INFORMAL LEARNING AND TEACHER EDUCATION STUDENTS:  
CHANGING PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS AN 
EDUCATIONAL PARADIGM SHIFT

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Abstract

This qualitative study is aimed at investigating the effects of teacher education students’ introduction to Informal Learning in a conservatoire setting, their perceptions of their preparation and willingness to use it in their career as music teachers, and their changing attitudes during training relating to this approach. The research compared the aims of the Musical Futures program (Musical Futures, n.d.), university lecturers and relevant professionals with students’ perspectives after immersion in a new pedagogy. This study, conducted in order to discover more about Informal Learning pedagogy at a tertiary level, revealed the varying effects of, as well as responses and attitudes towards Informal Learning from students studying music education at Sydney Conservatorium of Music. It demonstrates the issues arising from introducing an approach to teacher education students that challenges conventional conceptions of the classroom. It also shows the effects that students’ practicum school context, personal experience, teaching style and personal values have on their reception of, engagement with and future use of the approach.
Acknowledgments

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Chapter 1  Introduction

Recent research into informal learning practices in schools has raised concerns regarding the progress of music teachers and their learning about new methods of teaching. Aspects of informal learning practices originally emerged in the 1970s (Dunbar-Hall & Wemyss, 2000), as a response to perceived student alienation from classroom music. Juxtaposed with their dislike of the music curriculum was the considerable importance music held for students outside the school. One approach to remediating this situation was the incorporation of popular music into the classroom music program, as a way of aligning repertoire with students’ musical interests.

Music educators have increasingly used popular music in attempting to connect with students in the classroom, and account for the diverse musics relevant to the time (Campbell, 1995). In addition, John Paynter’s innovations in the music classroom involving a philosophy of engaging students through creative processes, including all students through small group work, and challenging common notions of linearity (Spencer, 2010) have also influenced classroom practices since the 1970s. Notwithstanding these changes, for some time after its introduction, popular music was often treated like Western Classical music, requiring a one-way transmission of practical and theoretical knowledge from teacher to student. Consequently, students began to feel the same detachment from popular music in the classroom that they frequently felt towards Classical music (Green, 2008).

Although the inclusion of popular music repertoire has continued in music classrooms in many countries in the developed world since the 1970s, appropriate pedagogy for use with this repertoire has been an ongoing issue (Folkestad, 2006). One of the first studies to investigate the learning methods of popular musicians as a way of developing more naturalistic ways of teaching popular music explored the informal garage-band rehearsals of adolescents in Seattle (Campbell, 1995). More recently, Green (2001) initiated an extended study of the ways in which popular musicians of a range of ages learn, in order to ascertain their learning methods and the effects of different forms of school music over time on these practices. The outcomes of this
research motivated the implementation of a project in which the learning practices of popular musicians were used as the basis of classroom pedagogy for young adolescents (Green, 2006).

Fuelled by the need to find more effective ways to teach classroom music, a project called Musical Futures was initiated in the United Kingdom in 2003 (Finney & Philpott, 2010; Green, 2008; Musical Futures, n.d.). The program aimed to discover how to bridge the gap between the positive musical experiences students experienced outside the music classroom, and the negative ones within it. Student reactions revealed significant positive results in terms of student motivation, engagement, autonomy, and social skills (Musical Futures, n.d.). This approach to teaching was created in emulation of the pedagogical approach and theories relating to Informal Learning evident in the ongoing work of Green (2008).

As defined by Green, Informal Learning introduces the concept of musical learning that remains true to the methods and processes of learning by which popular musicians have learnt, played and composed. This can include learning musical material through aural copying and interacting with other players, as well as improvising and composing with an understanding of different musical styles. The role of the teacher becomes that of a facilitator of knowledge, and students become very much autonomous learners.

The Informal Learning pedagogy is taking hold in a number of countries, particularly in the United Kingdom (Green, 2006), with Sweden (Georgii-Hemming & Westvall, 2010), the USA (Jaffurs, 2004) and Australia (Jeanneret, McLennan, & Stevens-Ballenger, 2011; Webb, n.d.) also showing interest. Significant attention has been given in research as to how informal music learning can make learning appropriate and effective (Green, 2005, 2006; Jaffurs, 2004; Newsom, 1998). Green’s (2005) implementation of informal music learning generated groups of students who were enthusiastically on-task almost all the time. The approach, focussing not on musical content but on the ways in which students learnt it, increased motivation through a sense of achievement and pride. It created personal autonomy, increasing enjoyment through meaningful skill acquisition. Many
students were able to transfer knowledge to new listening tasks. They seemed to work best without help and picked up musical concepts innately. Believing it was a promising area, Green conducted further research, combining qualitative data with theoretical concepts that reinforced her findings (2006). Subsequently research by a range of scholars reinforced a number of further positive effects of Informal Learning (Feichas, 2010; Finney & Philpott, 2010; Folkestad, 2006; Green, 2008; Musical Futures, n.d.).

From her research, Green (2008) generated the following strategies for classroom use of music:

1. Learning should begin with music the students understand, like and identify with - that is, music of their choosing.
2. The primary method of learning involves aurally copying recordings.
3. Learning takes place alone and in friendship groups.
4. Skill acquisition is often non-linear and holistic, and begins with real, entire pieces of music.
5. Students learn through listening, performing, improvising and composing, with a focus on creativity.

Ideally with the application of the philosophy of Informal Learning towards music in general, it is seen that students might eventually be introduced to and appreciate music of any style, including music under the ‘Classical’ umbrella. In such a way, music becomes authentic, meaningful and “lived” by students (Finney & Philpott, 2010). The notable benefits of this approach will now form the basis of an evaluation of significance.

**Significance**

There has been considerable evidence in the last decade in particular to suggest that Informal Learning has the potential to be of musical and more general benefit to secondary students (Green, 2005, 2006, 2008; Jeanneret et al., 2011; Winter,
2004), particularly to address feelings of alienation in students (Finney & Philpott, 2010). The shift in focus from what students learn to the ways in which they learn has had strong implications for music pedagogy. As this paradigm shift in music education has evolved and is still evolving, much less research has been conducted regarding tertiary students’ education in this pedagogy (Karlsen, 2010), and none in an Australian context. This study explores this new way of thinking about education and Informal Learning, with a focus on the teacher education student. Within this more specific area of study there has been an insignificant amount of research, and therein lies the core of this study’s purpose, for it is in the minds of the teachers where perceptions delineate their educational path, defining what is important in music, and how this can be achieved, as well as influencing their level of confidence and sense of musical and educational identity.

The current study examines change in perceptions of teacher education students at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music. It uses qualitative methods to interact with these students in their final year of study, after completing studies in Informal Learning practice the year prior, and implementing this new pedagogy on their junior high school practicum placements. Additional participants with expertise in this pedagogy have also been interviewed, as outlined in the Methodology chapter.

This research holds relevance for teacher education students, in giving them self-awareness of how their own tertiary education and experience of innovative new pedagogy has the potential to inform their practice, and change their teaching attitudes and values, as well as their personal teaching style. It will also be of interest for tertiary institutions and educators, informing them about how pedagogy is received by teacher education students; the nature of their individual views and how receptive they are to shifts in understanding. The study aims to support some of the presently existing research on Informal Learning as pedagogy.
Research Questions

The perceptions of teacher education students in regard to teaching change over time. This study will attempt to gauge teacher education student attitudes towards the particular pedagogy of Informal Learning, from both before and after they implemented it in a practicum setting. These points, along with implications for the reception of new ways of thinking, and how they utilise this in their future education careers, have been addressed with the following questions:

1. How does Informal Learning affect teacher education students over time, in relation to changing perceptions of themselves and of new pedagogy?
2. In what ways does implementation of the pedagogy during teaching practicum affect these perceptions?
3. How do perceptions and experiences with the Informal Learning approach by teacher education students compare with those of experts in the field?

These questions have been considered with reference to the following review of literature. The literature addresses the history and context of the Informal Learning approach, and also investigates the literature on student teacher attitudes and the nature of pedagogical innovation.
Glossary of Terms

**Informal learning:** this term (designated by initial lower case) describes the method of learning music most usually found outside of the formal classroom. People of all ages may experience solitary learning in the comfort of their own home, by copying music from recordings and creating their own music. They might also take part in learning within a friendship group such as a garage band or other community gathering, where music is learnt primarily through aural copying, and is not guided by a formal instructor or professional. This way of learning formed the basis for recent research and the establishment of the official Informal Learning approach of Musical Futures.

**Informal Learning:** this term (designated by initial upper case) represents the pedagogical approach first emerging from the research of Lucy Green (2008), based on the ways popular musicians learn, and the related five-step process suggested for the classroom. It is now more prolific, particularly in the United Kingdom, due to its promotion and expansion under the Musical Futures initiative.

**Musical Futures:** this is a program that grew out of research supported by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, based in the United Kingdom (Musical Futures, n.d.). The project used a five-step process and a uniquely student-focussed approach in order to connect with students and give them motivation and autonomy, aiming to utilise their full musical potential. A prerequisite for this new way of teaching was the use of popular music to first engage the students in learning. The program was strongly influenced by the work of Lucy Green on the relevance to England’s youth of the pedagogical practices of popular musicians.
Chapter 2    Literature Review

The first section of this review discusses pedagogical paradigm shifts in relation to their historical development, and how this concerns Informal Learning as a new approach. Following this is a focus on the advantages and disadvantages of Informal Learning for students in school and other formal music education contexts. The needs and concerns of the teacher education student in the context of this pedagogy are then addressed. Finally the literature reveals issues relating to teacher education student attitudes and perceptions, noting the effect the Informal Learning pedagogy has on these, before concluding with a discussion of the need for further research.

Pedagogic Development

The nature of any pedagogical method will inherently change over time. Much knowledge teachers possess may not be applicable to the school’s students, as teachers may not be up to date with socio-cultural changes in music. In the classroom, new knowledge needs to be tied in with existing musical knowledge. Emmons (2004) argues that children should be exploring not just popular music, but world music, and this is also indicated through Green’s study (2008). Unfortunately Emmons does not clarify the means to achieve this. He and Campbell (2001) feel that teachers should also take into account the varied means of transmission of learning that present themselves from one culture to the next. Many of the musical associations students have are from outside the classroom (Folkestad, 2006), which should be acknowledged when considering the various mixtures of formal and informal transmission of music throughout the world.

Gatt’s (2009) study in Malta, although focussed on the subject of drama rather than music, still importantly indicates that in order for pedagogical change to occur, it must first be initiated with teachers. With an insight into how this might be possible, Knowles (cited in Dolloff, 1999) proposes that the “superior pedagogy of experience” has far more effect than learning different educational pedagogies in an education
course. Gatt (2009) provides the explanation that considerable change usually only occurs after teachers witness evidence that the approach improves student learning, which perhaps substantiates Knowles’ endorsement of experiential learning in teacher training.

In the context of Informal Learning, it is particularly important to consider the way paradigm shifts have occurred and proliferated in the past, in order to inform the more recent shift that is this study’s focus. The move to using popular music in the classroom continues to be emphasised by scholars, who note how popular music has been neglected in the past, and is important not only to be accepted, but also embraced as part of the curriculum (Théberge, 2000; Winter, 2004). Educational philosopher John Paynter emphasised the importance of creativity in the classroom (Paynter, 2008); however, creativity is unfortunately still limited by the public’s unjustified emphasis on private lessons and ensemble music, rather than the classroom (Spencer, 2010). As the full potential of popular music is yet to be realised, so do scholars feel the underestimation of the music classroom despite Paynter’s innovations.

Paynter revolutionised music education by “challenging conventional ‘linear’ notions about learning”, with a focus on creativity, student choice and composition (Spencer, 2010). Similarly, Informal Learning challenges existing conceptualisations of the classroom, but does so not through classroom structures and content, but by using the outside-the-classroom context of informally learning popular music, to inform practices inside the classroom (Green, 2008). Spencer (2010) notes the striking impact that Paynter’s educational innovations had, influencing classroom curriculum in a number of ways, including instigating group composition activities, which are now commonplace. Informal Learning is also beginning to influence classroom practice, most prevalently in the United Kingdom (Musical Futures, n.d.), although its influence is spreading to international contexts.

As with Green’s large scale project (2008), Paynter’s writings (2008) reveal how in the 1970s, The Schools Council for Curriculum and Examinations funded a national project to address music education in secondary schools, which resulted in educational innovation. What is somewhat downplayed in the writing of Paynter is the
time it took for these educational methods to spark significant international interest. The work began in the 1970s, but was purportedly not embraced on a worldwide scale until the 1990s (Paynter, 2008). This suggests that for the new pedagogy of Informal Learning it may take some time to be disseminated and acknowledged globally. However, the general success of the Musical Futures program in which Informal Learning has been trialled, particularly in relation to the musical engagement of school students, indicates the potential for this pedagogy to be more broadly accepted.

**Informal Learning and Students Within and Beyond School**

Insights from throughout the world, where informal learning raises concerns relating to different ages, educational content and unique contexts, can inform the current study’s focus on teacher education in Informal Learning pedagogy. There is significant research now available on Informal Learning in the secondary school classroom. Georgii-Hemming and Westvall (2010) reveal an attempt in Swedish secondary schools to include students’ personal interests and experiences, giving them choices so that they become autonomous and active learners. They draw on current pedagogy, studies and national evaluations to reveal issues of student engagement, participation and inclusion in the popular music classroom. Ongoing peer-directed learning, self-, and peer-assessment appear to allow student responsibility and control over their own learning (Green, 2008), which manifests as a progression of achievement and then decline, before improvement. These factors highlight the unique environment created by informal elements in the classroom.

In understanding the pedagogy, Green (2006) distinguishes between what she calls inherent and delineated meanings. Inherent meaning is where musical understanding derives from the musical qualities themselves, while delineated meanings are those that are culturally associated with or perceived around the music. She demonstrates the potential of popular music learning strategies to be appropriated for the learning of classical music, with immediate and overwhelmingly positive reactions. When students were introduced to classical music using Informal Learning strategies, initial distaste gave way as the experience of inherent meaning made way for new, positive
delineations. In her earlier study, Green (2001) noted that the formal classroom, and music to which they cannot relate, makes students feel alienated, but at the same time they gain an important theoretical understanding of music. Informal learners may miss some important theoretical aspects, but are highly motivated and enjoy the processes.

The ideal learning environment is one where teachers and students co-produce learning, in contrast to the long-existing master-apprentice pedagogic model (Lebler, 2008). In Lebler’s university study, staff assessment was used to validate peer evaluation of popular music generated by students. This shows a good balance with informal learning combined with a structured course, encouraging teachers to work alongside students, rather than ‘at’ them. In this case, the student became the master, able to self-reflect and assess, with feedback from the study showing that students almost always demonstrated the ability to give good peer feedback. While the students in this study were studying popular music, not education, the positive effects of this study inform education using informal pedagogy.

Displacing learning from an informal context into a formal environment has its complications. The Swedish adult education program for rock musicians called BoomTown music education was studied by Karlsen (2010). She used an Informal Learning approach in a two-year education program for rock musicians in Sweden. This approach illustrates how factors such as Informal Learning’s existence as a structured institution leave it in a hybrid category between the formal and informal. Karlsen believes this is beneficial, as learning reaps the benefits of both approaches. Green (2001) also supports the notion of Informal Learning in a formalised classroom. However, Karlsen (2010) questions the authenticity of Informal Learning practices when implemented in a school setting. Espeland (2010) agrees, noting that this formal setting, combined with the use of teacher-controlled stages, means that learning is no longer ‘informal’. Also of concern to Karlsen (2010) is the potential danger of removing the teacher too much from classroom instruction. A further problem is the difficulty in fostering holistic musical awareness and critical thinking when limited, at least initially, to music of students’ own choosing. This is also noted by Green (2008), and Finney (n.d.).
Further critical analysis suggests that an informal pedagogy may be used as mask for deficiencies in content or methodology (Finney & Philpott, 2010). In the study of Informal Learning and its effects on music education in England, this research proposes that Informal Learning can make it difficult to aim for much more than short-term impromptu goals. This shows the need to cater for all levels of musical experience, as those with more experience benefit more. Results of the study indicated that the focus of the approach was on personal and social development, rather than the development of musical knowledge and communications. Pop and rock music was dominant, rather than what was described as ‘serious’ music, implying that the approach has swung too far towards popular music, and is neglecting more traditional content. Musical style choice is also limited by the students’ decisions. Students are unaware of the degree of construction of their musical ‘interests’ here. The focus is on musical preferences, meaning knowledge is not expanded to new styles and learning methods. Hence Finney and Philpott maintain that while popular music has done much for the revival of music education, the informal/formal balance can be pushed too far.

There are some further concerns with Informal Learning that could also be addressed. The pedagogy can potentially result in a decentralised education system. Music is taught in a multitude of ways, and as a result, curriculum content and teaching strategies are not thoroughly regulated, and there are large variations between schools (Finney & Philpott, 2010). This means that any students changing schools may find it more difficult to build on previous knowledge, as the structures and approaches to learning music are never consistent. There is little other literature available at present to support or disprove this, and so it could be the focus of future studies.

**Training of Teacher Education Students**

Some studies attempt to answer how the needs of teacher education students may be met with pedagogical innovation. Doloff’s (1999) Canadian study discusses how some pedagogic methods can fail to address the personal pedagogies created through the elements of individual ideals and skills of teacher education students. This contrasts with Informal Learning, which initially derives purpose from the students
Théberge (2000) also notes that in a university context, it is important to have a multidisciplinary approach, whereby the innovation derives from the positive ideas within the institution. This is something that has not been addressed by the work of Green (2008), who omits any suggestion regarding teacher training in Informal Learning, nor has it been considered by other sources in Informal Learning literature to date.

Issues within the Informal Learning classroom are directly affected and controlled by the teacher, and are affected by their education in the approach. Finney’s (n.d.) case study observations reveal how one trainee teacher changed the Informal Learning approach to suit the classroom, but did this in a way that consulted and connected with the values of the students themselves. Another way to connect with teaching students is to recognise the individually different experiences they have with formal and informal learning, which will affect their reception of the approach. Espeland (2010), believes the dichotomy between formal and informal to be the most difficult to traverse because of the change in thinking about basic teaching strategies. In the model of Informal Learning, students are encouraged to learn independently, as opposed to the master/apprentice model previously used in the traditional formal setting, and this can be challenging for trainee teachers.

Some scholars believe that traditional music teaching methods do not cater for individual learning backgrounds, and suggest the integration of formal and informal learning processes as a possible solution. Trainee teachers in a Brazilian institution were seen to be either formal learners, informal learners or those with mixtures of both approaches (Campbell, 2001; Feichas, 2010). Feichas believes in a balance between formal and informal, believing this can maximise student potential and avoid a Eurocentric view towards education. Gómez & Txakartegi (2008) suggest that as teacher education students have varying informal and formal experiences, it is best that they learn to teach through equally diverse pedagogical and cultural experiences.

Finney & Philpott (2010) show how teacher education students in England learnt music actively, through constantly listening, rehearsing and refining their musical creations. Other teacher education students have noted that “music skills…are developed inside the making of music” (p. 10), showing just how important it is for
music to be created through doing. This is vital for teachers to understand so they can express this to school students. As in student-focussed studies discussed previously, aural skills are particularly developed in these settings (cited in Waldron & Veblen, 2009). Swanwick (Georgii-Hemming & Westvall, 2010) suggests that teachers need to have “curiosity, the desire to be competent and the desire to emulate others” (p. 234), in order to teach authentically, something which might be encouraged in a tertiary environment.

While Informal Learning encourages teachers to hold a different relationship with students, this, among other unique traits of the pedagogy, may be difficult for teacher education students to initially embrace. Doloff (1999) makes the crucial point that many teacher education students teach in the same way that they were taught in school due to a stronger familiarity with these teaching methods than with new teaching approaches. This has significant implications when considering the ways in which students absorb Informal Learning pedagogy, as they may find it difficult to go against their experiences. Green (2001) insists on the importance of educators trying informal practices for themselves. Informal Learning also aspires to raising active, democratic citizens, both musically and generally, through open dialogue in classes. When giving students control of musical choices, the content tends to be music of local cultures, which can result in little tolerance and acceptance of other musical, ethnic, social and geographic cultures. Ideally, teachers need to create unprejudiced citizens open to other identities and choices (Finney & Philpott, 2010).

Finney and Philpott note that the live and exploratory approach of informal learning often has considerable impact upon teacher education students’ complex and subjective schemata, which can then impact upon their own students. Wright & Kanellopoulos (2010) believe that an informal approach can nurture open, respectful relationships between student and teacher. However, the lack of intercultural teaching skills in teachers can become challenging (Gómez & Txakartegi, 2008), as the eventual aim is to move from what music students like towards music that is socially and culturally unfamiliar. Such skills must therefore be developed in conjunction with the Informal Learning approach in tertiary institutions.
Teacher and Teacher Education Student Perceptions

Teacher education student perceptions of their own training and learning are crucial when considering the way they will use the Informal Learning method. It is important to consider how teacher beliefs strongly affect the way they perceive what they have learnt, and consequently how they will use that in the classroom. Research indicates that “personality, cognitive characteristics, musical factors, family and social factors, and physiological factors” all impact on teachers’ beliefs (Biasutti, 2010, p. 52). Many teachers believe that musical ability is fixed, which can limit their perception of themselves and their students. Education systems may be informed by emphasising that musical competency is not stationary, and can be improved with training (Biasutti, 2010).

Finney (n.d.) reveals the need for teacher education students to take time in order to find what worked for them within the Informal Learning approach, in a path to self-discovery. He notes that it often takes some time before students begin to understand the approach and see its benefits. Teachers should be wary not to fit into the role revealed by Jaffurs (2004), whereby the teacher’s own music is ‘real’ music, and a dislike for or lack of proficiency in that music deems students untalented.

The demystification of creativity in this process has also been considered (Emmons, 2004). Wright & Kanellopoulos (2010) examined a teacher education student course in free improvisation in two Greek universities. They deduced that improvisation encouraged the type of thinking necessary for informal learning. Teacher education students were to some extent able to break down perceptions and barriers that the conservatoire system can embed in their thinking, through the creative instrument of improvisation. They gained personal musical development through unpressured discovery of their own creativity and meanings for music. Teacher education students developed their learner-identities, which resulted in a positive change in attitude, as both teachers and students have “something to learn and something to teach” (Wright & Kanellopoulos, 2010). This informs the current study in its description of teacher education student attitudes and self-perception.
Conclusion

While there has been significant research surrounding the effects of Informal Learning in the music classroom, issues surrounding the music teacher, teacher education students and training in the pedagogy need to be more fully addressed. Issues such as personal ability levels, confidence when in the position of a training teacher and resultant challenges in adopting a new approach, whether in practicum experience or as a newly qualified teacher, are all of concern. The Informal Learning approach is a significant challenge for teachers due to its shift from more conventionally formal ways of learning to those common in an informal learning setting. However, the extent to which teacher education students embrace this pedagogical approach, and details of their finer interactions and reflections, reactions, understanding, competency and perceptions are more rarely studied. This study attempts to address this by investigating teacher attitudes, perceptions, understandings and reflections in relation to their Informal Learning training and experience. The proceeding chapter will discuss the methodological design created to most suitably and effectively investigate these issues.
Chapter 3  Methodology

The examination of the changes in attitude and understanding of teacher education students towards the Informal Learning pedagogy is well suited to a qualitative approach, as it attempts to discover the nature of particular experiences and responses (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), in this case concerning teacher education student experiences and their interaction with a new approach to teaching and learning. This project examines university students studying Informal Learning, as well as a number of professionals who have considerable experience of the pedagogy, in order to create a comparison of the detailed range of opinions and understandings within this style of music learning.

Methodological Design

This study is ethnographic, in order to generate detailed descriptions of a specific cultural group. In this case the participants consisted of music teacher education students at a university conservatorium in Sydney, who studied Informal Learning as part of their music education training. A case study approach has been used for the university participants, because it has the ability to “investigate and report the complex dynamic and unfolding interactions of events, human relationships and other factors in a unique instance” (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000, p. 181). It aims to penetrate the reality in which these students perceive and experience Informal Learning through the situational learning context of the conservatorium, as well as the school practicum placement environment, during student participants’ four-year education degree. The Informal Learning approach, as defined by Lucy Green and Musical Futures, directed the learning of the student participants and provided another parameter for the study.

This is an instrumental case study, which examines the context of a particular unit (Burns, 2000), in this case, final year students in a four year undergraduate music education degree. This case attempts to explore the development of understanding and implementation of Informal Learning by teacher education students through “thick
description” of video and audio data (Cohen et al., 2000, p. 182). In addition to this primary case, various experts in the field of Informal Learning pedagogy were also interviewed to support the findings and provide outsider viewpoints on student learning.

Furthermore, the research has been conducted using grounded theory, which derives theory from a particular phenomenon supported through the research (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This approach involves a creative interpretation of the data, grouping concepts together and analysing the relationships they hold to each other. This forms a conceptual map of the data that can inform further study and inform the discipline being studied.

Participants

Fourteen fourth year music education students participated, as well as one newly qualified teacher who graduated from the university program in 2010 (see Table 1). There was also a university lecturer participant, Dr Michael Webb, who significantly developed the program of Informal Learning in which the students participated, as well as two professionals who have had a directing role in the work of the Musical Futures program since its inception, past and present Project Leaders David Price and Abigail D’Amore (see Table 2).

Students were recruited through an introductory brief talk during lecture time, and were then invited to supply email addresses if they were interested in participating. It was hoped that a significant sample size would provide representation of the music education student body, rather than consisting of participants volunteering due to a particularly proactive disposition or personal interest in the subject matter. Although varying views were represented it is quite possible that some student participants may have agreed to participate based on their enthusiasm for the approach, and some who may have had more negative experiences with it may have declined participation.
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<td>Catherine</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>31/03/11</td>
<td>TES*</td>
<td>4 years as private/group music tutor; 2 years as school band director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annabelle</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>06/04/11</td>
<td>TES*</td>
<td>3 years as music tutor; 2 years of primary conducting; prolonged volunteer education work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebecca</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>13/04/11</td>
<td>TES*</td>
<td>2 years as choir conductor and teaching at secondary level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simon</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>02/05/11</td>
<td>TES*</td>
<td>Additional teaching experiences unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talitha</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>04/05/11</td>
<td>TES*</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hannah</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>04/05/11</td>
<td>TES*</td>
<td>Additional teaching experiences unknown</td>
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<tr>
<td>Natasha</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>04/05/11 18/05/11</td>
<td>TES*</td>
<td>Additional teaching experiences unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mitchell</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>05/05/11</td>
<td>TES*</td>
<td>Extensive band experience (20 years), instrumental tutorials and workshopping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bryce</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>05/05/11</td>
<td>TES*</td>
<td>Additional teaching experiences unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camilla</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>11/05/11</td>
<td>NQT**</td>
<td>Completed B Mus (Mus Ed); 7 years as private music tutor; 3 years as community band conductor; 6 months as secondary music teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isobel</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>12/05/11</td>
<td>TES*</td>
<td>Additional teaching experiences unknown</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Teacher education student (4th Year BMus (Music Education))

** Newly qualified teacher
As further outlined in the following chapter, the student participants mostly had limited prior experience with the techniques of Informal Learning before learning about and implementing it in their third year. Most had experienced a brief introduction during their second year of study, including reading on the subject and a practical workshop, in addition to an active experience of learning informally early in the third year of the degree. Apart from this, almost no students had prior experience or externally acquired knowledge of the Informal Learning pedagogy.

I also played a crucial role in the research, being a member of the cohort of students being studied. There was a level of understanding of the situation and attitudes of teacher education students towards Informal Learning that is unique to me personally. In this way I was able to include some of my own opinions, experiences and continuing perceptual development towards informal practices and my own development to add to the data, based on memo notes and descriptions of encounters on my own practicum. I had to also be aware of the potential of my own personal bias and experiences to affect the authenticity of my response to the data. I attempted to minimise this through awareness of my position, and by making myself sometimes ‘stand back’ from the data. I have reflected and accounted for this potential risk in my results and conclusions.

### Table 2  Expert Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Michael Webb</th>
<th>David Price</th>
<th>Abigail D’Amore</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Background</strong></td>
<td>PhD in Ethnomusicology; secondary and tertiary teaching experience</td>
<td>Extensive work in music industry; involvement in secondary, tertiary and further education</td>
<td>Exposed to informal ways of learning folk music from a young age; trained formally in classical music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Informal Learning connection(s)</strong></td>
<td>Currently lectures in Informal Learning to Conservatorium Music Education students</td>
<td>Previous Project Leader of Musical Futures. Current Project Leader of Learning Futures</td>
<td>Research assistant for early Musical Futures research; current Musical Futures national co-ordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Location</strong></td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of interviews</strong></td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Type of interview</strong></td>
<td>Video recording</td>
<td>Audio recording</td>
<td>Skype audio recording</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Date of interview(s)</strong></td>
<td>May 5, 2011, May 12, 2011</td>
<td>April 8, 2011</td>
<td>May 17, 2011</td>
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</table>
Data Collection Methods

Single and Group Interviews

For both the music education students and the relevant experts, this study used semi-structured interviews. As much as possible, the interviews were conducted with attentiveness and sensitivity, and established a positive, natural communication between researcher and respondent. The use of semi-structured interview is important, as this allows the researcher to modify questions and alter the course of the conversation based on the information imparted by the participant. In this way crucial themes could emerge and be pursued by the participant-researcher (Fontana & Frey, 2000).

While the expert participants were interviewed individually, student participants were given the choice of having an individual or a small focus group interview, which allowed them to choose the situation that felt most comfortable to them. Focus group interviews can be useful to help participants challenge and extend their ideas through engaging discussion; however it is acknowledged that personal issues are often avoided (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000). Watts and Ebbutt (cited in Cohen et al., 2000) noted the benefits of a group interview where participants have an issue in common, or where participants are interested in the topic of each other’s discussion. This is relevant to the study in its focus on Informal Learning, as it is a common experience for all student participants, and still fresh in their minds from their experiences during the previous year. The focus group interview is useful to discuss a shared event, in this case their Informal Learning implementation (Fontana & Frey, 2000). A number of students who had participated very actively in focus group interviews were also given the opportunity to engage in an additional individual interview so that they could expand on points initially made in the group context. This also served to triangulate the data.

Interview techniques were used to communicate effectively and maximise the potential of the discussion. Interviews began with more general, less personal and easily answerable questions, gradually moving to more specific, personal and
thought-intensive questions (Burns, 2000). Listening skills were imperative, and were initially problematic to enact, particularly given the nature of the sometimes quite personal relationship held between the interviewees and myself, making it difficult for me to not intervene with my opinions, as in our regular conversations. The use of Skype as a technological tool for data collection broadened the scope of the study to include participant Abigail D’Amore, an expert who was vital to the data gathered in her role as current project leader of Musical Futures in the United Kingdom. Most interviews were video recorded to facilitate accurate transcription and data analysis. In some instances, email communications were used to clarify particular points made by participants during interviews. The video data from interviews were transcribed, as often as possible within the same day that the interviews were conducted, and data coded, at the most within a few days. In this way the information was interpreted with the fresh perspective of the interviewer, maintaining a level of authenticity.

Field notes, Reflective Journal and Additional Documents

In order to maximise an understanding of the events of the interview, and to potentially gain later insights, field notes were written immediately after each interview to recount the event. Notes were made on the disposition of the interviewee on the day, sometimes comparing the attitude and content of their discussion to a prior interview if relevant. Notes also included accounts of the relationship and interaction they had with the researcher, and the researcher’s perceptions of the integrity or bias relating to certain information. It was also a useful way to reflect and consider technique improvements for future interviews. The notes’ primary purpose was to provide a detailed context for the data when later coding and synthesising.

As both researcher and student, I kept a journal in order to comment and reflect on the development of the project and my own personal ideas and attitudes regarding Informal Learning. As a member of the socio-cultural and institutional group of which the main participants are a part, it was important that my own perceptions of Informal Learning were observed extensively in order to reduce bias. The development of research skills may be increased with such reflexive practice. As a form of secondary data, I gathered an assortment of the accompanying PowerPoint presentations and class handouts that were given to the class as part of an assessment of practicum
implementation of Informal Learning (see Appendix E). These served to triangulate the data along with my own written journal notes and reflections.

**Data Analysis**

This study can be identified as an interpretative case study; one that separates the data into categories in an inductive way so that initial perceptions and ideas can be questioned (Cohen, et al., 2000). In committing to an endeavour to seek the truth, valid research must be conducted with the ability to remove oneself from the research and examine the data critically, and be able to identify and avoid bias (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In this case I was considerably entrenched into the mindset of the students being studied because of my position as a member of the cohort. While this gave me an insider perspective, I acknowledged the need for objective detachment in analysing the data.

Accurate description is a valued quality within this project. While this factor indicates the need for personal interpretation and selection, data presented were chosen due to what was seen as significantly representing the themes of teacher education student and expert attitudes towards the Informal Learning pedagogy. Field notes endeavoured to distinguish between interpretive and descriptive information. In accordance with Cavan (cited in Cohen et al., 2000), I needed to be sensitive to the rights of those involved in the research, and note that “being ethical limits the choices we can make in the pursuit of truth” (p.56). I have formulated my methods under the understanding that the dignity of my participants takes priority, even if it is to the detriment of the research.

Within method triangulation, whereby two or more data collection methods are used, was an effective way to decrease the bias or inaccurate representation of the complex human behaviour being studied (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000). A level of comparison was made between emergent themes, and information present in different student interviews and different expert interviews, in order to validate the findings. The data from student interviews was combined with the opinions and more solid
conceptual understanding of Informal Learning possessed by the professional participants in the research.

Between methods triangulation was used, making the data credible and dependable (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) through multiple methods of data collection, including interview data, secondary data, field notes and journal. It was decided that while the primary source of data came from the music students, the data from relevant experts would help to enhance discoveries emerging from the primary case study, in another method of triangulation (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000).

The grounded theory approach dictated the way in which data were analysed. It involved a number of steps: confirming that the theory was validated by the reality uncovered by the data, checking that the theory made sense, and determining the theory’s applicability to the context of the study and to other contexts (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The coding process involved analysis by first using open coding, which classifies essential categories in the data. Axial coding was then used to identify potential links between categories and sub-categories. The next level of analysis, called selective coding, involved recognising a central theme or category, and how this related to the other themes present (Hittleman & Simon, 1997).

**Conclusion**

The specific context of teacher education students in their study at an Australian conservatorium was examined. In this way there was a microcosmic examination of different perceptions and intentionalities of both training education teachers and professionals in the pedagogy. The qualitative study is situational (Bresler, 1992), focusing more on discovering new directions and themes of the data as it goes along, and using this to inform further research. Findings of the study are outlined in the following chapter.
Chapter 4  Results

The data collected reveals the process of teacher education students’ first contact with Informal Learning at university, their implementation of Informal Learning during their initial secondary school practicum experience, (referred to as the Informal Learning sequence\(^1\)) and their perceptions and use of Informal Learning in various contexts following their practicum experiences. The findings will be structured according to this chronological learning experience pathway. Along this pathway, interrelated themes revealed from student participant perspectives include their experiences and reception of the Informal Learning approach school and classroom context; school reception and the student participants’ adaptations of the approach; and their thoughts on its future use.

Experiences Prior to Practicum Implementation of Informal Learning

University Experiences

Throughout the course of the student participants’ four-year Music Education degree, teacher education students experienced interaction with Informal Learning concepts at three separate points in time. In semester three they were given a brief introduction to Lucy Green’s work; in semester five they participated in subject activities in which varying approaches to informal ways of learning were directly modelled, and in semester six they were introduced to Musical Futures principles and practices in class. At this last juncture, they were also given the opportunity to implement these ideas on their junior high school practicum placement. Afterwards they were asked to reflect and report on their experiences. These three linear points will now be discussed concerning their contribution to students’ individual understandings and perspectives related to the Informal Learning approach.

\(^1\) Students in their junior secondary music practicum experience were asked to implement a sequence of four Informal Learning lessons based on the Musical Futures model, and to then report their experiences. See Appendix E.
Their third-semester introduction was quite brief, and was completed some two years prior to the interviews, which may have contributed to a lesser memory for the content of these classes than those in the following year. Rebecca found her memory of those sessions fading away, and Natasha and Mitchell recalled Informal Learning activities, but did not associate them with that title at the time. However, some participants like Mitchell had a very memorable initial experience, saying he “loved it ... I knew it was practical; it was hands on ... I thought, ‘oh, this is me’” (Interview, May 5, 2011). Bryce also had a positive reaction, as he “really enjoyed it” (Interview, May 5, 2011).

These participants, who were significantly impressed by the approach upon their first introduction to it, proved to be generally more influenced by Informal Learning after its dissemination and implementation in semester six of the degree. Bryce found that the study of Informal Learning in semester six made it easier for him to contextualise the approach for its usual associations with a secondary school class, rather than when it was first introduced. The third-semester introduction to Informal Learning had a core focus of preparing students for their first primary school practicum, rather than the secondary school setting where Informal Learning is usually presented. As a result, other students may have found their Informal Learning sequence enacted during semester six more contextually logical, as they were able to apply what they learnt to a practicum context.

Some students found the organisation of content in their fifth semester subject, associated with the teaching of popular music, to be informative in relation to their first practical implementation of Informal Learning. The way Janica learnt Informal Learning principles from this unit taught her the value of teaching through experiential learning and modelling, which she now uses frequently. She noted that while the topic of Informal Learning was not specifically identified in this unit of study, these classes involved the use of a number of the pedagogy’s characteristics. In common with other students including Catherine, Janica, Nicole and Annabelle indicated that in this class, participation in role-playing (involving the Informal Learning strategies of small group work developing creative and aural practices in the context of popular music), in addition to the use of practical devices such as
modelling, structured guidance, and instruction on assessment practices, were extremely valuable.

Catherine stated that her own personal teaching values sometimes differed from the values of the Musical Futures approach, and she preferred the less specifically labelled approach of her semester five training, which could be suited to the particular musical content being used. She felt that she gained more where there were a number of different options, rather than one single process: “you can do it as a class, you can break them up into small groups, you can model certain parts, you can get them in groups working out just a line by themselves”. She felt that there were “different strategies for different pieces of music”, compared to the Musical Futures approach, where “[students] go and learn their own thing” (Interview, March 31, 2011).

In semester six, Informal Learning was introduced more thoroughly according to the series of stages recommended by the Musical Futures organisation. University lecturer Michael Webb noted that teacher education students may be considerably influenced by their own teachers, and their secondary school experiences often affect and sometimes limit their ability to take on new ways of learning such as Informal Learning. For a number of participants, significant understanding of Informal Learning was really only developed after the Informal Learning sequence conducted during the practicum following these lectures. Bryce felt that his implementation was like a “baptism by fire” but was actually “how [he] normally [works].” He described it as “going in and going, ‘ok, I’m just gonna do what I think happens and see if it works, and go with it’… that’s sort-of how I roll” (Interview, May 5, 2011). Seth was also not concerned when going into his Informal Learning sequence, as he felt very confident in his understanding. These perspectives contrasted with those of most other participants, such as Jacki and Isobel, who found not knowing what to expect quite difficult.

Student-participants found the approach challenging in different ways. Mitchell thought that this was often related to individual personalities and certain students having a need for particular structure in their learning process. Contrastingly, many other students were very inspired by these sixth semester classes. From the previous year’s cohort of Conservatorium teacher education graduates, the newly qualified
teacher Camilla found the learning process from this unit “inspirational”, “in depth” and “philosophical” (Interview, May 11, 2011). Mitchell said that he was so affected by these university lectures that he went and investigated the associated materials straight away. Some of the most emphatic responses were that of immediate and excited optimism.

Isobel questioned the value that teacher education students hold in their own lecturers, by asking whether it is more valuable to have teachers who can get students through an exam and give them a good mark, or have someone who is “inspiring”, with “really great ideas”, especially if “you just wanna expand the mind”. Isobel felt unable to answer this conundrum, as she could see the benefit of both angles. There appeared to be a considerable divide in values between students with contrasting opinions of these two different concepts. Seth, in the position for mind expansion, noted that:

> If you give these … philosophical, or … just open-ended … approaches to teaching then it means that you can implant any content into that; you can implant anything that you wanna teach within those broad models … and those broad ideas. (Interview, May 19, 2011)

He believed that in knowing how to get content through to the class, content was the least important issue, and providing more broad structures the most important. Participants’ understandings of content and pedagogy were affected to some extent by the available preparation time within the degree.

**Understanding and Preparation**

The chance to interview current project leader of the United Kingdom-based Musical Futures program, Abigail D’Amore, led to some insights about teacher training, to compare with student understandings. It highlighted some similarities and differences between the initial reception of the approach by the current study’s teacher education students, compared with practising teachers in the United Kingdom who participated in one-day workshops in Informal Learning. Abigail described the potential risk involved when implementing Informal Learning without a deeper understanding of
the pedagogy, based on training programs for practising teachers in the United Kingdom:

I think that the negative thing is when people misinterpret it … we’ve got so many resources - we run free training - but if somebody doesn’t access any of that … then they can implement this incorrectly, and it can fall flat on its face. (Interview, May 17, 2011)

Unfortunately, the restricted time for delivering subject content and the combined pressures of the university degree meant that many participants in this study had limited time for developing a more profound conceptualisation of Informal Learning. Despite some apprehension, a number of participants in the present study still acknowledged the potential of the approach for their teaching. At first, Simon did not quite understand Informal Learning or his role, but as time went on he began to realise that it was “a valuable teaching method” (Interview, May 2, 2011). Mitchell noted that Informal Learning “immediately drags you out of your comfort zone” (Interview, May 5, 2011). Isobel also took some time before she began to understand the general idea of the approach, and was very conscious of the knowledge she was still lacking:

I know it was just the tip of the iceberg, like I know there’s so much more about it [to learn], but … I think I got the general gist of it, which is all you can really do in the time .... (Interview, May 12, 2011)

The course of learning over time revealed students’ development of an understanding of the educational approach throughout their university experiences. Rebecca found Informal Learning difficult to understand at first, and did not take to the approach until she completed her Informal Learning sequence. However, David Price, former Project Leader of Musical Futures, pointed out that:

Some of the research that we did with the Institute of Education … [concluded] that [Informal Learning] can be quite difficult … especially for a teacher who is on prac … because of the radical shift that it proposes. (Interview, April 8, 2011)

It was therefore not just the limited contact with the approach, but also the unique nature of the approach itself, that made learning challenging. This is evident in some
of the responses from participants. It is interesting to note that Seth’s viewpoint appeared to change between his first and second interview, as he began forgetting smaller technical problems, and considering more broad concerns. When in the group interview, he noted that, “stepping in, yeah, that was probably my biggest issue with the whole thing”, while in his later interview, reflecting on the immediate concerns of his initial experience, he much more optimistically accepted that challenges are a part of growth and a part of being a trainee on practicum: “you kind of just have to accept that prac teaching is actually kind of more about the teacher than the students in some ways”, where the class is almost used as “guinea pigs” for the “greater good” of valuable teacher experience (Interview, May 17, 2011).

Michael Webb felt that it was initially difficult for teacher education students to gain a deep understanding of Informal Learning in the context of their Conservatorium experiences. He describes how responses changed over the course of the five years he has taught Informal Learning:

The sort-of proportion of students who reported enthusiastically or competently compared with those who didn’t have an opportunity to implement the study, or were very unsure of it, or got negative feedback from teachers at schools saying, ‘you can’t do that’, or whatever … has … evened out a bit so that you’re getting a majority of people in the … positive box, and a minority of people in the negative box - although it hasn’t shifted hugely. (Interview, May 5, 2011)

This trend indicates a shift in perception by students towards Informal Learning over time. In the conceptualisation of a new pedagogy, teacher education students’ increased exposure to Informal Learning over the course of their degree in recent years may have refined their understanding of the approach, and increased their confidence in teaching it, resulting in more positive experiences. Michael Webb speculated that the generally increasing awareness and use of this pedagogy in schools may be now showing the approach in a more favourable light, easing teacher education students’ implementation of it on practicum. He noticed a trend recently for more students at the institution to admit to confidence and competence in popular music, which may have also affected their practicum experience. In addition, he felt that the university gradually used the approach more in classes and in general
discussions with students, stating that “By 2010 it was ‘in the ether’, whereas in 2006 it ‘came out of nowhere’” (Email communication, June 22, 2011).

Abigail’s comments also revealed the ways in which many teachers’ and teacher education students’ prior teaching and learning experiences may enable them to more readily connect with the approach:

Some teachers have been drawing on informal learning methods for years … and obviously young people have been learning informally for years as well, so, you know … informal learning will always be there, whether there’s Musical Futures or not. (Interview, May 17, 2011)

In the following section the experiences and associated perceptions of teacher education student participants when actively implementing Informal Learning during practicum are explored.

Practicum Experiences and Perspectives

Practicum Implementation: Institutional Factors

Lecturer Michael Webb described the challenges involved in institutionalising the teaching of a new pedagogy within a school environment. He perceived that there could be some resistance to the approach from school teachers who witness it for the first time during practicum. This has implications for how students conduct themselves in this situation:

[An educational] system has to be conservative, ‘cos it’s huge and it’s cumbersome … so it changes very slowly. So when a conservative system embraces … a pedagogical idea, what generally happens, is that it gets mainstreamed … So what happens in schools, if you go, ‘hey, I’m horrified by the idea of having a popular music teaching method’, well … you have to sort-of, smooth around the corners, the rough edges, and … you kind of dumb it down a little bit. (Interview, May 5, 2011)

The authenticity of using a new approach may thus be affected by its institutionalisation. Participants generally did not aim to simplify the approach, but they did adapt it for the teachers and the environment, and attempted to provide them
with enough information to give them as good an idea about the approach as possible, even though teachers often had little time or motivation to take a huge amount of interest.

Isobel felt very deterred by the school response to the approach because of the negative environment in her practicum school. This contrasted with my own positive attitude towards Informal Learning as a student participant researcher in the same school as Isobel. While Isobel could only draw on her limited introduction to the approach, I had been reading in depth about the approach for some time before those classes began. I therefore had more confidence in attempting its implementation, and despite our shared and equally negative environmental experience, I was still overwhelmingly positive about the approach, unlike Isobel. This indicates the strong effect that the level of understanding of this approach may have on the ability of teacher education students to optimistically receive it, despite complicating contextual factors.

**Practicum Implementation: Initial Responses**

As part of their assessment, teacher education students’ PowerPoint presentations and handouts showed how they perceived significant positive school student reactions towards their self-governed learning and choices, and the opportunity to learn unfamiliar instruments. When interviewed some months later, participants still had clear memories of these student reactions, while specific details were less memorable. During their interviews, individual student participants recalled aspects of Informal Learning that they felt were most important. Jacki saw some of the benefits that school students gain through the experience, as “the students really enjoyed the autonomy that they got” (Interview, October 7 2010). Camilla valued the student control and self-directed learning, and Annabelle also was pleased that students had the choice of their musical content and the understanding developing from their engagement with the music: “It’s practical; hands on; how can they not understand the music they’re playing themselves?” (Interview, April 4, 2011).

These values are integral to the approach, and were also emphasised by David Price, who described his experiences with the growth of the Musical Futures concept:
At the start of this project, I was of the belief that … it didn’t really matter what we did, we’d never get to the point where kids were really excited about playing music in school …. It was never going to be a cool thing to do – and I was wrong …. It reaches kids … where they’re at, and where their passions and enthusiasms are at. I think that’s really important. (Interview, April 4, 2011)

It is interesting that this integral effect of Informal Learning was important to David Price as a knowledgeable expert, but it was also immediately recognised and acknowledged by the student participants, demonstrating how practical use of the approach can reveal some of its core principles, even to trainees who had never used Informal Learning before.

Catherine, Janica, Seth and Nicole enjoyed the people skills, popular music skills and aural skills developed through the pedagogy, while Camilla noted the effect of allowing friendship groups on equalising the classroom: “My supervising teacher said usually he would mix the [students] that were more experienced [with] higher … order thinking, with those that were much slower … so that the … mixed ability could … help each other … But that doesn’t follow the friendship groups.” Using friendship groups meant that students with higher and lower abilities were in separate groups, and “that didn’t affect the level of performance … because it was the low-ability group that came up with the really good performance in the end.” Camilla thus revealed her excitement at this discovery of the potential benefits of Informal Learning to reach all students in the classroom, regardless of any perceived ability. The benefits of friendships were highlighted by a number of participants, including Abigail D’Amore, who saw the positive effects of:

really simple things like letting young people work with their friends, because so often in schools they’re kind of put into groups … But when you put them with their friends … They have a lot more confidence … and they’re much more willing to kind of have a go. (Interview, May 17, 2011)

Some student participants found the aural training involved in Informal Learning very useful. Isobel found that, “Coming from someone that … hasn’t got very good aural skills, I like that it helps with that, a lot.” Like Isobel, Natasha also found a particular
benefit that related to her personally. Having never played without music, she found the aural learning aspect of Informal Learning, “a really valuable skill” (Interview, May 18, 2011). Seth felt that Informal Learning was an effective way to “bridge the generation gap between students and teachers” (Interview, May 17, 2011). He felt that it could connect teachers with the music of the students, and increase their connection through this music. It may be that Seth’s and some others’ more extensive reading of relevant materials helped find some of these more sophisticated thoughts about the pedagogy.

In contrast, some negative aspects discovered by a number of participants were related to the short time given for the Informal Learning sequence, and the small spaces in which multiple friendship groups often made music together. One group of participants agreed on a range of difficulties, including issues related to preparation, resources, support, behaviour management, keeping everyone on task, a lack of understanding of Informal Learning and time management. Many student participants felt concerned about behaviour management prior to using the approach, which was demonstrated by the behaviour of students in Isobel’s video clips from practicum experience. These factors that often dominate the concerns of teacher education students during practicum can remain further prioritised by the process of attempting a new pedagogy.

Seth found it difficult to know when to step in and aid students’ learning, as did Jacki and Isobel, but they all felt that this was something that came with further experience and familiarity. Isobel found that a personal lack of confidence when implementing Informal Learning “turned [her] off” the approach (Interview, May 12, 2011), demonstrating how individual differences such as self-efficacy can influence the level of enjoyment and impact of the new pedagogy for training teachers.

Contrasting with these obstacles for student participants were the opinions of Abigail D’Amore and David Price of the Musical Futures program, who felt that the main difficulty was when the approach is misinterpreted, and people “only understand part of the picture” (David Price, interview, April 8, 2011). Given that student participants were still getting used to the teaching environment, had only recently been introduced to the approach, had no previous experience with implementing Informal Learning,
and were in another country from where the approach had been widely accepted, they may have had a less comprehensive understanding. This sometimes resulted in more negative experiences of the approach. All the negative and positive experiences revealed seemed to relate to various environmental and personal characteristics.

**Practicum School, Classroom and Teachers**

The school environment naturally influenced the way in which student participants implemented their Informal Learning sequence, and they had much to say in regard to its effect. Although some student participants found their practicum teachers were supportive, or at least open to them experimenting with new methods, many students found resistance from classroom teachers while using the approach. Simon felt that often teachers don’t accept the approach because it is easier to just continue “doing what they’ve been doing” (Interview, May 2, 2011). He noted a reaction towards his description of Informal Learning from the head of a private school in retorting, “oh, I thought that was called bludging”. Contrastingly, Annabelle found her Informal Learning sequence created a positive environment, and her class felt a sense of achievement. Others like Jacki discovered that students were self-motivated and some chose to work outside class time, which resulted in a higher quality performance at the end of their learning sequence. Mitchell’s students reacted positively and even volunteered themselves to play in a school assembly after Mitchell had left.

Camilla believed that despite the resistance from teachers, if it was possible to positively demonstrate and workshop the approach to show the benefits, teachers would be quite likely to “give it a go” (Interview, May 11, 2011). This distinguishes her from the student participants in the study, who had less opportunity to develop staff relationships to the level Camilla had experienced as a teacher. As a result, student participants were only able to express their immediate perceptions of largely resistant teacher responses to the pedagogy before, during and after the practicum implementation of the approach. Like Camilla, David Price realised a need to show the positive effects of the approach to teachers, and acknowledged the need to have demonstration schools in Australia, as in the United Kingdom, in order to “fit the Australian context” (Interview, April 8, 2011).
Erica felt that her students’ potential was not being realised, as the teacher “really dumbs them down”, spending extended periods of time teaching very simplistic material and instruments. Both Isobel and I, as participant-researcher, found our shared practicum experience inhibited by the influence of the classroom music teacher, who “interrupted a lot … and she made us interrupt,” which made our learning difficult (Isobel, interview, May 12, 2011). Video recordings of our joint-implemented Informal Learning sequence show how uncomfortable the supervising teacher was with the approach, and the resultant need to intercept and instruct the students. Having not read any materials on the approach before seeing it, the teacher was naturally misguided as to the purpose of what she saw as “wasting time” (Memo notes, September 23, 2010), and this affected the ability of the teacher education participants to accurately conduct the approach.

The context of the classroom and students appeared to have a significant effect on how the classroom students engaged with Informal Learning. Simon was surprised by the unexpected leadership roles emerging from particular students throughout the sequence, where normally unmotivated students suddenly became the leaders of their groups. Erica noted how most students in her class had very minimal instrumental knowledge or experience, and as a result, teaching a larger class in this way was challenging. Other participants such as Isobel had a small class, and were able to manage them more easily. Seth noted the temporary nature of practicum experiences, which inhibit the ability to build relationships and rapport with students: “I think everything that you do on prac - it’s not really a realistic situation” (Interview, March 31, 2011). He felt the same at the time of his university presentation, where his written handout explained in more detail the challenges of teacher misunderstandings and restrictions, such as the following issue:

Because this class had two different classroom teachers (and a teacher’s aide that attended some lessons), I had three extra personnel to try and explain the MF [Musical Futures] framework to. As someone who had done a lot of reading about MF, I still found it difficult to define the role of the teacher to the staff, particularly as I was inexperienced with it myself. As such, fellow staff members, at times, stepped in when they shouldn’t have, as well as stood back at times when groups could have used help.

Some student participants, like Annabelle and Erica, felt that it could be a very different experience given another school. Annabelle said, “I would be keen to try it
with a different class, cos … it was almost like my experience was … too good … even though we had a few problems, on the whole they were just a really great bunch of kids” (Interview, April 6, 2011). Talitha noted that when students were doing written work, “they were answering these questions and were really intelligent kids … and were actually interested. But then as soon as we went to that practical side, [they] went back to [their] old ways.” This reveals how some routines and perceptions instilled in classroom students affected the implementation of Informal Learning.

Erica was affected by her unique role in Informal Learning:

The students treated me differently in that class … I wasn’t the intimidating teacher at the front of the room … I think it was because I felt like one of them that I got over my performance anxieties … I just liked the general atmosphere in the room. (Interview, March 22, 2011)

Bryce and Mitchell also experienced this sense of classroom equality, which David Price explained when he said, “it’s about democratising schools, and teachers and students being on a slightly more even footing” (Interview, April 8, 2011). The results indicate the effect a positive, supportive environment and successful teaching outcomes can have on student participants’ experiences.
Post-practicum Experiences and Perspectives

Looking Back and Looking Ahead

Rebecca endorsed the approach, as she found it good for aural and rhythmical skills. “I am very happy about it. I think it’s very progressive; it’s fun, and it’s fun for me to teach … Oh I just can’t wait to do it again, absolutely, I’m stuck; I’m stuck with it.” She felt strongly about its contextual use, where she explained, “I know that, from my experience, [this] will be good for them (whispers) - but not in classical!” (Interview, April 13, 2011). This concern of the appropriateness of Informal Learning for different musical content, such as classical music, was common among participants. Bryce and Natasha thought it was mainly just applicable to popular music. However, Abigail D’Amore indicated that once students are motivated through Informal Learning, it is possible to introduce them to many other types of music, and noted that teachers often miss this aspect in their training.

In relation to how students retained information about Informal Learning after their varied experiences, Seth considered the importance of using Informal Learning in a practicum setting, saying, “if you actually experience it, then you’re going to remember it”. He then considered that if “you have a bad experience of it, then you might go, ‘oh, no I’m not gonna try that again’”. This also indicates the dilemma regarding whether the implementation of the approach should be used as a part of course expectations. It was sometimes only upon reflection that participants saw significant value in Informal Learning, such as Annabelle. After her Informal Learning sequence, she felt that her PowerPoint presentation, given in the university class as part of the assessment of the practicum Informal Learning experiences, helped her realise how important the approach really was. It made her want to try it with different classes to test its applicability to different settings.

Newly qualified teacher Camilla revealed her views on learning about the approach almost two years before, describing her most recent experiences:

Since that time when I did it, it’s recently come up … when I recently went over to visit my old prac school, and [the music teacher] was telling me about
when he’s been using it since [I used Informal Learning] … And now he’s going to London for training, it sort-of spiked my interest again … But I haven’t actually gone … and looked and read over all the … principles and that kind of thing, and I haven’t put it into place … directly or purposefully in my casual teaching since then. (Interview, May 11, 2011)

She explained why she had been reluctant to use it since her university training, despite enjoying it, and apparently despite the school taking an interest:

I think that is because in a lot of the schools where I have been [working], I have tried to fit in with what they’re already doing, and wherever I’ve been teaching…they’re far from IML; they’re very teacher-focussed: ‘bang, bang, bang, here’s a worksheet’. (Interview, May 11, 2011)

Abigail D’Amore speculated on the importance of newly qualified teachers in England having the opportunity to return and try to use the approach again, even some time after training, in order to achieve an ongoing positive outcome:

I think that students probably quite often enjoyed the session that they come on to … they agree with Musical Futures, they like it, they get hold of the resources, but then they go into their schools and the kind of forget about it for a year, in their … first year of teaching … but then they perhaps come back to it, and I think that … as long as people know about it and they know that they can come back to it at some point, that’s kind of what we’re trying to achieve. (Interview, May 17, 2011)

Some student participants also seemed content just to have the experience on practicum. Seth felt that the experience was still valuable, even with failure, feeling his own attempt was not a good example. Despite negative experiences, most of the student participants said that they would use the approach within their first year of teaching, although it was emphasised that the right environment and relationships would need to first be established. David Price also recognised the need for the right conditions within the school, and also noted that “confidence is so much the name of the game in terms of Musical Futures stuff” (Interview, April 8, 2011). As previously outlined, one of a few participants who felt the approach was not really practical for teacher education students was Isobel, who, whether by coincidence or explanation, noted personal teacher confidence issues while implementing the approach. This may indicate that her lack of confidence increased her struggle with the approach and resultant feeling that it was not a realistic task for practicum students.
Rebecca, among others, valued Informal Learning in ways that connected with her personally.

I know through my experience … I didn’t know that it was called informal learning, a long time ago, but that’s what I did…myself when … after … classical music school … I [would] come home, and the next day I [was] listening [to a] song on the radio, trying to pick it up …. That was, for me, like … getting away from that enormous weight of classical [music]. (Interview, April 13, 2011)

Mitchell also felt a huge impact, saying Informal Learning “completely changed my attitude to teaching … I didn’t realise how much I enjoyed teaching ‘til [learning about Informal Learning in third year] – I thought ‘I really dig this. I really like teaching’”. Natasha valued her experience upon reflection, where she felt, “‘yeah, OK that makes sense’ … I saw the sense at the time, but even more [now] I can relate to it, going ‘oh, OK, that’s what I’m [learning] now - how much more beneficial is it to a kid who’s fifteen?’ Like, clearly I should have done that when I was fifteen.” Isobel, by contrast, felt she was hindered by being made to learn about it: “I think I’m more likely to use things without realising I’m using things … I hate how people … classify everything and theorise – it makes it too much like school! … I’d rather just do it.”

Although there were a variety of responses to the approach, and Informal Learning connected with each individual in different ways, many of the student participants held positive values about the pedagogy. While personal differences made the pedagogy significant for some, for others it was poignant experiences and reflections on their past that made students connect with Informal Learning in a deeper way. However, sometimes less complex understandings led to less optimism for the potential appropriation of the approach to non-popular forms of music.

**Adaptation**

Abigail D’Amore stated that Musical Futures has “always been a very evolving approach”, based on constant teacher feedback, although “the core principles at the heart of it” would never change. Students seem to have naturally adopted this principle, and have even begun adapting the approach for different areas of their lives.
Seth thought about how it might be used in primary school, as this was the area in which he was considering teaching. Bryce had already been heavily involved in drama, which he had always taught in a very “informal learning way.” He described his experiences: “Coming from a drama background where everything is sort-of workshopped … It just really sort-of fits in with my own arts education philosophy … this sort-of cross-over [of Informal Learning and Drama Education]” (Interview, May 5, 2011).

Seth described it as a “self-updating model”, and felt that “I don’t think any approach should be used exclusively” (Interview, May 17, 2011). Simon felt that the theory and analysis aspect of musical learning was missing from Informal Learning, and thought he could address this issue by adding analysis after students had learnt the music. This was also suggested by Catherine, in such a way as to tie their experiences back to the students’ familiar way of learning. Both Rebecca and Mitchell felt that they could integrate the approach with the use of technological tools such as YouTube videos to connect to students through visual media.

Simon did not feel he needed to do any further research into the approach, as “you’re going to adapt it anyway.” Many other student participants, however, felt they should continue learning through the Musical Futures Handbook and other online resources. In private studio lessons, Annabelle said, “I try now to sometimes get them to do little improvisations, and also, I do … short phrases and they … copy me” (Interview, April 6, 2011). Natasha, among others, has used the philosophy of the approach to influence her teaching and general outlook: “I’m just seeing it’s worth in a more practical level, I think, now that I’m trying to [use it] in my own life” (Interview, May 18, 2011).

For Camilla, now conducting a mature-age band, the approach “made me realise how much I spoon-feed a lot of my students.” She now makes them tune themselves using aural skills, rather than telling them what to do. “Also in my teaching … I’ve started saying, well, ‘how would you improve it?’” and asking them what their own goals are (Interview, May 11, 2011). This shows an impressive shift in thinking, perhaps more sophisticated than in the student participants. However, all of these instances indicate
the ability of Informal Learning, even within a practicum setting, to influence the teaching philosophy of future educators.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has revealed the experiences of teacher education students as they made their way through their individual Informal Learning journeys. Beginning in their second year of study, and continuing during their third year of study at the conservatorium, student participants’ views and experiences have been discussed, and given context by the views of relevant professionals in the Informal Learning field, including the insights of their own instructor. It has revealed their changing attitudes towards music and education as they learnt about the approach, through their implementation of it, and then their final reflections and thoughts for the future. The final chapter will now discuss in detail the implications of this research.
Chapter 5  Conclusion

When a paradigm shift arises in music education, it tends to happen very slowly, gradually becoming more and more prolific until it can be recognised as the norm. Informal Learning is no exception to this trend, and teacher education students in this study were experiencing this new approach in the context of its relatively recent development from existence in informal contexts to its inclusion in the classroom. The key purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptual change and growth of Conservatorium students in their interactions with Informal Learning, in light of its somewhat limited circulation in Australia to date.

In a case study of these sixteen students, these perceptions were complemented by adding the voices of relevant experts in the field, and that of a newly qualified past Conservatorium student with the same Informal Learning training. Single and focus group interviews revealed the differences and similarities between respondents with different backgrounds, experiences, values and opinions on their experiences with Informal Learning at different points in time. Of particular focus was the learning of the approach during the sixth semester of study, under the guidance of Dr Michael Webb, where they also implemented it during their practicum, and reflected on this in a presentation task.

Training and Responses to Informal Learning

While university learning of the approach was similar for all student participants, there existed a variety of responses to Informal Learning, which reflected the majority-positive to minority-negative ratio indicated by Michael Webb, although there was some flexibility in this result. When using a “foreign” pedagogy, doubts may surround the approach until it is implemented practically, after which more deep understanding is possible. Almost all students were open to the possibility of using the approach again, which is also reflected in responses to day-long workshops currently running in the United Kingdom, where Musical Futures was born. However, pressures to conform to school practices when students initially...
become casual teachers mean that it might take several years before teachers turn again to the approach.

Students with a most notable enthusiasm for the approach showed interest from the moment they came into contact with it. Interest was sparked through the alignment of their personal values with Informal Learning’s philosophy, which sometimes led to reflections on its potential appropriation to other areas of education. Interest levels were also affected by students’ personal teaching values and their level of experience with popular music and informal ways of learning, influencing competency and in turn, confidence with the approach. Several months after their implementation of Informal Learning, students remembered less specific detail, but found the positive reactions of the students the most easy to recall. Those with the desire for more structured learning for themselves and a preference for multiple ways of teaching rather than one stage-by-stage process, as Informal Learning is most usually presented, found Informal Learning challenging. They saw the institutionalisation of Musical Futures as a contradiction to the philosophy behind the approach. Many participants remembered very little of the approach until it was either taught more comprehensively in semester six, or used in their practicum school.

Student participants consistently emphasised the importance of their live experiences with the approach, while they found that the “radical shift” was difficult to grasp as teachers in training. Both experts and teacher education students acknowledge that learning requires launching themselves into the unknown. For some, even a negative school environment or the sense that they implemented it badly ceased to tarnish their high regard for the pedagogy, and their value of using it practically, despite perceived failure.

**Personal Reflections on Informal Learning Experiences**

Student-participant values were expressed through what they liked and disliked about the approach. Benefits for the classroom students were highly valued, including personal autonomy and control of choices; aural, popular music and other
musical skills; engagement and resulting achievement, particularly through friendship groups; understanding through practical activity; the equalisation of the classroom; social skills and leadership skills. Teacher benefits considered were aural skills; the diffusing effect of the more equal or ‘democratic’ nature of the relationship between student and teacher; and the ability to connect with student musical tastes and in turn, connect with students. Teacher education students experienced difficulties with a number of issues related to preparation, resources, support, behaviour management, maintaining student focus, students’ poor musical and instrumental skills, deciding when to intervene, self-confidence, a lack of understanding of Informal Learning and time management. Many of these concerns were related to lack of general teacher experience, especially regarding classroom management, or the issues raised by David Price and Abigail D’Amore of Musical Futures, including lack of deep understanding or misinterpretation of the pedagogy.

Some resistance and lack of support for the approach from practicum schools made it difficult for some students to effectively implement the approach, which they often adapted in order to suit their environment and to placate practicum music teachers, who, having little understanding of the approach, often perceived it as chaotic and inefficient. These factors were already evident to student participants, and also recognised and explained by Green (2008). Some participants empathised with the practicum teachers, who they believed found it easier to continue with more familiar methods.

With the completion of training and resulting employment within schools teacher education students may be better empowered to embrace new ideas, given the right situation. At this stage, the potential for classroom teachers to ‘come around’ to the approach after seeing its benefits, is understood and acknowledged. Within the United Kingdom there is a more emphatic understanding of the need for teachers to have demonstration schools that are contextually appropriate for Informal Learning. These would also facilitate its implementation by student teachers in Australia, which is something student-participants were not able to fathom from their experiences. However, it is possible for teacher education students to recognise that practicum experiences are not an exact representation of real teaching practice.
Post-practicum Perspectives, Future Use and Adaptation

While student participants recall ideas from the pedagogy that impacted on them, obstacles that they initially recall fade over time. This could be as a result of choosing to focus on positive outcomes rather than their own struggles as teacher education students, acknowledging that these struggles are a result of general teaching issues, which resolve as a result of more experience. Whether their experiences were positive or negative, students felt the need to experiment with a different context to see if a different outcome would result. This reflects the perceived need to gain more experience, for their development of competency in this approach.

Teacher education students felt that they reflected on the approach both formatively and in summative assessment, post-practicum. Some also solidified their attitudes over the few months before interviews began in the year following their practicum experiences. As a result of these developing attitudes, many teacher education students were very enthusiastic to attempt the approach again, while others were less enthusiastic, but still holding enough value to consider using the approach again in the future. While there is some resistance to a pedagogy being a mandatory part of practicum experiences, others felt that this was worthwhile just to sense the value of the approach and consolidate it conceptually.

Some teacher education students reflected on past informal or formal experiences that helped them realise the importance of Informal Learning. For newly qualified teachers, the desire to use Informal Learning again may only come as a result of a teaching-related connection to the approach that reminds teachers of their desire to use it again. While the pedagogy is still beginning to develop a foothold in Australia, if in time it becomes more prevalent here, then it will be more likely for teachers to employ the approach once again. Some teachers in training are able to connect to Informal Learning practice because of their own background and teaching values, which affected their attitudes on a deep level. It becomes possible to realise the potential enjoyment and rewards of teaching in this way.
Abigail D’Amore understood Informal Learning as a constantly changing and evolving entity, which should be adapted to suit the environment, while always maintaining its core principles. Teacher education students embraced this concept, and feel they can adapt Informal Learning in numerous ways, in order to address lack of music theory in the approach; to connect with students’ pre-existing methods of learning and to utilise appropriate technology and media. Importantly, it is already affecting some of their educational lives today. Some students implement Informal Learning values of listening and improvisation in their private studio teaching, while in qualified teaching, it also affected the need to give students more autonomy, realising the potential of students, who have “so much to offer”.

**Implications and Further Research**

This study reveals the need for regular training in a new pedagogy, which allows understanding at more than a surface level. This is particularly true when it demands of its users a profound shift in thinking. The receptiveness and enthusiasm for the approach seems to be affected by a number of factors, including students’ personal background and experiences, their values in teaching and their comfort with an approach that throws them ‘in at the deep end’. Longitudinal study of teacher use of the approach, from university inception through to their established teacher positions, is necessary to investigate the impact of the approach and ways to improve teacher training.

It is clear that real, live experiences with Informal Learning are not only an effective learning tool for teacher education students, but also have some lasting effect on many students’ educational schemas. It would benefit future studies to investigate the development of teachers in the workforce over more time and how this affects their reception to new approaches. This is vital to inform the creation and development of approaches to teaching and learning that meet the needs and context of the teacher.
References


Appendix A: Ethics Approval Letter
Ref: IM/OO

24 January 2011

Dr James Renwick
Sydney Conservatory of Music
Greenway Building – C41
The University of Sydney
Email: jrenwick@sydney.edu.au

Dear Dr Renwick

Thank you for your correspondence dated 6 January 2011 addressing comments made by the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC). The Executive Committee of the HREC, at its meeting of 18 January 2011, considered this information and approved the protocol entitled ‘Informal Music and the Student Teacher: Learning and Perceptions Within a Conservatoire’.

Details of the approval are as follows:

Protocol No.: 13307
Approval Period: January 2011 to January 2012
Authorised Personnel: Dr James Renwick
Miss Tanya Nehl

Documents approved:
- Participant Information Statement – University Students (V2 – 02/01/11)
- Participant Information Statement – Education Experts (V1 – 02/11/10)
- Participant Consent Form (V2 02/01/11)
- Interview Protocol

The HREC is a fully constituted Ethics Committee in accordance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans-March 2007 under Section 5.1.29.

The approval of this project is conditional upon your continuing compliance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans. N.B. A report on this research must be submitted every 12 months from the date of the approval, or on completion of the project, whichever occurs first. Failure to submit reports will result in the withdrawal of consent for the project to proceed. Your report will be due on 31/01/2012, please put this in your diary.

Chief Investigator / Supervisor’s responsibilities to ensure that:

1. All serious and unexpected adverse events should be reported to the HREC within 72 hours for clinical trials/interventional research.

2. All unforeseen events that might affect continued ethical conduct of the project should be reported to the HREC as soon as possible.
3. Any change to the protocol must be approved by the HREC before the research project can proceed.

4. All research participants are to be provided with a Participant Information Statement and Consent Form, unless otherwise agreed by the Committee. The following statement must appear on the bottom of the Participant Information Statement: Any person with concerns or complaints about the conduct of a research study can contact the Deputy Manager, Research Integrity (Human Ethics), University of Sydney on +61 2 8627 8176 (Telephone); + 61 2 8627 8177 (Facsimile) or ro.humanethics@sydney.edu.au (Email).

5. Copies of all signed Consent Forms must be retained and made available to the HREC on request.

6. It is your responsibility to provide a copy of this letter to any internal/external granting agencies if requested.

7. The HREC approval is valid for four (4) years from the Approval Period stated in this letter. Investigators are requested to submit a progress report annually.

8. A report and a copy of any published material should be provided at the completion of the Project.

Please do not hesitate to contact Research Integrity (Human Ethics) should you require further information or clarification.

Yours sincerely

[Signature]

Associate Professor Ian Maxwell
Chair
Human Research Ethics Committee

cc: Tanya Nehl  tneh4325@uni.sydney.edu.au
Appendix B: Participant Information Statements
PARTICIPANT INFORMATION STATEMENT – UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

Informal Music and the Student Teacher: Learning and Perceptions within a Conservatoire.

(1) What is the study about?
This study aims to investigate the learning style of popular musicians in the recently emerging educational approach of Informal Music Learning (IML). This includes changing the teacher’s role, giving students more responsibility and learning through aural copying in proactive group discovery. This study looks not at the school students who are introduced to the pedagogy, but to the student teachers who are introduced to this approach, and how they receive and use it. This research aims to discover student perceptions to IML, including those acquired from university study and as a result of teaching IML during their practicum experience.

(2) Who is carrying out the study?
All research is being conducted by student researcher Tanya Nehl, and will form the basis for the degree of B.Mus. (Mus. Ed) (Honours) at The University of Sydney. The research will be under the supervision of Dr James Renwick, Lecturer in Music Education.

(3) What does the study involve?
This study will require your consent to participate in a video-taped interview, which would be arranged to take place at the Conservatorium of Music at a time to suit you. You may choose to do a one-on-one interview or a small group interview with your peers. If you would like to participate, you will need to fill in the Consent Form, which also asks whether you would like to receive feedback on the results of the research once data have been collected and synthesised. Interviews will be conducted by the student researcher, Tanya Nehl.

(4) How much time will the study take?
The interview may take around an hour, although this will vary and may take a longer or shorter amount of time depending on how much you have to say about the interview topics. Group interviews usually take longer than a one-on-one interview.
(5) Can I withdraw from the study?
Being in this study is completely voluntary - you are not under any obligation to consent and - if you do consent - you can withdraw at any time without affecting your relationship with The University of Sydney or the Sydney Conservatorium of Music. If you take part in a group interview although you can withdraw at any time it will not be possible to delete the video recording once the session has commenced.

You may stop the interview at any time if you do not wish to continue, the video-recording will be erased and the information provided will not be included in the study.

(6) Will anyone else know the results?
All aspects of the study, including results, will be strictly confidential and only the student researcher will have access to information on participants. A report of the study may be submitted for publication, but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report.

(7) Will the study benefit me?
Results of the study will be provided to you if you wish, and may provide some ideas about the Informal Learning pedagogy and its use by student-teachers, which may be relevant to your studies and professional life. Therefore there may be some indirect benefit, but this cannot be guaranteed.

(8) Can I tell other people about the study?
Yes, you may.

(9) What if I require further information?
When you have read this information, Tanya Nehl will discuss it with you further and answer any questions you may have. If you would like to know more at any stage, please feel free to contact the following researchers:

Tanya Nehl                     James Renwick
Mob: 0420 965 024             Work: (02) 9351 1235
Email: tneh4325@uni.sydney.edu.au Email: james.renwick@sydney.edu.au

(10) What if I have a complaint or concerns?

Any person with concerns or complaints about the conduct of a research study can contact The Manager, Human Ethics Administration, University of Sydney on +61 2 8627 8176 (Telephone); +61 2 8627 8177 (Facsimile) or ro.humanethics@sydney.edu.au (Email).

This information sheet is for you
PARTICIPANT INFORMATION STATEMENT – EDUCATION EXPERTS

Informal Music and the Student Teacher: Learning and Perceptions Within a Conservatoire.

(1) **What is the study about?**
This study aims to investigate the learning style of popular musicians in the recently emerging educational approach of Informal Music Learning (IML). This includes changing the teachers’ role, giving students more responsibility and learning through aural copying in proactive group-discovery. This study looks not at the school students who are introduced to the pedagogy, but to the student teachers who are introduced to this approach, and how they receive and use it. This research aims to discover student perceptions to IML, including those acquired from university study and as a result of teaching IML during their practicum experience.

(2) **Who is carrying out the study?**
All research is being conducted by student researcher Tanya Nehl, and will form the basis for the degree of B.Mus. (Mus. Ed) (Honours) at The University of Sydney. The research will be under the supervision of Dr James Renwick, Lecturer in Music Education.

(3) **What does the study involve?**
This study involves an interview, which will either be video-recorded at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, or, if you would prefer, an online audio-recorded Skype phone interview. This would be arranged at a time to suit you. If you would like to participate, you will need to fill in the Consent Form, which also asks whether you would like to receive feedback on the results of the research once data have been collected and synthesised. Interviews will be conducted by student researcher Tanya Nehl.

(4) **How much time will the study take?**
The interview could take up to an hour, although this will vary and may take a longer or shorter amount of time depending on how much you have to say about the interview topics.

(5) **Can I withdraw from the study?**
Being in this study is completely voluntary - you are not under any obligation to consent and - if you do consent - you can withdraw at any time without affecting your relationship with The University of Sydney or the Sydney Conservatorium of Music.
You may stop the interview at any time if you do not wish to continue, the video-recording will be erased and the information provided will not be included in the study.

(6) **Will anyone else know the results?**
All aspects of the study, including results, will be strictly confidential and only the researchers will have access to information on participants. A report of the study may be submitted for publication, but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report, unless consent to this is given.

(7) **Will the study benefit me?**
Results of the study will be provided to you if you wish, and may provide some ideas about the Informal Learning pedagogy and its use by student-teachers, which may be relevant to your studies/profession. Therefore there may be some indirect benefit, but this cannot be guaranteed.

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Yes, you may.

(9) **What if I require further information?**
When you have read this information, Tanya Nehl will discuss it with you further and answer any questions you may have. If you would like to know more at any stage, please feel free to contact the following researchers:

Tanya Nehl
Mob: 0420 965 024
Email: tneh4325@uni.sydney.edu.au

James Renwick
Work: (02) 9351 1235
Email: james.renwick@sydney.edu.au

(10) **What if I have a complaint or concerns?**

Any person with concerns or complaints about the conduct of a research study can contact The Manager, Human Ethics Administration, University of Sydney on +61 2 8627 8176 (Telephone); +61 2 8627 8177 (Facsimile) or ro.humanethics@sydney.edu.au (Email).

This information sheet is for you.
Appendix C: Consent Forms
PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

I, .................................................................[PRINT NAME], give consent to my participation in the research project

TITLE: INFORMAL MUSIC AND THE STUDENT TEACHER: LEARNING PERCEPTIONS WITHIN A CONSERVATOIRE.

In giving my consent I acknowledge that:

1. The procedures required for the project and the time involved have been explained to me, and any questions I have about the project have been answered to my satisfaction.

2. I have read the Participant Information Statement and have been given the opportunity to discuss the information and my involvement in the project with the researcher/s.

3. I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time, without affecting my relationship with the researcher(s) or the University of Sydney and the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, now or in the future.

4. I understand that my involvement is strictly confidential and no information about me will be used in any way that reveals my identity. Only the student researcher will know my identity.

5. I understand that being in this study is completely voluntary – I am not under any obligation to consent.

6. I understand if I take part in a group interview I can withdraw at any time however the video recording cannot be erased once the session has commenced. In a one-on-one interview, I can stop the interview at any time if I do not wish to

continue, the video recording will be erased and the information provided will not be included in the study.

7. I consent to: –

   i) One-on-one Interview                     YES ☐       NO ☐
   ii) Small Group Interview                  YES ☐       NO ☐
   iii) Video-taping                          YES ☐       NO ☐
   iv) Receiving Feedback                     YES ☐       NO ☐

If you answered YES to the "Receiving Feedback Question", please provide your details i.e. mailing address and/or email address.

Feedback Option

Address:  

Email: 

Signed:  

Name:   

Date: 

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3. I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time, without affecting my relationship with the researcher(s) or the University of Sydney and the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, now or in the future.

4. I understand that my involvement is strictly confidential and no information about me will be used in any way that reveals my identity, unless I consent to this.

5. I understand that being in this study is completely voluntary – I am not under any obligation to consent.

6. I understand that I can stop the interview at any time if I do not wish to continue, the video recording will be erased and the information provided will not be included in the study.
7. I consent to: –
   i) Video-taping          YES □       NO □
   ii) Audio-recording      YES □       NO □
   iii) Receiving Feedback  YES □       NO □
   iv) My name being used in published material YES □       NO □

   If you answered YES to the "Receiving Feedback Question", please provide your details i.e. mailing address and/or email address.

   Feedback Option
   Address: ____________________________________________________________
            ____________________________________________________________
   Email:  __________________________________________________________

   Signed: ........................................................................................................
   Name:  ........................................................................................................
   Date:  .........................................................................................................

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Appendix D: Interview Protocols

Interview Protocol: Student participants

The practicum experience
• When you used Informal Learning last year during prac, what was your school class like?
• Tell me about what you did for your Informal Learning sequence.
• How did you find using Informal Learning in your prac?
• How did your school/teachers take to the approach?
• What were student reactions to it? How did you feel about those reactions? Did students musical abilities change over time?
• Do you think they learnt much? If so, what?
• How might you assess them?

Reflections on experiences
• When did you first hear about Informal Learning?
• Do you remember learning about it in Significant Methods last year? What memories do you have of that?
• How did you respond to learning about Informal Learning this semester?
• How do you feel about it now compared to how you felt when doing it in your prac? Have you reflected on it much?
• Is there anything you like about it as a way of teaching?
• Is there anything you don’t like about it as a way of teaching?
• Did you have to modify aspects of Informal Learning or the prac school environment to make it suitable for you or the school?
• Has your attitude towards Informal Learning changed over time?
• How prepared do you feel you were, going in to teaching it in prac?

Conceptualisation and future use
• What do you think are the most important factors about Informal Learning? What is the main philosophy behind it?
• Has Informal Learning changed the way you think about anything related to teaching or otherwise?
• If you were to begin teaching now, how comfortable would you be with teaching Informal Learning?
• Do you think you will use it in the future? Why/Why not? How?
• Is there anything that you might need to do to help you teach in this way in the future? How would you personally teach it?
• What things are challenging in taking on a new approach/way of thinking about teaching?
• How might it be different to use it over a longer period of time?
• Is there anything you would like to add; any important ideas on informal learning that we haven’t mentioned?

Thank-you for your time. Your information will be kept just with me, and destroyed after the research is finished. I won’t use any of your real names in my thesis.
Interview Protocol: Expert participants

Personal background/general pedagogical information
• How long have you known about Informal Learning? And/or what is your experience of Informal Learning?
• How did you come to be involved in Musical Futures? Did your reception of the approach change at all over time?
• What do you feel encompasses the Musical Futures pedagogy? How is this achievable? Do you believe this has or will alter in the future?
• What do you feel are positive aspects of this approach?
• What do you feel are negative aspects of this approach?
• Have you ever tried implementing it yourself? Can you describe your experience/s of implementation?

Teachers and student teachers
• Tell me what you know about how student-teachers have been taught the pedagogy. How have they learnt it, and to what level of depth? Is it challenging for them? What do you think the ideal experiences for teachers that promote the best understanding of the approach, and an ability to teach it in schools?
• Do you think Informal Learning has an affect on student teacher perceptions? And on their developing teacher identity?
• Does the level of exposure to the pedagogy alter teachers (or student teachers) ability to implement Musical Futures?
• Do you think student teachers will actively incorporate this pedagogical change? To what degree? Why? Have you any experiences had that make you feel this is the case?
• How receptive have people been to this pedagogy? How receptive have student-teachers been to this pedagogy? Why? Suggestions for improvement?

Broader implications
• How does Musical Futures for teachers differ from place to place? Is it different for different institutions, or locations in the world?
• What do you think the differences are between Musical Futures and informal learning in its more “natural” form (outside of the classroom)? Do you think this has an effect on the way tertiary students receive it?
• In your experience, how effective do you think this approach is? Has this changed? How might it be improved?
• How difficult is it for teachers to implement this new approach as a permanent change? What are the causes of these difficulties and how can they be eliminated or improved?
• How do you think Informal Learning is influencing the way we think about education in general? What effect do you think this might have in the future?

Thank-you for your time. Your information will be kept just with me, and will be destroyed after the research is finished. Would you like to use your name in this research?
Appendix E: Teacher Education Student Informal Learning Assignment

**Task 5 Informal Music Learning trial and 10 minute report**

During Professional Experience teach a sequence of approximately 4 Informal Music Learning lessons based on the Musical Futures model and present a brief, well-organised oral report in class describing and evaluating your experience.

The oral report should be supplemented with a one-page (maximum) dot-point summary handout containing the background information requested below. In your presentation present excerpts of recorded results and photographs and student evaluation of the activities [appropriate permission must be sought within the school to record/document the lessons]. Be sure to demonstrate that what you implemented conformed to the pedagogical principles of IML, including teacher’s role.

Background information:
   a) What you undertook – phase of project, number of lessons, class/year/number of students/gender details
   b) Student responses to the lessons – your evaluation of why they responded this way
   c) Results/outcomes of the lessons
   d) Your evaluation of the process – how both you and students saw your role, how you evaluated the process

Due: Wks, 10, 11 & 12 (as per schedule)