An Investigation of the Mentorship Programme of the KwaZulu-Natal Philharmonic Orchestra: A Case for the Adoption of an Experiential Learning Model.

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Declaration

Submitted in fulfilment / partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Music in Performance , in the Graduate Programme in the Faculty of Humanities, Development and Social Science, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, South Africa.

I declare that this dissertation is my own unaided work. All citations, references and borrowed ideas have been duly acknowledged. It is being submitted for the degree of Master of Music in Performance in the Faculty of Humanities, Development and Social Science, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, South Africa. None of the work has been submitted previously for any degree or examination in any other University.

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Date					

Abstract

The National Cadetship Programme (NCP) is part of a comprehensive Education and Development Programme within the KwaZulu-Natal Philharmonic Orchestra (KZNPO). The NCP offers promising young South African players focused coaching and first hand experience of playing in a professional orchestra. One of its main aims is to increase the number of South African musicians in the pool of present and future orchestra musicians. However, though the NCP has been in existence for just over ten years, the demographic representation of the KZNPO remains largely unchanged. This research investigated whether it is necessary to make changes to the NCP in order for it to be more effective. It began by revealing the intended overall structure of the Programme through interviews with the orchestra management, comparing it to what is actually happening, and discussing the implications that this has for learning within the Programme. It also obtained the expectations of the various participants of the NCP regarding the educational process, and evaluated the level at which these expectations were being met. Further, it analysed the reasons why these expectations were or were not being met in terms of experiential learning and programme development, and discussed the implications for the Programme. The research found a lack of clarity amongst the mentors and cadets about the structure of the NCP and the roles expected of them. It also revealed that the formal assessment and feedback procedure needed to be improved in order for it to be more educative, and that the cadets needed to be given more performance opportunities. The research concluded that it would be beneficial to the NCP for experiential learning to be formalised within the Programme with the systematic adoption of an experiential learning model.

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1. Introduction

The survival of symphony orchestras worldwide is largely dependant on their ability to justify their role and relevance for the societies they serve. One way in which orchestras are achieving this is by offering a wide range of programmes for their subscribers and for the greater community (Lawson, 2003). South African orchestras are also aiming to increase their relevance by including within their ranks more South African musicians, especially those from historically disadvantaged backgrounds. The KwaZulu-Natal Philharmonic Orchestra (KZNPO) based in Durban, does this through their National Cadetship Programme (NCP), a mentorship programme that provides in-house orchestral training to promising young South African musicians.

The KZNPO NCP was initiated by Mr. Bongani Tembe, the KZNPO Chief Executive officer (CEO), in 1996. According to the CEO, one of the first things that he noticed when he joined the KZNPO in 1994 was the small number of South African musicians in the orchestra, despite available positions. The CEO believed that South African musicians were failing the auditions because their standard of playing was lower than that of their overseas counterparts due to lack of orchestral experience.

Initially the NCP targeted promising first and second year university music students, providing them with paid opportunities to rehearse and play with the orchestra while they were studying. It was hoped that this would enable them to gain the necessary orchestral experience so that they could successfully audition for a full position with the orchestra on completion of their studies. However, the CEO soon realised that there were other musicians that could also benefit from the NCP. These included South Africans who already had music degrees but were still not ready to be members of an orchestra, as well as a number of semi-professional South African musicians, many from historically disadvantaged backgrounds, who aspired to play in the orchestra but whose performance abilities were sometimes below expected standards. The desire to incorporate musicians who fell into either category detailed above led to the restructuring of the KZNPO NCP in 2001.

The NCP was divided into three levels – junior, intermediate and advanced- with performance opportunities of varying degrees of difficulty afforded cadets at each level. A generous monthly stipend was introduced for cadets in the intermediate and advanced categories, and all cadets were provided with weekly one-on-one tuition by a mentor (usually the principal of the section). In addition, a formal assessment and feedback procedure was introduced to monitor the progress of the cadets.

The restructuring of the NCP into the format described above resulted in a programme that resonates effectively with national transformation goals and objectives. In his message prefacing the White Paper on Education and Training (Department of Education, 1995), Professor S M E Bengu, the then Minister for Education states:

It is essential for us to build a system of education and training with which all our people can identify because it serves their needs and interests. Such a system must be founded on equity and non-discrimination, it must respect diversity, it must honour learning and strive for excellence, it must be owned and cared for by the communities and stakeholders it serves, and it must use all the resources available to it in the most effective manner possible.

This research investigated whether the NCP does in fact use all the resources available to it in the most effective manner. In order to achieve this, the research had the following objectives:

- To investigate and articulate the understanding of the management, mentors and cadets of the overall structure of the Programme, and the implication that this has for learning;
- To assess and outline the expectations of the participants regarding the educational process, and whether these expectations are being met;
- To determine whether or not there is clarity and consensus regarding the roles of participants within the Programme;
- To analyse how the KZNPO NCP compares to other in-house orchestral training programmes, and determine whether there are aspects of these other programmes that should be incorporated into the KZNPO NCP.

2. Methodology

The research used primary data in the form of one-on-one semi-structured interviews that were conducted with management, which consisted of the KZNPO CEO and the Orchestra Manager (OM), as well as the twelve cadets and ten mentors involved with the NCP during 2006 and 2007. The decision was made not to interview past participants of the Programme as the structure of the Programme had changed significantly since its inception in 1996, and the research was concerned with the success of the current format.

The respondents were asked to outline what their understanding of the overall structure of the NCP was. They were also asked what expectations they had regarding the educational process and whether they felt these were being met, and what roles they expected the management, mentors and cadets to play within the Programme.

A study of other in-house orchestral training programmes from around the world was also conducted. These apprenticeship-like programmes are a relatively new practice amongst modern orchestras. Through the internet, six different orchestras that offer programmes similar to the KZNPO NCP were identified. These are the Berlin Philharmonic in Germany, Bavarian Radio Symphony in Germany, Royal Concertgebouw in the Netherlands, Chicago Symphony in the United States of America, Hong Kong Philharmonic in China, and Sydney Symphony in Australia. The websites of these orchestras were consulted for information about the general structure of their in-house training programmes. The orchestra managers were further contacted electronically with a request for further information about assessment and feedback procedures within their programmes. Responses were received from the Sydney Symphony and Bavarian Radio Symphony orchestras. Information about the programmes listed above was used for comparative purposes.

Theories concerning experiential learning and education were deemed to be relevant to the investigation of the educational process of the NCP. An essential feature of the Programme is that much of the cadets' learning is experience-based. This type of learning can be defined through an experiential learning model.

One of the most influential writers on the topic of experiential learning is David Kolb, who is recognised as a foundational theorist in the field of modern experiential education (Andresen, Boud and Cohen, 2000: 231). In order to illustrate the process of experiential learning, Kolb (1984) created a cyclical model consisting of 4 key elements: concrete experience, observation and reflection, forming abstract concepts, and testing in new situations.

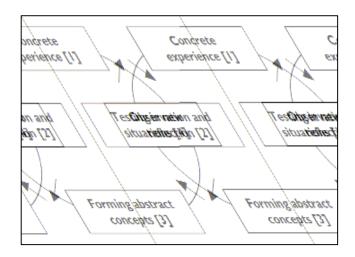


Fig. 1 The Lewinian Experiential Learning Model (Kolb, 1984: 21)

The educational process of the NCP was analysed to identify whether the four stages represented in Figure 1 were present. Following this inspection a comparison of what was found to be the practice of the NCP was made with the theories embodied within Kolb's model.

The research was also influenced by Carl Rogers's, "Freedom to Learn" (1969). Rogers's theory of learning is that it should be facilitated rather than taught. He suggests that facilitators adopt a particular attitude towards learners that involves trust, non-possessive

caring, and empathic understanding, in order for learning to be significant. Providing resources, the use of student contracts, and self-evaluation are some of the methods that Rogers presents for creating a facilitative climate, which helps to develop self-reliant learners. This theory guided the investigation of the approach to learning employed within the NCP.

In addition to investigating the process of learning and its approach within the NCP, an investigation of how learning outcomes are assessed within the Programme was also deemed necessary. Sieborger (2004: 6) believes that "The purpose of educational assessment is not only to measure what learners have achieved…but also to motivate learners to learn, and to tell them what they need to do in order to improve". The assessment procedure of the NCP was investigated in line with this view. In response to the findings, part of the research involved looking at how assessment within the Programme could be transformed so that it fulfilled an educational purpose.

Finally, since the research included suggestions for changes to be made to the NCP, it was deemed necessary to include suggestions for how these changes could best be implemented. Literature by Boyle (1981) and Chadwick and Legge (1984) concerning programme development, was consulted. A principle common to both sources, which influenced this part of the research, is that active participation by all parties is necessary in the process of change in order for it to be effective.

3. Findings

3.1. KZNPO National Cadetship Programme

The findings from interviews with the KZNPO NCP participants during 2006 and 2007 are divided into the following sections: cadet selection, cadet levels, training programme, assessment and feedback, the role of participants, and general comments and suggestions. The information in these sections relates to the stated research objectives in that it provides a holistic view of the Programme and the participants' response to it.

3.1.1. Cadet selection and placement

All the NCP participants – cadets, mentors and management – agreed that it is the management's responsibility to publicise and market the Programme, and to find and recruit new cadets.

The CEO said that management rely mostly on word of mouth to find cadets. He also said that talented students from around the country are identified through the auditions for the annual KZNPO Youth Concerto Festival. According to management there are difficulties finding suitable cadets for the Programme. The CEO attributes this to lack of music classes in the schools, which in turn results in a small pool of South African musicians from which to choose. However, the OM had a different opinion. He said, "The guys are out there but they're either not aware of the Programme or don't want to come here because nothing seems to be going on here". \(^1\)

Once identified, prospective cadets are then invited to audition for the Programme. Auditions are held throughout the year and take place in the orchestra rehearsal room at the Playhouse Theatre premises in Durban. The audition comprises solo pieces of the candidates' own choice as well as prescribed orchestral excerpts, performed in front of a panel consisting of the Principal players of the relevant section of the orchestra: strings, wind, brass or percussion. The panel members then make recommendations for or against

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¹ Interview conducted on May 10, 2007.

acceptance, and if so, at what level. These recommendations are passed on to the CEO who makes the final decision about acceptance onto the Programme, and about cadet level. According to the CEO, a cadet's level is partly determined by their playing ability but also depends on circumstances, such as the cadet's availability for rehearsals and performances, or the capacity of a section.

The mentors and cadets were in agreement about the cadet audition process. However, there were concerns about the cadet levels. The mentors felt that the playing standards for advanced cadets should be higher, whilst the standard of acceptance onto the Programme at the junior level should be less strict. They believed that the inclusion of more junior cadets would mean that more students could benefit from the Programme, and that the advanced cadets could concentrate on the more serious programmes rather than having to play for everything. Although most of the mentors are the Principal players of their sections, and are therefore present at the cadet auditions, they felt that their recommendations regarding cadet levels were not always followed. They believed that some of the intermediate and advanced cadets should have been appointed as junior cadets. This has resulted in reluctance on the mentors' part to recommend new junior cadets in case the situation is repeated. The cadets had an issue with the cadet levels because they understood the levels to be based on playing standards. The junior cadets found it confusing when they were occasionally used for symphony concerts but were not promoted to the intermediate or advanced level.

3.1.2. Cadet levels

The cadet levels determine their level of engagement, i.e. which type of concerts they can play for. Junior cadets are usually allowed to play only Education and Development (E&D) concerts. These concerts include programmes at various schools in KwaZulu-Natal and consist of a few light pieces for orchestra, one or two excerpts to demonstrate each section of the orchestra and individual instruments. The orchestra also performs a programme of light classics at old age homes as part of the E&D schedule. Intermediate cadets play for the E&D concerts as well as the 'Proms' or 'Symphony in the Suburbs' concerts, whose programmes include more challenging repertoire. The advanced cadets

can be asked to play for any rehearsal or concert, including concerts in the formal symphony season.

Cadets are remunerated differently depending on their level. Table 1 below shows what the cadets and professional musicians of the KZNPO are paid. Cadets also receive one hour of individual tuition per week paid for by the orchestra, as well as the annual string and reed allowance and full instrument insurance that is provided for the full time professional players. However, they do not qualify for the housing subsidy, medical aid, or annual thirteenth cheque.

Category	Level	Rehearsal	Concert	Monthly
Cadet	Junior	R150	R250	-
	Intermediate	-	-	+/- R3500
	Advanced	-	-	R5000 - R7000
Professional	Extra: part time	R350	R450	-
	Tutti	-	-	R8700
	Co-Principal	-	-	R10000
	Principal	-	-	R11000

Table 1. Remuneration of Musicians within the KZNPO in 2007

Most of the cadets were satisfied with this arrangement. However, some of the advanced cadets who were playing in a full-time capacity felt that their pay was not fair, and that to be paid less for playing exactly the same as the full-time musicians reduced the value of their contribution. They felt that their pay would be fairer if they were allowed some time off during the Symphony season, and that this would also give them more personal practise time to prepare better for the concerts that they did play for. A few of the mentors raised concerns about the use of cadets in a full-time capacity, as they believed it alluded to cheap labour. However, the CEO said that it was the mentors' prerogative to

decide which concerts their cadets should play for. He also said that a cadet on full rotation might be doing more, but that they had a better chance of getting a job.

3.1.3. Training programme

There are two components to this section: experiential learning and individual tuition.

The experiential learning component comprises opportunities to play with the orchestra at selected rehearsals and concerts. One of the main issues raised by the cadets was that they were not learning much from the E&D concerts. The cadets wanted more complete works to be included for E&D programmes, especially for the school concerts, and for the repertoire to be more challenging. They also requested an increased seriousness to E&D rehearsal sessions, which they said took place only when there was a new programme, possibly once or twice a year, and seemed to be treated as play-throughs by the professional musicians.

Another issue was that the advanced cadets in the lower brass had very few opportunities to play for symphony concerts. The lower brass cadets felt that playing for Symphony concerts was important for learning how to perform under pressure. They said that in their section it was left up to the professional musicians to decide which concerts cadets played for, and that they were mostly being used to play E&D concerts. Some of them felt that they were just being used to let the Principals off the concerts they did not enjoy doing.

The lower brass mentors said that the artistic direction of the orchestra was partly to blame for the problem. Most of the brass players are from overseas and have joined the KZNPO to gain their own orchestral experience. They said that symphony programmes often do not require brass and when brass is required they would like to play themselves. They explained that because the brass parts are solo lines, it is not possible for cadets to double the professionals, meaning that if a cadet plays then the professional musician must sit out. They also said that the brass parts are very exposed and that they are afraid that the cadets might make mistakes that could affect the professional image of their

section. The brass mentors said that a weekly repertoire class had been introduced for the brass cadets in order to prepare them better to play in Symphony concerts. This is a group class that is run by the brass mentors, where the cadets have set repertoire to learn on their own, which they then bring to the class to play through together with the other brass cadets and with the brass mentors.

In addition to the experiential content of the training programme, the NCP also provides individual tuition for the cadets on their instrument. Each cadet is entitled to a weekly one-hour lesson with their mentor. The objective of these lessons is to help the cadets improve their playing technique, and to help them prepare their orchestral parts. Technical exercises, solo repertoire, and orchestral excerpts are examples of what is included in these lessons. Some of the mentors also use the one-on-one lesson time to discuss the cadet's experience of playing in the orchestra and what they learnt from that experience, and to give feedback to the cadet about their performance in the orchestra. However, it is left to each mentor to decide how their lessons are run. One mentor, when asked whether the mentors should be given more guidance regarding lesson content, said, "I think it is better to be flexible. You know people have different visions, different opinions, and if you try to say to everybody you must do this and that then maybe people won't agree a 100 percent". ²

3.1.4. Assessment and feedback

Cadets are required to undergo a formal assessment bi-annually. The assessment is similar to an audition in that each cadet must perform a solo piece (or pieces) as well as orchestral excerpts, in front of a panel consisting of the Principals of the relevant orchestra section. Each panel member writes their comments about a cadet's performance on a special assessment form, which is put on the cadet's personal file. These forms are not made available to the cadets so as to avoid the comments being taken personally by them, but are used as a reference by the OM to give feedback to the cadets.

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² Mentor respondent 4. Interview conducted on April 15, 2007.

The OM said that whilst promotion to a higher cadet level is a possible outcome of a successful assessment, the main purpose of the assessment is to evaluate a cadet's progress. However, some of the cadets and mentors felt that the purpose and outcome of the assessment was not clear. One mentor mentioned that they had experienced a problem in their section because the cadets had misunderstood the purpose of the assessment. They had thought that it would lead to promotion, when it was really just to assess whether they were still learning and improving. Another mentor questioned what happened if a cadet failed an assessment. The OM's response to this was, "If they fail an assessment then I'll call them in and give them a letter that just says if they fail their next assessment in six months then they may cease to be on the cadet programme. Then we obviously go through the reasons why they weren't successful".

Concerns about the fairness of the assessment were raised. One mentor said, "We have some people coming in and doing just solo work and others are doing just excerpts. The brass section almost treat it like a lesson...asking their cadets to repeat things. So it's not structured". Another mentor complained that "they're coming around and doing the same repertoire at each assessment. The teachers can do whatever they want, they just say he's going to play this and that and we just have to accept that". Some of the mentors felt that there should be a prescribed list of solo pieces and orchestral excerpts for each instrument. However, the OM felt that this would not make sufficient provision for the individual differences and needs of cadets. He believes that it should be left to each mentor to choose the pieces and excerpts that they think are appropriate for their cadet to present.

The mentors also questioned the continuity and comprehensiveness of the assessment. They felt that a cadet's attitude to work and ability to blend in with the section were aspects that should be evaluated, and that the assessment didn't allow for this. They suggested that the cadet's attitude be assessed throughout the year, and that ensemble playing be included at the formal assessment. The mentors also felt that more emphasis should be placed on orchestral excerpts at the assessments.

³ Interview conducted on May 10, 2007.

⁴ Mentor respondent 3. Interview conducted on February 14, 2007.

⁵ Mentor respondent 7. Interview conducted on April 27, 2007.

Finally, there were concerns about the feedback given to cadets following the formal assessment. The cadets, mentors, and management agreed that it was the OM's responsibility to give feedback to the cadets after the formal assessment. However, some of the cadets said they had not received any feedback regarding their assessment. The cadets also complained that when they did get feedback it was not constructive. One of the mentors said, "I would write a lot during the assessment onto the assessment form, and I only realised later that if I didn't go back to the cadets and give them my comments then they'd never have got them". 6

Regarding this issue, the OM said:

This is one area where I think that management has been falling a little short. I usually only give detailed feedback when it's a negative thing...I think that perhaps management could give a more detailed feedback to each cadet. I feel that it's one area that we could improve on.⁷

3.1.5. Roles and responsibilities

Management was clear about the roles and responsibilities expected of Programme participants (see figure 2). However, the interviews with the mentors and cadets revealed that these expectations may not have been communicated effectively to all of the participants. For example, some of the cadets said that it had been left to them to choose their own pieces and excerpts for the assessment. Also, some of the mentors were not aware that it was their prerogative to say whether or not their cadet could play for a particular concert. Most of the mentors felt that the Programme lacked structure, and wanted management to provide a more formalised framework within which to work. One of the mentors who felt this way said:

There needs to be much more clarity because as far as I can see, at least with our cadets, is they come in and then they float around and they don't know what they're doing. There should be some plan to the whole thing. They could provide

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⁶ Mentor respondent 9. Interview conducted on April 29, 2007.

⁷ Interview conducted on May 10, 2007.

guidelines and also say where they want the cadets to be when they come in to the cadetship programme, where they're going, and how long the cadetship programme is.⁸

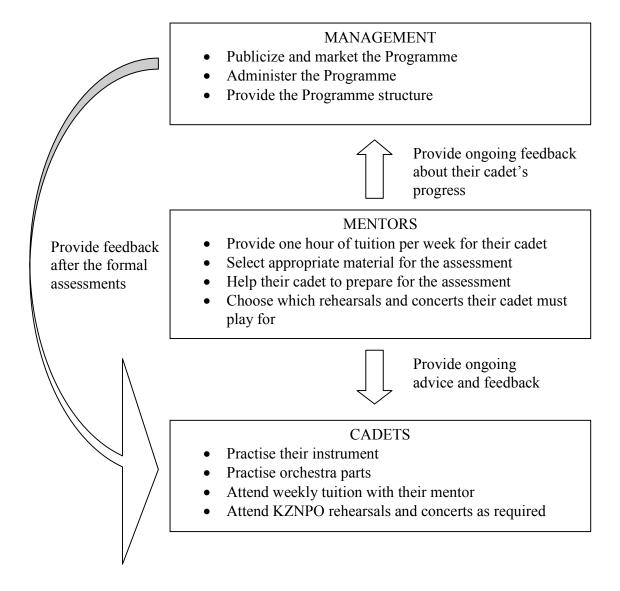


Figure 2. Roles and Responsibilities of NCP Participants according to Management

A few of the mentors mentioned that it was not clear who was actually running the Programme and that this had resulted in a lack of direction to the Programme. The mentors wanted a specialist music educator to be employed to administer the Programme and drive it forward. They felt that management was too busy running other projects at

⁸ Mentor respondent 7. Interview conducted on April 27, 2007.

the same time to be able to focus on running the Programme themselves. Another idea was to form an education committee, consisting of members of the orchestra, to help run the Programme.

3.1.6. General comments and suggestions

Some of the mentors had questions about the length of time a cadet could be on the Programme. They thought that it was meant to be for a maximum of four years but said that some of the cadets had been on the Programme for much longer. The CEO confirmed that the maximum length of time that a cadet was meant to be on the Programme was four years, by which time it was hoped that they would be able to pass the required audition for a full-time position with the KZNPO. However, he said that cadets could only audition for a full-time position if there was a vacancy for their instrument, and that the orchestra was under no obligation to offer cadets a permanent position. He said that there had been occasions where there were no vacancies in the KZNPO, or any other orchestras and ensembles for cadets to go to, and so he had allowed some cadets to stay on the Programme for longer. However, it was observed that some of the cadets who had been on the Programme for longer than four years played instruments for which there were vacancies.

Amongst the mentors there were different opinions regarding the content of the NCP. While some mentors felt that theory and history classes should be included, others felt that the Programme should continue to focus just on orchestral playing experience. The OM said that management were open to the idea of incorporating other educational content within the Programme if the mentors felt that it was needed. He said that there had been an occasion in the past when they had organised theory lessons for some of the cadets, on the advice of their mentors. However, interviews with the mentors revealed that they weren't aware that they could make such requests.

The cadets had many positive things to say about the Programme. One of the cadets said, "I think the main strength is that the Programme provides an opportunity for people to develop who might not otherwise get a full-time post. I think that it is progressive, and is

a good bridging experience". The cadets said that the Programme gave them a realistic impression of what it was like to be a professional orchestra musician, and listed the professional standard of playing expected of cadets as one of the Programme's strengths. They also expressed appreciation for the respect and support that they received from management as well as their full-time colleagues. Finally, most of the cadets said that they felt positive about their future with the KZNPO. The few cadets who weren't that positive played instruments for which there were no foreseeable vacancies in the near future.

3.2. Other in-house orchestral training programmes

In addition to investigating the KZNPO NCP and the participants' response to it, a comparison of the Programme with other in-house orchestral training programmes was deemed necessary. Six different orchestras from around the world were identified as offering in-house orchestral training programmes similar to the KZNPO NCP. They are the Berlin Philharmonic (Germany), Bavarian Radio Symphony (Germany), Royal Concertgebouw (Netherlands), Chicago Symphony (United States of America), Hong Kong Philharmonic (China), and Sydney Symphony (Australia). A study of the programmes offered by these orchestras revealed that they differ markedly with each other and with the KZNPO NCP with regards to their purpose, entrance requirements, number of places offered, length of enrolment, and remuneration (see Appendix A).

These aspects were found to have no relevance for comparison since the circumstances under which these programmes are presented are very different from those in KwaZulu-Natal. Aspects that were found to be relevant are those that pertain to the content of the programmes studied. Common to all the programmes is the provision of opportunities for students to rehearse and perform as part of the professional orchestra, as well as individual tuition. Differences with the KZNPO NCP are the inclusion of chamber music in 66% of the programmes, and master classes with visiting artists in 33% of the programmes. One programme also offered mental training with a psychologist.

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⁹ Cadet respondent 12. Interview conducted on April 25, 2007.

4. Discussion of Findings

4.1. Learning process

According to the KZNPO CEO, the NCP was initiated so as to provide the training that was needed in order to increase the number of South African musicians in the pool of present and future orchestra musicians. The KZNPO especially wanted to target potential orchestral musicians from historically disadvantaged backgrounds. Since the NCP's inception, at least ten cadets have gone on to permanent orchestral positions within South Africa. Four of these are currently employed by the KZNPO.

However, there are some indications that the Programme has not been particularly successful. Not all the cadets join an orchestra, and while some have found music-related positions, others have left music as a career altogether. The number of permanent KZNPO musicians that are South African-born citizens accounts for only about a third of the orchestra, and only one South African member of the orchestra is from a historically disadvantaged background. Also, at least half of the cadets enrolled have been on the Programme for more than three years, in part due to a lack of vacancies in their sections, but in some cases because they are still unable to pass the required audition. Thus it would seem that the Programme is not doing all that it might for the cadets.

One of the main objectives of this research was to identify and investigate those characteristics of the programme that needed to improve. In this regard, the literature on experiential learning and education was particularly useful. A distinguishing feature of experiential learning is that experience is the foundation and stimulus for learning. Discussions about the value of learning through experience have existed as far back as ancient Greek times, but became prominent during the 20th century. One of the main points to come out of contemporary discussions is that reflection on an experience is needed in order for that experience to be truly educative. Modern-day theorists use the term "experiential learning" to denote learning that involves both action and focused

reflection. The term also encompasses experiential education, which is "experiential learning through programmes and activities structured by others" (Smith, 2003).

A defining feature of the NCP is that cadets directly experience playing in a professional orchestra. The orchestra management also confirmed that focused reflection is intended to be a part of the NCP. For this reason it was deemed appropriate to analyse the Programme in terms of the model of experiential learning presented by Kolb (1984), which consists of four key elements: concrete experience, observation and reflection, forming abstract concepts, and testing in new situations.

4.1.1. Concrete experience

Opportunities to play as part of the orchestra form the concrete experiences that cadets have whilst on the KZNPO NCP. Their inclusion in rehearsals and concerts exposes them to the context and daily work life of professional orchestral musicians. The individual tuition and the brass repertoire class, although experiential in themselves, do not qualify as concrete experiences within the context of learning how to become a professional orchestral musician. This may seem more evident in the case of the one-on-one lessons, where there is no ensemble playing, but is pertinent to the brass repertoire class as well. Although the class provides brass cadets with the opportunity to learn similar things to that learnt through playing with the orchestra, it only approximates orchestral experience since it does not include interaction with a conductor or with any of the other sections of the orchestra.

The Association of Experiential Education (AEE) states that the principles of experiential education practice include that "Experiences are structured to require the learner to take initiative, make decisions and be accountable for results", and that "The design of the learning experience includes the possibility to learn from natural consequences, mistakes and successes" (www.aee.org/customer/pages.php?pageid=47). The concrete experiences afforded cadets at the various levels within the KZNPO NCP embody the principles listed

above. However, there has been an issue with some of the advanced brass cadets not being allowed to play for symphony concerts, where the mentors were afraid that they would make mistakes that could affect the professional image of the brass section. This attitude seems to contradict the principles of experiential education mentioned above. One could argue that it is the correct stance to take in this instance since "learning is more pervasive when external threats are minimized" (Rogers, 1969: 161). Rogers (1969: 162) believes that humiliation, ridicule, devaluation, scorn and contempt, threaten a person's perception of themselves, and interfere strongly with learning. These are all possible consequences facing the advanced brass cadets if they make mistakes for symphony concerts, because their parts are so exposed. In this regard the brass repertoire class can be seen to address this issue, because it prepares the cadets better, which means that there is less risk of making mistakes, and therefore a minimized threat to self. The challenge is for this class not to become a substitute for orchestral experience, but to continue to function as a preparatory exercise that leads to more opportunities to play in symphony concerts for the cadets concerned.

4.1.2. Observation and reflection

Kolb states that "Learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience" (1984: 38). A central feature of the literature on experiential education is that reflective thought is required in order to transform experience. According to the orchestra manager, mentors are expected to help their cadets reflect on their orchestra experience at the weekly lessons. However, the interviews revealed that this reflection is not universally practised, and that the weekly lessons mostly focus on preparatory exercises. In this regard, the statement that "The quality of reflective thought...is of greater significance to the eventual learning outcomes than the nature of the experience itself" (Andresen et al, 2000: 226), is noteworthy. Although cadets may reflect by themselves, it could be argued that focused reflection facilitated by their mentors will lead to more meaningful learning. It may be that awareness of experiential learning is required in order to convince the mentors to include reflective

exercises at the weekly lessons. However, it could also be that better communication from management about their expectations of the mentors, as well as consensus and clarity about the roles of participants, is all that is needed to improve the situation.

Another area of the KZNPO NCP that relates to observation and reflection as depicted in Kolb's model is the bi-annual assessment. Sieborger (2004: 6) states that "assessment is not simply to measure what learners have achieved, but to help learners to learn and achieve more". In order to maximise the learning potential of the NCP assessment it is important that focused reflection by the cadets regarding the results of their evaluation, be included. However, as noted in the findings, this has not been happening.

Alternative approaches to assessment and feedback are seen in the responses received from enquiries made to overseas orchestras, namely the Bavarian Radio Symphony and Sydney Symphony¹. The response from the Bavarian Radio Symphony did not indicate that any formal assessment or feedback procedures were employed as part of their inhouse orchestral training programme. However, informal feedback is implied by the inclusion of individual tuition and chamber music, which both involve strong direction from the mentors. The Sydney Symphony Fellowship Programme includes individual tuition and chamber music. Formal feedback is included in the form of a debriefing by the Fellowship Director with each fellow at the end of their tenure. In contrast to the NCP, learners are not required to play an assessment, but their progress is informally monitored throughout the year. The debriefing is used to discuss this progress, as well as other things such as a learner's attitude, preparation, and future career opportunities. This presents a well-rounded approach to reflection that could improve the NCP assessment feedback procedure to the cadets' benefit if incorporated.

¹ Email correspondence with Ursula Weischmann – Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, and Angela Chilcott – Orchestral and Education Assistant Sydney Symphony Orchestra, in January 2008.

4.1.3. Forming abstract concepts

The third element represented in Kolb's (1984) model is the formation of abstract concepts. This is when the learner understands the general principle under which a particular instance falls. A learner's ability to generalise depends on their ability to see a connection between actions and effects over a range of circumstances. For example, in the orchestra a string cadet might observe that in a particular piece the direction of their bow is different from the rest of the players in their section. This wrong action would result in an aberration of the visual synchronization of the section and could also affect the aural synchronization of the section. If the cadet noticed that their bow direction was different from the rest of the section in other pieces as well, he/she might generalise that there is a need to pay more attention to his/her bowing in future so that it matches the rest of the section's bowing.

At a professional level, orchestral musicians are expected to understand the general principles of style relating to different composers and historical genres of music, and to be able to translate this into their playing. One way in which cadets learn about stylistic playing is by following the instructions of the conductor and section leaders, and copying the actions of the more experienced players in the section, coupled with reflection on what they observe. Cadets in the advanced level are expected to have a more advanced knowledge about stylistic playing than cadets in the lower levels, because of the opportunities afforded them to play symphony concerts, where more attention is paid to this aspect of orchestral playing.

It is debatable whether the experiences afforded cadets on the KZNPO NCP facilitate the formation of abstract concepts amongst all the cadets. The interviews revealed that whilst some cadets played for a variety of concert programmes, there were many that only played the E&D concerts. Since the programmes for E&D concerts are usually repeated, the range of circumstances that they present is limited. In addition, the lack of formal reflection within the NCP means that the formation of abstract concepts amongst those cadets that do have varied experience cannot be guaranteed.

4.1.4. Testing in new situations

The final step in Kolb's (1984) model involves experimentation. This is when a generalisation is tested by applying it through action in a new circumstance to see whether the action has the anticipated effects. For example, a string cadet might generalise that quaver note passages with staccato markings should always be played off the string in the lower half of the bow because that is what the conductor requested for pieces by Shostakovitch, Stravinsky and Kabalewsky. The cadet would then test this theory by playing similar staccato quaver passages in music by other composers in the same way. If the rest of the section played differently, or if the conductor indicated otherwise, then the cadet would have to assume that their generalisation was incorrect. In order for testing to take place it is necessary that cadets play a variety of programmes with the orchestra. The interviews revealed that this is not facilitated for all the cadets by the current programme.

Another problem relating to this principle is the risk that is involved in allowing a cadet to experiment during the more serious orchestra programmes, especially where the parts are solo lines and therefore very exposed, as is the case of lower brass. There are alternative ways in which a generalisation can be tested that may be more effective. If the generalisation is made as part of a formal process with the mentor, or in a group led by an experienced player, the false generalisation might be open to correction without the cadet having to test it directly in a rehearsal or performance. The brass repertoire class incorporates this approach. However, this class only caters for the brass cadets. Notably four out of the six other in-house orchestral training programmes identified feature chamber music as an essential part of their programmes.

4.2. Roles of teachers and learners

A defining characteristic of experiential education, that is not dealt with in Kolb's (1984) model but that is relevant to this study, has to do with the roles of learners and educators within the learning process. Unlike didactic education, which involves a discipline-

constrained transmission of knowledge controlled by the teacher, experiential education supports a more participatory, learner-centred approach where the learner is more actively involved within the learning process and the role of the teacher is to facilitate such learning. According to Rogers (1969: 164-66) this facilitation includes 1) setting a positive climate for learning; 2) clarifying the purposes of the learner; 3) organising and making available learning resources; 4) balancing the intellectual and emotional components of learning; and 5) sharing feelings and thoughts with learners but not dominating. In experiential education, learners are expected to take more initiative as far as the nature and direction of the learning process is concerned, and should be continuously investigating, experimenting and posing questions.

These roles require that teachers adopt an ethical stance toward learners that involves features such as "respect, validation, trust, openness, concern for the well-being of the learner, and pursuing the self-directive potential of the learner" (Andresen et al, 2000: 228). Rogers (1969: 103-26) argues that the attitudinal qualities which exist in the personal relationship between facilitator and learner are more important in facilitating significant learning than the facilitator's teaching skills or knowledge of the field. The interviews revealed that the mentors were open to a more negotiated learning process but expected the initiative to come from the cadets. However, this has not been communicated to the cadets, who seemed content to allow the mentors to be in control of the learning process.

Rogers (1969: 130-43) presents various techniques that teachers can use in order to create a facilitative climate that would encourage learners to take more control of their learning. One example is for the teacher to concentrate on providing a variety of resources and making them clearly available. These could include books and recordings as well as human resources. Another technique that Rogers suggests is the use of student contracts. These include goals set by the learner, as well as the plan of how they intend to achieve them. A variation on this approach could be to include an agreement of what the mentor's responsibilities are within the learning process.

The study projects that the cadets' learning within the NCP will be more meaningful when the roles of teachers and learners typical of experiential education practice are adopted by the mentors and cadets. In order for this to happen, the concept of experiential learning would have to be introduced to the participants and they would have to be won over to it.

4.3. Implementing change

One of the main objectives of this research was to suggest changes that could be made to the NCP to improve it. Since the manner in which change is affected can influence its effectiveness, it is necessary to include a discussion about implementing change.

Literature on programme development suggests that the most desirable change is achieved through active participation by all parties in the process of change (Chadwick and Legge 1984, Boyle 1981). According to Boyle (1981: 95), participation not only helps to identify the most relevant needs and opportunities for learners, but also acts as a vehicle for social therapy, helps to avoid misunderstandings that may occur, speeds up the process of change, mobilizes resources, and is a learning experience in itself.

Accordingly, it can be argued that in the NCP, participation by all parties regarding decisions about which concerts cadets play in, would be beneficial. The inclusion of the cadet in the decision-making process would provide an opportunity for them to discuss their needs with their mentor and management regarding performance opportunities and what they hoped to learn. A three-way discussion would also help to clarify the reasons that the mentor and management have for choosing to include the cadet in certain concerts but not in others. In addition, if the discussion was held before the concert season began the cadets could prepare better for the relevant concerts, as this would give them more time to practise the music and to listen to different recordings.

Another aspect of the Programme where participation can be shown to be beneficial involves the selection of repertoire for evaluation. In order to select appropriate pieces,

cadets need to know about audition practices and standards from around the world. In addition, the selection of orchestral excerpts requires some knowledge of standard orchestral repertoire. This represents a learning opportunity for cadets. Participation also implies that some discussion would need to take place about the reasons for selecting particular repertoire. This would help to clarify what element of playing was actually being tested in each piece or excerpt and would give focus to the cadets' learning. Finally, participation by management would make it easier for them to monitor the fairness and continuity of the assessments.

Decisions about changes to the overall structure and administration of the Programme, such as whether or not to employ a specialist music educator or introduce chamber music as a requirement for all cadets, would also benefit from participation by all parties. A group discussion would provide an opportunity for all views to be heard and for information to be shared. Chadwick and Legge (1984: 49-50) suggest various tactical measures for group participation, such as the development of 'active' boards committed to a co-operative model, and the formalisation of student representatives on management committees.

5. Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

The primary objective of this research was to identify whether it is necessary to make changes to the NCP, and if so, to suggest what these changes might be. The methodology adopted included interviews with the orchestra management, the cadets and their mentors. These interviews provided information which allowed for a comparison to be made of the educational process of the NCP with Kolb's (1984) model of experiential learning. The NCP was also gauged against the training programmes of other orchestras.

The interviews revealed a lack of clarity amongst the cadets and mentors about the overall structure of the NCP. There was uncertainty about a number of things including cadet levels, the purpose of the bi-annual assessment, and the overall plan and direction of the Programme. This seemed to result from poor communication between management and the other participants and meant that expectations were not always being met. The implication was that learning was not as effective as it could be and that some of the participants were becoming disillusioned with the Programme.

A key aspect of the NCP where expectations of cadets and mentors were not being met concerned the educational process. Many of the cadets were only being used to play for E&D concerts, which are not that educative due to their repetitive nature. There were also concerns about the bi-annual assessment and most particularly, the associated feedback, which is a fundamental aspect of the educative process. Cadets were supposed to be given feedback following the formal assessment. However, this had not been happening consistently. The research indicated that it is important that all the cadets receive feedback, not just the cadets who performed poorly at the assessment.

The research reported a lack of clarity and consensus amongst the cadets and mentors regarding their roles and those of management within the NCP. The interviews revealed that although management had a clear idea of what roles were expected of the different parties this had not been communicated effectively to the other participants. As a result the Programme lacked direction.

The research considered how the NCP compared to other in-house orchestral training programmes. One of the main differences was the emphasis placed on chamber music by most of the other programmes. Also notable was the debriefing employed by the Sydney Symphony at the end of a learner's tenure. The debriefing was used to discuss not only a learner's progress, but also his/her attitude, preparation, and future career opportunities. Differences with regards to purpose, entrance requirements, number of places offered, length of enrolment, and remuneration were also revealed. However, these aspects were found to have no relevance for comparison since the circumstances under which the KZNPO NCP is presented are very different from those affecting the other programmes.

Whilst changes to the NCP would undoubtedly improve the Programme, it should be noted that the research also indicated that there may be other issues affecting the Programmes success. One such issue is the limited pool of South African musicians, possibly due to a lack of music in the schools. Another issue is the perception that musicians in the rest of South Africa might have that the classical music scene is limited in this part of the country. These and other issues contributing to the circumstances under which the KZNPO NCP is presented, are not dealt with in this study but could provide possible avenues for further research.

The study findings have led to a number of recommendations. One of the ways in which learning within the NCP can be improved is for management to provide the cadets and mentors with a more formalised framework within which to work. It may be that documentation is required in order for this to be effectively communicated to all parties. In addition, it was suggested by some of the mentors and cadets that a specialist music educator be employed to administer the Programme and drive it forward.

Changes are also recommended to the educational process in the cadetship experience. A review needs to be made of the E&D programmes. The orchestra should consider including more challenging repertoire for these concert programmes and changing the programmes more frequently. Communication about the structure and purpose of the formal assessment is also needed. It is vital that feedback is given to all the cadets

following the bi-annual assessment. A possible solution would be to make each mentor responsible for discussing the assessment feedback with their cadet, since each of the mentors are experts on their instrument and therefore best placed to provide support of this nature. Aside from the feedback, few changes need to be made to the bi-annual assessment, with a possible suggestion being for other means of evaluation to be included, such as ensemble playing.

It is also recommended that mentors and cadets adopt the roles of teachers and learners typical of experiential education practise in order for the cadets' learning to be more meaningful. In order for this to happen the NCP participants would need to be introduced to the concept of experiential learning and won over to it. The implementation of an experiential learning model might be useful in ensuring the development of cadets. It places the responsibility for learning upon the learner and emphasises the importance of reflection by the learner within the learning process.

Based on the study of other in-house orchestral training programmes, it is recommended that the NCP includes mentor-directed chamber music ensembles for all the cadets. In addition, a more well-rounded approach to the feedback procedure is advised.

The research also considered how to implement change in the most effective manner within programmes. The literature confirmed that the most desirable change involves active participation by all parties in the decision making process. It is therefore recommended that future development of the NCP incorporates this approach by including all the mentors as well as the cadets in discussions about the Programme.

Finally, although changes are proposed, the KZNPO should be commended for its development of the current NCP. It should be noted that very few orchestras worldwide offer in-house training programmes similar to that of the KZNPO, and those that do include some of the most prominent orchestras in the world.

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APPENDIX A. COMPARISON OF IN-HOUSE ORCHESTRAL TRAINING PROGRAMMES

Orchestra	Name of Training Programme	Purpose	Entrance Requirements	Number of Places Offered	Length of Enrolment	Remuneration
Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra	Academy of the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra	To promote young orchestral talent.	BMus or equivalent. Max age for admission is 26 years. Selection by audition.	18	2 years	500 Euro per month + accommodation
Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra	Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra Academy	To equip talented young musicians to meet the requirements of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra.	Graduate diploma from an institute of music, a conservatoire or equivalent. Max age for admission is 25 years. Selection by audition.	Average of 2 places per instrument .	2 years	650 Euro per month
Chicago Symphony Orchestra	Chicago Symphony Orchestra Lewis- Sebring Fellowship	Increase the pool of musicians from groups that have been traditionally under-represented in American Orchestras qualified to contend for orchestral positions.	Must be from African-american, Latino or other under-represented group. Aged between 18 -32 years. Selection by audition.	2	1 year + possible extension of 1 year	\$36,000 + medical + travel per year

Orchestra	Name of Training Programme	Purpose	Entrance Requirements	Number of Places Offered	Length of Enrolment	Remuneration
Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra	Robert H.N. Ho Family Foundation Orchestral Fellowship	To promote and develop orchestral culture in China and throughout Asia.	String player graduating from Central and Shangai Conservatories and the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts. Selection by audition.	10	10 months	HK\$12,000 per month + medical, instrument insurance, travel and accommodation.
KwaZulu-Natal Philharmonic Orchestra	KwaZulu-Natal Philharmonic Orchestra National Cadetship Programme	To increase the number of South African musicians in the pool of present and future orchestra musicians.	Must be a South African citizen. Max age for admission is 30 years. Selection by audition.	10	Max 4 years	Up to R7000 per month for advanced cadets + instrument insurance.
Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra	Academy of the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra	To develop a pool of young musicians who can be used as replacements / extra players.	Musicians from the EU. Max age for admission is 27 years. Selection by audition.	5	4–5 months	Paid full extra rate per session worked.
Sydney Symphony Orchestra	Sydney Symphony Fellowship	To provide a stepping- stone to the life of professional orchestral musician.	Must be an Australian citizen and resident. Max age for admission is 30 years.	5 string, 1 wind	1 year	AUS\$12,000 per year

APPENDIX B. LIST OF INTERVIEWS (All interviews were conducted by the author in Durban).

Management Interviews

- KZNPO CEO. Interview conducted on January 31, 2007.
- KZNPO Manager. Interview conducted on May 10, 2007.

Mentor Interviews

- Respondent 1. Interview conducted on February 14, 2007.
- Respondent 2. Interview conducted on February 14, 2007.
- Respondent 3. Interview conducted on February 14, 2007.
- Respondent 4. Interview conducted on April 15, 2007.
- Respondent 5. Interview conducted on April 16, 2007.
- Respondent 6. Interview conducted on April 25, 2007.
- Respondent 7. Interview conducted on April 27, 2007.
- Respondent 8. Interview conducted on April 28, 2007.
- Respondent 9. Interview conducted on April 29, 2007.
- Respondent 10. Interview conducted on May 17, 2007.

Cadet Interviews

- Respondent 1. Interview conducted on August 28, 2006.
- Respondent 2. Interview conducted on August 28, 2006
- Respondent 3. Interview conducted on September 6, 2006.
- Respondent 4. Interview conducted on September 7, 2006.
- Respondent 5. Interview conducted on September 7, 2006.
- Respondent 6. Interview conducted on September 8, 2006.
- Respondent 7. Interview conducted on September 9, 2006.
- Respondent 8. Interview conducted on September 13, 2006.
- Respondent 9. Interview conducted on February 5, 2007.
- Respondent 10. Interview conducted on Febuary 5, 2007.
- Respondent 11. Interview conducted on February 10, 2007.
- Respondent 12. Interviews conducted on April 25, 2007.