Academic Paper

Discovering the 'modern maestro': The importance of a professional industry pedigree and aspects of coaching and mentoring within the supervision of music undergraduates

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Abstract

The case study reported in this paper explored the aspects of coaching and mentoring theory and practice used in the supervision of undergraduate students at a London music school. It used coded analysis of interviews with tutors, students, and academic administrators to conclude that supervisors who are also highly experienced professional musicians, often use a directive and challenging style of intervention, influenced by their own knowledge of industry standards. It is suggested that this 'modern-maestro' mentoring relationship may help motivate the student to adopt an autonomous approach to their work, needed not only for their academic success, but for their future professional music careers too.

Introduction

The study set out to explore the aspects of coaching and mentoring, taking place within the supervision of undergraduate music students, completing their final year PM612 Music Projects (hereafter 'the projects') at a specialist music school (BIMM London). The module, which has the highest number of credits leading to their final grade, tasks students with creating and managing their own music project, normally involving writing and recording a music piece, often accompanied by live performance, and supporting media materials. I too work at BIMM London, as a lecturer, though not specifically involved in this project module.

A background literature review was undertaken to identify the broader context and issues to consider before the singular case study was undertaken.

Higher Education and Constructivism, Transformation and Adult Development,

Any relationship between a tutor and undergraduate can firstly be viewed through an appreciation of educational theories, and the broader aspects of adult development and transformation are particularly relevant within a discussion of coaching and mentoring. The theory of constructivism, evolved through the pioneering work of early educational theorists such as Vygotsky (1962), Piaget (1957) and Bruner (1966) and views the student as evolving their learning capability through two constructs: first, the importance how their social surroundings and backgrounds (social constructivism); and second, the ability to collate, reason and link concepts (cognitive constructivism). Constructivism also views education as a driver of broader social change and adult developmental growth with Vygotsky (1962) suggesting that adult learning required a zone of proximal development, whereby, in order to develop, people must be stretched and challenged to change supported by the scaffolding created by their teacher, coach or mentor.

The supervision relationship in Higher Education (HE) can therefore be viewed a valuable part of this developmental scaffold, with the student evolving, assisted through structure and conversations created by the tutor. Such scaffolding is a highly supportive process, as Bates identified: "Vygotsky maintained that scaffolding could be used by a teacher to help people safely take risks and reach a higher level of understanding than would be possible by the individual's efforts alone" (Bates, 2016, p.46).

Pioneered by Mezirow and Taylor (2009) and later by Kegan and Lahey (2009) transformational theory suggests that adult development occurs when there is an emphasis upon 'the individual's experience of life, critical reflection – and rational dialogue and discourse' (Illeris, 2009, p.41). Coaching and mentoring, can be seen to share elements of both constructivism and transformation and in any HE environment there is a strong element of broader human development, and especially when there is a close mentoring or supervision relationship. As Mezirow states:

> The mentor-student relationship could not exist unless teachers remind themselves that their role is not so much to profess as to facilitate, and equally students understand that their role is not so much to absorb what is professed but to place their ideas and questions at the centre of learning (Mezirow, 2009, p79).

Mezirow (2009) also suggested that the institutional culture and processes also have impact on any mentoring relationships in HE environment but that the emphasis is on the tutor facilitating the student to become autonomous and to take a proactive role in their own learning and development.

Defining Coaching and Mentoring in Education Context

Many aspects of coaching and mentoring are already well researched and recognised as existing in the undergraduate supervision relationship, as identified in research by Brockbank and McGill (2006), de Hahn (2012), Malik (2013), Pleschova and McAlpine (2015), Lochtie et al (2019) and Katsyrubra (2019). However, there are subtleties in how coaching, mentoring and supervision are defined and understood.

Van Nieuwerburgh (2018) offers a definition of 'educational coaching' which appears particularly useful to consider when considering undergraduate supervision, describing it as: 'A one-to-one conversation focused on the enhancement of learning through increasing self-awareness and a sense of personal responsibility' (p17). Also with reference to coaching in education, Wisker (2017, p.10) says that 'the terms coaching, and mentoring are often used interchangeably' – though with

coaching viewed as more concerned with specific problems and delivered by someone with a broader background, whereas mentoring is best delivered by someone who 'has already travelled the same journey' (p.10) . This becomes particularly relevant when discussing the supervision relationships studied at BIMM London.

Debates and discussions on coaching and mentoring practice definitions are complex, and sometimes terms are, at best, intertwined or, at worst, unhelpful semantic alleyways and contradictory. This lack of clarity in defining coaching and mentoring could be viewed critically, as perhaps a sign of a very confused and fragmented academic field since, as argued by Andy Roberts (2000), 'If no definitional agreement exists, how do we know we are talking about the same thing?' (cited in Brockbank & McGill, 2006, p.66). However, a practical response could be to accept that terms are fluid and dependent upon context and in addition accept the relationships, and interventions themselves often adjust over time.

For the purposes of this study, I settled on appreciating this fluidity of roles by revisiting the original support model developed by Gravells and Wallace (2007) as this helps show how roles may shift during a range of one-to-one encounters from Directive to Non-Directive and from Stretching to Nurturing. I adapted this model a) to clarify that coaching, mentoring and supervision definitions have fluidity, that they include common characteristics and that, at times, the relationship may shift within these dimensions and b) to show areas of potential overlap (Figure 1).

Figure 1: An Adaptation Of Gravells and Wallace Support Model (1985)
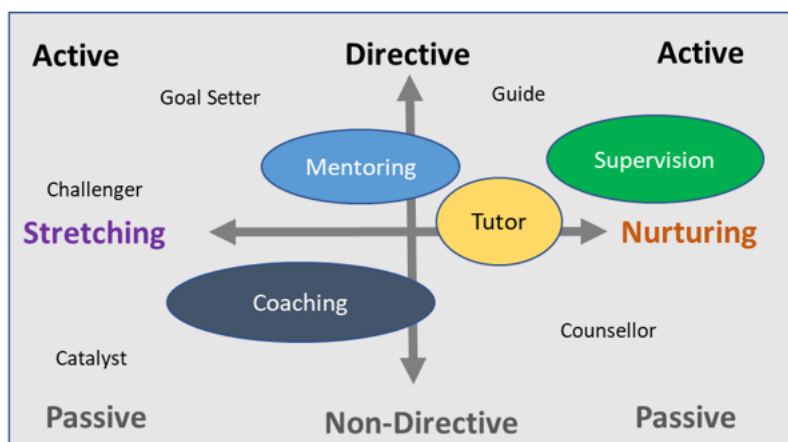
The Importance of Relationship, Trust and Background

Coaching, mentoring or supervision activity, contain within them a core personal relationship, built using a conversational process, containing elements of and tools contributed from the practices of psychotherapy, consulting, management, and counselling. A substantial study of research literature by Gessnitzer and Kauffeld (2015) exploring the importance of relationship to coaching outcomes, reveals that most academic studies on this topic show that the relationship is the most important factor, building the working alliance between coach and coachee. The importance of relationship was reinforced further in studies by Blackman (2016) and Chinn et al (2015).

The importance of trust and background within coaching relationships is also recognised as being highly important to both individual development and in supporting challenging and sometimes difficult conversations, as noted by Flaherty (2005), Rogers (2008), Kimsey-House (2011) Blakey and Day, 2012). In addition, individual autonomy and self-motivation are strongly recognised as important factors of any focused development, as noted by Deci (1996), Deci and Ryan (2012) Keller (2010) and Schiemann et al (2018). Adding further to the relationship management aspect, the value of contracting and boundaries is consistently viewed by theorists such as Brockbank and

McGill (2012), Wisker (2008) Passmore (2007) and Hawkins (2010) as a vital element of building a successful outcome. However, any coaching, mentoring or supervision relationship may shift to different styles of interventions, a dynamic process that is understood in the work of Heron (1975) and Stein (2009), showing how the coach or mentor may move from being supportive, to being challenging, from being passive to being active and directive.

Autonomy, the use of challenge, and a trusting relationship were therefore important aspects to consider in this study, in which it will be suggested that students, tutors and indeed the institution are united in the need for students to be prepared for a career in a highly competitive industry where self-management and self-motivation become critical.

Challenges – Higher Education and Music Industry Contexts

In 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic clearly affected the delivery of HE in every institution, recognised in reports by Deloitte (2020) and NUS (2020) but prior to the pandemic the HE sector had been facing criticism from across from across party politics and academic researchers on its ability to help students to improve their prospects. Educational theorists and critics such as Collinni (2018), Furedi (2017), the Policy Exchange report by Hudson and Mansfield (2020) and The Higher Education Policy Institute reports (Neeves, 2018) all agree that HE must improve the life and career outcomes of students and that too often degree programmes fail to do so.

Potentially and even more impactful upon undergraduate supervision, is the increased recognition of mental health problems and in particular anxiety and depression, within general student experience - something which could impact on the working relationship between tutor and student. This issue has been recognised across the HE sector through a wide range of research including; NUS (2013, 2020), UNITE (2016), Brown (2017), Jenkins (2018), UCAS (2019), Digin (2019) and Universities UK (Jenkins, 2019), all sharing the consistent view that growing numbers of students struggle with mental health and that they frequently require careful support to complete their assessments, with the final year of studies viewed as particularly stressful as they become concerned about career prospects.

With a focus on supervision of music students at the heart of this study, there is also the appreciation that we are dealing here with creative individuals combined with the professional music industry context, and there is substantial evidence to support the claim that creative and music careers, are ones with a particular high degree of uncertainty and pressure. The high occurrence of anxiety and stress across musical careers has been noted by Demabtir (2012), Gross and Musgrove (2017) and Embleton and Jones (2020) but there is also a rich and broader psycho-social consideration of creative work that is important to bear in mind when dealing with young creative people.

Psychologists and researchers such as Kaufman and Sternberg (2019), Dewey (1934), Deci (1996), Patson (2013), Csikszentmihalyi (1996, 2002), Duckworth (2017) - and leading creative sector practitioners, such as Catmull (2014) and Greenman (2018) all note that any high-level creative work, is often associated with (and indeed, it may be argued, requires) extremely high levels of intrinsic motivation, an intense personal focus and discipline and technical practice that at times, may promote periods of anxiety.

The theories of flow state (Csikszentmihalyi, 2002, Seligman 2011) and contemporary Zen influenced approaches in psychotherapy such as IKIGAI (Garcia & Miralles, 2014) suggest that creative and purposeful lives are often associated with deep personal interests and high engagement with difficult or highly detailed tasks, that may at times, make people uncomfortable, but are ultimately rewarding and steps to becoming fulfilled. In simple terms, social psychologists and industry professionals appreciate that whilst any creative path offers intrinsic developmental

rewards, the desire to be creative is accompanied by periods of uncertainty and doubt and often it will be a challenging road and technically demanding.

Methodology

A singular case study was selected as the research strategy, even though as an approach it is recognised as having inherent weaknesses, with researchers such as Aguinis and Solarino (2019) and Goffin et al (2019) suggesting that there can often be a lack of rigor in the data collection and analysis in case studies. Bell and Waters (2014, p.12) note too that case studies may suffer from 'selective reporting and the resulting danger of distortion' but support the strengths of a good case study since, as pointed out by Bassey (1999), they are not designed to make broad generalisations and new theories, but rather they acknowledge their limits and focus of its subject, in a particular context, at a particular time. This study sought 'relatability' – not 'generability' (Bell & Waters, 2014, p.13) as it aims to explore aspects of coaching and mentoring reliably and credibly, in this context only. It does not aim to present the complete 'truth', but rather it seeks to be a useful investigation that may valuably open up the topic and further the debate. My philosophical approach is as a critical-realist, (Willig, 2013, p.12) and so I take a more post-positivist epistemological view of knowledge (Popper, 1959) recognising that whilst the aim is to approximate reality, my own position and my reflection and bias, is inevitably a factor within it.

Elsahn, Ziad et al (2020) conducted a substantial analysis exploring the use of case study in a variety of organisational settings which offers useful insights, suggesting that 47 per cent of researchers utilise a single case study and that the most common data collection method used was interviews (84%) and secondary data (11%). The approach and methods of most case study researchers reflected the processes recommended primarily by Eisenhardt (1989) and Yin (2018), with interviews being the primary data source. This reflects the mix of data used in this case study, focusing most on specific interviews but supported by additional organisational documentation data.

This study also combines some elements of descriptive phenomenology (Willig, 2013, p17) as there was a need to interpret the experiences of the subjects and participants themselves through the interviews and provide a discussion of the wider context within which the study is set.

Interview data was triangulated across three groups comprising: three tutor supervisors, three final year students and two senior academic administrators and, due to the organisational and contextual realities of the study, purposive sampling (Braun and Clarke, 2013) was used, with participants selected based on their experience and characteristics. With a very limited pool, participant selection had to take an illustrative approach rather than a full statistical sample as may be expected within a survey or census. The quality and expertise of those interviewed is therefore more critical in this study than the quantity and obtaining access to specific people, was essential, as in this context there are simply no alternatives, other than conducting interviews with a small group of people. As noted by Gillham (2005):

> Sampling in qualitative research is rarely of the kind used in survey sampling as its relationship is that of an illustrative kind. Its main task is to give a balanced picture of what informants have told you and of those within the setting being studied (p.42).

My aim was to remain as un-biased as possible during the interviews, focusing upon coaching and mentoring aspects, not academic or project quality or results. However, my existing relationship with the organisation and the interview participants was particularly important to consider. This can be viewed as a potential weakness of this research, as I have had many conversations with tutors and students, over seven years, it may be argued that my own opinion and biases could influence the reliability of this study.

However, as Berger (2015) notes, if a researcher is known to the participants, and has knowledge of the topic and organisation, this may offer key advantages and lead to organisations and participants being potentially more willing to share and discuss the topics. It allows exploration of tacit areas, only known to those who are within. For example, some existing organisational knowledge may be required to help interpret and understand comments, jargon and opinions, and so this insider pre-knowledge is potentially a valuable component that adds to research rigor, credibility and honesty rather than detract from it. It could be argued too that my pre-existing relationships and experience within and access to the organisation and my knowledge of the music business context, is a positive, as I could utilise this to enable richer, deeper research conversations. Indeed, it can be argued that it would be very difficult to conduct this study without having the existing relationships, approvals and tacit knowledge of both the organisation and to be aware of the professional music industry language and context, which I, as an insider, was fortunate to have.

However, Berger (2015) does stress that when studying human relationships and their work in an organisation, that the researcher needs to adopt reflexivity, the practice where the researcher is continually aware of an considering their own position in relation to the research. Prompted by this appreciation and the recommendations of Yin (2018, p 120), I recognised there was a need to build and maintain a different stance within interviews between the more conversational style, that I may naturally adopt with those whom I knew as colleagues or students and 'myself' as a researcher, and taking care not to lead or unduly effect the interviewee. Two trial interviews were run to allow me to test the question and topic formulations and refine my approach before final semi-structured interview templates and notes were then developed, combining several of the practical techniques recommended by Gillham (2005) and Braun and Clarke (2013) – with the aim of creating a conversational flow but with the research as its focus.

Interview questions included descriptive, structural, contrasting, and evaluative forms (Willig, 2013, p.31) within three core areas. First, those exploring the participants' own careers, backgrounds and interests and their role within supervision sessions, second, investigating their own experience of the sessions, and third, their opinion of the potential coaching and mentoring mechanics and suggestions for improvements. Interviews averaged 50 minutes duration with calls restricted to a maximum of one-hour in total, based on the recommendations of Braun and Clarke (2013) and Gillham (2005). The aim was quality over quantity of data obtained and care was taken not to lead the answers, with critical words such as autonomy, challenge, directing, purposefully avoided by me, but carefully noted when used by participants.

Data Analysis

The first phase of interview data collection and analysis required carefully converting the MP3 audio files into text using HappyScribe (2020) software, resulting in the creation of eight interview transcripts of 9,000 words each. Each transcript was then individually coded and tagged, following the analytical transcription processes of Saldana (2016) and Gillham (2005), before then adding specific codes from a set code book, which was created for consistent application. This analysis used a deductive approach, defined by Willig as one utilising 'some form of template, usually derived from the relevant literature' (2013, p.60). This was selected as it meets the explicit initial requirements and research question, to explore what aspects of coaching or mentoring maybe taking place. The latent meaning was based on specific coaching and mentoring theory and literature review elements, and the background context that was pre-identified.

Several key categories began to emerge, which led to groups sharing certain characteristics and these codes then gradually led to the creatin of key themes, which, as defined by Saldana (2016, p.199) enable an exploration of the findings. Two visual coding maps were then created to support the final analysis, which helped to visually illustrate and note how the various codes group together and connect to further thematic development and insights. Coding map 'A' focused on the pre-

determined structural codes from latent research deriving explicitly from the aspects of coaching, mentoring and supervision I had previously explored. Several important themes emerged from this such as, 'Building Autonomy', the 'Maestro-Mentor' and the importance of 'The Work and The Results'. However, several important process codes also emerged from the interviews themselves and were also identified by me, such as 'Agreeing Roles' and 'Being an Expert'.

Figure 2: Coding Map A. Using pre-determined coaching, mentoring and supervision codes to identify emerging themes
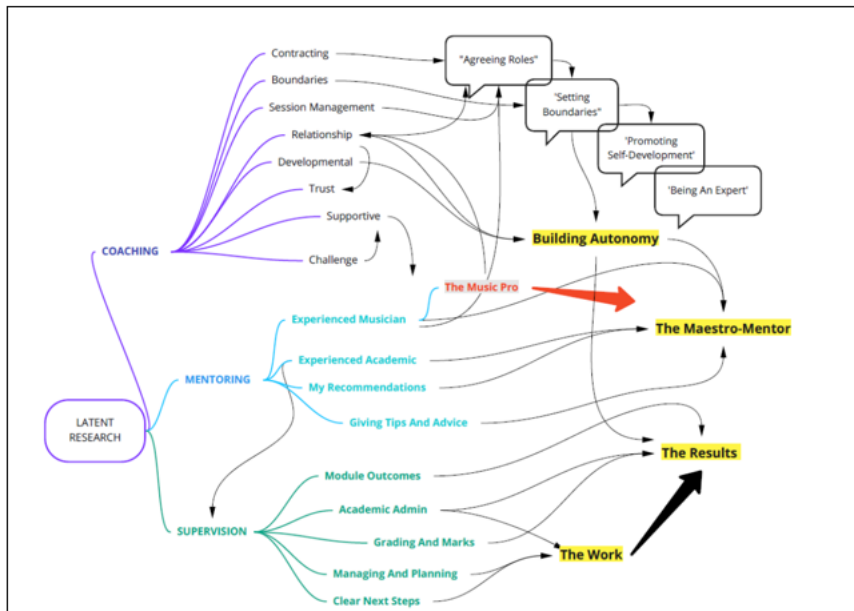
Coding Map 'B' was developed, based on the structural codes concerned with broader context and organisational issues and specifically; the HE sector, the music industry and the BIMM London culture and several key themes emerged from this, such as the importance of Career Fit but several also emerged to overlap with those from the first map, most prominently the Music Maestro and The Music Professional themes.

Emerging from both maps was the agreement across all three interview groups that the supervision often referred and related to music professionalism and career fit, and in turn the concept of the tutor often adopting strong elements of both mentoring and coaching, helping the student to build their autonomy and self-motivation to complete their final music project to a high standard.

Figure 3: Coding Map B. Using latent research topics from music industry, Higher Education and BIMM London culture to identify emerging themes

Findings

Findings from Organisational Data

The organisational documentation data, both public and private, firstly provided insight into the broader culture of the organisation and how this impacted the supervision relationships. The BIMM London prospectus promotes a strong ethos of creativity, self-awareness and being 'resilient and adaptable' (BIMM Prospectus, p36) – something especially important bearing in mind the noted pressures and competitive realities in professional music careers. BIMM London also places great emphasis upon the professional pedigree of its senior music lecturers within the cultural DNA of the organisation, as shown in public and internal materials, there is a clear drive towards encouraging young musicians to be autonomous, self-directed, and resilient as they grow their professional music careers.

Academic planning and deeper organisational documentation also reflected an institutional focus on promoting music careers, with modules and programmes built in conjunction with and influenced by the commercial music industry. The close affinity to the music industry and music careers is also reflected within internal organisational discussion documents, plans and briefings. For example, within curriculum re-design, it is noted that courses and studies are focused on post graduate employment and there is recognition that course and educational delivery has been built in consultation with 55 professional musicians, 36 companies and 5 trade bodies (BIMM London 2020). The BIMM London prospectus (BIMM, 2020) gives insight into this:

> As Europe's largest and most prestigious music institute, we understand what it takes to build a meaningful career in the music industry. After all, we've been training the next generation of music professionals across a variety of music related subjects for over 35 years (BIMM Prospectus, p.4)

and

> Industry engagement is at the centre of everything that we do. It is how we are transforming music education and it's what sets us apart from everyone else (BIMM Prospectus, p.37).

The clear industry focused direction and career tone of the environment is further reinforced with the tutors, who as well as holding formal academic music qualifications are also successful professional writers and performers, working as session musicians in studio recordings, as music directors or within major commercial productions and tours and this fact is again stressed strongly in marketing and promotional material (BIMM London, 2020).

BIMM London is often purposely not positioned as a traditional university or music conservatoire, which tend to focus upon musical theory and virtuosity and often specialising in; orchestra, chamber music, jazz, classical, folk music, or musicological theories and research. Rather, within internal documents such as Curriculum Redesigns (BIMM London, 2020) and BIMM Brand Guidelines (BIMM London, 2020) the emphasis is on promoting student autonomy and aiming for students to be career ready as they are more likely seeking future as performers or session musicians in contemporary industry.

Findings from Interviews

The analysis and coding of interviews with tutors showed that their practical industry context combined with their academic insights, was an important part of the supervision relationship and work, suggesting a particularly strong aspect of mentoring existing within the relationship. This was noted with the prevalence of comments related to steering, offering tips, helping to plan and recommending the way for work to be done. For example, according to tutor Ernie:

> I think a lot of people need that guidance and I think there's a lot to be gained from a supervisor who, who nudges you in the right direction and shows you how to exploit your own thoughts and how to how to pursue your own interests and your own line of thinking (00:00:53.960).

A further clear aspect of mentoring that emerged in tutor interviews, was that they are often selected to work with students because of their own music career pedigrees and interests, which the students admire or may wish to emulate, and there is a clear recognition, too that at times they will need to take the supervision role as a technical musical authority, to help steer the students from a position as an expert. For example, this is evidenced when tutor Earl says: "I'm a performer of many years. And, you know, I've got this range of skills that allow me to kind of adopt a kind of informed or authoritative or expert possibly role" – (00:33:03.230).

Whilst the tutor interviews reflected a strong mentoring approach, elements of coaching were noted too, such as recognition of relationship importance, and the mix of both supportive and challenge coaching. The need for autonomy and encouraging student self-direction was also a clear take-away from the tutor interviews, and they shared a view that they recognised an appropriate use of challenge interventions and directing the work, where they thought it was needed.

The emphasis on autonomy and challenge, was also reflected in the key interviews with academic administrators, who agreed that the supervisors should be steering and guiding, suggesting they too see the relationship as containing strong mentoring elements. They also stressed the importance of promoting autonomy within supervision and agreed that the music professional component of the relationship and a future focus was an important element as it fits the overall direction of, and reason for, studying at BIMM London. However, there was too a recognition that there was an important academic component within the relationship. The combination of the tutors' academic experience, industry knowledge and sheer technical musical expertise was key to the success of these supervision relationships.

Analysis of the student interviews mirrored many of the comments made by the tutors and administrators, with students also seeing the supervision relationship as being about encouraging autonomy and helping to drive them towards a professional music career. For example, the students valued receiving clear musical advice, project direction, and at times an appropriate challenge from true music professionals, who they respected, and this too suggests a strong element of mentoring, with students acknowledging that their supervisors have trod the professional path they are wishing to take. For example, student Stan says: 'You know, he's respected in the industry. That's where I want to be' (00:21:47.670).

The students also recognised too, the importance of some challenge in the supervision meetings and the need for the sessions to avoid being a cosy club and encourage creative work. For example, student Diana notes:

> I could see there was a lot of times when he was saying stuff to help me think up my own ideas. You are supposed to figure it all out yourself, so, he's got to facilitate your thinking (00:20:25.680).

It is also valuable to note the important aspects of coaching and mentoring that clearly did not emerge from interviews. The literature review noted the importance of contracting within coaching and mentoring and a key finding from interviews was a that whilst there were agendas for the sessions, and the tutors and students see them as important to delivery of the academic and broader developmental outcomes too, there was a clear absence of formal contracting in each meeting and no shared model or coaching or mentoring process used across supervision. This is not a major problem affecting quality of delivery, but it is recognised by tutors and administrators as being absent and something that could evolve.

Also, within the literature review, the issue of anxiety and stress, was identified as potentially important in both the current HE and music industry contexts and yet it is important to note that in this study, these issues never actually emerged as major factor in interviews. Rather it was the role of challenge and autonomy and the importance of a professional focus, that was much more prevalent revelation from the interview analysis.

Discovering the Modern Maestro

The most notable theme to emerge through this study was the potential discovery of the 'modern maestro', as a common connecting theme in the coding and analysis and one which was unexpected but potentially valuable. The term maestro is a concept, with a deep and sometimes controversial history in music education, that can be seen to share some of the attributes of coach, mentor, teacher and expert, a personal guide and director. Maestro was a strong tradition in classical music conservatories, often associated with extreme musical practice, technical mastery and a harsh discipline that is not appropriate in a modern context.

Within contemporary dictionaries a maestro is defined as; 'a master, usually in an art, an eminent composer, or conductor or teacher' (Oxford English Dictionary (OED), 2020) with the protégé defined as 'one who is protected or trained, or whose career is furthered by a person of experience, prominence or influence' (OED, 2020) and so the connection within this study's context can be made. For many people the 2014 film 'Whiplash' (Chazelle, 2014), which tells the story of extreme levels of perfectionism, intense rehearsal and often cruel old-fashioned methods in a present-day New York jazz orchestra, shows the kind of harsh maestro that modern music educators such as BIMM London would not in any way endorse or support. As a note though, it is interesting to consider that this film itself, was reportedly shot over nineteen, intense fourteen-hour days of music performance and filming (Ford, 2014) - so ironically the film itself, with its narrative critiquing the harsh regime, shows the extreme levels of work and pressure all creatives, not just musicians, often work under.

However, there is a deeper history of the maestro terminology that is worthy of exploration. As explained by Persson (2000, p.25) the maestro 'gains prominence by virtue of outstanding musical skills and is functioning as a teacher' and, as perceived by the music academic Morten Carlsen (2019), the maestro-student relationship may possess attributes to coaching and mentoring. He notes: 'The maestro will initiate the student into the secrets of the art and guide him or her towards success in the professional world' (2019, p 97). Carlsen recognises that traditional maestros was respected as they were professional and expert musicians that students desired to emulate, but that this traditional maestro approach to music teaching, associated with harsh and long hours of technical practice by the protégé, is today seen as too extreme and suggests that mentoring may be a more modern and more acceptable description:

> The mentor model places responsibility on both sides. It implies that the student must be competent as regards their own learning and development… Less motivated or self-conscious students may find this challenging' (Carlsen, 2019, p.100).

As identified in the interview analysis, the supervision relationship builds upon and is supported by the shared music interests of students and tutors, with the latter adding their own valuable technical skills, combined with their more practical advice and steering on academic project completion. It is worth noting that in many coaching and mentoring situations, the similarity and background of both participants is also often a critical element, as noted in research by Blackman (2016) and Chinn, Richmond, and Bennett (2015) and this too appears to be reflected in these supervision relationships. This modern-maestro form of mentoring was shown by the tutors often taking at times a very active and authoritative form or intervention (Clutterbuck, 1985; Heron, 1975; Stein, 2009) – mixing support and challenge but always aiming to encourage students to adopt the personal drive and practical autonomy, that they know, as experienced professionals themselves, is required to become a successful musician. At its centre, supervision is a trusting relationship built around a shared passion of the tutor and student for music, but as defined within my adaptation of the Gravells and Wallace Support Model (Figure 1) the supervision relationship appears to shift and adapt.

When adopting the aspects of supervision, the tutors were still seen to take the position of 'study guide', checking on academic progress and explaining and informing about key administrative elements.

However, the tutors also adopted supportive and challenging interventions and steers where needed. The final year music project may be viewed as the first professional steps young musicians are taking, working closely with a very experienced musician, someone who they admire and want to learn from, not just for academic success, but as exemplars for the kind of people they wish to become.

Conclusion

This study began with the recognition that any professional creative career is often uncertain and requires extreme levels of drive, ambition and resilience and that student life in 2020 is also noted as associated with high levels of anxiety and stress.

The supervision of music students in this context therefore poses a particularly sensitive and challenging context but with the increasing demands for HE to prepare young graduates for careers, there is a reality that it should be helping to prepare them for those professional demands, not neglect them. This study shows an agreement by the institution, tutors, and students that final year musicians need to be highly self-motivated, autonomous and creative. BIMM London clearly positions itself as being highly vocational HE institution and its close association with the music industry means its programmes are positioned as providing a direct route to professional careers

and this appears to be reflected in the supervision relationships and in the expectations and roles of tutors and students.

The supervision relationships studied here contain strong elements of mentoring and coaching practice but the most original finding in this study, is the identification of an emerging modern-maestro mentoring relationship style, suggesting that tutors with a very strong pedigree of respected academic and professional experience, may often usefully adopt a directive and challenging style of intervention during the supervision. This appears to build a positive relationship and impact, when students too, are motivated to become music professionals, following the path of their tutors. This discovery of a possible modern-maestro style in this creative education environment, is a theme potentially deserving further investigation, that could be explored and tested within other music institutions, across other creative undergraduate settings and, perhaps more broadly for coaching and mentoring theory and practice within the creative sector.

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