

INTRODUCTION

Most musicians are involved in educating others at some point in their career¹, with around 60% actively teaching at any one time². A conservatoire or university music degree is often regarded as sufficient qualification for instrumental teaching.

Teaching education provision at UK conservatoires has “improved massively over the last 20 years”³. However, Henley (2011)⁴ recommends that conservatoires improve teaching qualifications and experience, in order to meet the needs of music education in the UK.

This study summarises the provision of training in music teaching at UK conservatoires and universities, summarising the available undergraduate modules and their content, and considers whether this training is ‘fit for purpose’, using the topic of teaching adults as an example.

MUSIC EDUCATION TRAINING

Information on music education modules was gained from the institutions’ websites.

Table 1: All UK conservatoires offer (optional) training in teaching at undergraduate level.

Table 2: Of the ten universities ranked highest for music in the UK⁵, only two – those ranked 9th and 10th - offer education modules as part of their undergraduate music degrees.

Institution	Modules	Content
Birmingham Conservatoire	Community Engagement - year 2	Community and educational topics.
Birmingham Conservatoire	Third year modules	“Classes to develop as a teacher”, music service placements.
Birmingham Conservatoire	Fourth Year modules	Further pedagogy module, music & health.
Royal Northern College of Music	Third year placements	Placement options include music education organisations, schools.
Royal Conservatoire of Scotland	BMus programme – none. BEd programme – teaching in schools.	No mention of education in BMus degree. BEd trains students for classroom teaching.
Royal College of Music	Instrumental/Vocal Teaching - year 2	Work towards DipABRSM teaching diploma.
Royal College of Music	Instrumental/Vocal Teaching - year 3	"Inclusive pedagogy, assessment, safeguarding and child protection, LRSM diploma.
Royal Academy of Music	Third/ Fourth year electives	Principles of education.
Guildhall	Professional Studies - year 4	Includes Teaching Skills.
Leeds College of Music	Instrumental Teaching - year 2	no module details
Trinity Laban Conservatoire	Instrumental/ Vocal Teaching - year 3/4	no module details
Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama	Teaching Skills - year three	Theory of learning, teaching skills, practical teaching experience (1:1 teaching and outreach work).

Table 1

Institution	Modules	Content
University of Oxford	none	
University of Durham	none	
University of Manchester	none	
University of Cambridge	none	Outreach programme includes education opportunities.
King's College London	none	
University of Bristol	none	
Royal Holloway	none	
University of Bristol	none	
University of Surrey	Optional placement year	Includes opportunities in education.
University of Southampton	Community Music – year 2	Explores “running Community Music sessions with all ages”.

Table 2

MUSIC TEACHER NEEDS VS MODULE CONTENT: THE CASE OF ADULT LEARNERS

Does the content of music education modules meet the needs of teaching musicians? As an example, many instrumental teachers teach adults on a one-to-one basis. The ABRSM estimates that 2.5m adults currently receive musical tuition⁶. Teachers “lack confidence in dealing with [this] different kind of teaching challenge”⁷ and 67% of music teachers would like specific training in teaching adults⁸. A small-scale survey of music teachers⁹, all of whom had taught adults, revealed these views:

- a different teaching style is required for adults (85%)
- adults have different learning styles to children (77%)
- teaching adults requires more patience, sensitivity, encouragement (38%)

Some module descriptions mention working with “all ages” but this tends to be in the context of community music or therapeutic settings rather than instrumental teaching. The language used to describe module content implies an assumption that teaching mainly involves children, mentioning experience in schools, how to work with “young people”, and the “teacher-pupil-parent” relationship.

CONCLUSIONS

The proportion of music degree content which covers teaching does not seem to match well with the number of musicians who teach as part of their career. It is possible to gain an undergraduate music degree which contains no educational training, but still be considered ‘qualified’ to teach, especially as a private instrumental teacher. Specialist teaching modules and courses are available at postgraduate level, particularly at the conservatoires, and there is a tradition of musicians informally ‘picking up’ their teaching skills from their own teachers. However, these findings suggest that Higher Education institutions should be doing more to prepare music graduates for this aspect of their careers, both in availability of training and module content.

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