LECTORATE LIFELONG LEARNING IN MUSIC
MENTORING

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Spectrum of related but distinct roles
(Dependent on different contexts and purpose)

- **Buddying**: informal, friendly ‘confessional’ process, sharing experiences and insights. It offers little sense of progression, with low-level support and is often only short-term, assisting a transition to a new job or new role.

- **Shadowing**: a job role can be ‘shadowed’ by a musician with an interest in that role (not necessarily aspiring to the role) and in providing an alternative perspective. Observation and experience through shadowing can inform the musician for reasons that should be understood prior to the activity. It can also include peer-to-peer ‘conversation’ about shared observation of practice (artistic or professional) that could develop into a continuing professional peer relationship – i.e., peer mentoring.

- **Counselling**: conversation about personal development issues arising from practice.

- **Advising**: conversation about professional issues arising from practice in a specific context (e.g., career orientation; possible new directions for the future; professional development opportunities; new networks and partnerships; marketing; budgeting).

- **Tutoring**: intentional, goal-oriented activity aimed at fostering the understanding and learning of knowledge, often through the process of questioning, critical dialogue.

- **Instructing**: a didactic form of imparting and passing on specialist knowledge and skills with little scope for dialogue – i.e., a mechanistic model of transmitting knowledge.

- **Facilitating**: a dynamic, non-directive way of generating a conversation aimed at enabling or empowering a person(s) to take responsibility for their own learning and practice.

- **Coaching**: an enabling process aimed at enhancing learning and development with the intention of improving performance in a specific aspect of practice. It has a short-term focus with an emphasis on immediate micro issues. (e.g., How can I improve my performance in this particular area? How can I strengthen my workshop practice? What are the most appropriate ways of making my team work together more effectively?)

- **Mentoring**: a more developmental process including elements of coaching, facilitating and counselling aimed at sharing knowledge and encouraging individual development. It has a longer-term focus designed to foster personal growth and to help the individual place their personal, artistic and professional development within the wider cultural, social and educational context (e.g., How do I perceive my musical identity? In what ways does this impact on my professional life and work? Why am I doing what I do? Where am I going? What determines my long-term goals?)
Mentoring process

- A reflective conversation that focuses on:
  - asking searching questions – listening – absorbing – rephrasing – reflecting – mirroring back – responding by leading and challenging the musician/student (i.e., the ‘mentee’) in a non-directive way.
  - drawing out and enabling the individual to step outside and become a detached spectator on their own practice and on their own learning.
  - encouraging the musician to develop those listening and analytical skills that help them build up a strong sense of ownership of their practice in different contexts.
  - deepening the musician’s awareness and conviction in what they are doing by fostering a greater understanding of context and place – leads to making more informed choices.
  - strengthening the musician’s ability to challenge their preconceived views, to take risks, to make new connections and to shift their perspective.
  - helping the musician to find their own voice – to discover their own solutions – to articulate and come to know their own central question – to identify their core purpose in a multi-faceted professional world.
  - encouraging the musician to explore and verbally articulate the emotional interconnections between their artistic identity, motivation and professional practice.
  - assisting the musician to develop an understanding of their relationship with their own music-making (e.g., What does it mean for you? Why do you do what you do? What do you care about in your music-making? What function does music-making play in your life?)
  - enabling the musician to clarify the principles underpinning their work, thereby strengthening their sense of critical engagement.
  - empowering the musician by asking neutral, open questions that encourage critical self-reflection and a sense of curiosity. This non-judgemental process, starting from where the musician is in practice, helps to shift their inner dialogue in a search for greater understanding of more general concepts and broader issues.
  - encouraging the musician to develop a reflexive, as well as reflective, relationship with their practice – helps to build up greater responsiveness, sensitivity and empathy towards their existing situation. Resulting breadth and depth of awareness helps to inform subsequent action.

- A reflective conversation entails developing a reciprocal relationship between ‘reflection-in-action’ and ‘reflection-on-action’. Both processes are integral to reflective practice.
  - ‘Reflection-in-action’ focuses on the quality of listening, attention and awareness that enables processes and performance to be monitored and modified from the inside. “Our thinking serves to reshape what we
are doing while we are doing it (Schön p.26). Often this knowledge cannot be put into words – it remains tacit in the form of implicit understanding (p.31).

- ‘Reflection-on-action’ entails adopting a critical perspective about the reasons and consequences of what we do in different contexts. By focusing on the why rather than the how, this process becomes fundamental to the evaluation of what we do and helps to inform subsequent action. Critical reflection helps to transform our learning and change the way we make sense of our experience, our world view, our understanding of people and knowledge of ourselves. This perspective becomes integral to our conception, planning, delivery and evaluation of any activity or project.


Key qualities of a mentor

- Must have credibility and experience in the particular field.
- Must have a breadth of knowledge and skills to be able to make personal, artistic and professional connections.
- Must be able to let go of one's own ego, status and authority in order to project into the life of the musician and adopt a listening, supportive role. Must feel comfortable in this role.
- Must have the empathy and interpersonal skills to be able to ask appropriate questions regarding the personal development of the musician.
- Must understand what it is to be a musician – what makes musicians 'tick'. Understanding a person's inner musical voice can be illuminated by listening to how musicians play and improvise.
- Must have the skills and insight to act as a professional and artistic 'sounding board' for the musician. This is central to any developmental process aimed at enabling a person to clarify their sense of direction, to identify their strengths and realise their potential.
- Must have a wide repertoire of language skills in order to frame appropriate questions, respond to different personal narratives and communicate meaningfully from where the musician is coming from.
- Must be self-reflective and self-aware in order to nurture these particular qualities in others (e.g., questioning their motivation and ability to separate out professional from personal issues).
- Must be open and non-judgemental in relation to the musician’s individual and professional context.

Relationship between the mentor and the musician

- A one-to-one relationship in which the mentor has the ability to empathise and understand the position of the musician/student. (Note: Mentoring professional musicians has to be approached with understanding and
sensitivity. Most musicians have chosen to communicate through their music. In general, they connect with each other as peers through making music together, less through verbal, analytical, reflective processes. This can affect the dynamics of the mentoring relationship.)

- A reciprocal relationship in which the mentor respects the musician’s potential for professional and personal development, and acknowledges the individual’s motivation for extending themselves and questioning their work.

- A confidential relationship based on trust and parity of respect. Details held in confidence cannot be divulged to other individuals or organisations.

- An effective relationship depends in part on the strength and integrity of a mutual working partnership.

- Clear boundaries have to be established within the personal, artistic and professional domains if the relationship is to work. For example:
  
  o Primarily a mentor acts as a facilitator enabling the musician to make their own informed judgements. Advice is most appropriately offered about professional issues arising from practice in a specific context.

  o In the personal domain it is important to maintain a clear distinction between the roles of coach, mentor and counsellor.

  o In the artistic domain the focal point of the mentoring has to be the music practice (e.g., performing, composing, leading, teaching) and the distinct roles of mentoring, counselling and advising have to be understood and respected.

- The mentoring relationship should be time-based with a beginning and an end. It should not be ongoing (compare with peer professional relationship/peer mentoring).