

Moving from
Learning as transmission
to
Learning as process

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“Teaching is even more difficult than learning because what teaching calls for is this: to let learn” Heidegger

STUDENT CENTRED EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

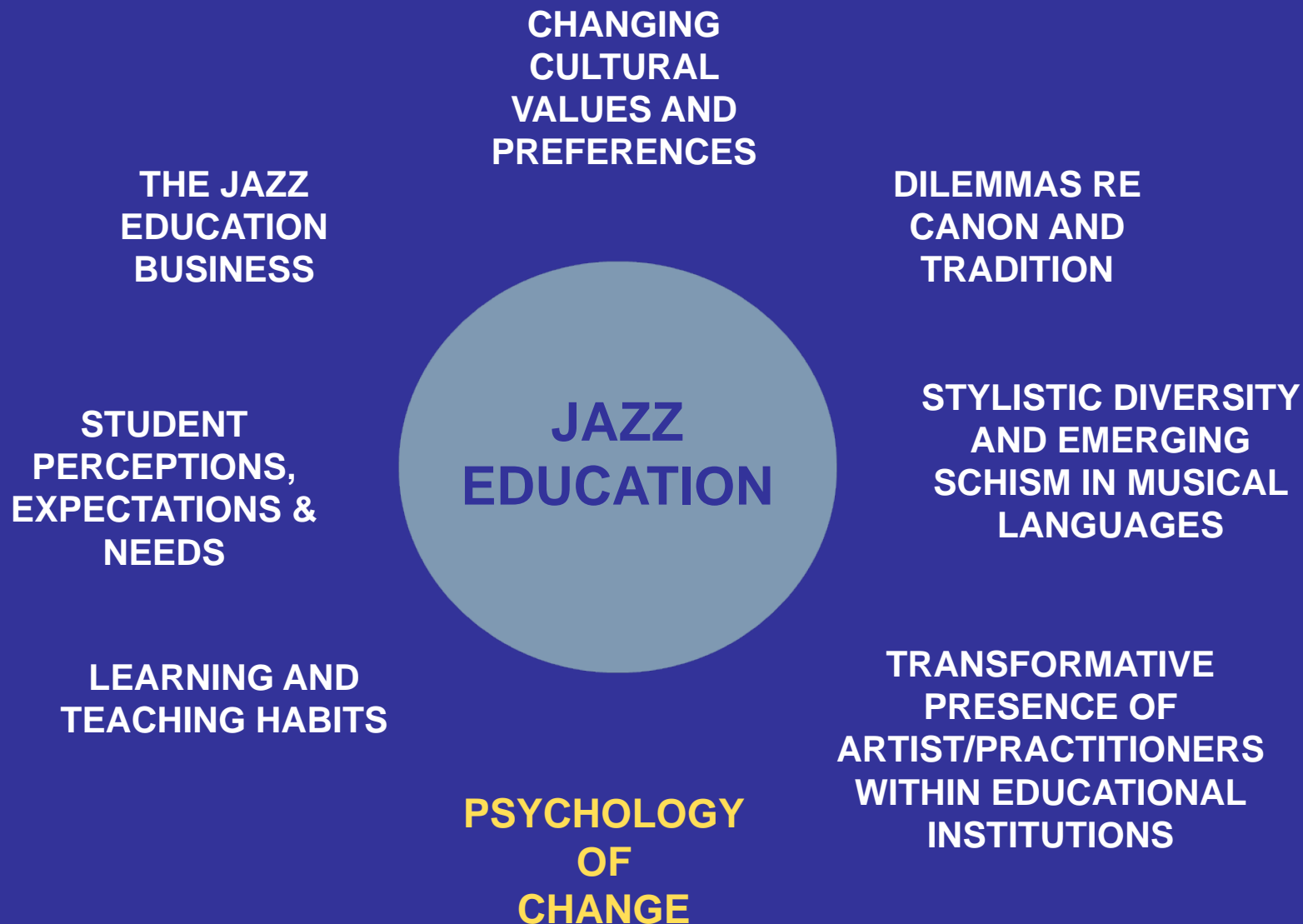
“Anyone who studies an instrument, sport, or other art form must deal with practice, experiment and training. We learn only by doing.”

Stephen Nachmanovitch

“It is helpful to remember that what the student does is actually more important in determining what is learned than what the teacher does.”

Thomas J. Shuell

JAZZ EDUCATION IN CONTEXT





JAZZ EDUCATORS/TEACHERS...

- Generally operate within a sector unfamiliar with explicit educational practice.
- Often teach talented, *syllabus-proof*, students.
- Are often eminent performers - we think we know how it should be done!
- Form part of a tradition that was learnt outside the formal educational system... *“jazz was something you did if you didn’t want to go to college!”*
- Frequently offer jazz courses within curricula and institutions designed for the training of classical musicians.



Product and Process

- Jazz educators are well resourced in terms of information (compendia of scales, vocabulary, repertoire, play-alongs etc).
- The internet produces an abundance of reissues and new music.
- Most materials generated by the *Jazz Education Industry* deal with information as distinct from process (see Kuzmich, *An Annotated Survey of Teaching Materials for Jazz Improvisation*).
- Informed discourse about teaching and learning (as distinct from subject matter) is comparatively undeveloped.
- While undeniably experiential, the teaching of jazz tends to focus on transmission of information and less so on learning as development of the needs of individuals - or groups of individuals.

3 Types of Teacher: the 3P Model, J. Biggs

Type 1: *Preoccupied with what a student is.*

- The effectiveness of any activity is determined by this
- A static and fatalistic view of learning.

Type 2: *The teacher as a transmitter of knowledge.*

- Generally a competent professional possessing a repertoire of techniques and resources that produce results.
- Education as **product**, evidenced by *teaching objectives*..

Type 3: *The teacher supports learning.*

- The teacher is interested in how and why students learn.
- Education as process and development, evidenced by *learning outcomes*.

See John Biggs, the 3 P Model in *Teaching for Quality Learning at University*, Open University Press, 1999, chapter 2



3 Types of Jazz Educator

Type 1 (the fatalist) believes:

- “You either have it or you don't”.
- “I just blow man”.

Type 2 (currently widespread) believes that:

- Jazz is frequently taught through enthusiastic transmission of information, resourced by a jazz education industry eager to provide information-based product.

Transition to Type 3 requires:

- Reflective practice and awareness of how students learn.
- Development of teaching and learning strategies that place the student at the centre of the educational experience.
- A flexibility of approach adaptable to the range of expressive practices favoured by younger generations of musicians.

A transition to type 3 facilitates learning processes more likely to resemble the improvised, yet informed, nature of the music.

VALUES and PRINCIPLES

What is occurring?

What am I doing?

How do I know? Am I being honest
with myself?

How do I fit into all this?

JAZZ EDUCATION FOR ALL-COMERS? ONE-SIZE FITS ALL!

Are there distinctions between

- a saxophonist...
- a singer...
- a pianist...
- a jazz composer...
- a collaborator...
- an improvising laptop player...?

Teacher Research and Curriculum

“It is not enough.... that teachers’ work should be studied, they need to study it themselves”.

Lawrence Stenhouse

Are we pragmatists or idealists?



CAN ANYTHING BE LEARNT FROM TEACHER-RESEARCH?

Although already experienced and formally trained, my own teacher-research resulted in:

- realignment of my attention - from product to process
- enhancement of intention - equipping students with *learnacy*, as distinct to transmission of information
- increased adaptability of approaches to teaching and learning
- heightened awareness of values of schemes of work (my own and others)
- deeper questions about the context and purpose of jazz education
- renewed confidence



HOW DO STUDENTS LEARN?

We might ask ourselves the extent to which teaching and learning is affected by:

- Age, experience, ability
- Personality type, gender etc.
- Psychological factors such as introvert/extrovert, dyslexia...
- Matters of artistic and personal identity

Which mode of delivery or learning experience is most likely to suit:

- preference for learning styles of each individual student
- the teacher
- the essential nature of the music

...but how does this affect our curriculum?



CURRICULUM DRIVERS 1

Educational values and principles (philosophy):

- Student-centred teaching and learning, based on commonsense... you start where the student is.
- Student-centred teaching and learning highlights the difference between instruction and discovery.
- Student-centred teaching and learning redefines relationships with bodies of knowledge.
- Commitment to **learnacy**.
- Reconcile stylistic adherences through attention to **commonality of learning and impulse towards realisation of vocation**.
- Being consistent with the **essential nature** of jazz/improvised music.
- Assessment procedures affect the extent to which a curriculum or teaching style is **student-centred**.



CURRICULUM DRIVERS 2

Additional institutional drivers:

- Profile, reputation and identity - excellence versus competence, maintenance of tradition, innovation etc.
- Sustainability within economic culture and changing cultural contexts.
- Statutory requirements - Quality Assurance, accountability, financial self-sufficiency.

One perception of a Jazz Curriculum



PROCESS BASED VERSION OF A JAZZ CURRICULUM

EVOLVING CURRICULUM



ACTION-BASED TEACHER-RESEARCH



**STUDENT-CENTRED
EXPERIENTIAL-LEARNING**

A MODE OF **ASSESSMENT** THAT RESEMBLES THE ESSENTIAL NATURE OF THE MUSIC



IMPROVISATION AND PLAY



A MODE OF **DELIVERY** THAT RESEMBLES THE ESSENTIAL NATURE OF THE MUSIC



VOCATION



An integrated curriculum

Can we combine attention to skills, information and the demands of 21st Century living, with a jazz/pop curriculum aligned towards self-realisation and student-centred, life-long, independent learning?

AN IDEAL JAZZ CURRICLUM

- What values and principles should drive our curriculum?
- Which kind of teaching and learning strategies are best suited to these values and principles?
- What currently obstructs the realisation of these values and principles? What are the operational limits?
- What is possible within limits?
- How can we address the *Performance Gap* - the gap between what is intended and what occurs?
- How might we maintain aesthetic/philosophical values and educational principles appropriate to the realisation of our preferred model of curriculum for Jazz or Popular Music?
- What are the implications for the development of curricula?



CODA

I don't want to deprive you of the pleasure of finding this out for yourself, and for that reason I'm not going to show you a thing. If you sit at the keyboard and get into it yourself, it'll be a marvellous experience... Bill Evans

The thing that makes jazz so interesting is that each person is their own academy... Cecil Taylor

I forget what I was taught. I only remember what I learnt...
Patrick White

Jazz can be learned, but not taught... Paul Desmond