools, it may have been that parent and teacher aims for music in some of these schools did not encompass a sweep of purposes for engagement that might include consideration of research into pedagogy and children’s learning experiences.

Regarding the period of years that participants engaged in formal music instruction, it would have been more helpful to have had precise details on length of learning and age at cessation of formal instruction for the adults participating in the study. Participants could not be grouped according to their length of learning because their memories of exactly how long they had learned and when they had started and stopped were too vague to make meaningful groups. Investigating whether a certain age-period or school year level is more susceptible to discontinuing would be better suited to longitudinal approaches or a quantitative method of data collection and analysis, as did Solly (1987).

In regard to the variation of involvement in music among the children, adults and tertiary students in the second stage of the study, the decision to favour those who were no longer involved in formal music instruction in terms of numbers (49 to 17), was to facilitate access to a wide range of views and experiences. The study gathered data from individuals who were involved in music learning for as little as 3 months to as long as 20 years. This weighting was aimed at gathering intense descriptions and enough variation (Polkinghorne, 1997) in the accounts of learning. The research questions in this stage were also of a more exploratory nature and an adequate sample size was envisaged to range from 20 to 35.

Several features of the research suggest that the weighting of non-current learners to tertiary students did not create an imbalance. One is that affinity for music, a sign of positive affect, was a strong and data-driven phenomenon that was as richly described as the deficits and difficulties that prompted withdrawal for many. A second feature is that the Stage 1 sample was well-balanced for age, gender and learner-status, and there was no indication of inconsistency from one set of analyses to the other in regards to differences, directions or associations of effects. A third feature was the period of engagement in formal music learning characteristic of some participants. Several adults had learned for up to 12 years (to the end of their schooling), and along with the tertiary students were able to provide reflections that looked back on learning in childhood and youth, captured at a different points of the life-span.

With regard to Stage 1 of the study, the design was largely built around adapted or researcher-developed measures, and each required close scrutiny for construct validity and reliability. A number of the items intended for use were not used in the final analyses, as their presence was deemed confounding, irrelevant or weak. These manipulations were clearly set out in Chapters Three and Four where pertinent. In retrospect, the inclusion of some items in the questionnaire needed a closer examination for content validity and administration of a pilot that also included
analysis of data. This is recommended as standard practice for quantitative data analysis (DeVellis, 2003), although not undertaken in this study due to unavoidable institutional changes and delays in supervision.

**Conclusion**

I would like to grow up in a world of music and instruments. (Primary student)

It also makes you appreciate different types of music, and just when you hear music you can understand the complexities that are going on behind it. (Adult)

If I stopped I would feel like a piece of me was gone. (Primary student)

Because it has already opened so many doors for me and I really enjoy playing. (Primary student)

*A moment in childhood when the door opens and lets the future in.* (G. Greene, 1940/2003, p. 12)

The implications of Graham Greene’s reflection on childhood were echoed throughout this study; opportunities in childhood do open the door to the future and this future is shaped by the opportunities themselves. A sense of musical self was born from the experiences individuals had of themselves in music, and the warmth and support of the intellectual and affective social milieu contributed to the depth and meaning of communications within participants’ immediate community or culture. Pedagogical opportunities allowed individuals to develop expression in and through music, and when this pedagogy or its assimilation fell short of individual needs, fluency of expression faltered. When musical expression and communication did not match the cultural environment, either through lack of fluency or through a non-fit of genre, then there was generally a serious disjuncture and loss of commitment. Where musical experiences were shared among the family, peer or wider communities, learning music led to a lifetime of enjoyment for many of the participants.

The subjective and affective have always suffused educational experiences; this research has shown in what forms and expressions this is likely to emerge in the context of music performance learning. The seed of an individual’s subjective attraction to music is also the seed of affinity for music, and it is this affinity with music that will keep a student attached and committed to their learning. This research has also explicated to some degree the enigma surrounding attrition, which when viewed as a binary choice of ‘dropout’, ‘gave-up’ or ‘non-musician’, implies negativity and deficit. Perhaps this conception obscures other construals of drop-out such as ‘maverick’, ‘free spirit’, or ‘individualist’. In other words, some may cease formal instruction because they find their learning and well-being is enhanced by doing so. They find more meaningful activities outside music. Meaningful activities inside music can
occur when those activities lead to instrumental fluency that is embedded in a relevant and supportive social context. Enjoyable, musically meaningful experiences will foster affinity for music and sustain participation throughout the formative years of childhood and youth.
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Stewart, J. L. (2002). *Factors related to students' decisions to continue in band*. Unpublished PhD, The University of Texas at Austin, Texas, USA.


Appendix A  ACADEMIC LEARNING THEORIES APPLIED TO MUSIC PERFORMANCE LEARNING

The table below shows the application of academic learning theories by music education researchers. To the researcher’s knowledge, only six of these studies focus on retention and attrition. These items are asterisked in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic learning theories (key studies)</th>
<th>Academic learning theories in music performance research</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Self-regulation & metacognition (e.g. Zimmerman, 1994) | Bailey, 2006  
Berg, 2007  
Cantwell & Sullivan (Millard), 1994, 1999  
Hallam, 2001a, b  
Leon-Guerrero, 2008  
McPherson & McCormick, 1999  
McPherson & Renwick, 2001  
McPherson & Zimmerman, 2002  
Nielsen, 2001  
Pitts, Davidson & McPherson, 2000a, b* |
| Achievement goals (e.g. Elliot & Church, 1997; Nicholls, 1990) | Anguiano, 2006*  
Bailey, 2006  
Marjoribanks & Mboya, 2004  
O’Neill, 1997  
Smith, 2005  
Yoon, 1997 |
| Attributions (e.g. Weiner, 1985) | Arnold, 1997  
Asmus, 1985, 1986  
Chandler, Chiarella & Auria, 1988  
Dick, 2006  
Legette, 1993, 2003a  
Vispoel & Austin, 1991, 1995 |
| Implicit theory of ability (e.g. Dweck, 1999) | Smith, 2005 |
| Expectancy-value theory (e.g. Wigfield & Eccles, 2000) | Hurley, 1994*  
McPherson, 2001  
Yoon, 1997 |
| Self-efficacy (e.g. Bandura, 1997) | McCormick & McPherson, 2003, 2006  
Nielsen, 2004  
Stewart, 2002* |
| Self-concept (e.g. Marsh, 1990) | Klinedinst, 1989*  
Legette, 2003b  
Rosevear, 2002  
Schmidt, 2005  
Zdzinski, 2004 |
| School-leaving theory (e.g. Tinto, 1975) | Sichivitsa, 2002, 2003 2004* |
### Appendix B  
**SUMMARY OF SCHOLARLY LITERATURE IN THE RETENTION-ATTRITION FIELD**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Data collection instruments</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
<th>Results (factors influencing dropout; all significance &lt;.05)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Allen</td>
<td>1981</td>
<td>To examine reasons for withdrawal from orchestra in public schools.</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>437 junior &amp; senior high students</td>
<td>Questionnaire</td>
<td>Discriminant analysis</td>
<td>Change of teacher; music reading.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brakel</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Examined relationship between teaching style, teacher demographics, school &amp; band structure &amp; attrition.</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>184 high school band directors</td>
<td>Questionnaire</td>
<td>Chi square, factor analysis</td>
<td>Neither individual teaching style dimensions nor total composite were related to attrition. Two-way interactions of teaching styles were predictors of instrumental music attrition and retention.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brown</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>To examine relation of attitudes, age &amp; achievement to retention &amp; attrition.</td>
<td>Quantitative &amp; Qualitative</td>
<td>412 4th – 7th grade beginning band students</td>
<td>MAP, attitude questionnaires, performance achievement, parent interviews</td>
<td>Correlation</td>
<td>More negative attitude to music at start and at end; positive correlation of achievement to attitude; more loss of interest by males; not liking practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bushong</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>How does parent participation impact retention?</td>
<td>Quantitative &amp; Qualitative</td>
<td>Grades 4, 5, 6 &amp; parents</td>
<td>Parent Involvement Program intervention</td>
<td>Descriptive statistics</td>
<td>Discontinuers disliked practice, bored and frustrated, lack of practice, other activities, and schoolwork as reasons to discontinue. Continuers had more parent participation than discontinuers.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Analysis</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cannava</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Examine the relationship between the implementation of professionally guided instrument selection &amp; beginning band retention.</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>3 groups X 6th grade beginning band students; 4 metropolitan schools.</td>
<td>Questionnaire and experimental intervention</td>
<td>Chi square</td>
<td>11% increase in retention. Continuers more likely to be suited to their instruments; not to switch to a different instrument; to have parental support; to play their first choice of instrument; and to have a higher ITBS composite score than dropout students. Also the intervention decreased instrument sex-stereotyping &amp; improved instrumentation balance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corenblum &amp; Marshall</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>To predict and test a model of intentions to continue.</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>253 Grade 9 (14-15 yrs) in band programs; Music teachers.</td>
<td>Questionnaire &amp; observation</td>
<td>Structural equation EQS</td>
<td>SES &amp; teacher evaluations predicted continuation. Continuation mediated through outside music interests &amp; parents, teachers &amp; school attitudes; no positive correlation of student attitude to persistence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costa-Giomi, Flowers &amp; Sasaki</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Investigate behavioural differences between continuers and discontinuers.</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>28 children: 14 x 3 yrs piano instruction; 14 x 2 yrs instruction then discontinued</td>
<td>Videotape of lessons; grades in piano exams</td>
<td>Analysis of teaching episodes</td>
<td>More approval seeking from 1st year discontinuers; fewer approvals, more teacher cues, less progress, &amp; lower exams scores. No demographic differences between groups in 1st year of study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cutietta &amp; McAllister</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Do certain personalities begin, continue, &amp; end specific instruments?</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>668 Grade 7-12 band students</td>
<td>Junior Eysenck personality questionnaire</td>
<td>MANOVA</td>
<td>Middle school instrumentalists the same as other students; continuers tended to be more tough-minded.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Author</th>
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<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Davidson, Sloboda &amp; Howe</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Find whether parent and teacher support is necessary for success.</td>
<td>Quantitative &amp; Qualitative</td>
<td>257 students (8-18 years), in 5 groups (specialist music school to dropouts) &amp; their parents</td>
<td>Structured interviews</td>
<td>ANOVA, Chi square, factor analysis</td>
<td>Dropouts had less early parent &amp; teacher support; less able to discriminate teacher qualities. Continuers able to differentiate between personal and professional teacher qualities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Davidson, Moore, Sloboda &amp; Howe</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Identify key influences of teachers on students.</td>
<td>Quantitative &amp; Qualitative</td>
<td>257 students (8-18 years), in 5 groups (specialist music school to dropouts) &amp; their parents</td>
<td>Structured interviews</td>
<td>ANOVA, Chi square, factor analysis</td>
<td>Discontinuers found teachers less encouraging, last teacher was worst. More discontinuers had group lessons.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frakes</td>
<td>1984</td>
<td>Identify music &amp; academic achievement of secondary participants and non-participants in music.</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>1 school, 83 graduates; Participants, dropouts, &amp; nonparticipants in elective music activities.</td>
<td>Questionnaire</td>
<td>ANOVA</td>
<td>Teacher not significant to drop-out; participants significantly higher in sixth-grade music and academic achievement &amp; had significantly more positive attitudes toward music than either of the other two subgroups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goodrich</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Do school scheduling patterns influence attrition?</td>
<td>Quantitative &amp; Qualitative</td>
<td>High school students &amp; teachers</td>
<td>Causal-comparative</td>
<td>Correlation</td>
<td>Block schedule patterns less amenable to retention.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Govel</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Identify reasons for dropout and influences of parents.</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>Adolescent piano discontinuers &amp; intending discontinuers.</td>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>Descriptive statistics</td>
<td>For dropouts: parents not directly involved in lessons or practice. Average length of learning 2 yrs, 8 months.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Author</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hallam</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>To elucidate the relationships between time spent learning, ability factors, aspects of perseverance.</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>109 string students, 6-16 years</td>
<td>Questionnaires</td>
<td>Correlation &amp; multiple regression</td>
<td>Significant predictor of dropout was child’s intention to practice. Also attitude to practice, combined attitude &amp; influence of school teacher, teachers’ ratings of child’s ability to understand instructions best predictors of retention &amp; attrition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hurley</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>What are students’ motivations to start? How were motivations changed over time? What reasons for continuing or discontinuing?</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>21 string students in 4 groups: beginner, continuer, discontinued (achieving well) discontinued (not achieving).</td>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>Thematic analysis based on Eccles-Parrons Expectancy-Value theory</td>
<td>Cost of participation as the greatest factor concerning dropout. Some dissatisfaction with the class itself. More often a combination of variables.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Klinedinst</td>
<td>1989, 1991</td>
<td>Which variables are associated with performance and retention?</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>205 5th graders</td>
<td>Experimental (instructional intervention)</td>
<td>ANOVA, regression, Discriminant function analysis</td>
<td>SES, self-concept, reading &amp; math achievement, scholastic ability predictors of retention (78%). No prediction from music ability, attitude to music, music background, achievement motivation for music, or instrument adaptation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Continued)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Data collection instruments</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
<th>Results (factors influencing dropout; all significance &lt; .05)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Koutz</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>To assess attitudinal differences among former participants, non-participants &amp; participants of ensembles.</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>School students</td>
<td>Questionnaire</td>
<td>Correlation</td>
<td>Stronger self-concept for continuers &amp; discontinuers than non-participants; students at smaller school had more positive self-concept of aspiration. Discontinuers less satisfied with teachers, had schedule conflicts &amp; disliked marching.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McCarthy</td>
<td>1980</td>
<td>To compare the influence of individualised &amp; group ensemble instruction &amp; students demographics on music reading and dropout.</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>10 teachers &amp; 1199 5th &amp; 6th graders.</td>
<td>MAT</td>
<td>Regression, Experimental</td>
<td>Sight reading better for individually taught students; Reading grade level associated with dropout; No effect of race &amp; little effect of gender.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morehouse</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>To assess student &amp; parent attitudes to string class and find which attitudes discriminate between retention and attrition.</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>1229 beginning string students &amp; 47 teachers</td>
<td>Survey (SSAM-author)</td>
<td>Discriminant analysis</td>
<td>16 variables predictive of retention &amp; dropout: (1) attitude toward strings as a class; (2) attitude toward music played; (3) expected overall school grade; (4) attitude toward string teacher; (5) attitude toward string classmates; (6) string teacher MTAI raw score; (7) attitude toward string instrument chosen; (8) attitude toward playing in concerts; (9) ownership of instrument; (10) general overall negative string class experience; (11) perceived parent support; (12) sex of student; (13) private string lessons; (14) attitude toward practicing; (15) expected string class grade; (16) perception of improvement in playing.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Continued)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Data collection instruments</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
<th>Results (factors influencing dropout; all significance &lt;.05)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mowery</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>To assess influence of personality variables on attrition from school orchestra.</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>144 6th &amp; 8th grade string students (continuers &amp; discontinuers)</td>
<td>Survey, MBTI</td>
<td>ANOVA, CHAID</td>
<td>Dropouts were those with less-developed perceptive ability. SES was non-significant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pitts, Davidson &amp; McPherson</td>
<td>2000b</td>
<td>Motivations and behaviour of learners in 1st 20 months of instruction.</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>9 cases as a subset of 158 students, parents &amp; teachers</td>
<td>Questionnaire &amp; structured interview</td>
<td>Deductive thematic analysis</td>
<td>Discontinuers easily affected by adverse experiences; parents accept low practice levels; little self-regulation; little parent involvement; low expectations of enjoyment; others shape their attitudes; unduly concerned with quantity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rogers</td>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Reasons for attrition.</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>High school students</td>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>Descriptive statistics</td>
<td>Discontinuers experienced more conflicts (schedule, director) &amp; dissatisfaction with progress. Same achievement levels as continuers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royse</td>
<td>1989</td>
<td>To identify predictors of continuation.</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>Non-music major university students</td>
<td>Questionnaire</td>
<td>ANOVA</td>
<td>Continuers felt needed, felt they got along well, lived off campus; not influenced by parents or gender.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sichivitsa</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Influences on students motivation to persist in studying music.</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>96 4th-6th graders</td>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>Path analysis</td>
<td>Continuers’ parents were supportive, higher ability beliefs, comfortable in music class, valued music more.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solly</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>Reasons for withdrawal from instrumental program.</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>328 students (Year 4-12), 100 parents.</td>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>Descriptive statistics</td>
<td>Dropouts were not followed up by directors; 55% lost interest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sloboda &amp; Davidson</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>How do students of differing achievement levels differ on practice amount &amp; activity?</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>257 students (8-18 years), in 5 groups (specialist music school to dropouts) &amp; their parents</td>
<td>Structured interviews</td>
<td>Correlation, regression</td>
<td>Dropouts completed less formal and informal practice, lower achievement levels, less lesson time.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Continued)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Data collection instruments</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stewart</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>To assess influences of gender, lesson experience, self and family factors on retention.</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>8th grade students in middle school band</td>
<td>Survey &amp; performance assessment</td>
<td>Descriptive statistics</td>
<td>No significant relationships found between students' decisions to continue in band and their perceptions of their playing or sight-reading skills. Private lessons, interested, valued and liked participating &amp; performing in band associated with continuation. Conflict of activities main reason for discontinuation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(factors influencing dropout; all significance <.05)
## Appendix C  SUMMARY OF VARIABLES IN THE RETENTION-ATTRITION LITERATURE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Significant effects of or implications for attrition</th>
<th>Authors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual factors</td>
<td>Demographics</td>
<td>-Age start</td>
<td>Not reliable indicator.</td>
<td>Brown, 1996; Sloboda &amp; Davidson, 1996 (NS).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-Gender</td>
<td>Trivial significance.</td>
<td>McCarthy, 1980 (NS); Morehouse, 1987 (NS).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-Race</td>
<td>Not significant.</td>
<td>McCarthy, 1980 (NS).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Academic achievement</td>
<td>-Achievement; reading; maths; ability;</td>
<td>Least accomplished discontinued.</td>
<td>Corenblum &amp; Marshall, 1998; Frakes, 1984; Klinedinst, 1989; McCarthy, 1980.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Self-efficacy</td>
<td>Not significant, no difference between groups.</td>
<td>Stewart, 2002.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|                   | -Music self-concept| Self-concept related to achievement & to motivation to succeed; lower in discontinuers. | Frakes, 1984; Klinedinst, 1989; Koutz, 1987; Pitts et al., 2000b. | (continued)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Significant effects of or implications for attrition</th>
<th>Authors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social interactions</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>-Teacher or school attitude</td>
<td>Less positive perceptions of teacher &amp; school attitude to music.</td>
<td>Frakes, 1984; Hallam, 1998.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-Teacher style</td>
<td>Discontinuers had teachers who gave less positive feedback &amp; did not support autonomy.</td>
<td>Brakel, 1977.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Family</td>
<td>-Attitude of involvement of influence of</td>
<td>Discontinuers had less parent support early, less extrinsically motivated, and then more extrinsic later.</td>
<td>Bushong, 2005; Cannava, 1994; Corenblum &amp; Marshall, 1998; Davidson, Sloboda &amp; Howe, 1996; Frakes, 1984; Hallam, 1998; Pitts et al., 2000b.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Continued)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Significant effects of or implications for attrition</th>
<th>Authors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Group or individual lesson</td>
<td>More discontinuers in group lessons.</td>
<td>Davidson et al., 1998; McCarthy, 1980 (NS).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Course content</td>
<td>Discontinuers less satisfied with music played.</td>
<td>Frakes, 1984; Morehouse, 1987; Sloboda &amp; Davidson, 1996.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Schedule conflicts, building changes, teacher changes</td>
<td>More conflicts, change building, more dropout; students did not like to change teachers from elementary into junior high bands.</td>
<td>Allen, 1981; Hartley, 1996; Koutz, 1987; Solly, 1998.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NS=not significant;
Appendix D  INFORMATION STATEMENT FOR SCHOOL STUDENTS

Primary & Secondary Information Statement

Information Statement for the Research Project: Motivation for Music

Dr. Melissa Monfries
School of Education,
University of Newcastle
Callaghan 2308
TEL: 4921 6738
Melissa.Monfries@newcastle.edu.au

Dear Parent and Student,

Ms Jennifer StGeorge is undertaking PhD research study at the University of Newcastle, entitled Motivation for Music, for which I am her Supervisor.

Why is the research being done? This research project concerns the interests of young people and their motivation for musical activities, including learning a musical instrument. The research will focus particularly on why young people discontinue musical instrument learning. Previous research has shown that involvement in music and the arts has a beneficial influence on students’ attitudes to schooling. The outcomes of this research project may well contribute to the development of educational opportunities in music and encourage young people’s sustained engagement and enjoyment in musical participation.

Who can participate? As part of Ms StGeorge’s research, she is seeking primary students in Years 5 and 6, and secondary students in Years 10 and 11, to participate in this research. All students in your class are being invited to participate, as your Principal has agreed to the research being undertaken at your school.

Participation in this research is entirely your choice. Only those people who give their informed consent will be included in the project. Whether or not you decide to participate, your decision will not disadvantage you, and will not affect your school marks or assessments in any way. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw from the project at any time without giving a reason. You may also withdraw your data. Participation will not unduly interrupt your child’s school time.

The project involves three parts:
Questionnaire
Group discussion
Individual interviews

What will you be asked to do? If you do agree to participate, you will be asked to complete a questionnaire, in class time, which should take approximately 30 minutes, about your musical interests and activities, and whether you learn, or used to learn, a musical instrument. Those students who have stopped learning a musical instrument will then be invited to participate in a group discussion and/or individual interviews. The peer-group discussion will take about 30 minutes, at school, at lunchtime on another day. The discussion will be about your experiences and thoughts about learning a musical instrument: what interest school students have in musical instruments, why you start, why you stop, for example. The researcher and her supervisor will audiotape the discussion, and make some notes. The interviews will take about 30-40 minutes, at school, at lunchtime on another day, with the Student Researcher. The interview will be audiotaped. The interviews will concern your personal experiences of learning and practising. The research will take place in the second and third terms of 2005.

If you choose to participate in the questionnaire, you are not obliged, if eligible, to participate in the group discussion or the interviews. If you do choose to participate in the group discussion, you are not obliged to participate in the interviews.

We cannot promise you any benefit from participating in this research, although it may be helpful or interesting to you to talk about some of your experiences with music listening, playing or learning.
How will your privacy be protected? We can assure you that your privacy and confidentiality will be maintained. Codes will be used for the questionnaire, and the Master List held by the Researcher. Your name will be replaced with a pseudonym in the transcription of the group discussion and/or interview. Information that specifically identifies you will be edited or deleted. However, not all of students’ contributions to the group discussion may be able to be erased from the group tape. All participants will, however, be asked to respect the confidentiality of the group and not to talk about the specific content of the discussion to others. If you wish, you may listen to the tape or read the transcript, and where possible, edit or erase your contribution to the discussion.

Audio-tapes will be stored at the School Of Education, University of Newcastle, until the PhD research is complete, at which time they will be destroyed. Information provided by the participants will be used only for the express purposes of the research, and only will be seen by the three researchers nominated on this information sheet.

The interviews will be analysed and quotes may be presented in papers in journals, and in a dissertation submitted for Mrs. StGeorge’s degree. Individual participants will not be identified in any reports arising from the project.

What do you need to do to participate? Please read this Information Statement and be sure you understand its contents before you consent to participate. If there is anything you do not understand, or you have questions, please contact the researcher.

If you would like to participate, please complete the attached Consent Form and return it to your School Office. Arrangements will then be made for the questionnaire to be completed at school.

When you are consenting on behalf of a child, please discuss the project with the child before making a decision. Your child may of course, refuse to participate.

For further information about the research, please contact either:
Dr. Melissa Monfries 4921 6738 or
Jennifer StGeorge 4921 6658

Thank you for considering this invitation.
Yours sincerely,

Dr Melissa Monfries (Supervisor)
Jennifer StGeorge

Research Team
Dr Melissa Monfries, Lecturer, Supervisor
A/Prof. Allyson Holbrook, Supervisor
Ms Jennifer StGeorge, RHD Student

This project has been approved by the University’s Human Research Ethics Committee, Approval No. H-959-0205

Complaints about this research: Should you have concerns about your rights as a participant in this research, or you have a complaint about the manner in which the research is conducted, it may be given to the researcher, or, if an independent person is preferred, to the Human Research Ethics Officer, Research Office, The Chancellery, The University of Newcastle, University Drive, Callaghan NSW 2308, telephone (02 49216333), email Human-Ethics@newcastle.edu.au.
Appendix E  CONSENT FORM FOR SCHOOL STUDENTS

Dr. Melissa Monfries
School of Education,
University of Newcastle
Callaghan, NSW 2308
Tel: 4921 6738
Melissa. Monfries@newcastle.edu.au

Consent Form for the Research Project: Motivation for Music

Research team
Dr Melissa Monfries (Supervisor)
A/Prof. Allyson Holbrook (Supervisor)
Jennifer StGeorge (RHD student)

I agree for my son/daughter to participate in the above research project and give my consent freely.

I agree to my child’s participation in:
Questionnaire………..Yes / No

If my son/daughter is eligible to participate, I agree to receive an invitation to participate in the group discussion and the interview……..Yes / No

I understand the project will be conducted as described in the Information Statement, a copy of which I have read and retained.

I understand my son/daughter can withdraw from the project at any time and does not have to give any explanation for withdrawing. I understand that our personal information will remain confidential to the researchers. I have had the opportunity to have questions answered to my satisfaction.

Student’s Name:…………………………………………………………………
Parent/Guardian Signature:…………………………………………………
Student’s Signature (optional):………………………………………………
Date:………………………………………………………………………………
Your Phone Number:…………………………………………………………
Mobile:…………………………………………………………………………

Thank you for responding to this research invitation.
Appendix F

INFORMATION STATEMENT FOR TERTIARY STUDENTS

A/Prof Allyson Holbrook
School of Education
Faculty of Education & Arts
University of Newcastle
Callaghan NSW 2308
Phone: 4921 5945
Allyson.Holbrook@newcastle.edu.au

Information Statement for the Research Project: Motivation for Music

Dear Student,

Ms Jennifer StGeorge is undertaking PhD research study at the University of Newcastle, entitled Motivation for Music, for which I am her Supervisor.

Why is the research being done? This research project concerns the interests of young people and their motivation for musical activities, including learning a musical instrument. The research will focus particularly on why young people discontinue musical instrument learning. Previous research has shown that involvement in music and the arts has a beneficial influence on students’ attitudes to schooling. The outcomes of this research project may well contribute to the development of educational opportunities in music and encourage young people’s sustained engagement and enjoyment in musical participation.

Who can participate? As part of Ms St George’s research, she is seeking tertiary students who major in instrumental performance to participate in this research. Your Head of School has agreed for the research to take place at the Newcastle Conservatorium of Music.

Participation in this research is entirely your choice. Only those people who give their informed consent will be included in the project. Whether or not you decide to participate, your decision will not disadvantage you, and will not affect your assessments in any way. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw from the project at any time without giving a reason. You may also withdraw your data.

What will you be asked to do? If you do decide to participate, you will be asked to take part in an individual interview, concerning your experiences of motivation for and commitment to, musical instrument learning. The interviews will be conducted by the Student Researcher, should take approximately 30-50 minutes and will be audio-taped. The interviews will take place at the Conservatorium or a venue comfortable for you.

We cannot promise you any benefit from participating in this research, although it may be helpful or interesting to you to talk about some of your experiences with music listening, playing or learning.

How will your privacy be protected? We can assure you that your privacy and confidentiality will be maintained. Your name will be replaced with a pseudonym in the transcription of the interview. Information that specifically identifies you will be edited or deleted. If you wish, you may listen to the tape or read the transcript, and where possible, edit or erase your contribution to the conversation.
Audio-tapes will be stored at the School Of Education, University of Newcastle, until the PhD research is complete, at which time they will be destroyed. Information provided by the participants will be used only for the express purposes of the research, and only will be seen by the three researchers nominated on this information sheet.

The interviews will be analysed and quotes may be presented in papers in journals, and in a dissertation submitted for Mrs. StGeorge’s degree. Individual participants will not be identified in any reports arising from the project.

What do you need to do to participate? Please read this Information Statement and be sure you understand its contents before you consent to participate. If there is anything you do not understand, or you have questions, please contact the researcher.

If you would like to participate, please complete the attached Consent Form and return it to the Conservatorium office or Project Box.

For further information about the research, please contact either:

Jennifer StGeorge 4921 6658 or
Assoc.Prof Allyson Holbrook 4921 5945

Thank you for considering this invitation.
Yours sincerely,
Assoc. Prof. Allyson Holbrook (Supervisor)
Jennifer StGeorge

This project has been approved by the University’s Human Research Ethics Committee, Approval No. H-959-0205

Complaints about this research: Should you have concerns about your rights as a participant in this research, or you have a complaint about the manner in which the research is conducted, it may be given to the researcher, or, if an independent person is preferred, to the Human Research Ethics Officer, Research Office, The Chancellery, The University of Newcastle, University Drive, Callaghan NSW 2308, telephone 02 49216333, email Human-Ethics@newcastle.edu.au.
Appendix G  CONSENT FORM FOR TERTIARY STUDENTS

A/Prof Allyson Holbrook
School of Education
Faculty of Education & Arts
University of Newcastle
Callaghan NSW 2308
Phone: 4921 5945
Allyson.Holbrook@newcastle.edu.au

Consent Form for the Research Project: Motivation for Music

Research Team

• Assoc. Prof Allyson Holbrook (Supervisor)
• Dr. Melissa Monfries (Supervisor)
• Jennifer StGeorge (RHD student)

I agree to participate in the above research project and give my consent freely.
I understand the project will be conducted as described in the Information Statement, a copy of which I have retained. I understand I can withdraw from the project at any time and I do not have to give any explanation for withdrawing.
I consent to an interview that will be taped by the researcher.
I understand that my personal information will remain confidential to the researchers.
I have had the opportunity to have questions answered to my satisfaction.

Your Name (please print):…………………………………………………………
Your Signature:…………………………………..Date:……………………
Your Phone Number:…………………………………………………………
Mobile:……………………………………………………………………………..

Please return this to the “Research Project” Box in the Conservatorium Office.
Thank you for responding to this research invitation.
Appendix H  INFORMATION STATEMENT FOR ADULTS

A/Prof Allyson Holbrook
School of Education
Faculty of Education & Arts
University of Newcastle
Callaghan NSW 2308
Phone: 4921 5945
Allyson.Holbrook@newcastle.edu.au

Information Letter for Research Project: Motivation for Music

Dear Sir or Madam,

Thank you for responding to the invitation to participate in this research project. The research concerns people’s interest in learning musical instruments, and I am especially interested in why learners start and stop having regular lessons on their instrument. The project is part of my Doctoral study at the University of Newcastle.

The outcomes of this project are very important as previous research shows that involvement in music and the arts is beneficial to students’ school life. Learning music can contribute to achievements in academic areas, such as maths and reading, and also assists students’ socio-emotional development. There is also evidence that music participation provides a source of activity and mental stimulation which may influence mental health in older age.

I would like to talk to you about your experiences and attitudes towards learning a musical instrument, and your decisions to discontinue learning. The interviews, which I will record, will take about 30 minutes, in your home or at the University.

If you would like to be a part of this project, please read and keep this Information Statement. I will contact you on ______________ , and you can reply to this letter by telephone, email or mail, to agree or decline to participate.

The following information is provided to assist you in making an informed decision.

We would like to do the research from August through to November of 2005. Participation in the project is entirely your choice. If at any time you do not wish to continue in the project, you can freely withdraw without explanation. Whether or not you decide to participate, this will not disadvantage you in any way. We can assure you that your privacy and confidentiality will be protected: real names will be replaced with a pseudonym in the transcription of the interviews and anything that specifically identifies you will be edited or deleted. If you wish, you may listen to the interview tape or read the transcript, and if you choose, you can alter the script. Quotes from the interview may be presented in reports and in my dissertation; however no individual will be identified. The interview tapes will be used only for this research project; they will be stored at the University of Newcastle, accessed only by myself and my Supervisors, and destroyed at the end of my PhD study. The de-identified transcripts will be retained for at least 5 years as required by the University.

If you would like to participate, you may

Contact Jennifer by telephone: 4921 6658
OR Contact Jennifer by email: Jennifer.Stgeorge@studentmail.newcastle.edu.au
OR Complete and detach Consent Form and return it by mail as soon as convenient.

Please RSVP within 7-10 days
Thank you for considering this invitation. If you have any queries about the project, please contact me:

Jennifer StGeorge  4921 6658
Jennifer.Stgeorge@studentmail.newcastle.edu.au

OR my Supervisor
A/Prof. Allyson Holbrook 4921 5945
Allyson.Holbrook@newcastle.edu.au

Yours sincerely,
A/Prof. Allyson Holbrook .............................(Supervisor)
Jennifer StGeorge......................................

Research Team
Dr Melissa Monfries (Supervisor)
A/Prof. Allyson Holbrook (Supervisor)
Jennifer StGeorge (PhD candidate)

This project has been approved by the University’s Human Research Ethics Committee, Approval No. H-959-0205

Complaints about this research: Should you have concerns about your rights as a participant in this research, or you have a complaint about the manner in which the research is conducted, it may be given to the researcher, or, if an independent person is preferred, to the Human Research Ethics Officer, Research Office, The Chancellery, The University of Newcastle, University Drive, Callaghan NSW 2308, telephone (02) 49216333, email Human-Ethics@newcastle.edu.auConsent Form for members of the public
Appendix I

CONSENT FORM FOR ADULTS

A/Prof Allyson Holbrook
School of Education
Faculty of Education & Arts
University of Newcastle
Callaghan NSW 2308
Phone: 4921 5945
Allyson.Holbrook@newcastle.edu.au

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consent Form for the Research Project: Motivation for Music</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Melissa Monfries (Supervisor)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A/Prof. Allyson Holbrook (Supervisor)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jennifer StGeorge (RHD student)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I agree to participate in the above research project and give my consent freely.
I consent to an interview, which will be recorded.

Print Your Name:........................................................................................................
Your Signature:.................................................................................. Date:...........
Your Phone Number:.........................................................................................
Mobile:........................................................................................................

I understand the project will be conducted as described in the Information Statement, a copy of which I have read and retained.

I understand that I can withdraw from the project at any time and do not have to give any explanation for withdrawing. I understand that my personal information will remain confidential to the researchers. I have had the opportunity to have questions answered to my satisfaction.
### Appendix J  SUMMARY OF SCHOOLS CONSENTING TO PARTICIPATE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>ID</th>
<th>Accepted</th>
<th>Data Collected</th>
<th>Aggregated class size</th>
<th>Consent obtained from aggregated class size (n)</th>
<th>Consent as % of aggregated class size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primary school</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PS1</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PS2</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PS3</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PS4</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PS5</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PS6</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PS7</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Secondary school</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SS1</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SS2</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SS3</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Composite school (primary)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CS1</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CS2</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Composite school (secondary)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CS1</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CS2</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Appendix K**  
**QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SCHOOL STUDENTS**

We would like to know how you feel about music and musical instrument learning.  
*This is not a test, and so there are no right or wrong answers.*  
Your answers will not be seen by anyone else.

First, please tell us about yourself and your interests.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section A</th>
<th>All students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>.........................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Year Level</td>
<td>.........................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.........................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. We have some musical instruments in our house…</td>
<td>Tick one box</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 or 2</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 2</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. At least one of my relatives plays a musical instrument these days.</td>
<td>Tick one box</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I have relatives who can read music …</td>
<td>Tick one box</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I am currently a member of a music group, band or choir…</td>
<td>Tick one box.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I listen to music …</td>
<td>Tick as many boxes as apply to you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By myself</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With my friends</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With my family</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. Put a circle around the number in each line that shows how much you like music.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very much</th>
<th>A lot</th>
<th>A bit</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I like dance music</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like pop/rock</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like folk</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like classical instrumental</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like jazz</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like classical vocal</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like Country</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like Opera</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like another sort</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What sort ………………

7. Put a circle around the number in each line that shows how much you agree with the sentence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Mostly Agree</th>
<th>Mostly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I love listening to music.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can feel the emotion in songs and other music.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like to make music.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playing a musical instrument helps you be popular.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think that music is fun.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls who play instruments are usually teased or bullied</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like music.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playing a musical instrument is cool.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys who play instruments are usually teased or bullied.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. I think that...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Mostly Agree</th>
<th>Mostly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You have a certain amount of musical ability, and you really can't do much to change it.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your musical ability is something about you that you can't change very much.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You can learn new things, but you can't really change your basic musical ability.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9. Put a circle around the number in each line that best shows how you feel ...

When you think about your spare time and school...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Some of the time</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Most of the time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How much of the time are you satisfied or interested in what you are doing?

1

How often do you feel bored?

1

10. Do you have regular lessons on a musical instrument?

Tick one box

NO, but I used to □ Skip to the GREEN pages (Section C)

YES, I have regular lessons □ Skip to the PINK pages (Section D)

NO, I never have □ Finish these WHITE pages; so turn to the next page (Section B)

Section B  For those who have never learned

11. I would like to learn a musical instrument...

Tick one box

NO □ Go to the last question

YES □ Continue onto the next question

12. I would like to start learning an instrument...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Mostly Agree</th>
<th>Mostly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Because I have to learn an instrument at school.
Because my parents want me to.
I think it is a good challenge for me.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Because I want to be with my friends who play.
Because learning music is part of a good education.
Because I love to play music.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Because music is a good way to join in school life.
Because I want to show I am good at music.
Because learning music will let me do interesting things.
Because I really want to learn how to play.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Is there anything else you would like to tell us about music?

 btnf………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………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Section C  For Discontinuers only

Please think about the instrument you learned the longest...

I used to play the .........................................
I used to have lessons Tick one box
  Only in band with the conductor □
  Group lesson (with others)  □
  Private lessons (by myself with my teacher) □

I chose the instrument I used to learn.

    Yes □
    No □

I started when I was .................. years old
and learned for .................. years
I gave up in Year..................

I have done a music exam...

Tick one box

    Yes □
    No □

Which grade ..................
What mark did you get ..................

I started musical instrument lessons because

.............................................................................................................................
.............................................................................................................................

I used to do my private practise...

Tick one box

    Never □
    Once or twice a week □
    5-7 days a week □

How many minutes usually each time during the final year? ..................

What do you do now instead of music lessons? Tick as many boxes as apply to you.

Go out with friends □
Sport, gymnastics or dance □
Nothing extra □
School study □
Employment □
Other (please name ..................) □

I would like to start up lessons again...

    Yes □
    No □
1. Please think back about your main instrument (your longest-learned instrument)...  
Circle the number that best shows how much you agree with these statements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How did you feel about your practice?</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Mostly Agree</th>
<th>Mostly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I felt confident when I practised.</td>
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<td>My practice was frustrating.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowing <strong>how</strong> to play well was important to me.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My practice seemed worthwhile.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usually I didn’t notice mistakes.</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>I felt able to express my feelings through my playing.</td>
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<td>Learning a musical instrument was a challenge.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When learning something was a bit hard, I still enjoyed it.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I found practice usually very boring.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I always found different ways of playing my instrument.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Thinking back to your lesson days...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When performing or doing an exam...</th>
<th>Not at all well</th>
<th>Not too well</th>
<th>Pretty well</th>
<th>Very well</th>
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<td>How well could you read the notes and play without mistakes?</td>
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<td>How well could you play the right rhythms?</td>
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<td>How well could you make a pleasing sound on your instrument?</td>
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<td>How well could you play in-tune (not flat or sharp)?</td>
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<tr>
<td>(<strong>Pianists</strong>, don’t answer this last question)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Please think about the teacher you had for the longest-learned instrument...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>About your teacher...</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Mostly Agree</th>
<th>Mostly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My teacher noticed whether I improved in my playing.</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was important to my teacher that students did exams.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My teacher made sure I understood what to do.</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>My teacher compared students’ progress.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>I often didn’t understand how to do my practice.</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>My teacher really wanted me to enjoy learning new things.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My teacher encouraged me to ask questions.</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Now, about your family and friends...
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Mostly Agree</th>
<th>Mostly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Having friends who liked music is important to me.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because of my music learning, I felt left out by my friends.</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>4</td>
</tr>
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<td>I have friends that play musical instruments.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I heard doors or windows slammed shut when I practised.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My friends liked me to play an instrument.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I've been teased because I liked instrumental music.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>My parents helped me be involved with music.</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>My parents prefer music-listening or playing to TV or computers.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I wanted, my family helped me in my practice.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My family liked me to play an instrument.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My practising often annoyed others.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having my family like music was important to me.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I gave up learning my instrument because…</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was too hard.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It wasn’t cool or trendy.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I didn’t have a place to practice.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was too lonely.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I didn’t like the teacher.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was too expensive.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I felt too frustrated.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I didn’t like the music.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No suitable groups for me out-of-school.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My teacher left.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I couldn’t keep up with the others.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What would have changed your mind about stopping lessons?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You have now finished all the questions. Thank you for your time.
Please think about your main instrument...

I play the ........................................

I have lessons Tick one box
- Only in band with the conductor □
- Group lesson (with others) □
- Private lessons (by myself with my teacher) □

I chose the instrument I learn...
- Yes □
- No □

I started when I was ................. years old
and have learned for ................. years

I have done a music exam...
- Yes □
- No □

Which grade .......................
What mark did you get .......................?

I started musical instrument lessons because

I do my private practise...
- Never □
- Once or twice a week □
- 5-7 days a week □

How many minutes usually each time during this year?..................................................

About the future....

Tick one box

Will you learn your instrument in high school?
- Yes □
- No □

Will you play your instrument once you finish your schooling?
- Yes □
- No □

Will you do an exam, audition or solo performance this year?
- Yes □
- No □

Have you started and stopped learning another instrument?
- Yes □
- No □

(which ones?)

1. Please think about your main instrument (your longest-learned instrument)
How do you feel about your practice?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Mostly Agree</th>
<th>Mostly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>I feel confident when I practise.</td>
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<td>My practice is frustrating.</td>
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</table>

Knowing how to play well is important to me.

<table>
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<th>Agree</th>
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<th>Disagree</th>
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<tr>
<td>My practice seems worthwhile.</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Usually I don’t notice mistakes.</td>
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</table>

I feel able to express my feelings through my playing.

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<th>Agree</th>
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<tr>
<td>I often do not know how to fix things up.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning a musical instrument is a challenge.</td>
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When learning something is a bit hard, I still enjoy it.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agree</th>
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<tr>
<td>I find different ways of playing my instrument.</td>
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2. Thinking about your lessons …

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(Pianists, don’t answer this last question)

3. Please think about your current teacher, who now teaches you your main instrument.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agree</th>
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<td>About your teacher…</td>
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<td>My teacher compares students’ progress.</td>
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<td>I often don’t understand how to do my practice.</td>
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<td>When the teacher explains a problem to me, I still feel unsure.</td>
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4. Now, about your family and friends…
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<td>My practising often annoys others.</td>
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<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having my family like music is important to me.</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why do you want to continue learning your instrument?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think some kids get bored when learning a musical instrument?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If so, why?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there anything else you would like to tell us about music?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You have now finished all the questions. Thank you for your time.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix L  INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR SCHOOL STUDENTS AND ADULTS

Thank you for volunteering to participate in this interview. I am interested in your opinions and experiences because I would like to understand why people start, and stop, learning a musical instrument. This conversation is confidential and fictitious names will be used in reports of this research. Do you still agree to the taping of the conversation? Please feel free to interrupt or ask me to explain further.

What instrument did you play?
Did you learn in group or private lessons?
Can you tell me about when you used to learn your instrument?
    How did you come to start the ….?
Do any of your family play instruments?

Could you describe what led up to stopping having lessons?
What else was happening in your life then?
Can you tell me about your lessons?
What sort of things did you do?
How did you feel about them?

Can you tell me about your practising?
Where did you practice?
What sort of things did you do?
Play by ear?
Play by memory?
Play to others?
Can you tell me about what you had problems with, if any?
What helped you manage any problems you had?
What did parents or teachers say about practice and learning?

How did you feel about your progress?
When did you enjoy your music playing the most?
How do you feel about having stopped lessons now? What would have encouraged you to continue?
Are you more or less interested in music now?
Do you still play? Do you plan to an instrument again? Same or another?
Is there anything we’ve forgotten to talk about?
Appendix M  INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR TERTIARY STUDENTS

Thank you for volunteering to participate in this interview. I am interested in your opinions and experiences because I would like to understand why people start, and stop, learning a musical instrument. This conversation is confidential and fictitious names will be used in reports of this research. Do you still agree to the taping of the conversation? Please feel free to interrupt or ask me to explain further.

Can you tell me about when you started your main instrument, and some of the reasons you started that particular instrument?
What were your hopes and expectations when you first started to learn?
Did these hopes/ aspirations/expectations change over the years?
Can you reflect on your lessons?
How do you feel about the lessons?
How do you go about your private practice?
What do you do; how do you feel about it;
How do you go about overcoming any playing challenges or difficulties? strategies, others’ support?
In what ways do you think high level skill in playing is acquired?
What does ‘practice’ mean to you?
How do you feel about your progress? (Times of challenge or struggle?)
Have you ever thought of discontinuing your instrumental study?
What brought these thoughts about: Any event, incident, person, experience?
What might be one thing, or more, which has kept you interested and motivated to continue your learning?
In what way/What role have other people played in your continuing interest in playing music?
What is it about music has kept you interested through the years?
What impact has learning a musical instrument had on your life?
Is there anything else you’d like to mention about your experiences?

Age:
Course:
Appendix N  FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW GUIDE

Hi, I’ve come here today to talk about music and learning a musical instrument. I want to find out what children and young people think about learning and playing a musical instrument. I am going to tape this conversation we have; it is not a test, so there is no right or wrong thing to say. Your conversation won’t be heard by anyone except me, so you can say what you think. You don’t need to agree with anyone else either. The main thing is that each of you talk one at a time, so the recording is clear for me later. Remember that this talk is private, so please don’t tell other people about exactly who said what. OK?

First we’ll go around the circle to test the tape; just say your name first and then introduce the person next to you. OK, thanks for that. So now I’m going to put a sentence here…

1. Playing a musical instrument is… Can you give me words or ideas about this sentence. Can you give me some examples. What sort of … is that?

2. What about this sentence… Learning a musical instrument is… Can you give me words for that? Is it the same as playing, or different?


5. Do you think playing an instrument is easier for some people than others? When is it easier? What might make it easier? What sort of things make it harder? What does being ‘good’ on your instrument mean?

6. What are some of the reasons why children and young people start learning musical instruments? Can you give me some examples? Any other reasons?

7. What do parents and teachers say about learning musical instruments? Can you give me some examples? Anything else?

8. What would you say to other young people about practice and learning?

9. And to finish off, what would be the main reasons that would stop someone young from learning a musical instrument. Can you give me some examples or stories? Anything else? Thank you for coming to talk to me today.
Appendix O

TRANSCRIPT OF FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW

Focus Group interview FG03 (18/08/05)

F = Facilitator; R = Respondent (Respondents 1 to 9)

F: We might just have a little test of this to see that it actually is working. So, um, do you want just go round, say what your name is, and tell me what your favourite music or band is, or instruments.

R6: Yea, R6. I like clarinet, the only one I’ve played so far. And I like Michael Bublay.
R5: My favourite instrument is the flute. And I don’t really have a favourite band.
R4: My favourite instrument is the violin. And my favourite singer is Kylie Minogue.
R8: And my favourite instrument is the flute, cos that’s the only instrument I’ve learned so far.
R1: I’m R1. I like playing the piano, and my favourite band would be Random.
R7: I’m R7. I like, my favourite instrument is the trumpet, um, cos I used to play it, and I don’t really have a favourite band.
R8: My name is R8, and I used to play the piano and I still practise it a bit; that’s my favourite instrument and my favourite band is probably Greenday.
R2: I’m R2, though I don’t like to be called that though.

F: What do you like to be called?
R2: R2

F: R2. (umm) favourite music, band, instrument…
R2: Probably the saxophone and Cold Play.
F: Which one?
R2: Cold Play.

R3: I’m R3 and my favourite instrument would be clarinet, which my sister also plays.

F: Oh does she? That’s two of you. Right. I’ve come here today to talk about music and learning a musical instrument. I want to find out what children and young people think about learning and playing a musical instrument. I am going to tape this conversation we have; it is not a test, so there is no right or wrong thing to say. Your conversation won’t be heard by anyone except me, so you can say what you think. You don’t need to agree with anyone else either. The main thing is that each of you talk one at a time, so the recording is clear for me later. OK?

R6: Its fun, because when I first started playing the clarinet, my Grandma, I couldn’t get a note out of it, and I was blowing until I was red in the face, and then we gave it to my Grandpa and my Grandpa made the worst sound, so I took it back and ran into the room.

F: anybody got anything else?

R4: I think its fun like R6 said, because when I started to play I was really young and I wasn’t that good, and I had a very nice teacher and she taught me how to [unclear] properly.

F: Right, R5.
R5: I started playing the piano, because when I was little I used to thump around on it and I wanted to make a song.

F: Anybody got any other words for playing a musical instrument?
R9: When I was about, 6 probably 8 years old, I don’t remember, it was a couple of years after we moved into our new house. And Mum, it was Christmas, and Mum bought me a keyboard, and I thought she bought me the keyboard because she wanted me to learn an instrument, and so I started lessons with my...
cousin, and then she moved to Sydney, so I couldn't be taught anymore. But then we went and found somebody, in Y. I forget where the shop is. But there was a guy in there who was a really good piano teacher, his name was X. But then it was starting to get, like, he was always running late. And it was, like, he was putting a bit of pressure on me, cos I wasn’t learning, wasn’t doing too well. So I’m going to start again with someone else.

F: Anybody else had that experience?

R7: When I started playing the trumpet I thought that at first it was really challenging, and it just made me, like, I couldn’t do it. I kept trying and I kept trying and then my teacher kept teaching me how to do things, and then I finally went to one of the concerts and did really well but, it was just. I was doing too many things, I thought Oh, just…

F: Mmm.

R1: When I started, my Dad, cos he plays several instruments, and so I started playing on the keyboard, and we got this teacher, this old lady, and she was really mean, cos me and N were only 5 and 7, and she taught us like really professionals, and we got these really long music things that the notes, and that she knew, and so we quit for a few years, and then we got this really nice teacher, called J, and we had her for two years, and then she had to stop because she had to go to University.

F: Mmm.

R1: I first learned on the clarinet because I was too young to play on the sax. But then I went to the saxophone, and I still all this stuff and I was first chair. But then they moved up classes and with my brother and I doing it, we couldn’t afford a private lesson anymore, so I had to go into a group lesson and she put me with little girls who didn’t know how to play. And she kept on pressuring me to buy it, and pay all this other money and kept making me go onto other *[unclear] and stuff like that, and I just felt pressured so I quit.

F: Mmm. Thank you. R3, did you have your hand up?

R4: I started to play because my sister had all done it, and when I went into Primary school, I started to play then [unclear]

F: Ahh, you didn’t get your first choice.

R4: And then my sister became my teacher.

F: Interesting…Anybody got something else to say?

R8: I started playing the flute, and when I was 10, I’m now 11. But when I first started playing the flute, my teachers were, Oh no, you can’t do this, you can’t do that. And like none of the other kids were getting a tune out of it, and I was, and it was like, Oh no, you’ll never get a tune out of it. So then after he went overseas, we got this other teacher, who was really nice. And um, he goes, Oh don’t worry R8, you’ll get the hang of the song in a couple of days. So,…we moved out there, and… I still play it, but I can’t play it at the moment because I broke my finger..

F: No. not easy. Have you got something to say there?

R9: What was that old lady’s name? I had, oh yeah, I remember the name of the shop I went to too. It was called Wham Music. And there was an old lady there called Alma, and she…Alma sounds like a really mean name. And she… was … a real. old. [All laugh] She treated me like I was Mozart. She gave me all this hard stuff. And I thought, what’s this? [unclear][078]

F: So, have we got any more words we can add to this sentence? Playing a musical instrument is…we said fun…another word,

Enjoyable.

F: enjoyable, fun,

R7: Challenging

R8: Exciting

R5: Moody

R8: Excellent

R4: Graceful.
F: Now I’ve got another sentence… not Playing, but learning a musical instrument. Learning a musical instrument. Can you give me some words for that. And is it the same as playing a musical instrument for you?

No. [Many nos]

F: No. So, what’s learning a musical instrument?

F: What do you feel about learning a musical instrument, got some other stories about learning…

R1: When I, like with J, when I first went to… cos I quit, I didn’t even know one key or note, and when I was learning she was really nice and her family were really nice. Cos there were the teen…they were around the years when they’d go out partying and all that. Besides, they sat down, listened everyone play, and helped us out.

F: Helped you in the learning? Yea. Any other thoughts about learning an instrument? What do you do when you are learning a musical instrument? What are some of the things you might do?

R9: Like get bribed into..cos my cousin, she’d kind of bribe me in a nice way. The lesson was over, we’d played for an hour, and I said, I don’t want to do any more, and wishing that Mum was here. And it was Easter, and she had an Easter egg on top of the piano. And I said can I have it? And she said if you play this song once more…played..

F: Right. Anybody else got some words for here. About learning a musical instrument. If it’s different to playing? [unclear] It’s difficult?

Don’t know

F: If you don’t know what you’re doing?

R1: Learning’s like after a long time, a year or something, you know all the notes, you can, you can, read the notes without stopping. And you can play a nice rhythm when you’re learning you do bits by bits. So you can get better at it.

F: Yea OK. Alright now, is there Fun, you said it before…is there fun in learning an instrument?

Rs: Yes, Yes, Yea [Many agree]

F: What sort of things are fun? About it?

R1: Seeing other people’s faces when you do your scales!

R9: Sometimes, when you go to concerts, this happened once, happened to me. Its pretty fun, its not fun, but its funny, when someone’s just played a song and they’ve put on the really ear-piercing tone, and the person goes up to play, clenching the piece of music, and it sounds really, odd.

F: Odd. Right, OK. Are there any times when there’s more fun in learning an instrument than in other times?

[Uumm.Mmm]

F: When are those times?

R5: Its probably more fun when you first start, cos you don’t know as much.

F: Right. Yea. R7?

R7: When you learn your first song, and you get to play it in front of people. I think that’s fun.

F: Yea. OK Anybody got other ideas about when it’s fun? Are there some people you find it’s more fun to play music with than other people? [Mm. Yes] Which people might they be?

R2: People with the same ability as you.

F: Right, So OK. A?

R1: People who don’t do the same thing as you. Like you’re struggling and when they were young, they were really good, and they don’t really know what, um.[unclear] its like.

F: Yea, OK, so, what would you say is the best thing about learning a musical instrument?

R5: Having a laugh if you make a mistake.

F: Another best thing, or the next best if its not quite the best.
When the teacher’s being nasty and saying, Oh keep going, you’ll get the hang of it,

R5: Being up on stage and when everybody else is playing really nice, you seem to just stuff it up.

[laughs]

F: Oh, right, so that’s when it’s fun?

Yea.

F: Makes you laugh when you…

R5: Sometimes when you get nervous you always just stuff it up.

F: Right. Yea. Right well I’ve got the opposite, when is learning a musical instrument sometimes not fun?

(lots of hands for this)

When the teacher yells at you.

F: When the teacher yells at you? Why does a teacher yell at you?

Um, she never did, but probably..

F: It can happen? Mmm.

R8: When you have a really mean teacher who tells you you can’t do something and you can.

F: Right and you reckon you can do it but the teacher thinks you can’t? We’ll come back to that.

R1: When you know you can do it and um, you might be having a really bad day, or you be really good at something and if you just not do one good note and the teacher could say, you learn it and…

F: R7, do you have something to say about that? When is it NOT fun?… So that sometimes it feels like you think you can do something but the teacher thinks you can’t?

Yea, And you know that you’ve done it at home and you can do it.

F: Yes, anybody else had that same experience, you think you can. Lots of people nodding, saying I think I could do this but this teacher thinks I can’t?

R9: then you get [unclear]

You’ll get it [unclear]

R7: Another thing that is not fun, is when you go to your, I was in group lessons at one stage, you go to your group lesson on the day, and you do your…like your practice, and then you go home you can you do it, and then when you come back and try again in front of people, you just can’t, not stage fright but,… whenever someone’s around, you can never do it…

F: Right.

F: Yea. So its not fun not being able to do what you thought you could do? Would that be about right? Its not fun, not, thinking you could do something and then under pressure you can’t ?

R9: There was a really hard piece of music that I played in class once, and I think, it was probably The Fairies Court, and it involved how you do the notes from, really cool, like go up, and I did that really well, like I mastered it in the class, but when I went home and played it to Mum, I just couldn’t do it.

F: No. How did you feel when that happened?

R9: I felt like an hour’s learning time was gone to waste.

F: Gone to waste… Has anyone else got any more stories about when learning musical instruments is not fun? What’s the worst sort of thing you’ve gone through?

R6: Its not really the worst but its pretty embarrassing. I went to music camp, MM Music Camp, and we had to put on this little concert for all the parents that came, and apparently the clarinets had to play really loud because they had sort of moaning tone to them. So I’m blowing into my clarinet really really hard and it was a really long piece and at the end all this dribble was coming down my…[indicates chin, laughs].

F: Yea, a bit embarrassing.

R6: Yep, and pretty much everyone was looking at me, like what’s wrong with her?
F: Ohh, yeah. Anybody else got some stories about when it wasn’t fun? When learning an instrument wasn’t fun?

AL: When I was at music camp there was this clarinet person that didn’t like me much, because his name was Ben and I got told that his real name was Bernard, so I called him Bernard, so we were doing Massed Band, and we went out for a drink, and he undid my saxophone and when I picked it up it just slipped out of my hands.

F: Ohh, Yea, so it’s not fun.

R2: Then the teacher yelled at me.

F: Right so sometimes being in band with people is not fun. Sometimes it turns out like that? Yea. OK, so what do you think are some of the reasons why children and young people start learning musical instruments?

R9: Because a lot of people say if you learn a musical instrument it makes you smarter and it, like if you don’t learn a musical instrument your life is kind of, not really, as really, as smart or into things, but if you learn a musical instrument, teachers say that it helps you get into things helps you like get smarter.

F: Right, OK R7?

R7: Another thing is when kids a bit younger than us are growing up, they’ve got all these people they can listen to and that, like I really want to do that, I love, when it comes time, when they’re at primary school or whenever when they can get a musical instrument, they go, Oh, I want to be like him. I want to get that [unclear]

F: [unclear]

R1: Easier to learn when you are younger because you’ve got more time in your life but if you’re a Grandpa or something, really old, you haven’t got as much time or energy, [unclear] much fun?

F: Any more ideas about that?

R3: When they’re little they see older people play and they think, I want to be that.

F: Right, yeah.

R3: They think it might be time to start.

R4: If you start when you’re younger, when you get older you could start up a band and teach other people how to play.

F: Right, yeah, so I’m getting the idea that, do most of you think that its, um, its nice to start, to know lots of music people before you start your instrument, you think, oh I want to be like that person? Anybody here think, oh I want to be like somebody or somebody really inspires you as a music person? Got some names?

R7: Oh I don’t really have any names but my Mum used to play and I thought oh, I’ll try that, and just other people I thought …

F: I’d like to do that? Anybody else got any names or people they thought, oh I’d like to do that?

R2: I know it’s sad, but it was Lisa Simpson, but when I watched the Simpsons, I thought she was really good and I really like to do that.

F: Right. And what did she do?

R2: Saxophone.

F: Oh right.

R9: There was no-one really famous that inspired me; every time I went to my Aunties, my cousin she was always on the piano, and every time we ate dinner, we had to go and like open the doors and the windows, because my Mum loved her music and I said I wish I could be that good.

F: OK. Family members…

R7: All my aunties are music teachers and they’ve got all these pianos they’ve got drums and stuff down in the basement, and my Auntie E, she’d always play the piano with um, these kids about the same age as us, and they’d really be good and they’d start off a week before and they’d really be bad at that song, and
then do really good the next week, but then they had a different teacher and they wouldn’t be good. They just really enjoyed it.

F: OK, right… Yea. Something about that…

R6: With my last teacher, he, I was doing Kids on Keyboards but I wasn’t very good at it, and um I only started because this teacher he used to always crack jokes and he played keyboard and he’d do it really well, and he could sort of sing and do the keyboard at the same time. Sounded pretty good.

F: Yea. Another question along the same lines… What do parents and teachers say, you said about smart, ‘some people say you get smarter’, but actually I’ll go back to that, does anybody feel as though it helps them get kind of a bit smarter or bit more switched on when they did their learning instruments. Most people think…

R6: You get more coordinated.

F: You get more coordinated. Any other words that help that?

R9: Before I tried touch typing. And when away with Dad I came back I just lost the knack. And when I started piano, I was really good at touch typing so it helps you with your fingers. You get used to it.

F: Any other experiences along those lines where you felt you got a bit smarter or it helped your other work, or anything else?

AL: Because I was the only one in the class who could read music.

F: Right. OK. Now what do parents and teachers say about learning and playing musical instruments? Anybody got any, remember what their teachers said to them about learning or playing or what Mum or Dad say about learning and playing?

R7: Well, this is sort of about this but my teacher he used to say, if you are really bad at it or, and you could tell he sort of knew, that if you were really bad and having trouble doing it he’d say, he’d just encourage you by saying, on the day you can show everyone that you can do it.

F: Right. Yes.

R1: Well something that inspired me was my Dad; I was really bad at playing piano when I was first learning, he said it doesn’t matter how bad you are just as long as you enjoy it.

F: Right. OK.

R6: My teacher used to say just go ahead and try your best. You can do it.

Yea. OK. Anything more about that? When you are having trouble learning something on your instrument, and the teacher says go for it or just keep trying, what are some of the little things that you think in your own head, you think right-oh I’ll just keep trying?

Rs: [Nods, Yes]

F: Yea, so you just keep at it, sometimes go on long time or do you get at, how does that feel when you say, Oh I just got to keep trying?

R1: When you know you can’t do it and you’ve just been practising for hours and it didn’t work out, and your teacher knows you can’t do it but they just keep supporting you, trying to make you better, even of their own time they just give it up, they’re gone. Sometimes they just give it up.

F: How does it feel if you practise something for hours and it still doesn’t get much better?

R6: Frustrating.

R9: It didn’t frustrate me but it made me feel like I sucked, it lowered my self-esteem, cos like some days I just spent 15-20 minutes on the piano, trying to get one bar of music right, and I just couldn’t do it and it made me feel like [unclear].

AL: Feels degrading.

F: Do you think playing a musical instrument is easier for some people than others?

Rs: No. Yes.

F: No and Yes. Lets hear some nos. What um, do you think its about the same for most people?

Yea.
F: Some people think its easier for some people and harder for others. What makes it harder for other people?
R7: It makes it harder for people that have low self-esteem, and think, have trouble doing this kind of thing, like if you’re going to do it, you have to be confident.
F: Right, yeah.
R3: When you don’t have support.
F: When you don’t have support, it makes it harder? Yea, support from your…
Family and friends
R1: I think, cos when I was a little boy my Mum and Dad they didn’t care whether I was smart or not, and we had these Austrian people living near us, and they were probably training their kids to read and all that, and my Mum and Dad were working on me with the piano, like catching a ball and coordination, so and they tried to play the same piece thing as me [unclear] cos they weren’t as quick as me, they had no coordination.
F: So that made it harder? Is that what you are saying?
R1: Yea, makes it harder for them than it is for me.
F: Yes, because of coordination. Any other things that make it harder to learn instruments for some people?
R5: When the teacher sets a metronome on, you have to play in time with it.
F: Oh right, how do you feel when that happens?
R5: You don’t really know what to do. If you go slow it’s the wrong time with the metronome.
F: Anybody else had that experience with the metronome and not quite knowing what to do or not being able to catch up?
R9: My teacher, my cousin, she has this really good metronome she got from Queensland and she brought it over and she said, here try it with the metronome, and she put it on slow and played the song through. Then she put the speed up [all laugh] and I’m like, what are you doing? I kept speeding up and it got to this part and I just went [unclear]
F: No., how did it feel when it was so sped up?
R9: It kind of, I don’t know what it felt like, but I wasn’t used to it.
F: No. Ok. Look just a finishing off question. So we’ve had a good talk here and you might get out before the bell. Thank you. To finish off, what would be the main reasons that would stop someone young from learning a musical instrument? [Lots of hands] Lets start with you R8.
R8: Their coordination. Like if they’re [unclear] art and music.
F: Like say they’d already started learning, what might stop them? That coordination?
R8: Yea.
R?: If you’d chosen a particular instrument and you couldn’t find anyone who taught that instrument.
R6: And poor organization as well [unclear]
F: More organizational skills?
R6: Yea.
R?: The teacher.
F: The teacher?
R?: They don’t like the teacher.
R?: Falling behind and everyone can do it except you.
F: Yes, that might make you feel a bit …
R?: I was going to say similar to R3, but some little kids when they’ve got a bigger person as well that are close to them that are learning. They feel like they may as well give up because some people, they don’t, they don’t really want to get better for themselves they want to catch up on other people.

F: Right so they think, oh I can’t be as good as him so I may as well give up?

R1: Another thing is sport. Cos kids get into soccer and football activities or tennis or something and they want to get better at that so they can become popular at school cos there’s not too many popular kids who are popular for music. They want to be able to have normal friends and that. They give it up or they don’t like the teacher or something.

F. Yea. Any other reason why young people might stop learning their instruments once they’ve started?

R?: Money. Have enough money to pay.

R2: I had to stop because I got braces on my teeth.

R6: I made sure I got braces on my teeth so I had to stop. It was an excuse for me to stop instead of going, I don’t like you.

F: Mmm.

R6: I stopped because my clarinet lessons were on at the same time as Library and I like books better.

F: So sometime you have to decide between music and other things. How is it when you have to decide whether to go out and play or to sit home and do your practices? What are the things, if you decided, Oh I’ll do my practise, why do you decide to do your practice that time?

R?: Cos I know I’m going to get in trouble by a teacher for not practising.

R6: What I do if I have to practice, I have some days play and other days practice. Even.

F: Right. Yea.

R7: I usually select different days when I do different things. But it was really hard when I’d do practice and friends would come over and they were always like, come out, and I have to, um, say no or go out and stop practising .

F: Right.

R9: I’d compromise and you know how kids these days they get bored, like their playing is really really angry and their time when its up, they go, oh Mum I’m bored, can’t I have more time? But I compromise and say, well, every time that happens, instead of just complaining I’m bored, I can play, I can practise, and so every time I’m bored instead of just sitting there, and whimpering, I played [other agreement].

F: Do some of you still play instruments now not learning but just play your instruments for fun? [many agree]

F: So, most people play a bit of music for fun? [many say yes]

R6: I don’t play another instrument [unclear]

F: Anybody want to say anything else for the tape recorder while we’re here?

R: Thank you.

F: Thank you kids that was great.
Appendix P  TRANSCRIPT OF PRIMARY STUDENT INTERVIEW UNABRIDGED

IV73 “Laura”

I = Interviewer; R = Respondent

I: Thanks for volunteering…I am interested in what you learned and whether you learned in private or group lessons?
R: I learned the piano and I learned in private lessons.
I: The whole way through?
R: Yea.
I: And did you play in ensembles or groups for performance or just…
R: No [all the time just played by yourself?] Yea.
I: OK. And can you tell me about when you used to learn the piano. What is was like and I’ll ask you some specific questions about practice later. But, just the story of your learning?
R: Well I thought it was fun and cos I didn’t really want to do that when I was older. I just wanted to learn the pieces that I wanted to and just, um, have fun and if I saw a music book I’d just open it and play any song but my teacher thought that I wanted to do that for the rest of my life, and, I had to practise really hard, but I didn’t think I wanted to so I thought I’d just do it how I wanted.
I: What sort of things did she say to you that led you to believe you had to practise really hard?
R: Well, she had these stickers where she’d put them on my book, and if I had to practise she’d put a certain colour on, and if she wasn’t happy with me, she’d put a certain colour on, and if she liked how I played it, she’d put another colour on. And um, like, I’d get um, a lot of the ones that I had to practise on, so I thought that I had to, because I’d have to practise a lot.
I: How did you feel about that?
R: Well sometimes she’d get cranky, because I wouldn’t practise, but I liked to do other things with my friends and everything and um, I just didn’t really like having the stickers on there, because it was annoying.
I: And, what led you to start the keyboard? Or pick the keyboard out of all the instruments?
R: Well, I saw people at school playing it and I really liked how they did it and everything and I thought it would be easy to do. And I just picked it up like that, thought it would be a good instrument to play.
I: Did you think it would be easier than other instruments? Is that… in your mind?
R: Yea. Because it seemed easy because I could read some notes and I thought well that would be a good instrument because it looks easy to play.
I: Yea. OK. And um why did you stop having your lessons on the piano?
R: Well, um, sometimes, I didn’t really like the practice, and um sometimes, because I didn’t practice, my teacher would get cranky and I didn’t really like to be yelled at and everything. And I liked to do other stuff outside of school and play with my friends and everything. And like not have to practise every day when I got home from school.
I: Did you talk about wanting to stop with anybody?
R: No.
I: And was there anything specific that led you to say suddenly, right that’s it, or, was it a more gradual decision?
R: It was more a gradual decision.
I: And so, can you tell me about your lessons? What sort of things did you do in them and did you enjoy those things?
R: Well some pieces that I played I didn’t enjoy because they were boring and um, not very good, but the pieces I really did like playing I really enjoyed. We’d practise and then I thought the pieces I liked to do were fun, and I wanted to keep going but the pieces I didn’t want to do, I didn’t like it.
I: Did you talk with your teacher about pieces you liked and pieces you didn’t like?
R: Well sometimes I’d go, oh, I don’t like playing this piece and then I’d just have to end up playing it and then pieces that I liked, we’d have lots of fun.
I: And um what makes a piece boring for you?
R: Um, maybe just the way its played, if it’s really hard, I can’t get it right, I get frustrated and yeah…
I: If something’s frustrating or difficult, how do you get over that challenge?
R: I just don’t do it. Or I keep trying and trying and ask for help if I need it.
I: You ask for help. Who do you ask for help?
R: Sometimes I ask Mum or I ask my teacher if I need help. And that’s about it because no-one else really knows how to play piano.
I: Yea. OK, so um, have you got any, you did your pieces, did you do anything else in your lessons?
R: Oh like little sheets where I had to write in notes and everything and I’d learn new notes and just the practises and …
I: Did you enjoy those things?
R: Yea, some of them were alright. The easy ones were good.
I: Can you remember one lesson in particular or any particular incident or something that happened in your lesson time?
R: Oh, when I got a red sticker cos I didn’t practise that piece at all and it was really bad and yeah…
I: You can remember getting that red sticker? How did it, what did you think to yourself then?
R: I should have practised more, but it was a really hard piece and I wasn’t sure of some of the things and Mum didn’t know so I had to wait for my next lesson to ask the teacher and yeah…
I: So, is that the sort of thing you get to talk to your teacher about, how difficult that piece was then?
R: Yea, but sometimes she wouldn’t understand. She’d go on, you can play it and I would need more help…
I: You still felt you’d need more help. So how did you feel about that then?
T: Well I thought that um, if you’re not going to help me then how am I supposed to play the piece, since I don’t know how to.
I: How did that feel?
R: It didn’t feel very good.
I: No. And um, can you tell me about your practising, when you did do your practice, what sort of things did you do?
R: Well, I’d get the pieces that she’d marked off for me to practise, the ones that I knew a lot, I’d practise them first, and that would be easy, but the ones I didn’t really, I’d have to take time and work on them. And just go through them slowly.
I: OK. So, what was your plan for working on a hard piece?
R: Well, the sections that I did know, I’d play them first and then the ones I wasn’t really sure of, I’d go through them slowly, I’d just practise then and then I’d put it all together.
I: So what are your ideas about or understanding about practice, and the purpose of practice and so on?
R: Well you have to practise because it makes perfect sometimes and um, you just, it makes you go better, but, if you don’t want to practise well then you’re not going to be very good at the instrument you play.
I: So what do you understand about um, what you feel about practice, and, learning? How does ‘practice make you perfect’ I suppose is the question?
I: Well if you practise you learn more and then you can understand go up to higher playing like higher levels and everything but if you don’t practice well then you don’t learn anything so you sort of drop back.

I: Does music learning feel like a fast thing, a quick thing or a slower thing?
R: Slow [slow] yep…

I: What part of music learning feels slower for you?
R: Well the learning and everything like it takes time to learn a piece and then get it perfect then move onto the next thing.

I’ And what part of music learning is quickest? Or quicker for you?
R: Um, maybe the, well, you have to, …. I’m not sure about this one. …Maybe the, well, if you had a piece that you really know, and like you just go straight through it you can go onto the next thing.

I: Maybe another way round that is what feels easier for you in learning music?
R: Well seeing notes that I know straight away. The pieces that I know and I can just click right in to play them, I don’t have to practise them again.

I: Right, beautiful. So, um, did you ever play by ear? That is playing songs you’ve heard or knew of, but you didn’t have the music in front of you.
R: Yea, I used to play, all sorts of those things and my friends would just teach me and then I’d know straight away.

I: And so you spent a bit of time doing that?
R: Yep.

I: You enjoyed it?
R: Yea, it was fun. Cos they’d teach me really fun things cos they were more advanced, they’d teach me fun things that they knew and then I’d know them.

I: And so, that, ah, you had an opportunity to play music with your friends that way? [Yea]. Were there other ways that you played with other people with your keyboard?
R: No, not really [Shared your music], no.

I: And did you play music by memory, that is things from your books without the book?
R: Sometimes if the piece was easy and I knew it off by heart but otherwise I’d have to have the music.

I: Did you ever aim to learn pieces deliberately by memory?
R: No.

I: We talked about challenges and things, when things were challenging or difficult, what you did, were there any other ways that you overcame things that were a bit hard, talk to your teacher, talk to your mum?
R: Um, well I’d sometimes, I have a friend across the road who plays the piano really well. I’d ask her about some things, and um, I’d just try my hardest to get it right, and just try and remember the music and everything.

I: Yes, and so when you’d got a hard bit and you’re trying to do your hardest on, what does that mean, what did you make sure you did, what does trying your hardest mean?
R: Um, just trying to remember what my teacher said and just um, think of how she played it to me, how I can remember how to do it.

I: Generally what was hard about music? The notes, putting the notes in order or playing the rhythms that the music, that the notes went into?
R: Maybe the rhythm because it was hard to like keep it right because you had to hold notes for a certain time and you had to play one really quickly and join them up. And try to fit them all into the rhythm at the right time.

I: Right, OK. And how did you feel about your progress on the instrument?
R: Well I thought I went really, pretty good. I went through I think three books and thought I did pretty well, and I was about to go onto a newer totally different book but then I stopped doing piano.
I: Yea, OK, so you were pretty pleased with your, the way you were playing? [Yea]. And the sound you made? [Yea]. And when did you enjoy your music playing the most?

R: When I could just do whatever I wanted and find a piece in a book and play one that I really enjoyed.

I: And that would be a home sort of thing? [Nodded]. And did you spend much time practising, I mean did it sometime, not so much, how much did you practise but were there times when you spent a long time at the keyboard just enjoying yourself?

R: Yea, if I was bored I’d just go up and just maybe practise a piece or two and I could do whatever I wanted and just fiddle around.

I: So it was, was it something you felt you could do as a kind of leisure activity?

R: Yea.

I: Right. And um, how do you feel about having stopped you piano lessons now?

R: Well sometimes I wish I could still do it because I just see my friends just go to the keyboard and they play really well, and I’d feel like I wish I could still do that, but then sometimes I think I like sports better, and I like to get involved in things and be active and everything.

I: So, music is not active in that way?

R: Yea, if I was bored I’d just go up and just maybe practise a piece or two and I could do whatever I wanted and just fiddle around.

I: And that would be a home sort of thing? [Nodded]. And did you spend much time practising, I mean did it sometime, not so much, how much did you practise but were there times when you spent a long time at the keyboard just enjoying yourself?

R: If I was bored I’d just go up and just maybe practise a piece or two and I could do whatever I wanted and just fiddle around.

I: So it was, was it something you felt you could do as a kind of leisure activity?

R: Yea.

I: Right. And um, how do you feel about having stopped you piano lessons now?

R: Well sometimes I wish I could still do it because I just see my friends just go to the keyboard and they play really well, and I’d feel like I wish I could still do that, but then sometimes I think I like sports better, and I like to get involved in things and be active and everything.

I: So, music is not active in that way?

R: Yea, if I was bored I’d just go up and just maybe practise a piece or two and I could do whatever I wanted and just fiddle around.

I: So it was, was it something you felt you could do as a kind of leisure activity?

R: Yea.

I: Right. And um, how do you feel about having stopped you piano lessons now?

R: Well sometimes I wish I could still do it because I just see my friends just go to the keyboard and they play really well, and I’d feel like I wish I could still do that, but then sometimes I think I like sports better, and I like to get involved in things and be active and everything.

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I: So it was, was it something you felt you could do as a kind of leisure activity?

R: Yea.

I: Right. And um, how do you feel about having stopped you piano lessons now?

R: Well sometimes I wish I could still do it because I just see my friends just go to the keyboard and they play really well, and I’d feel like I wish I could still do that, but then sometimes I think I like sports better, and I like to get involved in things and be active and everything.

I: So, music is not active in that way?

R: Yea, if I was bored I’d just go up and just maybe practise a piece or two and I could do whatever I wanted and just fiddle around.

I: So it was, was it something you felt you could do as a kind of leisure activity?

R: Yea.

I: Right. And um, how do you feel about having stopped you piano lessons now?

R: Well sometimes I wish I could still do it because I just see my friends just go to the keyboard and they play really well, and I’d feel like I wish I could still do that, but then sometimes I think I like sports better, and I like to get involved in things and be active and everything.

I: So, music is not active in that way?

R: Yea, if I was bored I’d just go up and just maybe practise a piece or two and I could do whatever I wanted and just fiddle around.

I: So it was, was it something you felt you could do as a kind of leisure activity?

R: Yea.

I: Right. And um, how do you feel about having stopped you piano lessons now?

R: Well sometimes I wish I could still do it because I just see my friends just go to the keyboard and they play really well, and I’d feel like I wish I could still do that, but then sometimes I think I like sports better, and I like to get involved in things and be active and everything.

I: So, music is not active in that way?

R: Yea, if I was bored I’d just go up and just maybe practise a piece or two and I could do whatever I wanted and just fiddle around.

I: So it was, was it something you felt you could do as a kind of leisure activity?

R: Yea.

I: Right. And um, how do you feel about having stopped you piano lessons now?

R: Well sometimes I wish I could still do it because I just see my friends just go to the keyboard and they play really well, and I’d feel like I wish I could still do that, but then sometimes I think I like sports better, and I like to get involved in things and be active and everything.

I: So, music is not active in that way?

R: Yea, if I was bored I’d just go up and just maybe practise a piece or two and I could do whatever I wanted and just fiddle around.

I: So it was, was it something you felt you could do as a kind of leisure activity?

R: Yea.

I: Right. And um, how do you feel about having stopped you piano lessons now?

R: Well sometimes I wish I could still do it because I just see my friends just go to the keyboard and they play really well, and I’d feel like I wish I could still do that, but then sometimes I think I like sports better, and I like to get involved in things and be active and everything.

I: So, music is not active in that way?

R: Yea, if I was bored I’d just go up and just maybe practise a piece or two and I could do whatever I wanted and just fiddle around.

I: So it was, was it something you felt you could do as a kind of leisure activity?

R: Yea.

I: Right. And um, how do you feel about having stopped you piano lessons now?

R: Well sometimes I wish I could still do it because I just see my friends just go to the keyboard and they play really well, and I’d feel like I wish I could still do that, but then sometimes I think I like sports better, and I like to get involved in things and be active and everything.

I: So, music is not active in that way?

R: Yea, if I was bored I’d just go up and just maybe practise a piece or two and I could do whatever I wanted and just fiddle around.

I: So it was, was it something you felt you could do as a kind of leisure activity?

R: Yea.
I: And um, do any of your family play instruments?
R: No, we all used to but we don’t any more.
I: And did you used to get together and play together?
R: Not really.
I: No that’s alright. Did you talk about playing musical instruments together?
R: No.
I: How did it feel in school to be learning a musical instrument? What were the attitudes of other students at school to…
R: Well, my friends thought it was really great. We all learned an instrument and sometimes we’d just, cos we have piano and all instruments at school, and we’d just go in and just start playing things and then be really amazed at how good people could be on an instrument.
I: Yes. And when you think about high school, how do you think music, not just learning an instrument, but how do you think music learning fits into high school?
R: Well I think it fits in good cos it’s like, its good to learn an instrument in high school cos then you can go, be in the band and everything, but when you get up to high, you can do it for your HSC or something.
I: Yea, right, and being in band, what do you think is nice about band?
R: Well learning a musical instrument with a big group and um, putting together a big piece and everything and having fun [the group, people?] Yea.
I: Um, right, is there anything we’ve forgotten to talk about that your… remember, is there any time that you remember that was kind of really the pits of, the worst thing that you experienced n your playing?
R: Um, not really.
I: No, we’ve talked about some other things anyway. And um, your friends, you’ve got quite a few friends that play by the sounds of it.
R: Yea. Lots of my friends, well a fair few of them play the piano and I have a friend that plays the guitar, and um, some people that play drums and everything, yeah.
I: And the band. What do kids think of the band at school?
R: They like it, I think they find it good, and yeah, like lots of kids do it.
I: Yea it’s a strong program at school isn’t it?
R: Yea.
I: Great, thank you.
Appendix Q

TRANSCRIPT OF PRIMARY STUDENT INTERVIEW ABRIDGED

IV73 “Laura”

^ represents a cut in the dialog.
[ ] represents interviewer’s question re-interpolated

I learned the piano and I learned in private lessons. ^No [all the time just played by yourself?] Yea.

Well I thought it was fun and cos I didn’t really want to do that when I was older. I just wanted to learn the pieces that I wanted to and just, um, have fun and if I saw a music book I’d just open it and play any song but my teacher thought that I wanted to do that for the rest of my life, and, I had to practise really hard, but I didn’t think I wanted to so I thought I’d just do it how I wanted.

^ [What led you to believe you had to practise really hard?] Well, she had these stickers where she’d put them on my book, and if I had to practise she’d put a certain colour on, and if she wasn’t happy with me, she’d put a certain colour on, and if she liked how I played it, she’d put another colour on. And um, like, I’d get um, a lot of the ones that I had to practise on, so I thought that I had to, because I’d have to practise a lot. ^ Well sometimes she’d get cranky, because I wouldn’t practise, but I liked to do other things with my friends and everything and um, I just didn’t really like having the stickers on there, because it was annoying.

[I chose the keyboard because] Well, I saw people at school playing it and I really liked how they did it and everything and I thought it would be easy to do. And I just picked it up like that, thought it would be a good instrument to play. ^ [It seemed easier?] ^ Because it seemed easy because I could read some notes and I thought well that would be a good instrument because it looks easy to play.

^ Well, um, sometimes, I didn’t really like the practice, and um sometimes, because I didn’t practice, my teacher would get cranky and I didn’t really like to be yelled at and everything. And I liked to do other stuff outside of school and play with my friends and everything. And like not have to practise every day when I got home from school. ^No [did not talk to anybody about wanting to stop].^ It was more a gradual decision.

[In lessons] Well some pieces that I played I didn’t enjoy because they were boring and um, not very good, but the pieces I really did like playing I really enjoyed. We’d practise and then I thought the pieces I liked to do were fun, and I wanted to keep going but the pieces I didn’t want to do, I didn’t like it. [Did you talk with your teacher] ^ Well sometimes I’d go, oh, I don’t like playing this piece and then I’d just have to end up playing it and then pieces that I liked, we’d have lots of fun.

[And what makes a piece boring for you?] Um, maybe just the way its played, if it’s really hard, I can’t get it right, I get frustrated and yeah…

^ [How do you get over that challenge?] I just don’t do it. Or I keep trying and trying and ask for help if I need it. ^ Sometimes I ask Mum or I ask my teacher if I need help. And that’s about it because no-one else really knows how to play piano. ^[Other things in lessons were] Oh like little sheets where I had to write in notes and everything and I’d learn new notes and just the practices and … ^ Yea, some of them were alright. The easy ones were good. [One lesson in particular] ^ Oh, when I got a red sticker cos I didn’t practise that piece at all and it was really bad and yeah…[I thought] ^ I should have practised more, but it was a really hard piece and I wasn’t sure of some of the things and Mum didn’t know so I had to wait for my next lesson to ask the teacher and yeah…^ Yea, but sometimes she wouldn’t understand. She’d go on, you can play it and I would need more help…[You still felt you’d need more help?] Well I thought that um, if you’re not going to help me then how am I supposed to play the piece, since I don’t know how to. ^ It didn’t feel very good.

[What about your home practice?] Well, I’d get the pieces that she’d marked off for me to practise, the ones that I knew a lot, I’d practise them first, and that would be easy, but the ones I didn’t really, I’d have to take time and work on them. And just go through them slowly. [The plan was] ^ Well, the sections that I did know, I’d play them first and then the ones I wasn’t really sure of, I’d go through them slowly, I’d just practise then and then I’d put it all together. ^[Practice is for?] Well you have to practise because it makes perfect sometimes and um, you just, it makes you go better, but, if you don’t want to practise well then you’re not going to be very good at the instrument you play.
"[How does ‘practice make you perfect’?] Well if you practise you learn more and then you can understand, go up to higher playing like higher levels and everything but if you don’t practice, well then you don’t learn anything so you sort of drop back.^[Music learning feels?] Slow ^…[What part]" Well the learning and everything like it takes time to learn a piece and then get it perfect then move onto the next thing. ["The quickest?"] Um, maybe the, well, you have to, …I’m not sure about this one. …Maybe the, well, if you had a piece that you really know, and like you just go straight through it you can go onto the next thing. [What feels easier?] Well seeing notes that I know straight away. The pieces that I know and I can just click right in to play them, I don’t have to practise them again.

[Ever play by ear?] Yea, I used to play, all sorts of those things and my friends would just teach me and then I’d know straight away. [Spent a bit of time doing that?] Yep. Yea, it was fun. Cos they’d teach me really fun things cos they were more advanced, they’d teach me fun things that they knew and then I’d know them.

[Did not share music in any other ways]

^[Play by memory] Sometimes if the piece was easy and I knew it off by heart but otherwise I’d have to have the music.[Deliberately?] No.

^[If things were difficult] Um, well I’d sometimes, I have a friend across the road who plays the piano really well. I’d ask her about some things, and um, I’d just try my hardest to get it right, and just try and remember the music and everything.

^[What does your hardest mean?] Um, just trying to remember what my teacher said and just um, think of how she played it to me, how I can remember how to do it. [What was hard about music?] Um, I think the rhythm because it was hard to like keep it right because you had to hold notes for a certain time and you had to play one really quickly and join them up. And try to fit them all into the rhythm at the right time.

[And how did you feel about your progress on the instrument?] Well I thought I went really, pretty good. I went through I think three books and thought I did pretty well, and I was about to go onto a newer totally different book but then I stopped doing piano.^[Enjoyed it most] When I could just do whatever I wanted and find a piece in a book and play one that I really enjoyed. ^ Yea, if I was bored I’d just go up and just maybe practise a piece or two and I could do whatever I wanted and just fiddle around. [Like a leisure activity?] Yea.

[How do you feel about having stopped you piano lessons now?] Well sometimes I wish I could still do it because I just see my friends just go to the keyboard and they play really well, and I’d feel like I wish I could still do that, but then sometimes I think I like sports better, and I like to get involved in things and be active and everything. [Music is not active?] Well, it is sometimes, and it’s fun to do because whatever you do your hands work out or whatever, and um, but sometimes, it’s not like, running or things like that because running you don’t have to concentrate.

[So in music you need to concentrate? [Yea]. And the running and sports is less concentration? [Yea]].

[And is there anything that would have encouraged you to continue at the time?] ^ Well just being able to get a piano and start playing and seeing my friends, all my friends do it and see how fun it was, just to fiddle around but, yeah, I kind of stopped because I didn’t really like the practice, just, that sort of thing. [What might you have changed?] My teacher. [laughing]. And just um, maybe the books that I used, um, the ones that I enjoyed more with pieces that I enjoyed more and things like that.

I think it is important. It is good to do and everything.^[Yea I listen to a lot of music.

^[Yea, CDs and computer, radio, all sorts of things.^[Yea, I think I’m more interested into music, yeah.

[Has learning a musical instrument influenced how you feel about music?] Yea I think it has.^[How?] Well, sometimes, like with the pieces that I played, they were all a bit, like fun, happy one that I like to listen to and used to listen to other sorts of music so that I listen to the sort of music that I played.

[Family play?] No, we all used to but we don’t any more. [Did not get together and play or talk.]

[What were the attitudes of other students at school to…] Well, my friends thought it was really great. We all learned an instrument and sometimes we’d just, cos we have piano and all instruments at school, and we’d just go in and just start playing things and then be really amazed at how good people could be on an instrument.
[How do you think music learning fits into high school?] Well I think it fits in good cos it’s like, its good to learn an instrument in high school cos then you can go, be in the band and everything, but when you get up to high, you can do it for your HSC or something.

[What do you think is nice about band?] Well learning a musical instrument with a big group and um, putting together a big piece and everything and having fun [the group, people?] Yea.

[Friends that play] Yea. Lots of my friends, well a fair few of them play the piano and I have a friend that plays the guitar, and um, some people that play drums and everything, yeah. ^ They like it [the band at school], I think they find it good, and yeah, like lots of kids do it.
Appendix R  TRANSCRIPT OF ADULT INTERVIEW

7023_ Community “Gordon”

I = Interviewer; R = Respondent

I: Can you tell me about when you used to learn your instrument?

R: I started playing the clarinet at high school in about Year 8 about. I started playing clarinet because I heard another student playing it and I liked the sound of it and I had been thinking about doing some kind of instrument, and I kept doing it through several years of high school, then dropped it towards late high school, and I continued to play it on and off at various things, say music at a local church, and just playing for fun sometimes, and I still do it. The clarinet is sitting up in the cupboard and I pull it down every 12 months or so.

I: Your family?

R: Not a lot, mainly tape recorded music I guess. Dad plays the piano a little bit, so does Mum but we didn’t actually have a piano as I recall – no we did for a while, so we used to play it very occasionally and Mum hardly ever. So there wasn’t a lot of musical instruments going on until my brother and I played things at school. But there was plenty of music in terms of recorded music and tapes, and there was plenty of singing.

I: IN what form the singing?

R: We were sung to sleep, we got a song in the evening when we were going to bed as children, and then we were very active in the church at that time, so there was music groups and in choirs, as well as the regular singing. I also did some musical shows later on as I got older. As a singer – I did some Gilbert and Sullivan, and Sondheim. Post school, university.

I: What were your hopes and expectations about learning a musical instrument?

R: I certainly wasn’t thinking in terms of a career. I just wanted to be able to make music with it, and be able to play things that sounded nice.

I: Did you feel you fulfilled those hopes?

R: Mostly. I could have taken it further in terms of how far I went. But yes, it was a successful thing as far as that goes.

I: Could you describe what led up to stopping having lessons?

R: Time constraints and doing other things at school.

I: What else was happening then?

R: I may have continued lessons through most of high school. I can’t remember exactly when I stopped. It may even have been when I moved away from school. I was giving more time to my other subjects. I didn’t do music as a school subject. It was extra-curricular activity, when I got to HSC I just kept giving more time to my other subjects.

I: So in your recollection it was a gradual move away?

R: Now let me think. I did AMEB exams 3,4,5 each one getting progressively lower scores. And that would have been finished before I got to the end of high school. So then I stopped exams after that, and then** played at the church and things like that.

I: What would have encouraged you to continue at that time?

R: The strange thing .I have fairly prominent buck teeth, and I get a bit self-conscious about that. And I found that the mouthpiece of the clarinet tended to push me the wrong way. Maybe I was holding my mouth wrong as well, so thinking back, play in the corner so I was pushing so much, stronger lips or using my teeth as I probably should have been doing. That’s a weird little side effect and it was a bit of a consideration?

I: Is there anything else that might have encourage you to continue through to say the HSC?
R: I doubt it. My real interests just were in maths and science, and it wasn’t a case of was dissatisfied, its just that my real interests were with the maths and the science.

I: How do you feel about having stopped lessons now?

R: Fine. It doesn’t bother me. I think I learned enough that I can now pick up the clarinet, and sight-read music or play things by ear. When I feel like it. I can still pull it out and use it and I had no aspirations to be a great performer. SO what I have is a musical too that I can still use. Took me where I wanted to go.

I: Can you tell me about your lessons?

R: Lessons were a bit of a chore sometimes. I had a succession of different teachers, some better than others. One of the teachers I had could have made me feel a little bit nervous actually. He was a big guy, and he didn’t seem to have good control of his own mouth. He spluttered a bit when he talked, a slight speech impediment, he was kind of physical, he liked to put his arm around you and things like that and I didn’t feel totally comfortable. With that. There was nothing that was abusive or anything like that/. He just was not somebody I was completely comfortable with. He was my last teacher.

I: You mentioned AMEB?

R: Yes. Did various pieces, had to practice the arpeggios and so on. I also did a couple off my own bat. At one point I joined a band and we had band practices. Actually, OK, this answers the question you asked previously. It would have been better if I’d had more time in a band. With a lot of other instruments doing music together. I really enjoyed that.

I: You didn’t have much opportunity for band?

R: Not really.

I: Not at school or you didn’t take them up?

R: They didn’t have a lot at the school really. Inn terms of band. The band that I really enjoyed was one that was I just met a couple of guys in Uni in 1st year, and they were keen musicians, and they had their band that ran after school somewhere, and it was run more like a mini-orchestra. Like for school kids, but it was somewhat jazzy the things they did – Baby Elephant walk, Take 5, some quite challenging ones.

I: Can you tell me about your practising?

R: I guess I got into a bit of a routine for practice. I wasn’t hugely disciplined but I used to practice maybe half as much as I should have done, and I practised scales and arpeggios like I was meant to, but I was more keen to get onto the music pieces.

I: Did you stick to the repertoire the teacher had given you or did you play by ear?

R: I mostly stuck to what the teacher gave me. It was when I got a little bit older when I stopped lessons I guess that I was picking up whatever tunes they were doing in choir. I’d play along with a singing group or something and join in with that, or I used to pick up things from the radio, for fun.

I: Did it quite a bit?

R: I used to. Not now. I haven’t played for about year, so I'm due to have one soon, as I’ve just moved into a house and my niece is going to be interested in it.

I: did you play things by memory?

R: Yes, a bit. But mostly I preferred to play by ear or by music, from a score.

I: Did your playing involve playing to others much?

R: Occasionally when we Id be accompanying a singing group or something but I didn’t do a lot of solo performance things except one or twice for the school concert.

I: Can you tell me what helped you manage any problems you had, if any?

R: Not sure. Nothing sticks in my mind particularly as a problem except that it it hard work getting good at an instrument.
I: How did you feel about your progress?
R: I guess I was a bit disappointed I wasn’t progressing well in my grades. Thinking back I guess I was very keen on doing well, and I did do well in my academic subjects. My music subjects I tended to be kind of average. And that probably popped my motivations a bit?
I: What accounts for the averageness in music do you think?
R: Probably I just had to the quite automatic aptitude for maths and science whereas music I just had to work with and practice.
I: What sort of things did parents or teachers say about practice and learning?
R: Well my parents encouraged me to do the practice thing. And that not much that I recall.
I: What does practice mean to you?
R: To me, setting aside a bit of time, and having some standard pieces or things that you are wanting to master and going over them until you’ve got them. Now I don’t practice I fool around.
I: SO the difference being that you are not trying to master something, is that right?
R: That’s pretty much.
I: And do you enjoy that, fooling?
R: Yes, I like having a fool around now and then.
I: What are you doing when you do that?
R: Seeing if I can remember a piece or two, maybe its fairly spontaneous. My wife was playing some pieces on the piano, and so on play the melody line along over her shoulder.

I: When did you enjoy your music playing the most?
R: I guess when there’s a couple of other people doing it at the same time, at the same level. Working on some kind of musical challenge of some kind. Say if somebody is playing something on the piano and I try and accompany with it, or somebody singing something, and I can give a hand with the melody line, or we have a bit of music and we try …I don’t think there are a lot of other people around who play woodwind instruments, so it’s usually with a piano, or a singer. And there’s no piano here at all now.
I: The aspect that appeals to you there, is it musical or..
R: Yes, I think so. I like the sound of harmonies working together. Singing I used to enjoy doing the harmonies. I did chorus in the G&S. I did one solo once in a much smaller… the church put on Trial by Jury.
I: To recap that, you enjoyed music most when there were other people, around?
R: Yes, I think so, although I sometimes get it out and play by myself. Not often.

R: What about music has kept you interested through the years?
I: I don’t know. I like music, I like sounds and the way they work together. I still like to sing.
I: What do you feel music gives you, perhaps?
R: I don’t have a huge response to music in fact. I almost never play music or CDs for myself. Just not interested. But I like making sound; I like singing in the shower if I can get a reverberation. Because it sounds interesting. I enjoy the patterns that things make. That’s probably the mathematician in me.

R: What impact has learning a musical instrument had on your life?
I: Well its given an extra dimension that I’ve been able to carry through. I wouldn’t say its had a huge impact in terms of pushing me in particular directions or so on, but its given me a complement to my life that’s made it a little bit more interesting,, something else I can do. Without actually pushing me in a particular direction. In my whole life. Does that make sense.
I: Once you had finished your lessons, you were talking about music groups; what kept driving you to participate in the things you did after school?

R: Some of it might have even been showing off a little bit. People are interested to see the clarinet. Oh yes, I can do clarinet, here you are… Some of it was because it was fun to be with people and this was a good way to be with people, and do some music, a little singing group we had was good fun.

R: Is there anything we’ve forgotten to talk about?

I: The one thing that has been really useful to me, is the fact that my parents bought me a clarinet. If I had just used a hired school clarinet, I probably would have kept it up as much or as little as I have. I wouldn’t say I have kept it up, but the fact is I have a clarinet sitting on top of my bookshelf at the moment, that I could pull down. It’s not often, but occasionally. Having the instrument was a big benefit.

END
Appendix S       TRANSCRIPT OF TERTIARY STUDENT INTERVIEW

Tertiary Student 611 “Sanja”

I = Interviewer; R = Respondent

I: Can you tell me about when you started your main instrument, and some of the reasons you started that particular instrument?

R: I think I have two main instruments. I think I started piano when I was about 9, and maybe clarinet when I was 12 or 13. I remember starting piano because I am the youngest of 4, and all my older siblings played piano, and I just begged her to let me learn. For a while she was like you are not old enough yet but you will learn so I think I was about 8, and she was OK, OK, you can learn. Make sure you take it seriously though. I remember really wanting to learn, that’s why I started. For clarinet I wanted to learn trumpet, and I started to learn it but I didn’t like the smell…it’s not funny, I had a really old trumpet. So I took up clarinet instead. I was 13 because my hands were big enough, and I don’t really know the reasons can’t really remember. The reason I wanted to do it, in my town there was a concert band and my siblings were in it but I wasn’t, so again I wanted to learn something that they were doing. And I wanted to be involved in what they were involved in and so I had to pick up a non-piano instrument. To me at the time, it probably didn’t matter what it was. And I think the teacher would just recommend the instrument she needed most, so they probably needed clarinets.

I: Did your parents play?

R: No not particularly, my mum used to play a bit of piano, Dad really never played anything. But I know dad has a good ear, because he sings in tune. They are more into music now but they have CDs, but more some classical, but more Soundtracks and musicals. Also being brought up in the church there was always music around me. So I was very much wanting to be a part of that. We were always singing and stuff, and when Mum played the piano it was worship songs and stuff.

I: What were your hopes and expectations when you first started to learn?

R; No. I loved learning piano particularly, I don’t really know why. My older sister was quite good at it, and I remember her, after I had come home from my lesson, she would help me learn as well. In terms of hopes, expectations, there was a local eisteddfod every year and I remember being, I was in it every year, and so I remember once I was there I wanted to be good at it. Because I couldn’t be bad at it in front of my friends and stuff. That was a bit of an expectation that I would win in those sections.

I: Did these hopes/ aspirations/expectations change over the years?

R: Yes, I have realised how hard it is to master an instrument. But I have also realised that it’s actually achievable. Growing up you really haven’t a great perspective of what being good involves. But when you realise the reality I guess you either give up or strive for it more. I don’t think I’m ever going to be really good but I’m definitely not going to give up my music so…

I: Can you reflect on your lessons?

R: I remember almost always enjoying my piano lessons, and if I find at my lesson I remember coming home disappointed and I remember being able to get away with less practice than most of my friends who took up instruments, and still coming out with encouraging, my teacher thinking I was doing well. So that was encouraging. And when it wasn’t like that I was motivated to do a bit more work. Not too much but a bit. I also remember AMEB exams, and when we got up the grades a bit, 5th or 6th, my teacher put a bit more pressure on me to be more consistent with practice, and to take it a bit more seriously. So that was something that would make me enjoy lessons less. Just because it started to be less fun, and more exam focussed. But that was still a good thing and I remember after every exam we would always have, I got on really well with both my teachers. Even though the lessons were hard, it never really detracted from our relationship, because I had a good relationship with them.

I: What was a bad lesson for you?

R: If I worked really hard on something, and I got a very negative response from the teacher, she might
say, fix this fix this, and no positive comments, that would really discourage me. Sometimes it worked as a negative motivator.

I: You mentioned a ‘hard’ lesson?
R: I’m a really bad sight-reader. And so coming into a lesson where I hadn’t learned anything, and I had to read through it, is a lot of work. And still is a lot of work for my brain. And every line of music, 6 or 7 lines, you might have to play 4 things in the left hand and 4 things in the right hand. It’s a lot for your brain to take in, and so, just that would be… it’s hard to maintain that. For 50, 60 minutes. And scales. We used to do a lot of scales.

I: Lessons AMEB oriented?
R: More so for piano. Clarinet we would do exams but I would get away with doing a lot less work. And so for the majority of the lesson, we wouldn’t even look at AMEB pieces. I would do fun things like duets, and that also improved my sight-reading.

I: Easier on clarinet?
R: Much easier, one line to look at! In terms of reading from scratch, much easier on clarinet.

I: How do you go about your private practice?
R: I was never consistent. I sometimes enjoyed it, but more often than not my sitting down to practice would be ‘jamming’ or just improvising or not doing what I was supposed to be doing, but I guess that’s also a way of improving. I was very much pestered by my mum, who thought if she was paying for lessons I better practice, and because I really had the attitude that I didn’t want to give up but I didn’t want to practice either. So she made me, not made me, she would encourage me to practice and that was a good thing. For a while I went through a stage where I would just refuse to practice, it wasn’t motivating at all. Mostly enjoyed it. Even now, practising now, it’s a lot more pressure and you’ve got a lot of hard stuff to play, I still will sit down to practice and not find the motivation or the focus and so I end up just wasting an hour doing stuff, playing stuff on piano that I enjoy.

I: How do you think you got through the years on the amount of practice you did?
R: Two things. I used to memorise things fairly easy. And so because my ear is really good I can hear something and then work it out without even reading the music. So it is really bad when I HAVE to read something because I can’t do it, and my teacher even now is like, how can you play these and yet you can’t even sight read something easy? I really depended on my ear for most of my practice. And also once I did memorise something, I could just focus on playing the right notes, instead of having to read music. As soon as I hear a piece and know how it goes, I can pretty much play it. I’ve got to work at it, but it’s much less work than trying to read the music. So I guess it requires less practice.

I: How is Music Performance Anxiety for you?
R: I don’t really… if I know…performing in eisteddfods from year to year, growing up, did a lot for me, because young kids don’t really get affected by it, and if you are used to it, then you are much luckier than the people who are good performers, but put them in front of a group of people, and they want be
able to perform because their hands are shaking too much. Sometimes my hands are pretty good they
don’t usually shake. But sometimes my leg shakes. But that’s possibly the best thing that could happen,
except for my pedalling. For clarinet, I don’t think I really get nervous. I o a little bit but I know I’m
pretty lucky in terms of nerves. Sometimes I can really not be prepared for a performance and then still go
out and play it musically.

I: In what ways do you think high level skill in playing is acquired?
R: Consistent practice. I think it requires a lot more discipline than I really have the time for. But Ima
getting there, just slower than I should be. I’m just looking at potential versus where I am actually at, and
that’s a bit disappointing sometime, because I see that if I was serious I would be a lot better performer.
So …You need to be so much more disciplined you need to do so much technical work and then piece
work, and sight-reading play through your repertoire, play through a whole heap of things you can do, that
I am not really doing. Sometimes I get lessons where oh, you are doing well, and I haven’t really learned
much.

I: What does “practice” mean to you?
R: I see it as very boring sometimes and sometimes I will deliberately avoid it. But other times it can be
amazingly relaxing and it can cheer you up if you are having a bad day, you can take some time out away
from people and focus on your getting to be a better performer and better player. It can really calm you
and it can really lift your spirits. It depends, sometimes it can drop your spirits. Sometimes I think you
have got to be really careful about practice because sometimes you have to get in that zone, once you are
in the zone, your focus is amazing and you keep going in it; you wouldn’t even notice the 3 hours go past,
whereas other times you’ll be working and looking at your watch every 5 minutes, you have to make the
most of the time so it’s good. So that also means that you can’t really - for me, because that is not
consistent, my getting in the zone - I think I really can’t be that disciplined. I should be but …

I: How do you feel about your progress? (Times of challenge or struggle?)
R: Ohh. OK. If I am not practising well, then I know I might as well not be practising at all, because if
anything it is ineffective, or makes you worse, which is really something to avoid. So the fact that I do
less practice I think than I should, means that when I do it, I’ve got to make sure it is very effective. So
that’s my thing, to make sure when I do practice, it’s 100% effective, and not to waste time.

I: When you are not practising well, what are you doing?
R: After 5 minutes of playing what I sit down to play, a Chopin study for example, I will start practising
jazz chords, and then a few more, then I’ll try to work out a progression, and so I guess it is still musical
but it is really not. Chopin. After this degree I want to work on my jazz anyway, but I need to focus here.
To be a good jazz musician you need to be competent technically, so that’s why it’s really good to do a
degree like this that focuses on being really technical.

I: Is that the same for clarinet?
R: I find it less easy to motivate myself on clarinet. But when I do again it’s really good.

I: Have you ever thought of discontinuing your instrumental study?
R; I definitely thought about discontinuing one or the other just because sometimes it’s hard to maintain
both, but I never thought about stopping music all together. I really would hate that. It’s one of the most
amazing important enjoyable things to me. And in this degree is so ideal because you get to do what you
love doing. And you do it as a university thing. While other people are doing mathematics or physics
equations, we are listening to songs or playing in a small chamber group, just doing things that we love.
Even practice can be really really fun. Maybe in Yr 9 or 10 I wanted to quit piano, I was trying to do 8th
grade and it was hard, and I would have done…I did do it and did it well, but I just wasn’t prepared to put
the work in that I should have, so I knew that I could do it pretty easily if I practice. But I wasn’t
practising so that was my motivation for quitting. Just because it was more work than I wanted it to be.
But I never want to quit music. If I stop doing classical work, I’ll still be doing just music of some kind. I
was the one that wanted to do 8th grade, so it was my goal, except I wanted it to come easily.

I: So how did you get through that period?
R: I wanted to give up, and Mum was like, no, how much do you want to do the 8th grade, and I said, I still want to do it, so she said, keep going, don’t be stupid.

I: Did you do the work then?
R: Yes, I must have, I can’t really remember, I got an A but I still know that I could have done my pieces better.

I: Has playing always come easily for you?
R: It’s still hard, like there are some pieces especially now, we get given, most of my pieces are AMus standard, there’s no way you can learn them without practising. And that’s something I’ve had to deal with. I have not really had to do it until I studied music at a tertiary level. So now I am doing more practice than ever before. But still not as much as ideal. So…6 hours a week. Up till now, once you learned [the repertoire] but these pieces, especially last year, I got the biggest shock of my life coming into this degree, end of the year was a big big recital, 25 mins, and there was this Debussy piece, and I didn’t realise how hard it was, so hard, and I didn’t get a very good mark for that but at least I passed.

I: What shocked you?
R: Firstly was settling in. I was distracted socially, I'm always distracted socially. Just the fact that in my house now, without my parents doing anything, I'm doing a lot of things, housework I've never done before, and then so I didn’t do as much practice, and my teacher was like, you are going to fail and so I stressed out and practiced. Not until the very end - I didn’t learn one of my pieces until 3 weeks before the exam, so it was really … I don’t want to do it again this year, it was really pushing the line.

I: About clarinet?
R: I can generally do that, my timing is not as good but my sight-reading is good.

I: What might be one thing, or more, which has kept you interested and motivated to continue your learning?
R: I love it. I love the thrill of getting up there and performing in front of people, and I love the fact that you can create something really really really musical, just from playing a piece and making it there’s a huge pull with me musically, if I hear something I'll either not like or I'll just love it, and I'm also interested in contemporary music, not pop, but alternative, jazz, there’s a whole lot of music out there that I wouldn’t understand properly but I just like it and now because of music studies I can understand properly, and I love that I have that understanding because now I want to go to compose a piece and can do that as well. I get a huge amount of enjoyment out of music. Not just my own music, hearing other people. One of our courses involves concert practice, so the whole time we sit down and watch other people perform and it’s amazing, it’s just our peers, they are pretty good.

I: In what way/What role have other people played in your continuing interest in playing music?
R: Growing up it was definitely my family. Because I always wanted to be as good as my eldest sister. And also she did a music degree, but it was combined music/education degree, to be a music teacher. I just wanted to be a performer, so she is 7 years older, which is a fair way. I pretty much didn’t want to do music tertiary by the time I got here. It was more that I gave up on everything else. Rather than me giving up music. So it wasn’t like I was particularly good, I just gave up on school, and gave up on sport, because I was pretty sporty as well. I couldn’t see myself pursuing that as a career, couldn’t see myself as pursuing boring office work as a career, because that doesn’t stimulate me. So music is one of the things that really does stimulate me.

I: What do you see for yourself as your musical career?
R: I didn’t even know if I would get to do a BMus, but I got a scholarship and that was the answer. I wasn’t sure what I really wanted to do, but this is definitely not the whole time. And then I got it, and it was like, oh well you’d be stupid not to do it. So I am doing it, and eventually I want to start a little jazz band, travel, and teach overseas. There’s not many options. I'm definitely starting to be important to the music in my church, right now I'm on the worship team and, maybe ** play some music. Teaching music; I love kids, I just wouldn’t want to teach in a classroom. I love teaching them one-on-one. I see it as really encouraging and inspirational. You can get a lot out of that, seeing them develop. Both instruments, and I had some dodgy teachers, and good teachers, so that kind of helped to show me the difference that it could make. Your teacher can make a HUGE amount of difference. When I had a good teacher all I wanted to do was practice whereas if I had a bad teacher, the last thing I wanted to do the whole week was to either think about that. SO I guess the teachers play a huge part in motivating and inspiring you,
I: What impact has learning a musical instrument had on your life?

R: Right now music is a huge part of my life. I can’t drive somewhere without putting a CD player on. I’ll be in certain moods, during the day and if I heard songs stuck in my head, it’s usually a really complex one, and they rhythms just go around in my head….I have some really musical friends, and when they get together to have a jam, that’s really rewarding. Two of my flatmates have a jazz trio, and they are just amazing. They play at a hotel every week. It’s been awesome because it’s opened my world up to a completely different music world. All I ever learned was classical, I never liked pop music, but this is very jazz, and heavy stuff, and I never really understood it, but now I just love it so much. Also I can see that a lot of people get enjoyment from my music. Like when I moved away from home, mum used to ring me up and say I miss you practising, and I never realised. Practising isn’t a nice sounding thing. But apparently it is. And my friends love it as well. They say, play me a song. The fact that we can start a band, it’s not hard, it just comes easily.

I: Is there anything else you’d like to mention about your experiences?

R: I think growing up in a Christian home was a big development of my music, because I was surrounded by good music and I think there must be a lot of musical people in the church, because all the people at my school that tended to be really musical were the ones who went to my church, so that was really weird. There’s a strong connection between church and music for me. And I still see that now, growing up, and that’s part of why I do music. I see it’s more for – it’s a way of worshipping my God.

I: You mentioned overseas?

R: I could join the army band but I am going to see where it takes me I’m not really fussed. I want to go overseas anyway, I might have made up my mind.

END
Appendix T  
CODEBOOK FOR STEPS 1, 2 & 3 IN STAGE 2 ANALYSIS

General notes on the coding

This codebook explains the process of coding and describes the codes that were created through the coding process. Two purposes of a codebook are, first, to provide a record or log of analytical decisions across the project, which is used in reporting and dissemination of the findings, and second, to inform readers of the research of the logical process and evidence of the study. The codebook is written in order that the coding process be transparent, and that it could be utilised by other researchers using the same data. The codebook acts as an outline of the analysis path.

The coding process places text into categories (in software jargon, ‘nodes’), and the text remains tagged by the code name. In this study, ‘coding’ (verb) is the action undertaken to place the texts in nodes (noun), the ‘containers’ of the text. Any amount of text can be selected to be coded, and selection was based on the criteria of the text representing the meaning or description of the category. This process was more refined for the second step so that only the most essential aspects of the node were present in the coded text.

The coding structure used in this project was hierarchical, meaning that text coded at the first category could then be further coded into more refined or distinct categories within the hierarchy. In the software, this hierarchy is referred to as a ‘tree node’. The top level node of the tree node is called the parent or top-level node. The second level nodes immediately under the parent node are ‘children’ of the parent node, and third level nodes under the child nodes are the ‘grandchildren’ nodes. Text is usually not coded at more than one node of one level in the hierarchy, although it may be ‘coded on’ from level 2 to level 3. Thus, all sub-nodes of a category represent more refined or distinctive aspects of the broader top-level category. See Figure A1 for an example of the hierarchical structure of the nodes.

Figure A1 shows:

- Top-level node: **Self**
  - Second level nodes: **PA** (personal attributes); **MAEB** (musical ability & efficacy beliefs); **SEST** (self esteem)
    - Third level nodes: **DSPSN** (disposition) & **IDCOR** (identity/core beliefs); **MAEB** negative & positive; **SEST** negative & positive
The steps of the coding process are indicated in Table A1. The purpose of the first step of coding was to make a systematic overview of the scope and range of the data (Mason, 1996, p. 112). This included allocating all text to at least one code, top-level in the tree node. The large amount of data gathered through the interviews was collected into broad sweep categories reflecting either topics, events, processes or temporality following a ‘literal’ reading (Mason, 1996) of each interview in turn. This first pass, top level coding was essentially a structural coding, that is, representing the structure of topics of the research questions. The interview questions focused on participants’ description or narration of attitudes and behaviours in lessons, practice, and other playing, and of interactions between teacher-student, parent-student and peer-student.

Other top-level nodes were created as reading of the texts offered new major categories. The inductive top-level nodes were often conceptual representations of top-level structural categories. For example, the analysis of the roles that appeared to be acted out or fulfilled by people associated with the participants led to a list of roles acted by several people. Placing roles as a top-level node enabled the node to be searched to find out which people (another top-level node with sub-nodes) were acting each role. It also prevented the hierarchies from proliferating into fourth and fifth levels, which makes searching and description difficult.

The purpose of the second step of coding was to identify different dimensions, ranges, or instances of these categories; these became the sub-nodes in the hierarchy. This step was thus an inductive step, allowing the data to define the dimensions, range or specifics of the category.

Table A1: Activities in Step 1 and 2 of the qualitative analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category level</th>
<th>Analysis activities</th>
<th>Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Top level A Priori</td>
<td>Place data into categories derived from interview guide &amp; research questions</td>
<td>What is this data about?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top level I inductive</td>
<td>Derived from reading &amp; analysis of top level structural nodes</td>
<td>What is this (categorised) data about?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second &amp; third level</td>
<td>Compare segments of data to refine and dimensionalise the top-level category</td>
<td>What does this segment tell me about the category?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Each top-level node and its hierarchy is described below. The top-level nodes are first listed and described, followed by a description of the node and its subnodes, what is included in the subnode, what is not included if there could be conjecture, and an example of text coded at that node.

**Top level A priori nodes**

* A1. Musical Activities
  
  Captures all text that concerns activities, actions or behaviour in music.

* A2. People
  
  Contains all text that is about people other than self; influence of others, interactions with others.

* A3. Identity, core beliefs about self
  
  Contains all the text about self, including description of self, evaluations, beliefs about the self.

* A4. Attitudes & Emotions
  
  Contains all text about participants’ affective attitudes, emotions or feelings.

* A5. Motivation
  
  All text capturing the notion of motive, purpose, interest in, reason for learning music.

* A6. Discontinuation
  
  All text that exclusively and explicitly concerned feelings & thoughts that led towards giving up.

* A7. Persistence
  
  All statements concerning intention to continue, continuation of learning.

**Top level inductive nodes**

* I1. Roles
  
  All text that reveals the different roles that others (peers, parents, teachers), may be creating or fulfilling.

* I2. Outcomes of learning
  
  All text about the outcomes, results, impact, consequences of learning an instrument.

* I3. Impact of learning
  
  All text capturing the impact, effect of learning, of music participation, of engagement.

* I4. Learning
  
  All text capturing learning beliefs, will to learn, thoughts about the learning process and tasks.
The following lists each of the top-level nodes along with their subnodes and descriptions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A1. Musical Activities sub-nodes</th>
<th>A Priori Top-level node</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Musical Activities /Lessons</strong></td>
<td><strong>Description</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statements about lessons, activities in lessons, description of lessons, type of lesson, feelings about lessons</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inclusion</strong></td>
<td>Any statement about music lessons, at any period of time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Exclusion</strong></td>
<td>Statements that describe the teacher's approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Text example</strong></td>
<td>'in the lessons I could memorise the song that we did first that's easy because she would kind of start it off with me and then she’d finish it off and she has these ways to remember it, like CDEFG, make it like a catchy tune'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Musical Activities /Exams_performance</strong></td>
<td><strong>Description</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statements about performance and exams, including group, formal &amp; informal performances</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inclusion</strong></td>
<td>Any statement about performing, including feelings, description, thinking about performing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Exclusion</strong></td>
<td>Statements that are not concerned with the participants' reflections of their own performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Text example</strong></td>
<td>'I was even more nervous in the real exam. I was so nervous that at one stage I stopped halfway through a song'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Musical Activities /Ensemble</strong></td>
<td><strong>Description</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statements about participating in a group, formal &amp; informal,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inclusion</strong></td>
<td>Any statements that are descriptions, feelings, thoughts about ensemble playing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Exclusion</strong></td>
<td>Statements that are about ensembles that are not related to the student (e.g., the Sydney Symphony Orchestra)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Text example</strong></td>
<td>'It was a lot more easier when you have like a group'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'And then I went to a band camp, and I really, like I really, enjoyed it and I realised that I really wasn't enjoying [school] band'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Musical Activities /Listening</strong></td>
<td><strong>Description</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All text about deliberate listening to music, recorded, radio, live concerts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musical Activities sub-nodes</td>
<td>A Priori Top-level node</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Inclusion**
All statements about deliberate listening activities, including what, where, with whom, preferences,

**Exclusion**
Statements that are about listening to one's own practice

**Text example**
‘I really like the radio and I love listening to it’
‘We all have CD players in our rooms to listen to every night.’

---

**Musical Activities /Practice**

**Description**
Statements that describe activities in and feelings about practice, as well as statements that describe the nature of practice

**Inclusion**
All statements that describe what a participant did, thought about, was told to do, evaluated or planned as practice

**Exclusion**
Statements that are about the teacher or another student

**Text example**
‘I noticed I was getting better at it the more I practised, but the less I practised I was getting worse at it’

---

**Musical Activities /Practice / Practice Strategies**

**Description**
Statements about how practice was undertaken, activities, planning.

**Inclusion**
All statements about the way in which students reported they went about their practice.

**Exclusion**
Statements that are about the ways other people practice, or instructions given for practice if not reported to be carried out.

**Text example**
See below

---

**Musical Activities /Practice / Strategies: Mid-high level**

**Description**
Practice methods including chunking, speed alteration, scanning, research.

**Text example**
‘so I would work on the one piece for ages sometimes, and just slowly and slowly work them through the difficult pieces’
‘I would go look through it and I would find out what the problem was’

---

**Musical Activities /Practice / Strategies: Low level**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A1. Musical Activities sub-nodes</th>
<th>A Priori Top-level node</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Description</strong></td>
<td>Practice including repetition, trial and error, play-through, going over and over, no response or avoiding practice, external recourse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Text example</strong></td>
<td>‘When I get to a difficult passage there is no substitute except just to play over and over and over and over that, and that eventually I will get there’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘so I end up just wasting an hour doing stuff, playing stuff on piano that I enjoy’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Musical Activities / Practice / Strategies: Seek assistance**

**Description**
All statements about seeking assistance, asking for help, talking to others about how to accomplish a practice task.

**Text example**
‘Occasionally I would seek Grandma’s help’

Otherwise I would just get to my lesson and go, ‘I really don’t know how to do this section’.

---

**Musical Activities / Practice / Focus of practice: High level**

**Description**
All statements that indicate a focus on the meaning of the music in the practice session.

**Inclusion**
Statements that are about these elements not in the context of the individual’s practice.

**Text example**
‘I try to do it less mechanically, and more emotionally, getting to the mood of the piece’

‘The main purpose of it is to get the main message of the music’

---

**Musical Activities / Practice / Focus of practice: Mid level**

**Description**
All statements that indicated awareness of musical elements, such as dynamics and emotional content, and that music could be meaningful when practising.

**Inclusion**
Statements that are about these elements not in the context of the individual’s practice.

**Text example**
‘I put everything in here, harmony, aural, everything, so I don’t need to worry about the technique’

‘You always need to have new ideas because otherwise it’s stagnant’

---

**Musical Activities / Practice / Focus of practice: Low level**

**Description**
Statements that are about a focus on the technical, reading, keys, notation, rhythm patterns.

**Exclusion**
Statements that are about these elements not in the context of the individual’s practice.
A1. Musical Activities sub-nodes

**A Priori Top-level node**

*Text example*

‘Saying it out aloud so it sticks in our minds so it’s like CDEC’

‘going over my theory notes of what the notes were and how they should be played’

A2. Top level People codes

**A Priori Top-level node**

______ People/ Parents, Family

*Description*

All statements about parents, family, siblings & extended family; description of their activities, involvement with participant

*Inclusion*

Any statement about parent, family, sibling, grandparent-student interaction, description of those people, what they said & did

*Text example*

I had a lot of support from my family.

______ People/ Peers

*Description*

All statements about peers, description of activities, interactions, involvement with participant, attitudes of, feelings about peers

*Inclusion*

Any statement about peers, including description of peer attitudes, interactions

*Text example*

‘And it was a constant thing that everyone was competing together, all day. You still made good friends, it was just a competitive all the time’

‘but they were friends from high school which I didn’t talk to much but I really started talking to them because they played guitar, and they love music, so we talk about music’

______ People/ Teachers

*Description*

All statements about teachers, description of their activities, interactions, involvement with participant

*Inclusion*

Any statement about teacher-student interaction, description of teacher

*Text example*

‘so the music teacher suggested that I start on clarinet first and then go onto saxophone if I wanted to’

______ People/Others

*Description*

Statements describing people other than peers, parents or current teachers, who have interactions concerning music learning with the student
### A1. Musical Activities sub-nodes

**Inclusion**
Any statement about others who have some influence, impact, significance for student in context of music learning
Statements about other people that do not have relevance to music learning

**Text example**
‘She was more just a friend, an older sister teaching me the ropes’

---

**People/ Children of participants**

**Description**
Statements describing, about, the children of the participants

**Exclusion**
Statements about children in general

**Text example**
‘And a couple of my children are quite good musically’

### A3. Identity/self nodes

---

**Self / Personal attributes**

**Description**
All text about personal attributes, about the sort of person ‘I am’; self-appraisal, worth, ability

**Inclusion**
All comment about the sort of person I am etc; statements of self-appraisal, self-worth, attributions to self; including appraisal of competence; descriptions of self, core beliefs about self, identity.

**Exclusion**
Should not include musical efficacy or ability beliefs or self-esteem

**Text example**
‘I suppose you could say I’m a bit lazy, to go and ask everyone can I go to the band’
‘but I probably didn’t have sufficient inner commitment or acknowledgement that I really had that much to contribute’

---

**Self / Efficacy and ability beliefs**

**Description**
All thoughts about efficacy, ability and talent in music

**Text example**
‘so I thought if I do more practice, I might be good at the flute’ [positive]
‘I was always good at it so I took it for granted for a long time’ [positive]
‘I said kept on feeling like I’m not that good’ [negative]
‘But I would not say that I can improvise well’ [negative]
A3. Identity/self nodes

Self/ Self-esteem

Description
All judgemental thoughts positive and negative about self and personal esteem issues, evaluations of self.

Text example
‘relaxed attitude towards not beating myself up over not being the best either’ [positive]
‘but I think there’s a need in me to kind of stretch myself and overcome this basic fear and feeling of not being good enough’ [positive]
for a while I was not getting very good marks, and I thought I was terrible’ [negative]
‘my confidence was leaking out the side with him, I felt worse and worse about myself. I felt as though I didn’t belong or mattered’ [negative]

A4. Attitudes & emotions

Emotions / Positive: Enjoyment

Description
All statements about pride, indicating self respect, pleasure with self having done something.

Inclusion
Any statement of feelings that are specifically about personal achievements, activities etc.

Exclusion
Statements that concern other’s pride in the individual.

Text example
‘our teacher would play songs that she made up and all the words she knew so we’d have fun and we’d eat sometimes’

Emotions / Positive: Pride

Description
All statements about relief felt as release from an activity, thought, interaction.

Text example
‘less stressful and I think I’m enjoying not having to do practice’
‘now I’ve given up I’ve got some more time, more time to do my homework’
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emotions / Negative: Boredom</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Description</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All statements about feeling bored, experiencing boredom in practice and playing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Text example</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘because I was really excited about practising and then it just sort of got boring after a while’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘I guess practice, was like, not hard work, bit it was like a bit boring in a way’</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emotions / Negative: Frustration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Description</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All statements that report, describe frustration, bafflement, practising in vain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Text example</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘if it’s really hard, I can't get it right, I get frustrated’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘I sort of had this thing. I was working so hard, and I wasn't getting any results’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emotions / Negative: Anxiety</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Description</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All statements that describe anxiety, stress worry, rumination over problems, including music performance anxiety.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inclusion</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statements that describe feelings, and somatic symptoms of worry, anxiety or nervousness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Text example</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘I was a bit nervous about that because I didn’t want a strict teacher’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘having the exact same feeling that I was going to die, getting up there shaking and sweating’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emotions / Negative: Lack of pleasure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Description</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All comment referring to dislike, not liking, not enjoying, any activity associated with music: practice, lessons, rehearsals, progress, social interactions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Text example</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘it started getting annoying because I started cricket and tennis and I was tired’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emotions / Negative: Shame</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Description</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All statements about feeling badly in or about one’s self for actions, outcomes associated with practice, performance, lessons, &amp; interactions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Exclusion</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statements that are about circumstances other than musical activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Text example</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘that if everyone went along with it and I was the only one left out, it made me feel bad’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A4. Attitudes & emotions

--- Emotions / Ambivalent

Description
Statements that are neither positive or negative in relation to a choice, attitude, or opinion.

Text example
’maybe I might, maybe I won’t’

A5. Motivation

--- Motivation / Social

Description
All text concerning motivation by interaction with others; feeling excited, inspired, having a reason to practice or continue. Ranges from doing what was asked by parents to being inspired by others.

Text example
‘But I had that type of upbringing where if I was told I had to do it, I had to do it’
‘Firstly my parents were very much into, I had three sisters I was the only boy of 4, giving us all an opportunity to learning instruments along the way. They encouraged it, so the whole lot of us learned piano, a from about the age of 5’
‘They were my kind of not my idol, but I wanted to be like them’
‘Both my parents were musicians so I suppose I just wanted to do what they were doing’
‘So he pushed me as well. I remember he was, particularly when I was younger playing the piano, he kept me, captivated me’
‘In these days its not so much encouragement, its more looking at other people who I consider to be good musicians, and thinking I would love to be able to do that’
‘I want to play good music with good people’

--- Motivation / Internal_Intrinsic

Description
All statements concerning motivation from personal liking, interest in music and learning, feeling for the sound of the music by the individual.

Text example
‘I like music and the sound that the saxophone makes’
‘being able to produce that music is what has kept me going’
‘I just loved being able to play it’
‘When I was six years old I said to Mum I want a piano, I want to learn piano’

--- Motivation / Career

Description
All statements concerning motivation to make a transition from being a student to professional, or having music as a career.

Text example
‘then my aspirations changed a little bit. But I probably wanted to be part of an orchestra’
### A5. Motivation

A Priori Top-level node

‘I don’t have the expectation of being a great soloist. I know I will never be that, but I would really love to earn my living playing music’

**Motivation / External**

**Description**

All statements concerning motivation from externalities, such as obligation to learn, school program, parents’ choice.

**Text example**

‘Initially I took up the flute when I was at high school, because the school offered a school band’

‘That was just one of things we did I suppose’

### A6. Discontinuation

A Priori Top-level node

**Description**

All text concerning signs that the student is intending to, has feelings specifically about discontinuing.

**Inclusion**

Statements that are about losing interest, becoming demotivated; all thoughts about giving up.

**Exclusion**

Any statement that is about learning in negative tone that does not mention discontinuation in same statement or as a consequence of the described experience.

**Text example**

‘And that was much more important to me than the musical side of things’

‘Not having the time, and a change of school.’

‘I just think that if I hit the wall I didn’t have the strategies of how to overcome that and then Id get into most probably negative thinking, and then just give it up.’

‘After that, being in my teens, I lost interest a bit, and didn’t like the exam side of it.’

[“What finally decided you to stop?”] Well, I found it a bit hard to play the instrument’

### A7. Persistence

A Priori Top-level node

**Description**

All statements about continuing on in face of some setback, or other change in earlier feelings about music learning.

**Inclusion**

Statements about continuing and persisting in learning music.

**Text example**

‘But I kept coming back to it because it is really the only skill I know, and It seems that I do really love doing it.’

‘I think it was just a matter of keeping on plugging away and I do that now with my playing. Things will just not be working. I’ll reach a standard and I can’t get beyond that for a while. I keep working and after about a month or two, suddenly things start to happen again or suddenly I can do all these things that I have been trying to do for months’

‘Probably 6 months where I just couldn’t get into it, couldn’t get motivated, but my parents toughed it out, and ‘we
started you now, get past this. See how you feel after your next exam, you can give up after your next exam if you want’. At the end of every exam I would feel get excited again, up a grade.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I1. Roles</th>
<th>Inductive Top-level node</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Role/ Initiator</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Description</strong></td>
<td>All text concerning someone who instigated, initiated learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Text example</strong></td>
<td>‘My mum enjoyed playing piano so she suggested it to me’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘Well, when I was about 5, Dad said how would you like to learn recorder, so he took me to Foley’s and we bought a recorder and we started’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Role/ Advisor** | |
| **Description** | All text on those who advised, gave information for instructional purpose, not teachers |
| **Text example** | ‘When I was younger I needed before I was able to read music fluently by myself, it would be her pointing to the note, and me playing it, or her listening to my scales and arpeggios and listening for any notes out of place’ |
| | ‘go to our parents and see if they could help us with it’ |

| **Role/ Guardian** | |
| **Description** | All statements about those who paid for lessons, kept time, regulated learning and practice. |
| **Text example** | ‘but Mum said you’ve got to practise first’ |
| | ‘But at the time it was, “if you don’t do this you cant go to X”’ |

| **Role/ Encourager** | |
| **Description** | All text on those who encouraged, praised, were available to learners |
| **Text example** | ‘with my family. It was always good to show them’ |
| | ‘My teacher from high school days, he’s one of the reasons I want to do music, and why I am doing music’ |

| **Role/ Role model** | |
| **Description** | All text about inspiration from others more capable in music |
I1. Roles

Text example

‘and my cousin plays the flute, so she was doing all exams and she’s moved from a student flute up to the next flute so I got the student flute which was good. ^ I heard my cousin play it and just thought it played really nice music’.

‘And knowing my sister, she probably practices 8 hours ago, really worked hard, and I think, I’m not going to get anywhere unless I do that as well.’

Role/ Musical peer

Description
All text about musical-interest-related friends, including feeling as though they were colleague in music, social sharing, camaraderie

Inclusion
Any statement that describes interactions with music and peers, of negative or positive tone

Exclusion
Statements that are concerned with peers’ activities that are not interactions with the student

Text example
‘me and Liam would listen to it and Liam would start dancing and things like that’

‘the band director’s son, was a great player himself and he was in the percussion quartet, and he had a thing about if you weren’t up to scratch, then he’d let you know, and I can smile about it now, but at the time, it was pretty bad’

Role/ Musical kin

Description
All text about members of family sharing a musical bond, having something in common

Inclusion
Any statement that concerns musical activities of or interactions with family undertaken together

Statements that describe family activities without indication of belonging, interaction or involvement of the student

Text example
‘my family’s quite a musical family’

‘everybody else in my family doesn’t [practise] and they’re pretty good players’

I2. Outcomes of Learning

Outcomes of Learning/ Accomplishment/ Achievement

Description
All comment of positive tone concerning achievement, accomplishment, actual, perceptions or a sense of, actual marks or grades, levels passed, milestones passed, evaluations by others of the participants’ playing, performance, progress, at home, in lessons, in band etc. Generally associated with positive emotions.

Inclusion
Statements of positive tone regarding achievement, accomplishment for the participant.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcomes of Learning</th>
<th>Inductive Top-level node</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Text example</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘I picked it up very quickly and was in the band, in four weeks’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘My best period of progress was from when I was slowly…’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘But the progress that you make once you are out of the rut I think more than makes up for it’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘As I progressed though it became apparent that I really liked it, and I was sort of good at it as well’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Outcomes of Learning/ Musical encounter**

*Description*

All statements about music being personally meaningful as a result of learning, of experiencing a song, a musical message as an outcome of learning the piece. This is generally in a positive tone, associated with positive emotions.

*Inclusion*

Statements about meaning, personal, subjective responses to music making by the individual.

*Exclusion*

Any statement that is about musical meaning in contexts other than music making by the participants.

**Text example**

‘I think [I liked best] all the parts of the songs together’

‘I'd just go off in my own world and ….play what I liked and made up little songs’

‘In 8th grade, I played a Bach Prelude and Fugue, and that really stuck out to me, because I really enjoyed it a lot. And that was probably an important moment I suppose’

**Outcomes of Learning/ Progress OK**

*Description*

All text about making little or no progress, students feel they are not getting very far. Generally associated with negative tone, such as disappointment, possibly frustration.

**Text example**

‘Even though sort of my results reflected that I had improved, I still don't feel that I have improved’

‘But I’m getting there, just slower than I should be’

‘When you look back, its not very rapid’

‘I think I got a B, but I remembered that as just scraping through’

**Outcomes of Learning/ Personal limit**

*Description*

All text about having gone far enough, satisfied with level of proficiency, had done enough. Generally mildly positive in tone.

**Text example**

‘I could do everything that I wanted to do and I knew that I wasn’t going to be a flute soloist or whatever’

‘partly because I thought well, I can now play, I an teach myself quite a bit’

‘I always believe you can walk away with that and say you’ve done that, and it’s not really a waste of time’
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I2. Outcomes of Learning</th>
<th>Inductive Top-level node</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcomes of learning/ Deficit or lack</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Description</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All text about not learning things, not being able to do things, failure, lack of success, in the context of music making, performing, playing, practising. A sense of deficit or lack as well as direct descriptions of failure. Generally associated with negative feelings.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Text example</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘except for playing the high notes. Because I couldn't get the right one out’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘except for some of the music, they had all ups and downs and different notes that I didn’t know’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘So I’m feeling like I’m not getting away with it much at the moment’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘It’s like everything you go for in that moment, you're trying to do something, and it just doesn't happen’</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I3. Impact of learning</th>
<th>Inductive Top-level node</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Impact of learning / Self-fulfilling</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Description</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All text that described self development, self-esteem, well being, identity, ownership, belonging, good memories, social complement to life, life goals, life skills, extra dimension</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Text example</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘I was going to say my practice is the most successful emotional therapy I'll ever have’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘I think that something that is much harder to bring about because it's like exultation of your soul. It's like celebrating something.’</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| __Impact of learning / Emotional experiences in music__ |
| **Description** |
| All text about music & emotion experiences, refuge, relaxation, pleasure, including pleasure in pottering around |
| **Text example** |
| ‘Listening to music is big for me as well, it can help your mood, enhance, if you feel bad’ |
| ‘Its been wonderful. Its developed my whole entire feelings in that direction’ |

| __Impact of learning / Mental__ |
| **Description** |
| All text that captures the notion of mental engagement, need to learn, new skills, new challenges & discoveries |
| **Text example** |
| ‘It has obviously taught me about discipline because I had to get up so early in the morning. And changed how I think about a lot of things, I've learned lots of things about music’ |
| ‘just meant that I can understand things from a slightly different perspective’ |
### I3. Impact of learning

#### Impact of learning / Music appreciation

**Description**
All text capturing appreciation, base knowledge, understanding context of music, respect of musicians, listening with interest

**Text example**
‘It had quite an influence, and I think it that finer things give you an appreciation of lots of nice things’

‘I guess I appreciate people who can play really well’

#### Impact of learning / Participation

**Description**
All text capturing continuation, starting to learn again, the prospect of learning

**Text example**
‘Well it left me with the need to want to learn’ …’ then suddenly I decided, no I’m going to learn to play a musical instrument’

#### Impact of learning / Wishful thinking

**Description**
All text that describes wishful thinking, ranges from wistful, to wishful, to regret

**Text example**
‘I kind of wish that I had kept doing it, now. I really wish that I was a better pianist’

‘I think, gee I would love to be able to do that’

### I4. Learning

#### Learning / Beliefs about learning

**Description**
All statements that concerned participants’ beliefs about learning and about musical knowledge.

**Inclusion**
Statements that are about logical as well as illogical notions of learning, that are about the participants’ perceptions of what learning is like and/or of what musical knowledge consists.

**Text example**
‘Well, repetition is probably, lots of practice, there’s not any simple way to do it’ [naïve]

‘You are thankful that you can hit it and get the right sound’ [naïve]

‘When you’ve got to study, you can’t really do that. You have to learn how to play specific things to give you skills’ [sophisticated]

‘At 14 you can probably start to move into more adult musical conversation. Rather than, let’s get this C# in tune.’ [sophisticated]
### Learning / Purposeful learning

**Description**

Statements that described being deliberate, purposeful, thoughtful in approach to practice; where participant described thought, effort, goals, or preparation.

**Text Example**

‘So I had at least, make sure that I’ve actually learned something and accomplished something, and that’s how I accomplished it’

‘I think actually monitoring your progress yourself, rather than just going, “Oh, yeah, it sounds better”’

‘Is it my energy, or what’s it going to mean in a performance. That’s how I go about practice now and it works a lot better. Doing a scale doesn’t mean anything if it’s not going to make a difference out there.’

### Learning / The imperative to practice

**Description**

All statements about the primacy of practice as a method of learning, with the emphasis on the amount of practice completed or necessary. Contains descriptions of the process of ‘practice makes perfect’.

**Text Example**

‘Well you have to practise because it makes perfect sometimes’

‘If I can do it, then I’ll still practice it, if I have to play it. Once you’ve got it to the standard you can play, you can’t stop there, you can only get better, so it starts to become redundant but it means you can memorise it which is a really good thing’

‘I look at something I just keep playing it over and over and over and over again until it’s in my head’

‘Basically the practice is getting a piece of music to a point where you are happy with it’

‘Practice makes perfect. If you don’t practice you don’t get anywhere’

### Learning / Willing / Unwilling to learn

**Description**

All statements about making the effort, spending time on learning and practising, indicating that the participant was willing and intentional in their approach to their learning. Also all statements that indicated the opposite of this; unwilling, reticent, indication of lack of intention, explicit descriptions of lack of effort.

**Text Example**

‘It would take me about two weeks and I used to spend a lot of time’[willing]

‘Well I’m much more like, ah like, I want to do it, I’m happy to do it, I keep wanting to try to do it’[willing]

‘I am putting in a lot of hard work, and I hope that it does pay off’[willing]

‘So there’s another time I could have said, forget it’[willing]

‘I’d like to learn saxophone, but I don’t think I’d have the willpower of practicing it’[unwilling]

‘But I’ve never had the will power to work past that point’[unwilling]

‘And I knew the music and the scales, and I couldn’t be bothered’[unwilling]

‘For a while I went through a stage where I would just refuse to practice, it wasn’t motivating at all’[unwilling]
Other non-hierarchical codes

**Special memories**

*Description*

Statements that are recollections of special events, activities, objects, people, feelings etc.

*Inclusion*

Statements that refer to special memories in music learning.

*Text example*

‘I was about 7 and I heard, or I saw a drummer at a school fete and I looked and I just saw it. There was something funny about it. I’ve never felt that way about, never been so, felt so intense about something’

**Music learning in school**

*Description*

All statements that refer to participants’ learning during their school years.

*Inclusion*

Captures all text that refers to the participant’s learning at this time. For primary students, this would be their whole interview.

*Text example*

‘that probably changed when I had experiences of orchestral playing which started about 4th class, went to state music camps, played in the orchestras here, church orchestras’

**Music learning post school**

*Description*

All statements that refer to participants’ learning following their school years.

*Inclusion*

Captures all text that refers to the participant’s learning at this time. This will apply in interviews of adults and tertiary students.

*Text example*

‘I went away for two years, and I didn’t do any music seriously for that period of time. And I knew that was coming up, and there was also an 18 month gap. But I was still playing piano at church.’

**Music learning in university**

*Description*

All statements that refer to participants’ learning during their tertiary study years.

*Inclusion*

Captures all text that refers to the participant’s learning at this time. This will apply to some of tertiary students’ interviews, as well as the few adults in the community who undertook tertiary studies.

*Text example*

‘Play more and I think basically is to build up your knowledge, you know what you should do, like if you had a problem with playing you have to find out where it is, and to sort it out. You can ask your teacher, everything, and you find by yourself’
The third step of the analysis was aimed at interpreting the nodes and subnodes and drawing meaning from their content and context. This was primarily done by asking, ‘In the context of learning a musical instrument, what does this mean?’ Coffey and Atkinson (1996, p. 144) propose that this theorising and abstracting proceeds by identifying patterns and associations between the processes, events and contexts of issue at hand. The analysis strategies used were matrix searches to compare groups of individuals, and to find patterns of content and context occurring together, for example, the love of music occurring in the context of home, or the lack of musical encounter occurring with feelings of discontinuation. Other searches were used to examine the most frequently occurring nodes, the least occurring, and to integrate or synthesise the nodes. Some examples are as follows:

- Contexts such as who and when (‘people’ or ‘roles’ and ‘learning period’) were examined when specific events, such as success, failure, or enjoyment occurred.
- The attitude and emotions nodes were examined through cross-sectional analysis (intersection search strategy) to describe the valence and tone of interactions, activities or events.
- The discontinuation and persistence nodes were searched for outcomes, feelings, and people.

The following represents the focused third stage coding categories that formed the basis for the major interpretive themes of the study.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme name (Step 3)</th>
<th>Sources for themes: Coding from Step 2</th>
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| Affinity – the love for music learning (Chapter 5) | Motivation/ Internal intrinsic  
Motivation/External  
Impact of learning/ all subnodes  
Attitudes & Emotions/ All subnodes |
| Social roles supporting learning (Chapter 5)       | Motivation/ Social  
Learning/ Beliefs  
Musical Activities/Ensemble  
Roles/ all subnodes  
Musical Activities/ Practice/ Practice Strategies  
Self/ Personal attributes |
| The constructive learner                           | Learning/ Learning beliefs  
Learning/ Will to learn  
Learning/ Purposeful learning  
Musical Activities/ Practice/ Practice Strategies  
Musical Activities /Practice / Focus of practice |
| The expedient learner                              | Self/ Personal attributes  
Motivation/ Internal_intrinsic  
Self/ Efficacy and Ability beliefs  
Self/ Self esteem |
| The impetuous learner (Chapters 6 & 7)             |                                                                                                         |
| The Musical Self (Chapter 8)                       |                                                                                                         |
| Having a go                                       | Outcomes of learning/ Accomplishment  
Outcomes of learning/ Musical encounter  
Outcomes of learning/ Deficit  
Outcomes of learning/ Sufficient/Personal Limit  
Impact of learning  
Musical Activities/ Practice/ Practice Strategies  
Self/ Personal attributes |
| The pleasure of competence                        |                                                                                                         |
| Musical meaning and competence                    |                                                                                                         |
| Difficulties & despondency (Chapter 8)            |                                                                                                         |

(Continued)
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<td>Self/ Efficacy and Ability beliefs</td>
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Appendix U  DESCRIPTIONS OF PARTICIPANTS IN STAGE 2

The tables below indicate the affinity the participant developed from music learning, and this is shown alongside their term of learning (approximate). The resume column indicates whether or not the participant resumed formal instruction.

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### Appendix V  PARTICIPANTS’ AFFINITY WITH MUSIC

Different fonts are used to aid identification of different groups of participants (adults, tertiary students, primary students).

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