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A FIELD DIVIDED

How Legitimation Code Theory reveals problems impacting the growth of school music education

Christine Carroll

Introduction

Despite decades of curricular reform and moves to incorporate more authentic and inclusive popular music pedagogies in classrooms, the hegemony of Western art music remains unchallenged in many school education systems worldwide. As a result, teachers frequently bear the weight of choice: between meeting overriding curricular objectives designed to foster and preserve Western art music, or alternatively, providing more palatable educational experiences increasingly aligned to the 'popular'. Despite broadening access to school music, this situation has created a gap between the types of instruction offered in different classroom contexts over time. This division often manifests according to a perceived informal – formal, or popular – classical oppositional binary, potentially compounding issues of class and social-reproduction in schools. Yet at the same time, the mechanisms perpetuating such division remain masked in current curriculum documents, and as a result can cause confusion in classrooms such as my own, where a spectrum of skills, musical interests, and academic abilities rarely fit these dichotomous categories.

In order to investigate this complex and long-standing situation, research was undertaken using Legitimation Code Theory (LCT) from the sociology of education (Maton 2014). LCT is a multi-dimensional toolkit being used in an increasingly diverse array of fields from ballet to linguistics, which makes knowledge practices and their organising effects and principles more transparent (Maton 2014, p. 3). Using one dimension of the framework known as *Specialisation,* research was undertaken on two levels based empirically in Australian school music education. The first level exposed the emergence and orientation of a 'code division' in curriculum documents, historic accounts of pedagogic practice, and matriculation statistics spanning a 60-year period through to the present day (Carroll 2019). The second, examined the dynamics of this 'code division' from the ground up, via the implementation of a 10-week classroom study. Acting in the role of teacher/researcher and without prior knowledge of results from the first level of research, I designed and implemented a unit of teaching and learning for a group of newly enrolled students (aged around 16 years of age) at a senior secondary school of music. With ethical consent, three teachers (including myself), and 30 students representing a range of established musicianship skills, interests, and aspirations for tertiary study agreed to participate in the study.

The unit included three phases which moved the students from informal to progressively more formal tasks indicative of the two music curriculum courses offered at the senior secondary level in the state of New South Wales. The first course is a general course of study inclusive of popular musicianship (in LCT terms, this later aligned with a *knower code*). The second offers specialised study in Western art music (in LCT terms, this later revealed an *élite code*). The courses were integrated for the first two phases, with the third and final phase offering the students a choice of activities more typical of the separate curricular pathways.

A subsequent analysis of both historic and classroom levels of data using LCT revealed interesting findings. Despite the students displaying a range of knowledge and skills spanning the underlying code distinctions; the over-arching curricular objectives, pedagogies, and assessment practices employed perpetuated the code divide, disadvantaging students with informal learning backgrounds seeking further academic challenge currently on offer only to students with established music literacy skills acquired through prior classical study. Although small in scope, the study highlights some of the mechanisms by which classroom music education in Australia and elsewhere is at odds with scholarly rhetoric valorising musical diversity and inclusion. The system has indeed expanded particularly at the preceding junior secondary level (12–15 years), but change is yet to affect the 'end game' – where senior students with skills and knowledge aligned to Western art music are still deemed the more legitimate 'players'.

Legitimation Code Theory (LCT)

LCT is a sociological framework used for research and for challenging and changing practice (Maton 2014). A practical, multi-dimensional toolkit, LCT develops and integrates the relational thinking of Pierre Bourdieu's field theory, and the conceptual tools of Basil Bernstein's code theory (Maton 2014, pp. 19–20). It recognises that each field (of which school music education is one) is a relatively distinct social arena, yet is connected to others through an underlying set of principles. The game that unfolds within any field is one of 'competing claims to legitimacy' and its practices are known as 'languages of legitimation' (Maton 2014, p. 17). Actors, including curriculum writers, teachers, and students, their dispositions, and their positions within fields are conceptualised according to what Maton describes as *legitimation codes*. Acknowledgement of the codes underlying educational practice, therefore, provides insights into the internal dynamics of a field, particularly when tensions emerge due to competing claims to both status and resources. Equally, recognition of the codes determining play may provide clues as to how to change the dynamics of a field, by challenging existing definitions of what determines both value and status within.

Currently, there are five dimensions to LCT, each conceptualising a different form of legitimation code. These include Autonomy, Density, Specialisation, Semantics, and Temporality, but only one will be employed here, apposite to the research at hand: *Specialisation*. Specialisation works on the premise that every educational practice or belief is oriented both towards 'something' and by 'someone' (Figure 13.1). Practices and beliefs can be conceptualised on a continuum of strengths (+) and weaknesses (–), both in terms of *epistemic relations* (ER +, –) and *social relations* (SR+, –). *Epistemic relations* tie practices or beliefs to objects of study (i.e. 'what' constitutes legitimate knowledge). *Social relations* tie practices or beliefs to actors of various kinds (i.e. 'who' classifies as a legitimate knower) (Maton 2014, p. 29). Together, epistemic relations and social relations generate a series of specialisation codes as follows: a *knowledge code* (ER+, SR–) when claims to legitimacy depend more or less upon an actor's position in relation to an object of study; a *knower code* (ER–, SR+) when individual and collective claims to legitimacy are based instead upon possessing a particular disposition or

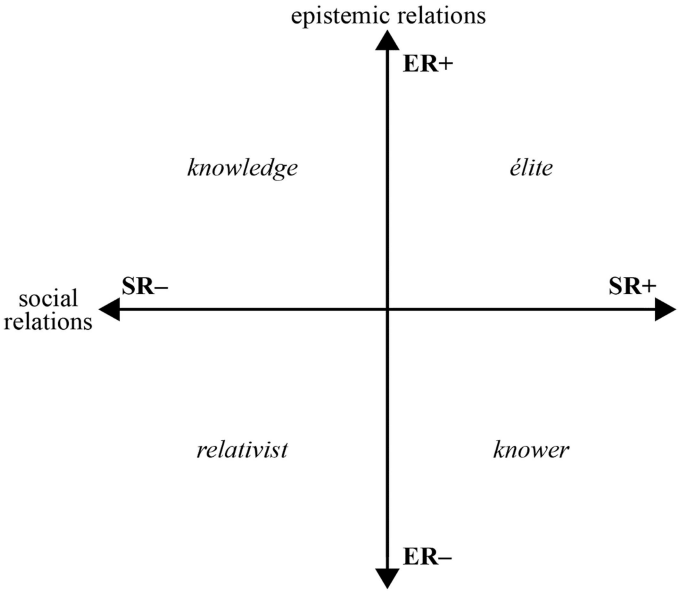

Figure 13.1 Specialisation codes (Maton, 2014, p. 30)

quality necessary for inclusion in a social group or in this case classroom practice; an *élite code* (ER+, SR+) where the terms for legitimacy are based not only on possessing specialised knowledge but also on being the right kind of knower; and a *relativist code* (ER–, SR–), where legitimacy is based neither upon possessing specialised knowledge nor acquiring a particular disposition or set of knower attributes (Maton 2014, pp. 30–31).

Represented using a Cartesian plane, the four codes are depicted as in Figure 13.1

Within the field of music education, the four code modalities may be conceived accordingly to 'what you know' (knowledge codes), the 'kind of (musician) knower' you are (knower codes), both (élite codes), or neither (relativist codes). A particular code may determine the basis of achievement, but may not be universally recognised. When more than one code is present, actors may clash over which code should dominate. These code clashes can manifest in curriculum documents, education policies and assessment practices, and, in teaching and learning interactions in classrooms.

Methodology

As international and often national variations in curriculum and practice can be substantial, a multi-layered case study was undertaken, with LCT constituting an overarching explanatory tool capable of tying together findings derived inductively from both historic-curricular and present-day classroom levels of the research (Maton 2014). Stake (1995) describes case study as "a specific, complex, functioning thing" (p. 2) of which there are two basic forms: the first 'intrinsic' which is self-bound, and the other 'instrumental', addressing context-specific phenomena but with broader explanatory potential (p. 3).

According to an instrumental case study design, school music education in New South Wales was examined on two levels. Here, and in the majority of Australian states and territories, music education in schools is founded upon British precedents, where classroom instruction integrates activities in performing, listening, and composing. Learning in large ensembles (choirs, orchestras,

and concert bands) also occurs in many schools, but operates under co- or extra-curricular (fee-paying) provision. In secondary classrooms, mandatory instruction is provided to all students in Stage 4 (roughly 12–13 years), before becoming an optional or elective unit of study for Stage 5 (roughly 14–15 years), and Stage 6 (roughly 16–18 years), when students complete formal assessments and final examinations before matriculating from high school.

This study was concerned primarily with Stage 6 level senior secondary classroom instruction. Part 1 provided a broad scale appraisal of curriculum reform, historic accounts of practice, and, matriculation statistics spanning a 60-year period relevant to the case. Part 2 provided ethnographic account from a range of qualitative classroom data. These data included a student survey, work samples, and transcribed interview and video footage concerning the 10-week research project conducted at my school. Inductive analysis generated a body of emergent themes with LCT then serving as an overarching analytical tool, exposing connections between the discussion of historic state-wide trends and the classroom data. A series of code matches and clashes emerged with implications for the present case and potentially beyond. Although the classroom study was conducted earlier in the research timeline, the historic discussion is presented next for coherence.

Part 1: Historic review of New South Wales' curriculum and practice

Analysis of the NSW school curriculum of the 1950s reveals a clear sequence of explicit knowledge and skills associated with the study of Western art music. The curriculum constituted graded exercises in class singing, solfege, aural transcription, harmony and counterpoint, coupled with immersive listening and score analysis of canonical works. Vocal performance was the norm, with instrumental skills and private tuition not stipulated as requirements for study (Secondary Schools Board 1956). The design of this early curriculum upon which later iterations would be modelled sought to strengthen the relatively weak position of school music, by drawing upon the discrete knowledge and skills valued at the tertiary level. The syllabus stated: 'music has been regarded as a language of sounds, the vocabulary of which may be learned through a step by step study of its use in musical literature, hand in hand with creative and re-creative self-expression' (Secondary Schools Board 1956, p. 2). In LCT terms, this constituted a *knowledge code, or* strong epistemic relations, with weaker social relations (ER+, SR–).

However, matriculation trends and relevant literature reveal that this course competed with an external pathway to matriculation, provided by the Australian Music Examinations Board (AMEB), a nationally accredited examining body (Comte 1988). In contrast to the course offered in schools, the AMEB syllabus focused on the progressive development of solo classical performance of Western art music accompanied by music theory. The graded examinations also imitated vertical progression with sequenced technical work and progressive repertoire lists (strong epistemic relations); however, the focus was upon the student's demonstration of stylistic awareness, technical mastery, and personal expression only achievable with the assistance of individual private tuition (strong social relations) (Australian Music Examinations Board 1956). The emphasis was on the cultivation of a musician *knower* and one who had internalised the correct sound or disposition towards performance over a considerable time.

During the 1960s and 1970s, revisions were made to the school syllabus to include more options for the study and examination of instrumental music (Secondary School Board 1962, 1986). The corresponding senior syllabus was also revised to allow students to specialise in performance, composition or musicology. By 1983, students matriculating with 3 Units of Music in performance (the most rigorous level with the highest number of candidates) were required to display many of the skills outlined by the AMEB system, including a final solo

recital of up to eight contrasting works (Board of Senior School Studies 1983). Supporting these observations, Comte (1988) notes that 'the final year of secondary schooling is, in many areas of Australia, tied somewhat immutably to an external examination system' (p. 109).

School curriculum writers had attempted a dual purpose: to acknowledge two distinct but interrelated forms of power and status. The first maintained the core knowledge content outlined by the earlier 1950s school curriculum (ER+, SR–), and the second, classical performance skills acquired through private instrumental tuition (ER+, SR+). Thus, a subtle combination of both *knowledge* and *knower* attributes (ER+ and SR+), were needed to qualify for entry into tertiary conservatoire or university music study. Carruthers (2005) articulates:

> Entrance to university music programs is especially selective. Incoming geography students are not expected to be geographers, nor are first-year botany students expected to be botanists, but entering music students are expected to be musicians. They must have received extensive musical training, especially (for whatever reason) in performance, and have achieved high standards. At universities with open admission policies in other areas, admission to music is by audition only. Students are accepted or rejected on the basis of prior learning, which puts tremendous responsibility on pre-university private and public music programs. (p. 50)

In summary, a code shift had occurred, away from the acquisition of specific knowledge, to cultivating student musicians who could demonstrate this knowledge both practically and academically (ER+, SR+): in other words, an *élite code*.

Over the same time period, a series of constructivist reforms took hold impacting school curriculum, particularly at the junior secondary levels. Student-centred, Creativity and Comprehensive Musicianship approaches were employed (Comte 1988), with similar movements noted abroad (Jeanneret et al. 2003). The aim was for students to become performers, composers, conductors, listeners, and critics in their own right, rather than the passive receptors of traditional knowledge and skills. A range of potential topics for study were introduced, placing the study of Western art music alongside Jazz, Music Theatre, Non-Western, and Popular music and a range of others, with no mandatory topics or set works prescribed for study (Secondary Schools Board 1981, 1986).

New knowledge frameworks known as music 'elements' or 'concepts' were brought in, reflecting an international trend to systematically organise music terminology according to the categories of pitch, duration, texture, timbre, structure, and so on (Mark 1986; Rose and Countryman 2013). These categories were believed capable of transcending the need to revert to the teaching of specific formal structures and theoretical concepts developed for the study of Western art music. It was intended that teachers use music notation to teach the elements – which by implication meant that traditional knowledge was not displaced by newer alternatives – but, exposure to notation remained conditional upon teachers' choices in topics, repertoire, and the personal needs of students (Secondary Schools Board 1986).

A weakening of relations to traditional epistemic content had occurred (ER–), creating a marked shift in practice that worked against the systematic construction of knowledge – the very thing the constructivist reforms were intended to facilitate. Maton describes this as generating 'segmented' knowledge (Maton 2009). In opposition to 'cumulative knowledge' where 'new knowledge builds and integrates past knowledge' (Maton 2009, p. 43), learning in topics or modules tends towards fragmentation and segmentation, with new knowledge acquired alongside old knowledge, without necessarily drawing connections between what is learned along the way. In opposition to the traditional canon of hierarchical knowledge (ER+),

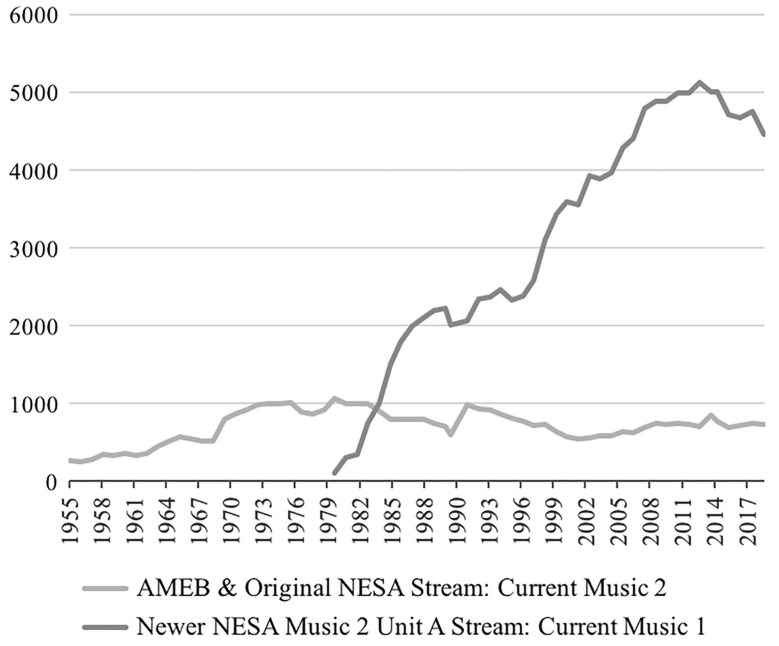

Figure 13.2 Candidature statistics for music[1]

knowledge and skills for Jazz, Popular, and Non-Western music each involved discrete and interchangeable repertoire, and a more diverse range of skills.

This created a problem. As dependent upon a teacher's programming at the junior secondary level, schools could no longer guarantee that students were adequately prepared for the challenges and rigour of the (still Western art music based) senior music curriculum. This had created a new path of learning in parallel with the first aligned to a more inclusive *knower code:* addressing students' immediate needs and tastes (SR+) but downplaying relations to hierarchic knowledge (ER–) associated with Western art music. The other path was the much narrower and specialised *élite code* (SR+, ER+), providing access to the senior curriculum and to tertiary study beyond.

Therefore, due to the highly specialised nature of senior study, a second senior syllabus, Music 2 Unit A (an early form Music 1) was introduced in 1978 (Wemyss 2004, p. 147). In order to accommodate diversity, this course contained options for the study of many new topic areas including popular music. The new senior syllabus stated 'the present structure of Music courses in the senior school pre-supposes a firm foundation of musical literacy and does *not* allow for a later development of interest in or aptitude for music'. (Board of Senior School Studies 1977, p. 1 italics added). Clearly, on grounds of inclusion, the emergence of a new kind of student *knower* had prompted the addition. However, the kind of *knowledge* relevant to the 'non-literate' musician is ambiguously framed by music 'elements' or 'concepts', and continues to be the subject of academic debate (Carroll 2020; Rose and Countryman 2013). With candidature numbers recorded on the vertical axis, Figure 13.2 plots the numerical growth in student uptake for these courses through to the present day.

This bifurcated system has remained in schools, with the Music 2 Unit A stream (now revised as Music 1) running parallel to Music 2, which is a revised version of the original senior

music course. At first glance, the rationales for each course appear similar, stating that students will study 'the concepts of music [construct knowledge], through the learning experiences of performing, composing, musicology and aural [through knowers' experiences], within the context of a range of styles, periods and genres [in segments]' (Board of Studies 2009a; 2009b, p. 8). These 'segments' or topic areas are not equivalent, however, framed variously under 'style', 'period', 'genre', and other categories that differ considerably between the courses, creating something of a code disjunction – or rather, code chasm – between the two. For example, students studying Music 2 must study Western art music and contemporary Australian art music through the use of scores, while Music 1 students select repertoire from a broad range of more loosely framed topic areas, accommodating an aural approach to learning with only minimal music literacy and theory requirements stipulated.

The newer course, although improving the number of music candidates (as indicated in Figure 13.2) has perpetuated a division at the senior level along with a formal versus informal, classical versus popular, theory versus practice, or knowledge versus knowing mentality amongst teacher colleagues including those working at my school. Seeking to understand this binary at a grassroots level – and, without prior knowledge of LCT nor the results from the historic analysis of curriculum and practice outlined – I designed a research project with a teaching program which would integrate both sets of course outcomes concurrently. The results are outlined hence.

PART 2: The 'Barock' music project classroom case study

This part of the project was developed to tease out a spectrum of 'informal' and 'formal' learning and pedagogy at Stage 6 curricular level, in order to examine if current provision at the school served the needs and learning orientations of the students. I use these terms akin to Green (2008), in distinguishing between the facilitation of aural-based music transmission strategies of popular musicians, and notation-based, teacher-directed study of Western art music. With an investigation of baroque music as the content framework, the unit was designed to progress students through three distinct phases that would together involve them in different kinds of learning opportunities. The topic was chosen as it was listed in both syllabus documents (Board of Studies 2009a, 2009b), but here served to initiate a range of learning representative of an informal – formal spectrum, encompassing ear-playing and ensemble work featuring versioning and improvisation, through to notation-centred learning and teaching as described hence.

The unit of learning was structured in three phases. The first phase was performance-based, and designed after Green's (2008) informal learning with classical music (as outlined hence). The second phase involved two written tasks – a scored transcription and an analysis report. The third phase offered activities designed to transition the students back into the separate courses: an improvisation task for those intending Music 1; and instruction in the basics of baroque counterpoint and fugue writing for those interested in Music 2. By momentarily dissolving the boundaries between the two typically divided cohorts, the relationship between different forms of musical *knowledge* and the aspirations of different musician *knowers* could be examined and explored.

The participants

The 30 (mixed gender) students represented a range of musical skills and interests, with some having received many years of classical tuition, and others 'self-taught'. The majority, however, had experienced some combination of the two (i.e. classical training on one instrument, self-taught on another, and so on). Prior learning did not always correspond with their current

music interests, as the vast majority reported skills and existing expertise to varying degrees in popular music-making. The teachers also represented a range of pedagogic backgrounds and professional expertise. Teacher 1, had two sets of undergraduate qualifications in classical and jazz performance; Teacher 2, had a background solely in jazz performance and arranging; and Teacher 3 (myself), a background in classical performance. All three teachers held either undergraduate or post-graduate qualifications in music education.

The majority of students – 27 in total – had undertaken Stage 5 elective music at the junior secondary level (ages 14–16) in a range of different schools prior to enrolment. Yet via the survey, most stated 'lack of confidence' with 'music reading' or 'music theory' as their reason for intending to study Music 1. Those wishing to study Music 2 numbered eight on grounds of its 'formal content', its suitability as a 'tertiary prerequisite' and also for the 'academic challenge'. Five students were unsure as to which course to choose, so were glad of some extra time to consider their options. Interestingly, student perceptions of course suitability changed over the first 2 phases, with the cohort dividing evenly (15 students each) for Phase 3. As data for the Phase 3 improvisation task generated very similar results to those generated for Phase 1, it has been omitted from discussion here.

Phase 1: weeks 1–5

The first phase was modelled after Green's pilot study on informal learning with classical music (2008, pp. 149–180). This involved the students working in five different friendship groups to create an original performance arrangement of a baroque work chosen from a compilation CD and scores that I had provided.[2] Each of the groups demonstrated idiosyncratic music-making during Phase 1, which bore reference both to their chosen baroque work, and also, to their prior learning and genre preferences in heavy metal, pop, blues, rock, folk and sometimes, an eclectic combination. All performances showed high levels of repetition, even phrase structures, and rhythmic, harmonic, textural, and improvisational features common to these genres of popular music (Carroll 2017). The students displayed high levels of motivation and ownership of their work in Phase 1 (in LCT terms strong social relations, or SR+), but only tacit awareness of the learning processes and explicit knowledge acquired (weaker epistemic relations, or ER–). Working mostly by ear, both the students (and the teachers) were largely unable to articulate direct connections between the passages selected and adapted for performance, and their origins in the baroque works, with these connections becoming clear to me only later through the transcription and analysis process of classroom video data (again, ER–) (Carroll 2017). In LCT terms, this phase generated for most students, a *knower code* (ER–, SR+).

However, tensions soon arose when the informal learning approach appeared at odds with the teachers' *élite code* experiences of baroque music. Struggling to find points of connection with a group of guitarists who could not read music, Teacher 1 chose to demonstrate passages of a Bach fugue on his bass guitar, intending these be learned and memorised. The footage revealed the students fatigued, soon returning to their heavy metal adaptation of the fugue in his absence. In a later interview, Teacher 1 provided this feedback:

> Well, I would have liked them to have … well you know, when you learn a language … not only do you learn some grammar and syntax and vocabulary, you learn the accent, and I think that I would have liked them to get a bit of all of those things … And look, I guess this is how it just had to be because they have such limited experience with this type of music, but it was like listening to someone speak French with a very heavy Australian accent. There was a very heavy accent of their *own*

> musical vernacular imposed upon the music. And I think that I would have liked them to get more into some of the details.

Using the metaphor of 'language', Teacher 1's pedagogy served to expose the students to some of the original content or 'vocabulary' of the fugue. However, unable to memorise lengthy polyphonic material nor perform it with the correct sound or 'accent', the students could not fulfil his intentions. Returning to their existing heavy metal adaptation of the fugue which they already enjoyed performing, a code clash had emerged between Teacher 1's *élite code* pedagogy, and the students' *knower code* disposition to the task.

Phase 2: weeks 6–7

Working in the same five groups, the students were then asked to transcribe their performance arrangements, and compare these with the original baroque work upon which they had been loosely based. Although the task instructions validated a variety of notation responses such as graphic symbols, chord charts, and guitar tablature, as well as digital and handwritten scores, all groups attempted to use staff notation. Surprisingly, the task was enjoyed most by the groups who had limited experience with staff notation, with pedagogy aligned to a *knowledge code* introducing a range of graphic and traditional notation types, connecting different knowledge forms across aural – notated, and informal – formal boundaries (Carroll 2020). However, for the groups representing a more diverse range of music literacy skills, the task proved divisive, as those with existing competence felt they needed to control the scoring outcome.

The written analyses were undertaken individually, requiring each student to discuss one 'element' or 'concept' area (i.e. 'pitch', 'duration', etc.) common to both course syllabi. Using bullet points and references to both performed, and original versions of the chosen works, the students were asked to articulate similarities and contrasts between the two. Problematically, many of the students misunderstood the point of the exercise or found it too challenging, and based discussion almost solely on the performed versions which were more familiar to them. When assessed, written terminology proved a sticking point, as student terms used and developed during 'informal' learning in Phase 1, were deemed inappropriate in the written reports. For example, rather than encouraging a terminology exchange between formal and informal musical language, classroom dialogue showed Teacher 2 superimposing terms such as 'interlude' and 'melodic theme', over the students' working descriptions of the 'solos' and 'break-downs' used in their performance (Carroll 2020). Here, and in the previous transcription exercise, it appeared that not all knowledge forms were viewed equally by all concerned. Teacher 2 later elaborated during a follow-up interview:

> My understanding was that after all it is still baroque right? So, no matter what it boils down to, it is still *that* right? So you need to use some terminology that shows the relationship to baroque music right? … That was my understanding.

The interview transcript highlights another set of code tensions. During Phase 1, Teacher 2 had provided the students freedom in the stylistic adaptation of Baroque material, according to a *knower code* (ER–, SR+). Later, in Phase 2, a pedagogic shift resulted in *knowledge code* pedagogy (ER+, SR–). However, tensions emerged as both teacher and student knowledge (ER) did not operate on an equal footing, with that aligned to Western art music deemed by Teacher 2 the more appropriate choice.

Phase 3: weeks 8–10

In Phase 3, the 15 students interested in studying the Music 2 course undertook a 3-week 'trial' where they were instructed to compose the opening of a baroque fugue using music notation software. The task began with teacher-directed listening and score analysis of a Bach fugue followed by basic instruction in some of the rules of baroque counterpoint (Carroll 2017). As successful completion of the task required an understanding of both fugue form and style traits, further tensions arose when students misunderstood the detailed instructions, or objected to the number of rules imposed, and hence, lack of compositional freedom. Equally, many of the students continued to work by ear rather than from the notation-based instructions and examples provided. Teacher 3 (myself) deemed many of the compositions unsuccessful, yet despite this, some of the students expressed pride and satisfaction in their work, as it had exposed them to new skills and musical ideas, as the following classroom video transcript relays:

STUDENT: I don't know if this bit fits but I thought that it sounded kind of cool. Can I show you?

TEACHER 3: (Listening to student work) … I actually like that … but, … you know what's been really interesting, is that all of your ears are still attuned to popular music because that's what you mainly listen to.

STUDENT: Yeah.

TEACHER 3: So getting you to write in a baroque style is really difficult, because the sound of it is not in your head. I actually really like that ending you've written there but it's not a traditional one you know …

STUDENT: Thanks heaps.

TEACHER 3: Difficult yes?

STUDENT: It's fun though. I do like the challenge.

Clearly, the students were happy to be presented with academic challenges (or ER+) – but with only limited time to cultivate knowledge of style and musical syntax, and, working largely by ear, their compositions had reflected a different kind of 'sound' to the one I as teacher had intended. My pedagogy was framed according to an underlying *élite code* (ER+, SR+), but in completing the task, many (if not all) of the students maintained their alignment to a *knower code* (ER–, SR+).

Discussion and conclusions: Code shifts and legitimacy in the classroom

In summary, trends in the classroom data can be attributed to shifts and clashes in codes of legitimation. In Phase 1, the collaborative informal learning task encouraged multiple interpretations and negotiable, more 'relativist' knowledge was the result (SR+, ER–). This framed the knower as central to the exercise. In Phase 2, the creation of scores and analyses required students to codify and critically compare their performances in Phase 1 with the original baroque works upon which they had been based. This required that students translate their 'knowing' into 'knowledge' (SR–, ER+). However, friction then occurred between a range of scoring and terminology outcomes aligned to different kinds of music. Also, the approach revealed that learning did not necessarily generate knowledge which the students were capable of transferring between learning contexts, as demonstrated by very limited comparison and critical engagement with the original baroque works.

In Phase 3, despite students making further gains in music literacy and enjoying the challenge of fugue writing, students displayed confusion as to why a task such as composition was so prescriptive in requiring knowledge of form and style. This indicated a code 'clash' between the *knower code* dispositions of students and the *élite code* expectations of myself the teacher. Nevertheless, many students indicated that they had enjoyed the challenges the task presented. Yet, due to further code clashes of this kind the majority of these students chose eventually to move to the Music 1 class, not due to lack of musical or academic ability, but because they perceived they were simply the wrong kind of musician, or possessed a different, or, an incomplete knowledge set to the one required. During the follow-up interviews, some of these students expressed the desire for more academically rigorous study which the Music 1 course did not provide. This is a significant finding, as it highlighted a missed opportunity for a portion of the student cohort (11 of the original 30), with implications beyond the present case study.

Later, when findings from the classroom study were placed alongside the findings from the analysis of state-wide matriculation statistics outlined in Part 1, the proportion of students remaining in Music 2 (numbering only 4 from the original 30 in the research project) mirrored a similar proportional split at the state level. Notwithstanding significant variation in course delivery across the state, there appears a deficit in provision for student popular musicians seeking further academic challenge, as Music 1 provides no clear path for extension, nor preparation for tertiary music study (Board of Studies 2009a). This highlights a need for curriculum reform in New South Wales Australia and potentially beyond, to provide students representing a range of musical skills and interests access to appropriately designed, yet academically rigorous educational opportunities should they seek them. In the meantime, it would appear that pedagogy is the key to addressing this problem. Without an awareness of the underlying code tensions resulting from the meeting of formal and informal knowledge in classrooms, teachers remain ignorant of ways to bridge the *élite code* – *knower* code divide, by encouraging meaningful dialogue between different knowledge forms.

This case study which helps frame various shifts in codes of legitimation in school music education, reveals that a curriculum centred solely around the *knower* may obscure or even impede access to valuable knowledge, resulting in what Maton (2014) describes as 'knowledge blindness' in the classroom. By making knowledge practices more visible, the underlying codes maintaining division can be both acknowledged and new possibilities considered. Rather than perpetuate a dichotomy, perhaps it is time to address prior assumptions and turn our attention to the kind of classroom practice that will prepare 21st-century musicians of various orientations for life-long learning in a music industry which no longer holds tightly to conceptions of low and high art. As to what kind of curriculum and classroom practice might enable such learning is beyond the scope of this research, however dialogue between various musical discourses including those associated with traditional study would be a useful point at which to begin the conversation.

Reflective questions

1. To what extent does the code divide described in this case study manifest within the school educational system most immediate to you?
2. What kinds of curricular structures and assessment strategies might be actualised by the idea of bridging the *élite code* – *knower code* divide, in order to provide more equitable educational experiences for students including those with informal learning backgrounds?

Notes

1 Graph generated from candidature statistics for Music tabled by gender. Statistics viewed 1 May 2020, http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/bos_stats/.

2 These works included the Organ *Toccata* in D minor by J.S. Bach, *Air* from Orchestral Suite No. 3 by J.S. Bach, *Little Fugue* in G minor by J.S. Bach, *Canon* by J. Pachelbel, *Dido's Lament* from Opera Dido and Aeneasby H. Purcell, and the *Hallelujah Chorus* from Oratorio The Messiah by G.F. Handel. These works were selected due to their relative familiarity and/or musical accessibility in terms of repetitive or formulaic structural design.

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