Tristan Burfield (S163961)
Curriculum Design and Evaluation.
Assignment 1. Curriculum Proposal

Aim

For my Curriculum Proposal I wish to introduce an optional 'women in music' module to the Edexcel Music Technology BTEC course (which will require no external funding). The aim is to encourage more female learners to study music technology and promote inclusive learning (amongst both girls and boys equally). This will replace the 'music and society module' to address a more prominent local and national need.

Local need: Further Education

I am currently teaching Level 3 Music Technology BTEC at Suffolk New College and my classroom has a strong bias of men to women. My ED2 Class is exclusively male, My ED1 Class consists of 16 males: 2 females.

National need: Further Education

Research published by Ofsted in 2009 suggests that boys were "five times more likely to be entered for Music technology A level"[1] Edexcel AS Music Technology entry results in 2008 reveal a male to female bias of 4209 men to 1077 women[2]. A2 results entry results reveal a male to female bias of 2792 to 589[3].

National need: Industry

Leonard (2007) concludes that women comprise "only 5-15% of working DJs in the UK, whilst the ratio of female sound engineers was merely 2-5% of their profession (mostly concentrated in live sound engineering)"[4].

Justification of Curriculum Model

My intervention utilizes a situational curriculum model because it focuses' on the cultural context of learning'. This proposal debunks Ofsted notion of ICT as a 'neutral tool for learning'[5] and acts on Green (1992) and Armstrong's (2011) observations of the social gendered elements of the music technology

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[1] Armstrong, Victoria (2011) *Technology and the gendering of music education***.** London, UK: Ashgate. p. 2
[2] Armstrong, Victoria (2011) *Technology and the gendering of music education.* London, UK: Ashgate. p. 2
[3] Armstrong, Victoria (2011) *Technology and the gendering of music education.* London, UK: Ashgate. pp. 2/3
[4] Farrugia, Rebekah (2012) *Beyond the Dance Floor: Female DJS, Technology and Electronic Dance Music Culture.* London, UK: Intellect. pp. 122
[5] Armstrong, Victoria (2011) *Technology and the gendering of music education.* London, UK: Ashgate. p. 8

hidden curriculum. The proposal aims to reduce factors not formally acknowledged by institutions (that can unwittingly create a culture of female exclusion).

Compliance

My intervention complies with the government's ethos of inclusive learning and the Protected characteristics of Chapter 1 of the Equality Act 2010. Two of the protected characteristics are:

- Sex
- Sexual orientation

Acknowledging the female learner voice

Armstrong (2011) claims that many female learners struggle to identify with the subject as "technology is traditionally considered a male pursuit because our cultural imagination aligns masculinity and rationality with technology and science. Whereas engaging with technology affirms masculinity, women's engagement with it marks an interruption to their femininity because technological expertise is not part of traditional feminine identity"[6].

McCartney (1995) documents the crisis in female technological identity in the following interview with the Music Technology student Wendy Bartley:

"I didn't know anything about computers when I started…I was in a class with eleven men, and they all seemed to be really hip to what was going on. There was a strong air of aggression in the class—probably all blustering, since I doubt that many of them knew much about computers either…Being one of the boys was my way of dealing with it- I dressed like one too…I wore heavy workbooks and huge T-shirts…Female students who can't easily fit in would do something else, just back out"[7]

My proposal will encourage students to discuss issues of representation and help them rethink gender stereotypes.

Learning Activities

The proposal aims to spark female interest in the subject through presenting alternative curriculum materials that favour pioneering female electronic musicians (who have been historically overlooked). The brief will involve learners producing a presentation on a female electronic musician who has challenged the role of women in the music industry. Learners will produce a composition inspired by the workshop activities in class. The module will take

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[6] Armstrong, Victoria (2011) *Technology and the gendering of music education***.** London, UK: Ashgate. p. 7

[7] Armstrong, Victoria (2011) *Technology and the gendering of music education.* London, UK: Ashgate. p. 31

place over 6 weeks and will feature female electronic pioneers such as Delia Derbyshire, Daphne Oram, Pauline Oliveros and Laurie Anderson.

Learning Outcome: Encourage Creative Risk Taking

The focus on positive female role models is designed to encourage risk tasking experimental approaches to musical composition.

Neurological research by Gurian (2009) reveals that girls and boys behave differently due to chemical, hormonal differences and the connection of nueral pathways in the brain. Women have higher levels of Progesterone, which is a 'bonding' hormone. Boys are less likely to regulate impulse control and typically have higher levels of Testosterone, which is responsible for aggression. These factors may contribute to a female aversion to risk taking which Gurian (2009) describes as an '"inherent, natural difference from boys"[8].

Green (1992) interviewed 78 teachers in state secondary Schools in the UK and the results revealed:

"That girls are more interested in 'getting things right', better at 'exercises' and rather conservative. The boys on the other hand, are said to have more 'natural ability'; as one teacher noted, 'much of the creative, adventurous composing comes from boys"[9]

This intervention aims to re-balance the natural strengths and weakness of both genders to raise overall achievement, whilst simultaneously increasing female recruitment. The benefits of encouraging creative risk taking equally amongst the sexes is that it can lay the foundation for higher learning at university level, increase employability, motivation and positive self image.

Learning Outcome: Promoting Inclusivity

Research by Green (1992) suggests that musical co-education can unwittingly promote gender dominance if unchecked. An Anon teacher comments:

"Boys (unless checked) dominate music technology resources: synthesizers/computer controlled notation; girls therefore veer towards orchestral instruments if allowed!"[10]

Researcher Abramo (2009) reflects on how some boys utilized aggressive volume levels to exclude and mark territory in co-educational music classes:

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[8] Gurian, Micheal et. al (2011). *Boys and girls learn differently*. NY, US: Jossey Bass. pp. 186/187

[9] Green, Lucy (1997) *Music, gender, education*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press pp. 196/197

[10] Green, Lucy (1997) *Music, gender, education*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press p. 176

“electronic instruments (...) have the luxury of increasing the volume simply by a turning a knob and the drums are easily played at a full volume. This allowed the boys to overpower any extraneous sounds that were not part of the rehearsals...Perhaps, their need to create volume was a way to show power, to call attention to themselves, and to carve out their own physical space through sound”[11]

My curriculum will aim to counteract the dysfunctional effects of musical co-education by allocating resources fairly and promoting co-operative learning styles (such as Pauline Oliveros’s Deep Listening program).

Deep Listening

Oliveros noted that although many musicians had strong read/write notation skills there was a tendency for musicians not to listen effectively when playing together in groups. Pauline Oliveros’s ‘Deep listening’ methods encourage co-operation, listening and meditation rather than competition and aggression.

Case Study: Girls Into Science Technology

Although my proposal risks framing women as an ‘exotic’ or ‘marginalized minority’, previous studies by The Gurian Institute and GIST have indicated that similar gender differentiation strategies can benefit both genders.

Female led action research projects such as Girls Into Science and Technology (1984) have demonstrated that overtly masculine courses that attract a higher ratio of men to women can be positively redesigned with female role models to reflect the interests of girls and boys. The two schools who fully participated in the research (Burnbank and Newhall) saw a 17% and 13% rise in the percentage of girls taking physics in fourth year respectively[12]. Surprisingly, the percentage of boys recruited in physics in fourth year also rose by 19% and 2% respectively[13].

Conclusion: Relation to my teaching practice.

Devising this curriculum proposal has encouraged me to revise my musical resources (to incorporate more female practioners) and experiment with more gender inclusive delivery styles that acknowledge the natural difference of both genders.

Feedback: Informal Life Long Learning

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[11] Bjork,Ceclia (2011) Claiming Space. Available at: *https://gupea.ub.gu.se/bitstream/2077/24290/1/gupea_2077_24290_1.pdf* Gothenberg: University of Gothenberg. Accessed: 2/6/2014 p. 111

[12] Whyte, Judith et. al (1985) *Girl friendly Schooling*. London, UK: Routledge. p. 85

[13] Whyte, Judith et. al (1985) *Girl friendly Schooling*. London, UK: Routledge. p.85

As a direct result of academic reading, I have adapted elements of my proposal into a workshop/lecture for the Golden Triangle Girls, WI in Norwich.

- Half of the completed feedback forms mentioned that they found the talk interesting.
- 12 learners out of 20 indicated that the presentation had sparked an interest in new music.
- 5 learners reacted negatively. 3 learners expressed indifference.

The testimonials below indicate a positive response to the project:

- 'Because you chose women as your focus, I would always listen'. Sarah Copeman (52)
- 'I found it really interesting and inspiring. It really inspired me- re, what women are capable of- especially 60+ years ago' Lizzie (33)

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