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Chapter 1

Meeting their needs? Towards curriculum reform in keyboard pedagogy

1.1 Rationale
In contemporary times, graduates who choose to engage in keyboard studies at university level embark on a very risky enterprise in relation to future career prospects. While a career as a solo performer in this domain\(^1\) has always been for the very few, this has become so problematic in post-millennial times that less than one percent have any real likelihood of success in turning keyboard studies into a financially rewarding vocation.

In some senses, this makes keyboard graduates no different from many of their counterparts in other disciplines (particularly in the arts and humanities), given the profound shifts that have been occurring in the global knowledge economy and the careers of those who seek to work within it (Gee, Hull & Lankshear, 1996; Poster, 1995). As Uszler (2000a) sees it, ‘what [students] offer [might be] regarded as honorable and idealistic…but [is] less in demand’ (p. 6). In the context of a burgeoning literature on the challenges of the knowledge economy (Castells, 1996), it is timely to revisit the issue of what today’s graduates of keyboard are being trained to do and why. If their skills are ‘less in demand’, what are the implications for Keyboard studies as a curriculum offering in Tertiary Institutions?

Since the advent of *Saber-tooth Curriculum* (Benjamin, 1972), the issue of curriculum relevance has certainly been much on the agenda among educators at all levels. Increasingly there have been calls for education to be more closely linked with occupational work and less concerned with passing on the ‘wisdom of the ages’ and thereby maintaining social elites and economic inequities. With the ‘massification’ of education in Western institutions we have witnessed an increasing dis/ease with any curriculum offering which does not appear to be anchored in a thoroughly ‘practical’ rationale, with practical rationale meaning an income-earning rationale, especially at the undergraduate level.

Practical is a contested notion about which critical theorists in particular have extensively debated. Jurgen Habermas (1971), like other critical theorists before him, Adorno, Marcuse, Horkheimer & Fromm (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2001), argues that the technicization of knowledge frames all but the few ‘experts’ out of the sort of knowledge that translates into real

\(^1\) In the context of this study, the domain referred to is classical keyboard performance.
power and material gain. According to Habermas, a key issue here that has ideological implications, is that the ‘practical’ has increasingly been conflated with the ‘technical’ and this has profound consequences for whoever is understood to have communicative competence.\(^2\) Whatever we learn from the critical theorists, it is clear that they caution against the conflation of the technical and the practical.

1.2 The needs of music students

As a teacher in a Conservatorium of Music, I am confronted by both the challenge to meet the ‘practical’ needs of students for employment after graduation, and the challenge to better understand what students might stand to lose as well as to gain in any reform of curriculum which arises out of prioritising employment needs over all other competing imperatives. On the one hand, I am increasingly sceptical of a curriculum that appears to remain oblivious to ‘real world’ issues that students will face on the completion of their studies. On the other hand, my reading is forcing me to address the complexity of what seems at first to be a simple issue, namely, that keyboard curriculum ought to be made more relevant to student needs by being more responsive to graduate employment and thus less focused on an increasingly small and precious world of solo concert performance.

There is no doubt that the matter of relevance is driving a great deal of reform and review in music institutions in contemporary times.\(^3\) It is clear from current literature that the unmet needs of students in terms of employment outcomes are increasingly a matter of concern, and the result is that there is ongoing contestation and struggle within music institutions as they seek to balance curriculum offerings to produce skilled performers who are also better equipped for the workforce.

This ‘practical’ imperative is being increasingly felt not only by artists and professional commentators but also by students. A music student at the Guildhall of Music in London recently reflected that

> the highly competitive nature of the world’s top conservatories results in extreme conservatism due to fear of losing their traditions and elitist position. The closed cultural perspective of many professional musicians

\(^2\) This is a term used by Habermas (1971) to define a condition which overcomes the problem of ‘the elimination of the distinction between the practical and the technical’, i.e. what he calls ‘technocratic rationality’ (p. 113).

\(^3\) The issue of relevance has more recently been brought to prominence through a meeting of writers, performers, researchers and directors of Conservatoire from European and Australian cities. An International Symposium held at the QCGU called CONNECTing with...provided a platform to address relevance issues, including the investigation of current music practice and music education.
and students could lead to the destruction of the Music Conservatoire in the future. The danger is that they are producing huge numbers of incredibly skilled players who have little idea how to connect with the rest of the world, and who are struggling to understand the place of music within a post-modern culture. (Renshaw, 2001, p. 4)

However, not all music educators (Bodman Rae, 2002; Gibbs, 1998; Waters, Dench & Thornton, 2000) agree with this view. While there has been a move by some institutions to address a perceived need for diversification and multi-skilling for occupational ends, others are not so sanguine. Researchers like George Caird (2002) and Peter Renshaw (2001) for example, note that there is a growing disquiet among some academics about offering anything other than traditional performance training because they fear it will result in the dumbing down and a lowering of standards.

Despite the contestations within universities, the ‘real world’ employment picture is clear. Current indications are that the opportunities available for keyboard performers in Australia are severely limited. A recent study by Harris (1997) of two hundred delegates at a National Piano Pedagogy Conference revealed only eight performed in public, only two performed publicly as soloists and only one earned a living entirely as a soloist. Moreover, only two of the music teachers attending the conference had produced students now earning a living as soloists. Clearly the matter of employability is a reality and one which can no longer be ignored, whatever the imperative to be ‘honorable and idealistic’ in music.

Nevertheless employability is only one aspect of a whole range of issues that increasingly impinges on the question of the complexity of curriculum ‘relevance’. It is a well documented claim that the increasing pressure to define the ‘relevance’ of tertiary professional studies in terms of the market place over the last decade, has come at the expense of western cultural and intellectual traditions (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1985). More recently, some commentators (Botsman, 2002; Osborne, 2003; Rees-Mogg, 2002) allege that the economic constraints and financial imperatives have caused a further jeopardizing of the deeper and broader role in scholarship, arguing ‘while it is reasonable to demand that universities play a strong role in providing an expert work force…this should not be at the expense of their capacity to enrich all field of human endeavour’ (Osborne, 2003, p. 22). They further suggest that, in their quest for diversification, universities are in danger of substituting a new kind of narrowness, defined by the professional and the vocation.
1.3 Problem
Most graduates of the undergraduate curriculum for keyboard pedagogy cannot make an economic and satisfying living from what they have studied. It is interesting to note that, despite this clear evidence of potential unemployment, the number of keyboard students entering tertiary education remains near its peak and shows no evidence of diminishing.\(^4\) Nor does the cost of supplying their educational needs lessen.\(^5\) Significantly, this is occurring at a time when public and private funding for the arts has been reduced and there are continuous rumours circulating about the impending demise of the concert hall paradigm. A number of questions are begged in this scenario. What do students need in keyboard studies at an advanced level? How might these needs be ‘legitimated’ as curriculum goals? Are the possibilities for advocacy limited to making the courses ‘more practical’ or guarding them against ‘dumbing down’?

To pose these questions is to open up the possibility that there may be no simple solution to the question of relevance of keyboard studies. Moreover, an investigation of these questions needs to be done in ways that do not simply refuse any privileging of an academic standpoint or an industry standpoint. This means maintaining some skepticism about the proposition that what the students might want is what they need. The challenge, then, is to design and enact a study that can capture the complexity of the relevance debate, and thereby open up the apparently simple issue of ‘making keyboard studies more relevant’ to allow a better understanding of the notion of meeting the needs of students.

1.4 Research question
The overarching research question arises out of the above imperatives and debates:
How might tertiary educators better understand ‘relevant’ keyboard pedagogy in tertiary institutions?

1.5 Objectives
The key objective of this study is to investigate the relevance of keyboard curriculum as it is currently delivered in tertiary institutions. To do so, it will focus on one such institution, a Conservatorium of Music, to examine the contestation over needs that is apparent in the

\(^4\) Australian tertiary music institutions report a consistently high application rate (Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University College Committee Report, 2001a).
curriculum of keyboard within this institution. Such a study is not intended to be generalised nor is it definitive. The intention here is to focus on how needs become articulated within a particular institution and curriculum domain and what effect these needs have on the practices of those who teach and those who learn within that domain. The aim therefore is to understand the complexity of the needs struggle as it is enacted at the local level rather than to move to develop a one-size fits all macro-curriculum.

1.6 Specific objectives
Such an approach involves the following tasks:

1. A review of current literature relating to developments within thinking about keyboard curriculum.
2. A conceptual framework that is able to provide a lens with which to examine ‘needs’ as a struggle which is complex and ongoing within and outside institutions such as universities.
3. A design which permits the gathering of appropriate data for tracking the contestation over needs within this particular site.
4. An analysis which is able to reveal the complexity of relevance issues as they are perceived by students, staff and others.
5. A discussion of implications of such an analysis for practitioners in the field of keyboard studies.

1.7 Significance of study
Changing expectations in the current social and cultural climate are forcing conservatoria\(^5\) to reappraise their priorities more critically and to attach greater importance to student needs in a more contemporary and social context (Renshaw, 2002b). In addition, as governments move from being ‘patrons of education’ to being ‘buyers of education’ (McWilliam & O’Brien, 1999), conservatoria,\(^7\) like most universities, are increasingly being put under pressure to be more accountable for public spending.

---

\(^5\) The cost of educating an undergraduate music student is approximately twice that of other faculties. The annual funding for an undergraduate music student at the Conservatorium is approximately $9135.00 compared to that of the funding for a Griffith teacher education student which is $3920.00 or science student which ranges from $4000.00-$5000.00 (Griffith University, 2002).

\(^6\) The usage of the plural term Conservatoria is more common in Australia than the term Conservatoires. Its usage will be adhered to in this study unless directly quoted. See footnote p. 40, Bridges (1970).

\(^7\) Many Conservatoria are independent institutions, however the Queensland Conservatorium is embedded in a university. It amalgamated with Griffith University in 1991 thus becoming Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University.
While most universities have recognized the need both to adapt to change and to ensure that graduates have generic skills required for future employment, such as communication, teamwork and leadership skills (Nelson, 2002), conservatoria have been reluctant to respond to the increasingly diverse needs both of the music industry and those of the community it serves (Renshaw, 2002b). This is despite the fact that employment opportunities that once existed in the visual and performing arts have diminished and are now ‘well below the national average’ (Moodie, 2002, p. 47). This reluctance of conservatoria to move into the 21st century is increasingly being challenged however, as music students have more recently felt the urgency ‘to develop [other] skills…which will enable them to connect to different contexts and changing cultural values’ (Renshaw, 2001, p. 4).

While there have been attempts by the Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University (1997) to address some of these issues through past curriculum reviews, these have largely been unsuccessful due to a debate that has continued to dominate contemporary thinking, namely a debate of performance versus vocational training.

The study that follows constitutes a significant rethinking of keyboard curriculum by rethinking method for inquiring into that curriculum. For professional music training institutions such as conservatoria, this demands confrontation of issues that are significant in more ways than simply preserving the tradition of excellence in performance at any cost.

Through the use of feminist poststructural analysis, the study attempts ‘to combat that dominance’ (Lather, 1996) by offering an alternative way of thinking about student needs within the academy. It applies tools forged out of feminist poststructural theory to move thinking about curriculum beyond a ‘vocational-versus-performance’ binary. The study seeks to decenter this binary by providing new vocabularies that capture the complexity of the discursive organization of ‘relevance’ in music curriculum and how this problem might be thought differently.

---

8 An interim review was also conducted in 2002-2003 (See Section 2.6.8).
Chapter 2

Keyboard pedagogy for the new millennium: Mapping the challenge

This chapter investigates the arenas of the current keyboard curriculum at the Conservatorium. It examines the employment environment within which the curriculum operates. It then moves on to examine the past practices of the institution, in order to provide an understanding of the pedagogical practices that continue to inform the present. A writing practice familiar to poststructuralist accounts will be employed in documenting this study (see St. Pierre, 1996; Lather & Smithies, 1997). The purpose of utilizing this strategy is to flag the writer’s problematic location as ‘insider’ as a teacher at the Conservatorium and also ‘outsider’ as analyst of the work of the Conservatorium. It is a ‘tactic’ used by some poststructuralist feminists who are concerned about being misrecognised ‘as the master of truth and justice’ (Lather, 1991b, p. 92) and who also seek to avoid indulging in a detailed self-analysis, an ‘implosion’ into the self.

One example of feminist poststructuralist work that employs this technique is Lather and Smithies’ Troubling the Angels (1997). In Troubling the Angels (1997), Lather and Smithies in their study of women living with HIV/AIDS employ a textual format that uses the literal page space to present an account of their research and their own reflections on themselves. Troubling the Angels works across various layers and shifts of register by the intertwining of the voices of the researchers and the researched through subtextual under-writing. Such an account works so that ‘one textual space …incite[s] another textual space to discourse’ (Lather, 1993, p. 673). In their attempt to address the epistemological paradox of acknowledging their own lack of innocence, while at the same time trying to ‘be of use’ to the researched, Lather and Smithies use an ‘interrogative text’, one that ‘reflects back at its readers the problems of inquiry at the same time an inquiry is conducted’ (Lather, 2000, p. 285). Likewise, Elizabeth St. Pierre (1996) also uses the literal space of the page to present a highly reflexive and insightful interpretation of her ‘nomadic inquiry’ into the identity of older American women. She employs this technique to produce her ‘own smooth mental space for writing and thinking’, referring to it as the ‘aside’, a place outside the text, a pleat in the text where the outside and inside fold upon each other’ (1996, p. 28). The intention is to make trouble for any neat positioning of author/researcher within the project.
The ‘boxed’ text that appears throughout this paper connotes an ‘aside’ space which allows me as a researcher to bring forward my own subjectivity for scrutiny, while acknowledging my non-innocent ‘presence’ in the research as a practitioner and advocate. No textual staging is ever innocent (including this one), as all researchers are complicit in the very research that they are doing. However, in order to acknowledge that complicity and to refuse the position of innocence, I take a similar approach to that of Lather and St. Pierre, one that acknowledges that ‘separateness’, that ‘aside’ as a lack of innocence. In Yeatman’s terms, I foreground my insider/practitioner/intuitive knowledge as valuable ‘more scientific knowledge’ (Yeatman, 1996).

\begin{quote}
The issue of what it means to teach is a problem of practice. This space enables me to tell you that it is more specifically, a problem of my own practice. The problem that I wish to bring forward for scrutiny arose out of my teaching practice and has been a cause of concern to me as a practitioner at the Conservatorium. Over the last five years I have become extremely concerned about the number of keyboard graduates who have not been able to find employment in their area of study. As I sit and assess many of the students’ solo piano recitals, a compulsory major part of the curriculum requirements, certain anxiety producing questions arise for me, such as: Is what I am doing in my daily work actually counterproductive in the lives of my students? Put bluntly, am I complicit in a bad practice? How much does the musical training that we offer in keyboard reflect the diverse reality of the music industry? Does the current curriculum and the environment in which keyboard students learn produce the kind of musicians who can survive or adapt within a multi-stranded industry? Finally, how effective and accessible are the opportunities for students to pursue research and continuing professional development?
\end{quote}

2.1 Performance practice, historical links

Until the beginning of the 20th century, the main career paths for keyboard players were performance, teaching and composition with the majority of keyboard musicians making their living from performance. Now in the 21st century, many pianists still aspire to becoming performers, but this performance focus has not been matched by a corresponding increase in career opportunities. This fact, in turn, has distracted keyboard performers from adjusting to the reality that very few will succeed in a performance career.

The changes for keyboard performers and for those seeking a career in keyboard during the last century have, however, been profound. They have been influenced by world events from the Russian Revolution to the Great Depression and the Second World War. The introduction of recorded music at the turn of the last century, the rapid development of music technology, and with it the keyboard itself during the last three decades, have all, according to Schonberg (1987), had a major impact.
2.1.1 Performance careers

Until the end of the 18th century, most keyboard musicians of the day such as Mozart (1756-1791) were trained on the harpsichord, clavichord and organ. Uszler (1983) maintains that the ‘keyboardist’ was often part of an ensemble, and although solo playing existed, ‘it often had functional overtones’ such as playing for dances, operas and banquets and social entertainment (p. 13). From 1800, with the virtual disappearance of the harpsichord and clavichord, the newly developed instrument, the piano, ‘became the most popular of instruments and the pianist the most popular of instrumentalists’ (Schonberg, 1987. p. 13).

At the turn of the 19th century, the number of pianists was few, recording technology was in its infancy, and so the high demand for performers resulted in a piano performance career being a privileged position. One example of an artist whose life reflected this privilege was Ignace Jan Paderewski (1860-1941), who at the peak of his career was considered to be ‘not just a recognized pianist, but one of the most famous people in the world’ (Schonberg, 1987, p. 13). Schonberg contends that when Paderewski toured, he took a large entourage with him in his own private rail carriage. He was ‘accompanied by his wife, piano tuner, maid, servant, secretary, private physician, masseuse, and chef- as well as his pianos’ (p. 57). This era was referred to as the ‘golden age of piano playing’ (Malik & Distler, 1999, p. 57). The twenty-first century classical pianist can expect no such treatment!

By 1918 it was becoming less easy for outstanding pianists to earn a living from performance in Europe. As a consequence of the Russian Revolution, a number of leading Russian performers such as Sergei Rakmaninov emigrated to the West (1917) to seek refuge. Rakmaninov found it difficult to survive financially in Europe and travelled to America ‘hoping that the USA might offer a solution to his financial worries’ (Norris, 1995, p. 554). His decision was vindicated, as his popularity on the concert platform was commensurate with his financial success.

Performance careers were then interrupted by the Great Depression, which merged with the onset of the Second World War (1939-1945). By the time the war had ended there was further competition to concert performances from the burgeoning recording industry, the emergence of other leisure pursuits such as watching television, and increasing competition for arts funding (Schonberg, 1987). Russia, however, with its generous state subsidies for the arts, was one of the
few countries unaffected by these trends (Elder, 1995). In the last decade, however, this situation has rapidly changed.

In an interview with Elder in 1995, the late Professor Lev Vlasenko (1930-1996), a prominent and leading Russian pianist, lamented that ‘concert life in Russia is practically dead…People preferred to sit by the television’ (Elder, 1995, p. 9). Concert attendance was certainly affected negatively by the fall of communism. According to Vlasenko, ‘formerly the state bureaus arranged concerts abroad and within the country…now if an organisation invites an artist to perform, it must pay for the ticket, hotel and fee’ (pp. 9-10). Even in the rare exception of a concert attracting a full audience, it was difficult for the concert organizers to break even (ibid).

While Vlasenko admitted to a shrinking audience in Russia, he was unconvinced that this was a global trend. ‘If critics keep saying the piano recital is dying, classical radio stations stop playing piano music, and teachers switch to electronic keyboards, these conditions collectively may cause this to happen’ (Elder, 1995, p. 10). He further argued that music education and piano recitals were still healthy in Europe. ‘I visit Germany every year… and the concert life is flourishing in both small and big cities’ (p. 10). Nevertheless, the lack of security and performance opportunities for pianists in Russia in the last two decades has led to an exodus of some of its most talented pianists and important music professors. In addition, talented students who go abroad after graduating in order to become better known, are not returning. Initially these concert artists and teachers travelled to the United States, but more recently have looked to other countries such as Australia in order to obtain financial security in a teaching institution.

In America and Europe, the opinions of most writers and managers are that the piano recital is dying (Elder, 1995; Lebrecht, 1997; McBride Smith, 2000; Uszler, 2000b). This is supported by many articles in the American press of diminishing audiences for classical performance, which in part have been accelerated by the reduced public and private funding. This has also been given recent prominence in England in Norman Lebrecht’s book (1997), When the Music Stops. In Australia, classical concerts are also under threat, as costs are rising at a rate that is not matched by the growth in earned income from box offices and the private sector, or from government funding (Cole and Aldred, 2004; Kelly, 2001; Nugent Report, 1999). While the overall number of attendees at concerts in Australia over the last five years has been static, a significant volatility
exists in attendances, particularly in the less populous States which have been adversely affected by the impact of globalisation and changing industry dynamics (Nugent, 1999, pp. 162-165).\(^9\)

When predicting career opportunities for performers at the beginning of the new millennium, Ellen Highstein, an Executive Director of Concert Artists Guild in America sees a different world from that expressed by Vlasenko (Highstein, 1995). In 1994, Highstein addressed the National Piano Pedagogy Conference in America, arguing that there had been an ‘explosion of musical training’, leading to an imbalance between qualified applicants and positions available. She cited several reasons for this imbalance:

1. Technology has made it easy and less expensive to listen to music in the privacy of one’s own home.
2. Graduating artists are vying for the same places in concert series.
3. Musicians are trained to ‘do the job, not get the job’ (p. 22).

Another respected leading American academic, English Maris (2000), suggests that the answer to job opportunities for performers may lie in the very ‘concept’ of performance itself. According to the Webster dictionary, performance means ‘to do something in a formal manner’ (Agnes, 2002). In a paper entitled Teacher Training for the Pianist in Preparation for the 21st Century, English Maris (2000) suggests that the concept of performance has changed and it is these changes that provide previews of what lies ahead in the new millennium. English Maris states:

music making is taking place in a greater variety of settings: in concert halls but also in hotel ballrooms with microphones and video cameras. Music making is taking place in recording studios, on television, on music videos, at outdoor festivals and in many informal settings as well. Music making is incorporating a greater variety of interactions among musicians, composers, and technicians. Music making is utilizing a greater palette of sounds. (English Maris, 2000, p. 33)

Another view of the need to create changes in music making is given by Imogen Cooper, a leading English pianist. In an interview with Robert Rimm (2000), Cooper states the need to relate to the audience and give greater importance and thought to the choice and balance of recital programs. She asserted, ‘I’m absolutely convinced that the old formula of a few Bach preludes and fugues, a big Beethoven sonata, and then Romantic music on the second half [of a program] has now largely gone, as it should be’ (Rimm, 2000, p. 49).

---

\(^9\) The percentage of people paying for performances by companies surveyed by the Major Performing Arts Board, fell in Brisbane from 14.1 per cent in 1997 to 12.5 percent in 2000 (Sorensen, 2001).
Audience support and enthusiasm for well-presented recital programs is demonstrated by the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society’s progressively rising membership and audience attendance. According to Rimm (2000), ‘just as poetry does in literature, chamber music and recitals satisfy a special need’ (p. 48). Rimm explains that the concert series began modestly in 1993 with a presentation of seven concerts and well thought through programs. He asserts that the concert attendances’ continued growth and success are a reminder of what can develop when effective management fuses with clear artistic aims (p. 48). Although they were an immediate sellout at the time, it is still necessary however, to subsidise these concerts through private donations (ibid).

While there may currently be an audience for well-presented programs and chamber music concerts, some writers, such as Lebrecth (1997) and McBride Smith (2000), suggest that the numbers cannot be sustained. McBride Smith (2000) reports that the patrons of live piano performance have aged, and in some cases, their attendances expired, along with the formerly flourishing recital series they once supported. He states that, in the late 1970s, a major symphony orchestra in the United States conducted an audience survey and found that the median age of their audience was in the late fifties. Ten years later a similar survey was conducted. The result revealed that the audience was exactly ten years older. There were not enough younger audience members to be statistically significant (ibid). Recent Australian statistics\(^{10}\) also suggest a similar ageing trend.

In Australia, as in Europe and America, very few concert pianists are able to sustain a living from solo performance alone. Australia has its unique problems of limited population and geographical distances, restricting the number of opportunities available for solo concert performances. These limited performance opportunities are reflected in the response to a questionnaire conducted by Diana Harris at the Third Australian National Piano Pedagogy Conference (1997). Harris posed a series of questions to the two hundred delegates who were both teachers and performers. The results are presented in Table 2.1.

\(^{10}\) Source: ABS. See Appendix A.
Table 2.1

Responses to Performance Questionnaire at the 1997 Australian Piano Pedagogy Conference

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Responses (from 200 delegates)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How many of you love(d) to perform?</td>
<td>Approx. 50% of the audience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many of you still perform frequently in public? (as soloists)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many of you get paid to perform as soloists in public?</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many of you earn your living entirely as a piano soloist?</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many of you have produced students who now earn their living entirely as piano soloists?</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the fortunate few who have been successful on the world platform in the last three decades, there has been the need to live in Europe where the wider audiences have presented them with more opportunities to pursue an independent or semi-independent career as concert pianists. In addition to their concert commitments it must be said that they also actively engage in a demanding agenda of teaching (Yallamas, 1996).

I am aware of only a handful of Australian pianists who have during the last three decades been successful in sustaining a living as solo concert pianists. They have however, as earlier mentioned, made Europe their base in order to access international performance opportunities. Renowned Melbourne pianist Leslie Howard has lived in London for approximately thirty years. Likewise, Brisbane pianist Piers Lane, a contemporary of mine, has lived in London for over twenty-five years. Other Australian pianists have travelled to Europe in order to further their studies and their career opportunities, but have been unsuccessful in realizing their ambition of earning a living as a concert pianist.

2.1.2 Competitions

In consideration of these figures, what then for the young pianist aspiring to a performing career in the new millennium? One possibly over-optimistic solution to the apparent diminishing opportunities for piano soloists has been to provide a platform through international piano competitions. Piano competitions have proliferated since the inauguration of the first International Piano Competition in Moscow in 1952. Many college pianists most interested in performance believe that these competitions are essential in launching their performance careers and furthermore believe that performance careers are indeed not only possible but inevitable for successful finalists.

One such competition, established in 1977, is the Sydney International Piano Competition. With its very generous prize money and a contract awarded to the winner to perform in concerts
throughout Australia, it is considered by its organisers and competitors to be an excellent launching pad for an aspiring concert artist. Although eliminated after the first round of the recent 2000 competition, Roger Wright, an American competitor, stated that the competitions provided a ‘platform [for performance] that pianists do not often have’ (McGilvray, 2000, p. 13). Wright further commented that ‘a win [in the competition] is great to have on your CV but appearing at an event such as this is also an opportunity simply to perform’ (ibid). The demands of the competition and the fact that it is held every four years, however, further emphasise the intense and limited market for performers.

While many competitors feel that a predictor of future performance career success may lie in winning a competition, others argue that competitions are not the real deciders in determining how successful a future solo performance career may be. As expressed from an anonymous backstage observer of the most recent competition, ‘if you look at these players in five years you’ll find half of them have given it up altogether and most of the rest will be teaching five-year olds how to play Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star and hating it’ (McGilvray, 2000, p. 13). Indeed, where are these prize-winners five years after the competition?

2.1.3 Unorthodox Performances

There is a belief by some managers and writers (Chronister, 1995; Highstein, 1995; McBride Smith, 2000 & Uszler, 2000c) that young pianists may have to rethink traditional ideas of performance if they wish to be remunerated for their efforts. McBride Smith (2000) argues that ‘they may have to consider playing in nontraditional venues, playing repertoire that they consider hackneyed or even abridged, making and maintaining their own personal and professional contacts, and improving their social skills in backstage situations’ (p. 177). Several young pianists are doing just that.

In a radical departure from orthodox performance, Ali Wood, a young Australian pianist, is in no doubt of the need to abandon tradition. She recently challenged the image of the classical artist by launching her career on a concoction of popular keyboard music, performing in unconventional dress, ranging from blue jeans to designer gowns. Wood has also foreshadowed the possibility of posing nude in a magazine for publicity, if that is what it takes to promote her art. Her emphasis on entertaining aims to attract a new generation to classical music from a public who, she claims, ‘would not otherwise attend a more traditional concert’ (Koch, 2001, p. 15).
Another exceptionally talented young pianist, who has also realised the need for a change of approach and diversification in ‘making music’ is French pianist Jean-Yves Thibaudet. A graduate from the Paris Conservatoire, he is ‘as busy and successful [an] artist as one is likely to encounter these days’ and is successful in deriving an income solely from performance (Uszler, 2000a, p. 23). In an interview with Uszler (2000a), Thibaudet attributes his success to many things, but most of all to his ability and preparedness to play in a variety of styles, or work in different capacities. He states that in addition to solo performances, he plays with world-class orchestras such as the London Symphony, Cleveland Orchestra and Chicago Symphony, and has appeared with most of the leading International Orchestras. Thibaudet works with singers in the role of an accompanist and has recorded the piano music of great jazz composers such as Duke Ellington and Bill Evans. He considers himself a classical artist, although his involvement in stretching the orthodox boundaries has led to his being criticized by his colleagues for ‘marketing’ (Uszler, 2000a, p.23).

2.1.4 Collaborative Performance

As Thibaudet has demonstrated, for those wishing to explore a career in performance, the concert platform is not just restricted to solo performances. Many trained solo performers, after realising the limited opportunities for solo performance, tend to look to the collaborative area for career possibilities. Collaborative performance,\(^\text{11}\) which involves playing chamber music, accompanying and performing in ensemble combinations, provides the pianist with alternative areas of expression. Are there enough opportunities for these extended roles of performance to ensure financial security and are pianists who have traditionally been trained in solo performance automatically equipped with the required skills?

One successful contemporary American artist, Warren Jones, who frequently accompanies and records with famous singers, is confident of the survival of the collaborative musician. He states that

although the recital as a performing genre has been reported in decline over the last few years, … my experience with the public has been just the opposite. When people are drawn together in relatively intimate, familiar surroundings and presented with music and words which move them to be involved as thinking and feeling beings, they respond very strongly. (Rimm, 2000, p. 51)

\(^{11}\) A collaborative performer may also work in the following areas: repetiteur work which involves working with opera singers; vocal coaching; instrumental coaching; choral accompanying; orchestral piano; dance; electronic keyboardist. Although there is work of this kind available in Australia, it is limited.
According to Harris (1997), a principal lecturer in an Australian tertiary music school, there are several employment opportunities for a collaborative performer, but these are specialist areas that require specific skills. While opportunities may exist in the collaborative area, many performing musicians find themselves ill-equipped to succeed in this area due to their intense concentration as undergraduate students on solo repertoire. It is, however, essential that they develop these necessary skills if they wish to survive in a collaborative performance career (ibid).

2.1.5 Jazz
The 20th century witnessed the birth and development of jazz, another form of keyboard performance requiring specialist skills. Uszler (2000d), argues that, although for the first half of the 20th century, jazz was considered ‘taboo’, great jazz pianists such as Oscar Peterson, Duke Ellington and Erroll Garner ‘dazzled audiences with rhythms, textures, and embellishments that equaled the brilliance and excitement of classical bravura and touched emotions too deeply human to be ignored’ (xv). Jazz music and methods originally designed for aspiring jazz performers have proliferated during the last three decades and many teachers are recognizing the need to expose their students to this style (ibid). More students are experimenting with ‘jazz’, ‘blues’ and ‘rock’ music and, moreover, tertiary institutions are offering formalised courses in such (Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University, 2003c). External examining boards such as Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music in London and the Australian Music Examinations Board are also including these genres in their syllabuses (Australian Music Examinations Board, 2004).

Traditionally for the jazz keyboard musician, performance opportunities are restricted to ‘gigs’ in bars and appearances in nightclubs. According to Blake (1982), chairman of the third stream music department at the New England Conservatory of Music, Boston, jazz musicians must know the street to survive. ‘[They] must be ready to cope with such experiences as last-minute cancellations, transportation hassles, unreliable musicians, and audiences who prefer gin and pot to listening’ (p. 49). Louise Denson, a well known tertiary jazz teacher and performer in Australia, supports this view, stating that, performance opportunities for jazz keyboardists both in America and Australia, still appear to be limited to the above venues and are not so much reliant on educational background as on ‘luck and showmanship’ (personal communication, February 25, 2001).
2.2 Teaching careers

Although there may be opportunities for the performer who is versatile, Uszler, Gordon and Mach (1991) argue that the overwhelming majority of piano students with a strong calling to make their living as practising musicians will not do so as concert artists. McBride Smith (2000) maintains that, many fine pianists entertain the thought that the most fulfilling career, short of a full-time performing career, is a position on a college faculty similar to the ones held by their own teachers. In fact, he argues that, when most graduates are considering a career in music, the one most frequently named after performance is teaching.

Specific teaching career possibilities for keyboard players include:

1. Studio or private music teaching.
2. Classroom music at both primary and secondary level.
3. College or university teaching.
4. Pre-school music teaching.

There appears, however, to be a traditional hierarchy in piano teaching that places the concert artist at the top. McBride Smith (2000) reports that concert artists such as Evgeny Kissin or Martha Agerich make a reliable and comfortable living from performing and recording yet they also may choose to teach a handful of students. He explains further that, on the next level is the artist teacher who may have a college or university position from which they derive their main income but still consider themselves to be first and foremost a performer. The classroom music teacher or specialist follows next and nearing the lower end of the scale come studio and private teachers also referred to in America as pre-college teachers (ibid).

The generally acknowledged leaders of the piano teaching profession are considered to be the teachers at conservatoires, colleges or universities. Piano faculties at colleges in America are usually divided into areas of piano performance teachers, pedagogy teachers, class piano teachers, accompanying teachers, chamber music teachers, or any other classification (Northwestern University, 1996). In Europe there is usually no such distinction within a piano faculty and it is only in the last decade that Australian tertiary music schools have offered specialised courses in the areas mentioned above.

It is not surprising that undergraduates aspire to teaching at this level, as they often greatly admire their teachers and seek to emulate them (McBride Smith, 2000, p. 177). They also see
this position as allowing them to continue their performance, at the same time coaching students similar to themselves (p. 177). Teaching at college level however, may not be the most rewarding choice as the profession of music teaching in higher education faces critical challenges. The artist/teacher, according to McBride Smith (2000), faces increasing demands upon her/his time. The demands of teaching and related duties such as committee work, faculty meetings, recruitment, research and publication have to be balanced with practice scheduling.

Society’s diminishing interest in the arts, decreasing investment in arts education, and progressive trends in music technology are also affecting the complexion of college teaching. Remuneration for academic positions compared to other professions is dramatically lower. American statistics in an annual American Association of University Professors report (1997-1998) reveal that faculty salaries have declined 4.4% compared to those in 1971-1972 (McBride Smith, 2000, p. 178). They continue to fall dramatically behind the earnings of other learned professions. For example, in America, ‘the lowest paid engineers make an average of US$8000 more than the lowest paid professors; the highest paid engineers earn a staggering $62,000 more than their academic counterparts’ (ibid). In Russia in the 1990s, the teachers employed at the conservatory and other tertiary colleges were being paid less than the bus-drivers and maintenance workers on the streets (personal communication with Vlasenko, July 1995). These institutions have over the last decade increasingly relied on fee-paying students from the Western World to support and pay their academics.

Tenured faculty positions are also in decline globally, with a 1995 study conducted in American institutions revealing that forty-three percent of all faculty positions are filled by part-time and non-tenure-track teachers. A disproportionate number of these positions are held by females (42 percent versus 27 percent of full-time faculty) without benefits. Only 42 percent of those teaching twenty or more hours a week report any benefit availability and they reported working in bad conditions with lower-level students (McBride Smith, 2000, p. 178).

An examination of employment opportunities in Australian colleges of higher education also reveals that tenured positions are increasingly scarce and more and more teachers in tertiary music schools are employed on a part-time basis. In 1995, 58% of academic positions were tenured, compared to 64% six years previous (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1997). With less than ten percent of graduate pianists achieving a position at college level, the majority of
graduates seeking employment in the teaching arena in the new millennium will have to consider alternative teaching options.

Although some graduates from the Conservatorium have been employed for a period of part-time teaching in a tertiary institutions during the last three decades, I am aware of only one keyboard graduate from the Conservatorium (apart from myself) who has been appointed to a full-time tenured position in a music department within a university or music college in Australia.

2.2.1 Studio teaching
In *The Well-Tempered Keyboard Teacher*, Uszler et al. (1991) argue that for those who value personal independence and the freedom to set their own goals, one option is to become a self-employed keyboard teacher. One of the most enduring careers in teaching in the last two centuries has been that of Studio Teaching. Also referred to as Private or Independent Teaching, Studio Teaching, Bridges (in Comte, 1992a) maintains, has been the backbone of Music Education. Although schools may also play an active role, many pre-college students today still rely solely on the individual lesson given by the studio teacher for their prime source of music education (ibid).

According to Bridges (in Comte, 1992a), it is often the only experience of one-to-one contact that some children may receive during their formal education, so ‘it is possible for a studio teacher to have an influence on many aspects of a child’s growth and development other than music’ (p. 90). Unfortunately, argues Bridges, the training and education qualifications and certification of other teaching professions do not generally match this important role. This group is also still mainly comprised of female teachers, ‘which in today’s economy still means lower wages and less recognition than that accorded to men’ (McBride Smith, 2000, p. 177).

The results of a 1989 national survey of piano teachers by the Music Teachers National Association in America, reflects these low wages. It found median fees for hour-long private lessons to be US$20.00 and hour-long group lessons to be US$8.00. The amount studio teachers earn in America, is considerably less than that of other professions, and salaries are ‘less than those paid to postal workers, United Parcel service drivers and clerical workers in larger metropolitan areas’ (McBride Smith, 2000, p. 175). The current recommended fee per hour by the Music Teachers Associations in Australia is $44.00 (Music Teachers Association of Queensland, 2004). Some teachers charge less than this as they feel it is necessary to under-cut their neighbouring colleagues in order to remain competitive. In view of the long hours and lack
of holiday pay and other benefits such as superannuation, the prospective studio teacher must question the economic sustainability of such a profession.

2.2.2 Qualifications and training

In Australia it is possible for anyone to set up an independent private studio practice and gain remuneration without any formal training. There are Music Teachers Associations to which teachers can belong, and these have been struggling unsuccessfully for years ‘to raise the status of studio teachers by trying to persuade State governments to legislate for registration of music teachers’ (Comte, 1992a, p. 92). In America, the situation was similar to that of Australia until 1980 when national acceptance of certification for the private music teacher was achieved. The music education of children in pre-Revolutionary Russia remained entirely in the hands of private teachers until the early 1930s. It was then, as Gelfand (1987, p. 39) reports, that the Soviet State took control of all spheres of the economy and culture. All music education was finally ‘put in order’ causing the virtual disappearance of the private music teacher. This new form of music education still exists there to this day (ibid).

The studio teaching profession throughout the Western World is sizeable although, as Uszler (1985) asserts, how large may never be known as ‘legions of neighborhood teachers cannot, and do not, claim identity as professional music teachers’ (p. 10). At one end of the spectrum, there are those who have come to teaching via performance while, at the other end, there are those who have had no formal educational or performance training. Although there are some excellent and outstanding studio teachers, the profession as a whole is not held in high respect and is largely a cottage industry made up of poorly trained teachers and those who simply regard it as a means to supplement their income. In her report The Private Studio Music Teacher in Australia, Doreen Bridges states that:

the historical notion that anyone who can perform can teach has created a paradoxical situation. Over the centuries many outstanding performers have also been outstanding and intuitive teachers; some, but not all, learnt their craft as supervised teaching assistants to the master under whom they studied. At the other end of the scale, there are ‘backyard’ teachers who have learnt to play (not always well) and have neither the education nor the musicianship to be able to cope adequately with the musical needs of their pupil. (Bridges in Comte, 1992a, p. 90)

Until the late 1970s, the main role of the Studio Teacher was to prepare students to play and perform pieces and improve their technique, and most teaching studios were 'populated almost
entirely by students aged six to eighteen, all of whom took individual lessons on an acoustic piano’ (Uszler et al., 1991, p. 4).

When I entered the profession of private studio teaching in the 1970s, the majority of students requesting piano lessons studied classical music. The average age of the beginner student was 6-7 years and students usually continued their study until they completed high school. During the last decade there has been an increasing demand from students to study pop and jazz as opposed to ‘straight’ classical music. Furthermore, today the average age of a child who discontinues one-one classical piano lessons is 12-13 years.

2.2.3 Keyboard technology

One of the most significant developments, which brought about a re-assessment of the role of the studio teacher during the last three decades, has been the rapid development of the keyboard itself. The piano is now one part of a far more extensive range of keyboard instruments than that existing in the 18th and 19th centuries. During that time, a list of keyboards was limited to instruments such as the clavichord, harpsichord, organ spinet, virginal, or fortepiano (Uszler et al., 1991).

Today, however, the term ‘keyboard’, according to Uszler (2000d), may be used in reference to an upright, an electronic organ, a digital piano, a portable piano, a synthesizer, an electronic harpsichord or further include any number of electronic instruments. Students now have a much more extensive choice of instruments. The student piano and keyboard population has grown as well as changed. Uszler (2000d) sums up this trend thus:

> Early in the twentieth century, student types were limited to children, professional wannabes, and dilettantes. In addition to these, today's pianos and keyboards are played by tiny tots, college students who are not music majors, therapists, TV and film composers, parents, those in assorted professions seeking leisure enrichment, entertainers of many stripes, and senior citizens. (p. xiv)

Uszler (2000d) states that the quick rise and development of keyboard technology and changing clientele have opened up new career opportunities for the studio teacher. Along with the explosion of new instruments has come an increased enrollment of students seeking musical training. According to Uszler, not only are electronic instruments more affordable, more easily transportable, occupying less space, but adults find them easier to play because of attractive gadgetry and instant orchestral accompaniments.
As a result, in addition to preparing students for performance, the keyboard teacher is also expected to teach students to harmonize, transpose, memorize, improvise, sight-read, analyze and be creative. The individual lesson has expanded into group lessons, keyboard classes and technology workshops. While it is assumed that the career of a keyboard teacher will include continued performance, the eighty-eight key acoustic piano is no longer ‘everyman’s’ keyboard and the independent teacher today ‘may need to wear at least several hats’ in order to survive financially (Uszler et al., 1991, p. 4).

For young pianists considering teaching as a profession, these changes mean that they will need to develop a ‘customer-based’ mentality (McBride Smith, 2000, p. 178). This customer or student based service means an independent teacher is more likely to have to negotiate and agree with the wishes and desires of a prospective student. Moreover, according to McBride Smith (2000), in a competitive marketplace where students can stop learning according to their will, there is a financial imperative to design teaching to meet the individual demands or desires of the students (ibid).

2.2.4 Music schools
A further provider of employment for the graduate who may otherwise engage in studio teaching has been the emergence of Music Schools. During the last three decades of the twentieth century, there has been a rapid expansion in the teaching of young children in this environment. This great interest by independent music teachers in pre-school instruction has arisen from the prevalence of instructional programs such as Orff, Suzuki, Kodaly and Yamaha.

One of the first Music Schools to emerge, offering employment to keyboard teachers, was the Yamaha Music Foundation established in Japan in October 1966 with the approval of the Japanese Ministry of Education. Its purpose was to promote music education and general music popularisation activities both in Japan and other countries (Lancaster, 1985). Its introduction to Australia in 1970 offered many studio teachers the opportunity to both train in and to teach in groups, children and beginning adults mainly through electronic keyboards.

In the last three decades, a number of other music schools (Forte, Encore and Vivace) have come into the field offering early childhood music classes. Furthermore, some tertiary music schools and colleges are also offering music classes at this level. The success of these schools, both as an educational philosophy and financially viable enterprise has depended on several factors. First,
many of today’s parents have been influenced by scientific studies detailing the benefits of music study, and are willing to pay for such education (Kendall, 2001, p. 43). Second, a new teaching philosophy of music based on an understanding of early childhood learning has been developed (Uszler 2000e, p.4). Third, electronic instruments, specially designed for young children to master, are affordable and easily transportable (ibid). Moreover, teaching takes place in a group situation, making it less expensive for parents to enrol their children and in turn making it financially rewarding for the providers. The market at this level is thriving and caters for children ranging in age from approximately four months to pre-school.12

Upon completion of the early childhood courses, many parents encourage continuation of musical training for their children and enrol them in group keyboard classes or in individual tuition. Music schools continue to provide this tuition for students until year twelve or pre-college level. Most instructors are final year under-graduates or newly graduated keyboard students. A music school can provide a young teacher with a good location and venue, and an assured student enrollment that frees the teacher of administrative concerns. There are, however, disadvantages. The pay for the teacher is considerably lower13 than that of the recommended fee they could earn privately and teachers working for a music school are often required to teach a prescribed method and curriculum in a set time.

2.3 Classroom Music Educators

Classroom music teaching in America is one of the largest employers of full-time music teachers in public and private schools, many of whom are keyboard graduates14 (Marcone, 1982, p. 55). A significant number of classroom music teachers are also employed in Australian schools. There are three categories of classroom music teacher:

1. The music specialist trained to teach in primary or elementary school.
2. The music specialist qualified to teach in secondary school.

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12 One example of this thriving industry is reflected in the number of enrollments in early childhood classes at the Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University, which have escalated from approximately fifty in 1998 to over three hundred in 2003. This initial enthusiasm displayed by parents in the enrollment of their children in music education is not necessarily however, a reflection of genuine interest in the arts. This is indicated in the declining number of children attending music lessons beyond teenage years (See studio teaching box Section 2.2.2). It is also reflected in the limited number of young people who attend classical music concerts. See Appendix A.

13 Those who teach in commercial music schools report that they get paid half the fee charged to parents, i.e. half the professional recommended rate. Consequently many teachers leave after a relatively short period of time and try to find alternative, more lucrative employment. This is often difficult as the competition from commercial music schools results in a reduction of students seeking to learn in a private studio.

14 See Appendix B.
3. The general class teacher who teaches some classroom music in primary schools.

The results of a survey conducted in America reported that classroom music in public elementary schools was being taught by certified music specialists in 70% of schools; the subject was being taught by both music specialists and generalists in 22% of schools; and 8% of music classes were provided with instruction by generalists alone (in Byo, 2000, p. 31). In Australia, the responsibility for classroom music teaching in state primary schools is reliant upon either generalist teachers or on-staff specialist teachers. The majority of secondary school music classes are taught by specialist music teachers. Such teachers are also usually required to teach a second subject area (personal communication Carroll, April, 2001).

2.3.1 Early instruction

Music education was introduced into American schools through vocal class instruction in 1838 (Sturm, 1998). It was introduced in England during the 1840s (Kwami, 1993) and Australia followed soon after in 1867 (Stevens, 1997). According to Sturm (1998), in America, a report commissioned by a special School committee (1837) in Boston recommended the adoption of public school vocal music based on three justifications; ‘the intellectual, moral and physical development of students’ (p. 18). After a one-year trial in a nominated school in Boston, school officials were convinced that ‘of the great moral effect of (vocal) music, there can be no question…It excites the listless, and calms the turbulent and uneasy’ (Birge, 1937, p. 51). In 1884, due to the considered success of the first classroom trial, a leading educational reformer at the time, Horace Mann, advocated the introduction of vocal music programs in all schools. He cited four main reasons:

1. Studying music was practical and democratic; every child was equipped with ears and a voice and was able to sing and derive pleasure from singing.
2. Singing was good for a person’s mental and physical health. Singing could make a person happy and carefree and at the same time could exercise the lungs, thereby helping to prevent consumption (tuberculosis).
3. Since musical harmony was based on mathematical relationships, studying music scientifically (like studying mathematics) could train the intellect.
4. Singing could be a good social and moral influence; according to Mann, music could calm what he called ‘boisterous and riotous passions’. (Sturm, 1998, p. 18)

Vocal group instruction in singing was also employed by English elementary schools in the early 1840s. Classroom singing, which was based on the French fixed-doh solmization method was introduced, not so much for its intrinsic values, ‘as for its capacity to instill moral, patriotic and
religious values through the words of school songs’ (Stevens, 1997, p. 397). Thus it appears that in addition to singing achievement, character and moral development influenced the acceptance of music as a part of the school curriculum both in America and England. Music educators certainly had an onerous responsibility. Australia adhered to British educational practice with the introduction of singing (1867) as part of its general school curriculum (Stevens, 1997).

2.3.2 Twentieth century progress

Around the turn of the century, important developments had a profound effect on music programs in schools. Reproduced sound on radio and phonographs gave students an opportunity to hear all ranges and styles of music including ‘not only art songs, choruses and operas but nearly the entire repertoire of instrumental music’ (Sturm, 1998, p. 18). As a result, in the decades that followed, music appreciation courses, specialization in choral music and instrumental music programs were launched.

As a consequence of both this intense focus on specializations and increased interest in music appreciation courses, general music teaching in America regressed. Leonard argues that while music educators succeeded in preparing choral directors, band directors and a few orchestra directors, they were less successful in the preparation of general music teachers (ibid). According to Leonard (1999) in a paper titled ‘A challenge for change in music education’, the lack of interest in general music teaching subsequently led to junior high schools relaxing the almost universal requirement of two years of general music education. During the 1960s, more projects developed, notably the Comprehensive Musicianship Project, although by then there was ‘a scarcity of music teachers with the courage and ability to implement these successfully’ (Leonhard, 1999, p. 41).

In Australia, the introduction of gramophones also affected the music curriculum and by the 1930s music appreciation programs were both firmly in place in the school and being broadcast by the Australian Broadcasting Commission (Stevens, 1997, p. 397). Other significant developments also occurred around this time. Recorder groups were established following the introduction of recorder playing in English schools and in the 1930s specialist music teachers were appointed to some high schools. The identification of key learning areas for national

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15 A further Report has been written by Stevens on developments in music education from 2002-2004 and includes recent information on the demographic profile of music education provision in Australian schools. While the Report is significant in terms of its potential to reform the teaching of school music, its implications for this study of keyboard pedagogy in a non-school setting are more indirect than direct.
schooling with the Hobart Declaration (1989) lead, in turn, to the publication in 1994 of the Arts curriculum statement (Curriculum Corporation, 1994a) and profile (Curriculum Corporation, 1994b) in which five arts subject strands were identified. Classroom music was finally recognized as being an integral component of general education for young people (ibid).

2.3.3 Classroom music today

Over the last decade, the educational landscape has altered rapidly, resulting in new and complex challenges for the music teacher and the music curriculum. Leong (1999) argues that, the official duties of classroom music teachers today are considerable as teachers are expected to perform a wide range of tasks. Byo (2000) states that these include teaching general and elective music, playing instruments, improvising, understanding relationships between music and other disciplines particularly understanding music in relation to history and culture. In addition to adhering to set curriculum requirements, today’s newly appointed classroom music teachers are also called upon to perform many extra duties ranging from preparing ensemble groups for performance, to conducting a choir or concert band and staging a musical.

Teachers also face a variety of other challenges on a daily basis, including, argues Krueger (2000), ‘large classes, students with special needs and multicultural, multilingual student populations’ (p. 22). Furthermore, there are often logistical and location difficulties. The classroom music teacher can also feel professionally isolated being so often the only such designated teacher in a school. Kreuger states that the classroom set-up is also unusual in that many classes tend to be conducted with children sitting on the floor playing a variety of instruments, while the teacher endeavours to ‘create’ music, potentially quite a different scenario from that of the general classroom educator who may have a more controlled setting (ibid).

Furthermore, teachers also feel dissatisfied with the number of working hours expected of them and the poor remuneration for their efforts. This entails many out of school hours and weekends in preparation, rehearsal and performance. When the work of a classroom music teacher is compared with that of other teachers, the result is disheartening. Again, when the salary of the average [classroom] music teacher (who has invested time and money into at least four years of college) is compared with salaries of students who enter the industrial work force upon graduation from high school, the comparison can be even more discouraging. (Schouten, 1982, p. 40)

16 These five subject strands were: dance, drama, media, music and visual arts (see Livermore & McPherson, 1998; McPherson & Dunbar-Hall, 2001).
While the contact hours of the classroom music teacher may be greater than those of their colleagues in general education, their salaries with paid holidays, sick leave and superannuation benefits compare favourably to that of most private music studio teachers. Some might further argue that the intrinsic advantages such as the recognition of producing successful orchestral concerts or staging musicals and the satisfaction of watching the students’ skills develop outweigh the disadvantages.

It is clear that many graduate teachers find these challenges of music education too demanding and there is an associated common concern, both in the United States and Australia, about the high dissatisfaction and drop-out rate of novice classroom music teachers (Haack and Smith, 2000; Krueger, 2000; Leong, 1999; Webster, 1999). What is the cause of the low morale and departure from the profession? Is it due to environmental factors, lack of ongoing education, lack of professional support or ineffective tertiary training?

In the United States, environmental factors have been identified as contributing to dissatisfaction and drop out rates of classroom music teachers. An analysis by Hamann, Daugherty and Mills (1987) reveals that environmental factors such as high teaching loads, lack of recognition, and other job-related conditions resulted in teacher dissatisfaction with their jobs. In addition, a large number of music educators also cited more personal reasons for leaving the profession such as:

1. Unclear or non-existent professional goals.
3. Lack of training.
4. Insufficient intellectual challenge.
5. A lack of cooperation or understanding among teachers outside of music within the school building and district. (Webster, 1999, p. 180)

Others (Haack & Smith, 2000; Krueger, 2000; Leong, 1999) argue that the early drop out of music teachers is largely due to lack of ongoing teacher support. Darling-Hammond, Wise, and Klein (1999) assert that, to retain new teachers, schools must be good places for educators, and effective mentoring must be implemented for beginning teachers. In addition to mentoring, Haack and Smith (2000) argue that new teachers should plan for short and long-term professional development:

The training that music educators receive is no more lengthy or extensive than that of other teachers, yet too often they are certified to teach K-12 instrumental, choral, and general music, in short, virtually every aspect of
in-school music. So with a broad yet limited course of preparation, music educators are awarded full licensure. To make responsibilities even wider ranging, administrative details come with the job... (p. 24)

In view of the nature and demands of the work of the graduate music teacher, it appears that some form of mentoring experience and professional development could be essential.

According to Leonhard (1999), a leading teacher and researcher in the United States, there are two major problems for classroom music teachers that need resolving. The first is that music educators ‘have been unable to adjust to a changing social structure, the revolution in communication, and contemporary developments in music itself’ (p. 41). The second is the ‘polarizing divisiveness that characterizes the arts education profession’ (Leonhard, 1999, p. 42). Leonhard argues that divisiveness exists not only among the four principal spheres of arts education - music, art, dance, and drama - but also within the individual spheres.

Over the past thirty-five years, the music education profession has fragmented into competing branches - band, orchestra, choral music, jazz, general music, Orff, and Kodaly - to such an extent that cooperation and unity of purpose at the public school level, the state level, and the national level have all but disappeared. Overly specialized music teacher education programs have encouraged this destructive divisiveness. (Leonhard, 1999, p. 42)

While Leonhard recognizes that there are some excellent bands, fine orchestras and impressive choirs, he argues that music in schools is no longer directed to all children. Rather, it appears to be only for those who wish to specialize and perform, which has resulted in what he terms an ‘elitist virus’, an attitude that leads conductors and teachers to concentrate mainly on music contests (Leonhard, 1999, p. 41).

In England, there is also concern that due to the financial constriction such as that currently being experienced, ‘an elitist view could militate against the musical needs of the majority of pupils’ (Kwami, 1993, p. 29). Kwami argues that there is a danger of music becoming available for only a few, arguing that scarce funding may result in the removal of music from the foundation subjects at the early levels of schooling. This, he claims would result in a detrimental effect on the status of music. One challenge that faces music educators might therefore include the

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17 In England, work is being done on the third revision of the original National Curriculum for Music developed in the early 1990s. In recent developments, a parliamentary edict has seen the establishment of the ‘entitlement’, a provision that advocates that all children in English schools have access to instrumental instruction.
marshalling of forces to once again make music education an integral part of the education of all children.

The educational landscape in Australia has also altered rapidly throughout the last decade and novice teachers are struggling with the demands of classroom music teaching (Finn, 1991 & Mayer reports, 1992a & 1992b). The move towards outcomes-based education (Willis & Kissane, 1995) has also resulted in the graduate teacher facing unprecedented challenges (Leong, 1999, p. 23). For a period of time after graduation, the effectiveness of the novice teacher in the workplace appears to be not fully realised. Ligon (1988), Rosenholtz (1989), Stone (1987) and Warren (1991) found that ‘novice teachers needed help from mentor teachers and administrators in the area of teaching practices and methods’ (Leong, 1999, p. 23). In view of these findings, Leong (ibid), a classroom music educator and researcher sought to find out just how useful initial teacher education is in preparing novice music teachers for the realities of Australian public schools at the beginning of the new millennium. And under what conditions might novice music teachers operate in their first teaching position?

In searching for answers to these questions, Leong (1999) conducted two studies of classroom music teachers in Australia. The outcome of his research illustrates the plight of novice music teachers. He concluded that:

1. Initial [music] teacher education did not fully prepare novice teachers for the broad range of expectations and conditions which they experienced professionally in their first year of teaching.

2. They did not receive the necessary assistance to cope with a wide range of professional expectations in their first year of teaching.

3. They were not provided with the resources and opportunities to employ and apply newly acquired skills such as the use of music technology. (Leong, 1999, p. 27)

Leong’s findings are reflected in previous research by Howey and Zimpher (1987), Nemser (1983) and Ward (1987). Leong’s study also appears to support the opinions of his American counterparts, namely, that there is evidence of a strong need for guidance from mentor teachers and administrators in areas of effective teaching practices and methods for classroom music teachers in Australia. In addition to these shared problems, Leong further concluded that in Australia there is also the need for initial music teacher education to review its course content and
practices so as to better prepare novice [classroom music] teachers for professional expectations at the coalface (Leong, 1999, p. 23).\textsuperscript{18}

The findings of Leong reflect the views of Bridges (1979) and the Australia Council and Schools Commission Report (1977) more than two decades earlier. In the 1970s, Bridges (1979) highlighted the problems associated with teacher training in Australia. She argued that even when education authorities have proclaimed that music has a positive role in education, ‘inadequate teacher preparation has been the downfall of many a well-intentioned scheme’ (Bridges in Comte, 1992c, p. 79). Moreover, according to Bridges (1979), in a report commissioned by the Australia Council and Schools Commission (1977), it was also found that ‘much teaching of music is inadequate and [particularly] ineffective at the critical learning periods of early and middle childhood’ (p. 1). The report suggested remedial action such as professional support and in-service training for teachers is necessary. However Bridges argues that due to the complexity of music in education it is more imperative to look at the initial training and content of courses for music teachers.

While it is generally agreed that both in Australia and America, one way to overcome professional dissatisfaction and insecurity within the profession is to provide a mentoring program for novice teachers, the concerns of Bridges (1979) and the findings of Leong (1999) suggest that in Australia the issue of music tertiary training needs also to be addressed. So what is the training of the classroom music teacher in Australia?

\textbf{2.3.4 Training process}

The formal training of a classroom teacher who wishes to specialise in classroom music teaching requires four to five years’ study in a tertiary institution. In Australia there are several course options open to undergraduates who choose classroom teaching as a career (Bartle, 1999). First, a student can apply for entry into a conservatorium or a school of music\textsuperscript{19} which initially allows for more intense concentration on their major instrument and associated music subjects. Education subjects are studied in the latter part of the course and, depending on the area in which the student wishes to teach, that is, primary or secondary level, students may be required to

\textsuperscript{18} The changing role of the professor is implicated here. See recent research investigating the role of the Conservatoire professor in instrumental teaching in tertiary education (e.g. Jorgensen, 2000; Mills, 2004; Persson, 1996).

\textsuperscript{19} Most schools of music are situated within larger tertiary institutions such as universities. They can also be referred to as music colleges.
choose a second major area of study. Alternatively, students can apply for entry into a tertiary college that may provide a degree in music classroom education or a general education teaching degree with a major in music. Students in this latter group generally elect to teach at primary or elementary level.²⁰

Traditionally, music education students come from a background where the emphasis for their music training has been on solo performance. They have most likely spent many years practising solo repertoire and mastering their instrument. However, if teachers are to be successful in the classroom, Bridges suggests that

the first essential…is to determine what performance skills teachers need in order to become effective and versatile musicians, ensure that enough time is allowed for students’ own practice, and develop flexible assessment procedures. (Bridges in Comte, 1992b, p. 76)

In view of the duties they are expected to perform, it seems clear that the training in essential skills such as ensemble performance, improvisation, choral or orchestral conducting, sight-reading skills and musical arrangement skills need to be included in the course curriculum. In addition, other considerations for greater flexibility, innovation and adaptability need to be implemented into the training structure.

Over the last few years, there has been renewed interest and support for the growth of music education. This is particularly evident in the United States due to strong centralised influences that are highlighted in a paper by Professor Charles Leonhard (1999) titled *A Challenge for Change in Music Education*. Leonhard (1999) remarks that

recently, music educators have gained support from prestigious and influential individuals and organizations, including the Arts Education Partnership Working Group, the Department of Education, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Getty Trust, the Kennedy Center... and commercial enterprises such as Yamaha and the Baldwin Piano Company. As a result of this coalescence of powerful forces in favor of arts education, I see a window of opportunity for music education and music educators such as we have never before seen. (pp. 41-42)

²⁰ In Queensland the qualifications for classroom music teachers are currently as follows: For appointment as a primary music teacher applicants require: (a) a degree in music, or music education and (b) some preparation for primary music teaching: eg P-12 music education degree, or secondary training with certificate/s in the primary school music pedagogy such as the Departmental 10 week course, Kodaly Institute relevant certificates or equivalent, or (a) primary teaching or primary education degree or diploma, with a performance diploma (including the theoretical requirements) and with (c) certificate/s in primary school music pedagogy. For appointment as a secondary music teacher, applicants require: (a) a degree in music education or (b) a degree in music and an education degree (Board of Teacher Registration Queensland, 2004).
Although classroom music in Australia continues to provide consistent employment, unlike its counterpart in the United States, Australia is not in the privileged position of having either centralised control or exposure to organisational support. The devolution of administration of state education ‘from the central departmental authority to regions and then to local schools’ occurred in the 1980s (Stevens, 1997, p. 399). Most Australian states have since dispensed with music-supervisors and centrally administered music teaching staff, resulting in general teachers or on-staff specialists being responsible for classroom music teaching (ibid).

Music teachers in this devolved system do not have the benefit of the majority of their colleagues in general education and are less able to influence the future direction and delivery of school music. This responsibility is at present divided between the directors of music in each state and the universities who provide separate systems to train music education undergraduates (Stevens, 1997). The universities may need to have a clearer pedagogical goal in order to develop both the musical skills and educational requirements demanded of these teachers. This training, unlike that of students in general education, needs also to cater for the degree of professional isolation that classroom music specialists experience. The recent conference held by the National Council of Tertiary Music Schools entitled Creating Musical Futures; Challenges to Music Education in the 21st Century (2001) is an important initial step in addressing these problems.

2.4 Music therapy
While traditionally performance and teaching have been the key areas of employment for keyboard graduates, the combination of music with other interests and skills enables them a greater chance of being able to make a living. Indeed Green (1997) argues that ‘music careers are as varied as the styles they encompass’ (p. 16). One such career that has developed in importance over the last three decades is that of Music Therapy. A music therapist ‘uses music in the therapy of human disabilities’ and must be a qualified musician and therapist (Graham, 1992, p. 71). According to music therapist Jane Edwards, (1997), Music Therapy is a professional discipline in which ‘the unique potential of music is used by qualified practitioners to meet the needs of clients receiving services in a range of therapeutic contexts’ (p. 406). Therapists are therefore most likely to be located in settings that employ members of the helping profession such as medical, community-based, special education, aged care, hospice, psychiatric, rehabilitation, prisons and private practice. In these settings ‘most music therapists work as a member of a multi-disciplinary team contributing to the team’s understanding of the client’s treatment needs and progress’ (Edwards, 1997, p. 406).
A number of techniques are used in therapy sessions, including improvisation, music composition, recreating music and music listening. The music therapist therefore needs high-level music skills and the ability to accompany and improvise on a keyboard is a major advantage.

2.5 Alternative careers
In addition to specialist careers such as music therapy in which well-developed keyboard skills are a major advantage, there are also a large number of arts-related jobs open to but not limited to keyboard graduates. According to Favaro (2000) and Hannan (2003), these include management, administration, technical applications, technology, music business, promotions and marketing. Favaro (2000) states that, ‘this is a growing sector that has established limitless opportunities, particularly for those with an entrepreneurial spirit and artistic abilities’ (p. 66). Ironically, however, Renshaw (2002b) argues, ‘due to the intense concentration on performance...the very skills and qualities often associated with [these career opportunities] are denied the opportunity to flourish’ (p. 12). According to Hannan (2003), this is largely because ‘tertiary music institutions offer courses designed to do one of two things: produce a small number of explicit career outcomes – concert soloist, concert composer, school music teacher… or impart a general education in music with no specific outcome’ (p. 1). Consequently music graduates ‘find themselves stuck in a job... but [they] have no idea of the alternatives’ (pp. 1-2). If music graduates wish to take advantage of these alternative careers, they will more likely be rewarded with greater job satisfaction and greater remuneration. They will, however, require additional skills aside from performance.

It is apparent that most aspiring performance undergraduates have little chance of succeeding in gaining a living on the concert platform. As Uszler (2000b) reminds us: ‘We already have an over-supply of degreed, tolerable players…seeking positions that are disappearing or being diluted’ (p. 7). Although the opportunities for the traditional concert performer have shrunk, these opportunities were never open to more than a very small number of the keyboard profession. This reality may not be appreciated by present and future graduates, whose aspirations to concert performance have been strengthened by the continuing proliferation of International Piano Competitions and an unchanging attitude of instructors. Recent significant cultural and economic changes will further destroy what has never been more than an illusion to most of these students.
Given then imperatives arising out of the history of keyboard performance and practices, to what extent does the undergraduate curriculum address the above scenario? Practitioner researchers look to their immediate professional context to examine issues such as this more closely. The relevant professional context in this case is the Keyboard Department at the Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University.

2.6 Re-inscribing the ‘Con’

No institution engages in innocent practices. It is also true that no institution is free of its past. Indeed it is constituted through its past investments, commitments, hopes, successes and failures. To investigate the pedagogical work within any institution requires familiarity with the contestations, personalities, programs and processes of its past. The Queensland Conservatorium of Music like any other educational institution exists as a palimpsest of practices, with one generation of ideas and aspirations layered over another since its inception in 1957. The purpose of this section is to indicate the dominant themes that constitute the legacy of the pedagogical past – a legacy that continues to inform (and at times frustrate) the work of the present.

The Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University is the largest music school in Australia with a current enrollment of over 600 students (Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University, 2003d). Almost a quarter of these are international students (ibid). The primary focus of the conservatorium’s training lies in conserving ‘classical’ traditions and this is reflected in the number of students enrolled in this area. In order to appreciate the rationale behind the present course program and curriculum for keyboard majors, it is necessary to look to the history of the Conservatorium and its past influences.

The Queensland Conservatorium of Music was established in 1957 because good and beneficial as is the work of teachers both in the schools and privately, a complete musical education is only possible in some institution where all the different aspects of tonal art are taught. (Brier, 1971, p. 93)

The earliest intentions of establishing a large institution of music in Queensland were first discussed between 1905-1910 and further waves of enthusiasm continued throughout the 30s and

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21 From 1957-1991 the Conservatorium of Music was officially known as The Queensland Conservatorium of Music. Most students, staff and the public affectionately refer to it as the ‘Con’. Following its amalgamation with Griffith University in 1991, its official title became The Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University. For the purpose of this study, its title will depend upon the period to which it is being linked.
However it was not until the conclusion of the Second World War that the real drive for a music institution was embarked upon with a campaign by musicians for the promotion of public interest and support (*Queensland Conservatorium of Music*, 1982, p. 4). In May 1951 a committee of enquiry was set up to investigate the establishment of a music institution (Brier, 1971).

2.6.1 Naming of the ‘Con’

The first consideration for the members of the committee was the question of the name of the proposed institution. Some musicians favoured the term ‘School of Music’ because of nomenclatures in Britain. The first music schools, which had been established in the Adelaide and Melbourne universities in the late 1800s, resembled their British counterparts and had been at first confined to the teaching of composition and theory as in British universities (Bridges, 1970, p. 2). However to meet the needs of students requiring advanced study in performance and to provide a complete musical education in the one institution, a Conservatorium of Music was established in both universities in 1900. (Bridges, 1970, p. 2)

The training at both Conservatoria was intended to function in conjunction with pre-existing degree courses in music and was based on the unique pattern of tertiary music education developed in British universities at the time. This education ‘combined performance tuition similar to that offered in Continental conservatories with studies in theory and composition based on the music degree courses at Oxford and Cambridge’ (Bridges, 1970, p. 1). The Conservatoria in Adelaide and Melbourne also offered training to non-matriculated students. A third

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22 This area refers to the Bachelor of Music program. Undergraduate degrees are also offered in Bachelor of Music – Music Technology and Bachelor of Popular Music (*Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University*, 2003e).

23 Brier (1971) reports that discussions occurred in the early days of the musicians’ association. The matter was again taken up in 1921 with the founding of the Music Teachers’ Association of Queensland, and again in the 1930s. It was not until the late 1940s that Les Edye and Sydney May (1882-1968), two prominent Queensland music teachers, began to arouse public interest. During their visits to the country to examine for the Australian Music Examinations Board, May and Edye collected over 2,000 pounds as a token of desire of many people for a School, College or Conservatorium of Music (Brier, 1971, p.93). Armed with both enthusiasm and financial support, both Edye and May approached the State Premier.

24 The chairman of the committee was Dr. L.D. Edwards, the Director General of Education. Other members included: E.K.Sholl, Queensland Manager, A.B.C.; Professor T.G. Jones, President, Professional Board, University of Queensland; Sydney L. May, Lecturer in Music, University of Queensland, and Leslie H. Edye, Teacher of Music. According to Brier (1971), despite an election promise in 1953, nothing happened until it was recommended that the Conservatorium be set up in the old South Brisbane Town Hall. The Hon. Vince Gair, Premier at this time, was more than enthusiastic about the establishment of a Conservatorium as it was in his electorate.
Conservatorium, the Sydney Conservatorium, was established in 1916. It was, however, unlike Adelaide and Melbourne, an independent institution unattached to a university (Bridges, 1970). The majority of musicians on the committee of enquiry felt that for the sake of uniformity with other Australian States, the name ‘Conservatorium’ would be more desirable than a ‘school of music’ (Queensland Conservatorium of Music, 1982, p. 5). The title of Conservatorium was chosen and a building was converted to meet its needs at a cost of 40,000 pounds. Other proposals recommended and accepted by the committee were:

1. That the Conservatorium be established under the control of the Minister for Public Instruction and be independent of the University of Queensland.
2. That an Advisory Council be appointed.
3. That steps be taken to obtain a Director and that the position be advertised in Australia and other parts of the world.
4. That the selection of staff be left to the Director following his appointment but that applications for these be called with those for the position of Director. (Queensland Conservatorium of Music 1982, p. 5)

In 1956 the position of Director was advertised world-wide and there were fifty-one applicants. Forty-five of these were from outside Australia (Queensland Conservatorium of Music, 1982). Dr. William Lovelock of the Trinity College of London was appointed as the first Director. He in turn appointed three salaried teachers from within Australia: Rex Hobcroft (piano), Basil Jones (violin) and Peter Martin (singing). Local teachers were appointed part-time in the areas of composition (Lloyd Vick) and orchestral instrument playing.

The Conservatorium officially began its work in 1957 with Lovelock predicting that it would be three years before the influence of the Conservatorium would be felt (Brier, 1971, p. 97). Lovelock refused to accept re-appointment shortly before this period expired, as his ‘ideas on the

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25 Adelaide University music department was founded in 1885 under the chair of Mr. Joshua Ives from Cambridge. Melbourne university music department was founded in 1891 under the chair of Mr. George Marshall Hall from England in 1891. Melbourne established a Conservatorium, The Melbourne University Conservatorium of Music, in 1895. Adelaide established a Conservatorium, The Elder Conservatorium of the University of Adelaide in 1900. Sydney Conservatorium opened its doors in 1916 (Bridges, 1970).

26 It has not been explained why the Latin form of the word was adopted rather than the more common French ‘Conservatoire’ or the anglicized ‘Conservatory’. Bridges (1970) states that it is possibly the closeness of ‘Conservatorium’ to the German ‘Konservatorium’ that is the reason for this decision. This usage, with its pendant plural ‘Conservatoria’ is now common throughout Australia, (Bridges, 1970, p.19) and will be adhered to in this study.

27 Brier (1971) states that, there was some debate over the appointment of the Director and teaching staff for the new Conservatorium. May, a leading Brisbane musician favoured appointment of musicians from Europe and felt that they should be sent to the larger cities of Queensland to teach, whereas Edye, a well-known teacher of music supported the idea of appointing well-known and leading teachers from Brisbane to teach at one main centre. The latter opinion was favoured (Brier, 1971).
operation of a Conservatorium were incongruent with those of the Queensland Department of Education and the Conservatorium Advisory Council’ *(Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University, 1996b, p. 5).*

In an article in the *Courier Mail* of 8th June 1959, Lovelock expressed his views as to how the Conservatorium should be run. He stated that a Conservatorium is not just another school but a highly individual institution and that it should not be attached to a Government department but rather should be in the nature of a department itself *(Queensland Conservatorium of Music, 1983, p. 7).*

Lovelock did not witness ‘ample evidence of the work being done’ by the first diplomee graduates who performed at the distribution of diplomas in 1959 and 1960 (Brier, 1971, p. 97). On the occasion of his eightieth birthday, Lovelock recalled in an interview with John Hawkins on the ABC (13th March 1979):

> The trouble was of course that nobody in Brisbane had the faintest idea of what a Conservatorium was supposed to be, or what it was supposed to do, and I realised very quickly that sooner or later there was going to be trouble. I had a so-called advisory committee, and the less said about them the better, and the general outlook was shown by one incident I remember. When I said well now, what about setting up a library and from the head of the table, the Director General of Education H.G. Watkin, (1898-1966), came the words, *What do you want a library for?* And you can imagine how I felt about that? However, I got my way and I forced them to spend a lot of money on library work, apart from some of the enormous gifts we had. We got moving in February 1957. We opened then, actually we went off like a machine gun, but the trouble was I had to fight for everything. I

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28 Arnold (1995) explores the traditions and role of the Conservatory or Conservatorium more fully. He states that the term Conservatory was originally applied to the mediaeval church choir schools. A later concept of a conservatory (French Conservatoire, also commonly used in the English language; German Konservatorium Hochschule fur Musik; Italian Conservatoria) developed following the establishment in 1783 of the Conservatoire National de Music de Paris. The Paris conservatoire was developed as part of a centralised policy in France to spread music through 56 music schools. In Germany, conservatoires developed randomly as individual institutions with the first being established at Leipzig in 1843. The concept of Conservatoria then spread to Russia both in St. Petersburg (1862) and Moscow (1866) and then to the U.S.A. in the 1860s (p.20). According to Arnold (1995) most conservatoires have drawn their teaching staff from the local musical institutions, the opera and orchestras in order to both produce excellent musicians and to maintain and perpetuate the high performance tradition. An alternative conservatory model was established in England (1830), firstly at the Royal Academy of Music and then at the College of Church Music (1872) subsequently called the Trinity College of Music. This latter institution developed a network of local examinations in music. Subsequently the Guild Hall (1880) School of Music was opened both for musicians and workers in London. This English model with its strong links to education, spread to Australia and New Zealand, whereas Canada combined both the European and English models (Arnold, 1995, p.21). The Australian universities have maintained this close association with music education and adopted chairs of music modelled on Oxford and Cambridge (Bridges, 1970).

felt I was continually banging my head against a brick wall, and I said, to blazes with this and I packed it in.

Although the Conservatorium had been operating for less than three years, Lovelock clearly identified four major problems that would re-surface to confront successive directors. These being:

1. The true purpose of the Conservatorium.
2. Anti-intellectualism.
3. Autonomy.
4. The problem of funding.

Following Lovelock’s acrimonious resignation, Basil Jones was appointed as Acting Director. The advertising of the position of Director resulted in more than twenty applications being received from persons world-wide. The Advisory Council officially confirmed the appointment of Basil Jones as Director in 1960, a position he held until his retirement in 1980 (Queensland Conservatorium of Music, 1982, p. 7).

2.6.2 Autonomy
In the early 1970s, the Conservatorium was established as a College of Advanced Education, placing it under the control of the board of Advanced Education, a statutory body, established by the State Government. This made it independent of the Education Department. This period would perhaps witness the Conservatorium enjoying its greatest degree of autonomy. The basic principles and aims of ‘Advanced Education’ institutions also sat comfortably with the ‘Con’s’ philosophy. That is whilst being tertiary in character, it allowed flexibility in approaches to entry requirements, teaching methods, modes of study and the design of courses and was primarily vocationally orientated (Queensland Conservatorium of Music, 1982, p. 7).

The Conservatorium had been largely operating under these principles since its inception in 1957. In terms of entry requirements, students were accepted into the institution on their ability to perform, and while other matters such as academic achievement were discussed in the audition process, students with obvious performance ‘ability’ were rarely turned away. The design of the courses reflected this concentration on performance that involved weekly individual contact with performance teachers and regular masterclasses and workshops. The time-table was also structured to allow students to set aside a significant amount of time for daily practice (Queensland Conservatorium of Music, 1973).
Several three-year full-time diploma courses were offered, the main direction of which was to provide graduates with ‘professional careers in all branches of music including performing, teaching, composing and school music’ *(Queensland Conservatorium of Music*, 1973, p. 7).* Employment opportunities listed in the 1973 handbook reflect these objectives. *(Queensland Conservatorium of Music*, 1973, p. 7). These were as follows:

1. **Institutional teaching**
   
   Highly qualified and experienced teachers may seek positions at Conservatoria and University Music Departments and independent schools.

2. **Private teaching**
   
   There is a considerable demand for highly trained private teachers of music especially outside the metropolitan area. This applies particularly to teachers of pianoforte and theory of music…

3. **Performance**
   
   Outstanding students may obtain employment as solo performers, accompanists…

4. **School Music**
   
   School music specialists are appointed by the Department of Education for the purpose of teaching music in State primary and secondary schools. *(Queensland Conservatorium of Music*, 1973, p. 8)

During this decade, student enrollments increased yearly and the support from both public and private sectors of the community also grew *(Queensland Conservatorium of Music*, 1982, p. 7).

**2.6.3 Major developments (1974-1980)**

In the mid-1970s there were significant developments in infrastructure and staffing resulting in considerable changes. First, free tertiary education was introduced in 1974 by the Federal Labor government under the leadership of Whitlam. This resulted in increased student enrollments in all areas, particularly keyboard and consequently in more full time and part-time staff being appointed. The keyboard department grew from an original staff of one full-time piano teacher in the 1960s to three full time piano staff, eight part-time piano staff, two part-time organ staff and two part-time harpsichord staff *(Queensland Conservatorium of Music*, 1973). Total student course enrollments increased from seventeen (1957) to over two hundred in the late 1970s *(Queensland Conservatorium of Music*, 1982, p. 13).

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30 These diplomas were: Associate Diploma in Music; Fellowship Diploma in Music; Master Diploma in Music; Concert Diploma in Music and Fellowship Diploma in School Music.
Second, in order to provide accommodation ‘for all aspects of music education and performance’, as well as the growing number of students, a new building was commenced in 1972 and completed in 1974 (Queensland Conservatorium of Music, 1973, p. 7). This was situated in the grounds of the Queensland University of Technology (formerly known as the Queensland Institute of Technology) adjacent to old Government House, the original site of the first University of Queensland.

The third and most significant change occurred in 1974 after a proposal was tabled for acceptance of a degree course. The Queensland Conservatorium thus became the first non-university tertiary institution in Australia to have been granted the right to award a degree in music (Queensland Conservatorium of Music, 1976, p. 4). In addition to the Diploma of Arts (three years), a Bachelor of Arts degree (four years) and a Bachelor of Arts in Education degree were approved.\textsuperscript{31} Students enrolled in the Bachelor of Arts in Education studied music subjects at the Conservatorium and education subjects were studied at the Brisbane College of Advanced Education (Kelvin Grove), which has since amalgamated with Queensland University of Technology.

2.6.4 Performance versus academia
The introduction and structure of the new degree brought with it many academic subject additions. Not all staff in the keyboard department, however, were convinced that these changes were appropriate. There were many discussions and debates in division and general staff meetings in relation to the number of new academic subjects versus practical performance (A. Lane, personal communication, May 11, 2001).\textsuperscript{32} The Conservatorium from the earliest days of conception had been regarded as ‘an institution where practical musicians could be trained’ rather than a place where academic requirements would be the main concentration (Brier, 1971, p. 311).

\begin{center}
All teaching staff in my workforce are referred to as ‘academic’ staff. However, in the 1970s and 80s (before the amalgamation with Griffith University) staff were usually categorized into two areas depending on what they taught. Those who taught a major study instrument such as piano were referred to as ‘performance staff’. Those who taught history of music, composition,
\end{center}

\textsuperscript{31} Students were able to enrol in the Bachelor degrees in the following four divisions:
1. Instrumental.
2. Vocal.
3. Composition.
\textsuperscript{32} The late Mr. Alan Lane, Director of Academic Studies at that time, was largely responsible for the approved accreditation of the degree award in 1974.
During Basil Jones’s term as director (1961-1980), external influences had brought about profound changes. The Queensland Conservatorium of Music had achieved a degree of semi-autonomy that had eluded Lovelock some twenty years earlier (Queensland Conservatorium of Music, 1976). Free education under the Whitlam government resulted in a considerable increase in student numbers (Queensland Conservatorium of Music, 1982). The degree course also significantly changed the emphasis and time available for devotion to performance studies. The expansion of commitment to academic subjects added to the existing dichotomy between the needs of students developing performance skills and the demands of a degree course.

Finally, the expanded student numbers also necessitated a new building. The increased student numbers already heralded the time when the supply would exceed the demand for positions available for keyboard graduates in performance, institutional teaching and school music. These changes however, were not reflected in the audition requirements or course design that remained largely unaltered. Furthermore, the Conservatorium reconfirmed its commitment to the concentrated focus on performance by the appointment of a new European director following Jones’s retirement.

2.6.5 New directions and expansion (1981-1995)

In 1981, a new director Dr. Roy Wales (1981-1986) from England was selected from a field of 67 applicants following international advertising. Wales came to the Conservatorium with a high reputation as a conductor of orchestras and choirs and keenly supported what was considered to be the Conservatorium’s main objective, being ‘great emphasis of pursuit of excellence in performance training’ (Queensland Conservatorium of Music, 1982, p. 17). In the Director’s Annual Report (1982), Wales stated that

the primary aim of the Conservatorium is to prepare students for the music profession, and preparation for competition and concert performances is
aimed at providing some of the right kind of experience and training which hopefully will enable many of them to be employed in the future as performers or teachers. (*Queensland Conservatorium of Music*, 1982, p. 17)

Under Wales’s directorship, the doors of the Conservatorium were also opened to further involve the community (*Queensland Conservatorium of Music*, 1982, p. 9). He introduced an Easter Vacation school involving 260 adults and young people from all parts of the state of Queensland, and actively promoted the Conservatorium through his leadership of the Brisbane Chorale and presentation of many public concerts.

Student numbers continued to increase; by 1986 full tertiary music education was being provided to more than 360 full-time students from all parts of Australia and overseas and 550 part-time students were registered for tuition in individual instrumental or vocal studies, or as members of music classes or ensembles. (*Queensland Conservatorium of Music*, 1987a, p. 2). To accommodate increased student numbers, Wales awarded many new teaching positions to European artists. From an all Australian department in the two previous decades, the keyboard department now housed five full-time staff, two of whom were European. The harpsichord position was also awarded to a European artist (*Queensland Conservatorium of Music*, 1987b, p. 7).

> These European artists brought with them a strong inherent tradition that favoured the training of performance over all else. Students were encouraged to devote more time to their daily practice schedule. However this further exacerbated the debate of performance versus academia among staff, as students had less time to devote to their academic work. It also caused resentment amongst students. Students enrolled in the Education degree were offered less contact time in their major area of study in their programs of study than those of their peers enrolled in the performance degree. With the emphasis on performance further strengthening, there was a perception by the education students of a favouring of the performance students in terms of resourcing and access to opportunity. It is my experience through general discussions with staff and also through discussions that took part in keyboard meetings, that the students concerns were justified.

Under Wales’s directorship, courses also continued to change. The original Bachelor of Music Education course was withdrawn in 1986, due to the process of course rationalisation, some four years previously, with a recommendation to the Federal Government from the Board of Advanced Education, that the Conservatorium should no longer offer a Bachelor of Music four year integrated course in Music Education (*Queensland Conservatorium of Music*, 1983, p. 18). The Conservatorium’s response was to introduce a three-year course with an intensified academic content and to seek the co-operation of the Brisbane College of Advanced Education to give high
priority to graduates wishing to enrol in that institution’s Graduate Diploma in Teaching (Music) (*Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University*, 1996b, p. 5). The new course was to be named Bachelor of Arts (Music). For those students wishing to enrol in this course, while a generally high standard in performance was desirable, more emphasis was placed on their academic achievements.

Towards the end of Wales’s appointment, it was becoming clear that employment prospects in music extended beyond the two careers of teaching and performance as outlined by him in the Director’s report of 1982. Despite his continued support for emphasis on performance, Wales expressed the necessity for courses ‘to suit the needs of the intending professional in both the classical and more commercial and technological strands of music’ (*Queensland Conservatorium of Music*, 1983, p. 5). As a result the diploma course was expanded to include a diploma in Music Technology and a two-year Associate Diploma in jazz was approved. Elective subjects were also introduced to include Accompanying, Chamber Music, Composition, and Music Recording Techniques (*Queensland Conservatorium of Music*, 1985, p. 3). This was to be the first step towards the inclusion of music areas beyond the traditional course offerings that had remained in place since the Conservatorium was established in 1957.

### 2.6.6 Internationalisation of the ‘Con’

In 1987 after five years in the position of Director, Dr. Roy Wales resigned and the position was once again advertised (*Queensland Conservatorium of Music*, 1987a). Anthony Camden from England was appointed in 1988. Camden graduated from the Royal College of Music in London in 1961 and until his appointment at the Conservatorium, had been head of Oboe studies at the Guild Hall in London. Camden not only shared Wales’s vision, which was to nurture strong performance standards, but endeavoured to strengthen them through exposure to international artists. He stated that ‘the results in all national competitions and scholarships …are living proof of the fact that here in Queensland we have the finest music school in Australia’ (*Queensland Conservatorium of Music*, 1989, p. 2). He also came with a clear vision to enhance and develop the opportunities for…students to internationalise their own training and experience…to experience and benefit from both teachers and students from other lands…and extend the Australian music culture…in the wider international field. (*Queensland Conservatorium of Music*, 1989, p. 2)
His appointment at a time of economic restraint in education was also substantially based on his reputation as an entrepreneur and fundraiser.

In choosing Professor Camden for the position, the Council of the Conservatorium…was impressed by his experience as a negotiator and entrepreneur and his ability to raise funds through sponsorship and negotiation with funding bodies. (*Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University*, 1994a, p. 5)

One of Camden’s first challenges was to attempt to defend the threat of the Conservatorium merging with a larger institution, as recommended by the Unified National System developed by the Dawkins Report (*Queensland Conservatorium of Music*, 1989, p. 6). Camden shared the philosophy originally expressed by Lovelock, that a Conservatorium is best served as a ‘stand alone’ institution and would not fit easily into a university structure. Camden stated that, ‘this autonomy allows an institution to be in control of its profile, its modus operandi and its international reputation’ (*Queensland Conservatorium of Music*, 1989, p. 2).

Negotiations with the then Federal Minister for Employment, Education and Training ultimately failed, and in 1991 the Conservatorium amalgamated with Griffith University. It became known as the Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University and ceased to be a College of Advanced Education (*Queensland Conservatorium of Music*, 1982). This change brought about a considerable sacrifice in the degree of autonomy that had existed in the last two decades. However, the fear of curtailment of one-to-one teaching was temporarily allayed.

> This system of teaching, which allows each student to focus on their major study performance skills, had always been considered fundamental to the acquisition of high individual performance skills and is a cornerstone of the teaching practice at the Conservatorium. My performance colleagues feared that this tradition might not be understood and could be curtailed by a University facing severe financial restraint and already having to limit the weeks of academic teaching.

Although Camden’s efforts were not successful in maintaining autonomy for the Conservatorium, many of the changes he brought about fared better. During his term as director he achieved partial success in several of his objectives. First, to ‘internationalise’ the profile of the Conservatorium; and second, to entice sponsorship from Australian companies (*Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University*, 1994b). The former he felt could be achieved through the appointment of more overseas staff and through international staff and student exchange programs. Overseas staff and student exchanges were arranged through the establishment of several ‘artist in residence’ positions. Exchange programs and links with music institutions
outside Australia were established, including the Academy of Performing Arts, Germany, Hong Kong and the Royal Academy of Music, London (Lane, 1991, p. 20). Camden endeavoured to achieve his second objective through greater community exposure of Conservatorium events. More performances were added to the concert calendar and major productions such as new operas were staged. Third, additional funding was achieved through Camden’s success in gaining permission through the Department of Employment, Education and Training to enrol full fee paying foreign students at the Conservatorium in 1990 (Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University, 1994b). The majority of overseas students in the first intake, most of whom enrolled in the keyboard area, came from Korea and Taiwan (Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University, 1991).

| My keyboard colleagues generally approved of the inclusion of overseas students as it was felt that they provided the necessary competition for the Australian pianists and as a result performance standards might improve. It was also perceived that this could result in the 'Con's' performance reputation being further enhanced. |

Camden’s enthusiasm and drive for concentration on performance was also to result in a further major course change. In 1990, a special Performance strand of the Diploma of Music was introduced, ‘designed for talented students who have the ability to concentrate on the rigours of practical performance rather than the rigours of degree coursework’ (Lane, 1991, p. 20). There had been mounting pressure for this from many performance staff especially in the keyboard division, as once again the argument was raised that with the introduction of more academic subjects through the degree course there had been less time to devote to performance.

| The performance course was not only greeted enthusiastically by my performance colleagues, but also proved highly attractive to overseas students as it enabled them to concentrate on performance areas where English skills were less necessary. However, once again my academic colleagues strongly argued that if less time were devoted to their subjects, students would not develop into fully rounded musicians. The debate of performance versus ‘other’ areas of study continues. |

Meanwhile, Camden had one further ambition, which was to take the Conservatorium into regional centres. In 1989 he announced that the first regional branch of the conservatorium would open in Mackay (Queensland Conservatorium of Music, 1989, p. 2). Hope of opening subsequent branches in Cairns, Townsville and Rockhampton did not eventuate and the Mackay campus was to become affiliated with the Central University of Queensland in 1996. By 1994, under Camden’s directorship, numbers in all areas of the diploma and degree awards excepting
Bachelor of Music Education which had been re-introduced in 1991 with the amalgamation, had increased dramatically and the first intake of overseas students graduated. This increase was especially noticeable in the keyboard department, where the number of students enrolled had grown significantly. Keyboard staff numbers had also expanded to include six full-time and fifteen part-time teachers (Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University, 1995). Overseas appointments in the keyboard area had increased from two to five. Courses had also expanded and in addition to course changes, a Bachelor of Sonology was added to the existing degree courses (Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University, 1994b).

Due to the doubling of the student population, the Conservatorium had once again outgrown its existing home (Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University, 1994a, p. 5). Pressure was also mounting from the Queensland University of Technology (with whom the Conservatorium had shared grounds) to occupy the building. Camden managed to secure from the State Government in his last year of office, a site on South Bank next to the Cultural Complex suitable for the erection of a new Conservatorium.

Although Camden was successful in raising significant funds both through full fee paying overseas students and through sponsorship for major activities, his efforts for funding through endowments were not realised. Moreover, although there had been significant increased student numbers, there appeared to have been no serious thought given to how students could best be trained to gain employment. Nor had there been any consideration directed to how the dwindling financial resources should best be used. This was to be Camden’s last year as director, marking the beginning of the end of a strong British tradition. The first major consideration in the appointment of Camden’s successor was the need to appoint somebody who could address the budgetary deficit (Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University, 1997). A further consideration was the ability of his successor to re-examine the education paradigms and practices of the Conservatorium (ibid).

2.6.7 Progression? (1996-2002)

In February 1996, Simone deHaan, an Australian, was appointed as director from a short-list of three, largely because of his clear agenda for review and change to situate the QCM at the progressive edge of music education practice and as a leader in provision of Conservatorium-style tertiary training in Australia. (Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University, 1997, p. 4)

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In that year the conservatorium also experienced two other significant developments. In July it moved into its new purpose built facility at South Bank. In August 1996, the Federal budget set new agendas for tertiary education in Australia that were to have significant impacts on funding of both its existing and future activities (Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University, 1997, p. 4).

In light of these severe economic pressures, special challenges [arose] for the Conservatorium to examine itself and to ensure that it [was] delivering marketable, high quality programmes (sic) efficiently and within in the new budgetary constraints. (Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University, 1997, p. 4)

DeHaan’s first major challenge was to rid the Conservatorium of its debt and to ensure that the Conservatorium could operate within the limits of the budget that it had been allocated. The second major challenge to face deHaan was that the nature of the music industry had been rapidly changing in the previous decade, ‘requiring musicians to be increasingly flexible, creative, and technologically literate …with the ability to self-manage and direct their own careers and adapt readily to change’ (Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University, 1997, p. 4).

DeHaan expressed the view that, in spite of the Conservatorium’s strengths and achievements, the kind of musical education provided at the Conservatorium could be seen as ‘responding to educational paradigms and practices belonging to and developed in earlier phases of its history’ (Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University, 1997, p. 4).

To meet and evaluate these challenges, he established committees to operationalise four key aims:

1. To position the QCM in a leadership role in the provision of innovative tertiary level Conservatorium training in Australia.
2. To develop a range of course offerings which are highly attractive and marketable and which are sustainable in the current funding environment.
3. To achieve lean, rational, and flexible course structures which are responsive to the needs of students and of the marketplace.
4. To embody in QCM courses a forward-looking and innovative character reflective of a strong and vibrant institutional ethos. (Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University, 1997, p. 5)

During the course of six months’ debate and discussion, a number of significant issues emerged. First, it became apparent that ‘one of the most problematical aspects of the Conservatorium’s
current positioning is the number of courses it offers and similarity of content of those courses’
(Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University, 1997, p. 13). These courses were becoming
both economically and administratively impossible to sustain. Second, it was recognized that the
Conservatorium was increasingly attracting ‘a diverse range of students’ and that any new
structure ‘needed to address their backgrounds, expectations and needs’ (Queensland
Conservatorium Griffith University, 1997, p. 13). These included:

- elite and non-elitie performers and composers in classical and
  contemporary/jazz fields, students whose careers will be in classroom or
  studio teaching, students who will work in the broader arts and music
  industry, students who will proceed onto higher degree studies in
  performance, composition, research and other fields. (Queensland
  Conservatorium Griffith University, 1997, pp. 13-14)

Third, it was felt that the set-course structures tended to lock students inflexibly into pathways,
making it difficult for them to develop new paths of interest as they progressed. Finally, it was
recognised that ‘a large percentage of [Conservatorium] graduates will at some time or other be
involved in professional studio teaching’ (Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University, 1997,
p. 20) resulting in a recommendation for the introduction of pedagogy into the undergraduate
curriculum. As a result of the evaluation of the under-graduate course, 28 recommendations in all
were proposed.33 The majority of these recommendations, with the exception of the introduction
of an Arts Management program, were adopted and implemented in 1998.
The effects of the cost cutting, due in large part to the budgetary deficit inherited in 1995, have
been profound. The Mackay campus could no longer be sustained and its association with the
conservatorium was discontinued in 1996. There has also been ongoing debate in relation to the
significant changes to the length, structure and content of course offerings (Queensland
Conservatorium Griffith University, 1997).

33 The most significant of these were the following:
- a change from a four year B.Mus. undergraduate degree program to a generic three year model in the following
  areas: Performance; Composition; Contemporary Music and Musicology
- the Bachelor of Arts and Diploma courses be discontinued and that those students be accommodated into the three
  year generic degree
- the existing Bachelor of Music Performance degree program be discontinued and that provision be made in the
  generic Bachelor degree structure for such students
- the Bachelor of Music-Sonology degree be discontinued and replaced by a new three year degree to be known as
  Bachelor of Music-Contemporary Music Technology
- the education program be expanded to a four and a half year program with more credit points to be completed in the
  education area at Mt. Gravatt campus
- a Year 4 specialisation program be offered in the areas of Music Pedagogy and Arts Management.
- in the design of the new course, attention be paid to reducing the number of subjects offered, but with the
  maintenance of high educational standards, appropriate student choice, and resources.
The most noticeable differences however, were both the reduction of the four-year Bachelor of Music degree to a three-year degree, and the number of academic weeks offered within each year of the new three-year degree course (*Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University*, 1997). In the decade of the 1970s, courses totalled 38 weeks per year. This number was reduced to 32 weeks a year in 1994, and then to 28 weeks per year in 1995. The number of academic teaching weeks per year currently totals 24.

A further cost saving was made in 1996 through the reduction of contact time allowed for each student in their major area of study. All students had been allocated an hour of individual contact with their principal study teacher. However, in order to reduce the expenditure, it was decided to decrease this contact time in the first and second years of the degree to fifty minutes per student (a reduction of 16%). Keyboard students now receive a total of 69 hours of one to one instruction in their major study over a 3 three period (*Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University*, 2004), as opposed to 152 hours in the 1970s over a four year period.34

A third major cost cutting measure resulted in the decision to abolish the second practical study which had traditionally been offered to all full-time students since the conservatorium opened its doors in 1957. The second study, which consisted of a 30-minute individual lesson per week, enabled students the opportunity to learn a second instrument including vocal studies. For many vocalists and instrumentalists this second study gave them the opportunity to learn piano, which is considered to be a necessary and desirable part of their training.

By the late 1990s, due to the abolitionment of the second study and the decreased contact hours of major study lessons, teaching staff in the keyboard department had been significantly reduced. The number of full time teachers in this area had been reduced from 6 in 1995, to four in 2000. Of these four full-time staff, only one Australian (myself) remains. Part-time staff had also been reduced by over 50% (*Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University*, 2000). However, through the above measures, deHaan managed to achieve a budgetary surplus (*Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University*, 2001a).

- Subjects in the three-year generic degree be offered in areas such as Ensemble and choral studies; Composition; Contemporary and World Musics; Keyboard Accompaniment; Music Literature and Culture; Music Theory; Music Technology; Opera Studies and Music Pedagogy (*Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University*, 1997).
2.6.8 Interim review – 2002-2003

In late 2002, deHaan resigned from the position of Director to take up an appointment at another university in Australia. Dr. Peter Roennfeldt, who had been working in the position of Deputy Director was appointed as Director for a period of twelve months.\textsuperscript{35} Before deHaan’s departure, an interim review of the undergraduate curriculum had commenced, as it was considered that ‘a number of circumstances just[i]fied the conduct of an evaluation at this time’ (Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University, 2002b, p. 1). These circumstances for the most part, included the need to address the ‘extremely costly’ Bachelor of Music degree that had been previously implemented in 1997 (Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University, 2002b). While it was considered that the first priority of the institution was ‘to retain quality of teaching and learning and an intensive conservatoire-style training’ it was also considered incumbent upon the Conservatorium to examine ways ‘in which we currently do can be refined and if possible rationalized’ (Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University, 2002b, p. 1). A further consideration was the ‘desirability’ to review the assessment practices so that ‘new assessment methodologies’ where possible reflected ‘latest assessment practices’ in the performing arts (2002b, p. 2).

While the review resulted in only minor changes in the area of keyboard, such as more prescribed course work relating to the major area of study rather than elective choices,\textsuperscript{36} one of the most significant outcomes of the review was the decision to introduce a new area to the Bachelor degree program called Bachelor of Music Studies.\textsuperscript{37} (Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University, 2003c).

\textit{My memory is that discussion did take place regarding the assessment practices of the institution, particularly in relation to the major study performance areas, however there were no changes to the assessment procedures. Despite numerous debates regarding the present performance assessment procedures within the Keyboard area.}

\textsuperscript{34} Teaching Contact for major study: 1975: 1 hour by 38 weeks by 4 years =152 hours. 1996: 1\textsuperscript{st} & 2\textsuperscript{nd} years – 50 minutes by 26 weeks: 3\textsuperscript{rd} year, 1 hour by 26 weeks: Total = 69 hours.

\textsuperscript{35} At the time of writing this thesis, the position of Director had been advertised but not been determined. It is anticipated that this will occur in the latter part of 2004.

\textsuperscript{36} The prescribed course work includes courses relating to the major area of study such as Performance Practice repertoire.

\textsuperscript{37} The Bachelor of Music Studies program introduced in 2004 is designed for students who wish to study music combined with other career-oriented areas. Unlike the Bachelor of Music program, the primary selection criterion is an OP score while the secondary criteria include an audition, a written musical skills test and an interview. Students enrolled in the program can major in World and Community Music; Arts and Cultural Management; Musicology or General Studies. While the Bachelor of Music Studies includes the practical study of instrument or voice it is at a lesser intensity than in the Bachelor of Music program (Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University, 2003c).
which many students and some of my colleagues- including me- feel are unsatisfactory due to their subjective nature, the present arrangements continue to be observed.

2.6.9 Re-surfacing of problems

The four major problems raised by Lovelock back in the late 1950s, (i.e. the issues of funding; autonomy; anti-intellectualism and the true purpose of the Conservatorium) have continued to resurface. The autonomy so valued by Lovelock and largely achieved under the direction of the Department of Advanced Education in 1973 was severely curtailed. Since its amalgamation with Griffith University in 1991, the Conservatorium has shared the pain of financial restrictions with all tertiary institutions. However, the pain has fallen disproportionately on the area of music because of the high cost of training performers.

Due to financial restraints, this system that exists in all major conservatoria, allowing each student to focus on their major study performance skills, has been significantly eroded through the reduction of contact hours. One to one teaching at the Conservatorium has been reduced by over 50% since 1975. There has also been a notable reduction in tertiary teaching positions. The Conservatorium is increasingly dependent on the allocation given to Arts funding by Griffith University. However, despite having regard for the high cost of educating a music graduate, will the university continue to have the intellectual courage to support music in competition with the other faculties? Moreover, given the economic and cultural changes, can and should the Conservatorium continue to remain focused on its original aims so clearly stated under the directorship of Jones back in the 1970s and early 80s, as to train solo performers, institutional teachers, private teachers and School Music teachers?38

2.7 Realignment of priorities: A summing up

Whatever the decision, it is clear from the literature that a combination of the effects of greatly reduced funding for tertiary institutions, the rapidly changing cultural landscape, the difficulty of unemployment among some musicians and the present student disquiet, has created priorities in re-examining and ensuring the delivery of marketable high quality programs.39 Renshaw (2002b)

38 In 2002 the Queensland Conservatorium discontinued its offering of a combined Bachelor of Education/Bachelor of Music degree (first introduced in 1998). This was due to the retention rates which reflected a significant loss of students, most of whom elected to transfer from this double degree into the BMus course. The institution no longer offers an Education Teaching strand. Anecdotal evidence suggests the reasons may be as follows: (a) after being accepted into the conservatorium, students find that they prefer to devote themselves exclusively to musical training rather than committing to the education path; (b) there is a distinctly different educational culture between the Conservatorium and the Faculty of Education which reflects the difference between the significant practical performance emphasis in the BMus as contrasted with the highly academic nature of the BEd. Because conservatorium students are enculturated within the institution for the first two years, the transition to the Faculty of Education in years 3 and 4 often proves very challenging (G. Howard, personal communication, May 15, 2001).

39 There is presently something of a crisis in relation to the true role of universities. Issues such as whether university degrees should be ‘vocational in nature’ versus ‘knowledge for knowledge’s sake, continue to be debated
argues that the nature and rate of change is now so significant that if the future survival of professional musicians is to be assured, they will need ‘to break out of those categories that have largely defined being a musician in the past’ (p. 2). Furthermore, unless this reality is addressed by both the training sector and associated institutions, that is, unless conservatoria start responding to ‘the real world in which their students will be working’, they will rapidly become an ‘anachronism’ (Renshaw, 2002b, p. 13).

As Renshaw (2002b) explains however, transforming conservatoria and those who teach within them is going to be a challenge, ‘as new initiatives, aimed at matching training to the diverse reality of the music industry, are often perceived as a “dilution” of the “core business”’ (p. 15). In a recent paper titled *Music Teacher as Knowledge Worker: What ‘Experts’ Need to Know*, McWilliam (2002) looks closely at the implications associated with the changing conditions that academics such as musicians and artists now face within universities and similar organizations. McWilliam argues that the strong grasp of disciplinary-specific knowledge that was once sufficient to claim the full status of ‘professional expert’ ‘is no longer the case for an academic as a *knowledge worker*’ (2002, p. 1). She explains, ‘two decades ago there were no computers on academics’ desks, no email, no on-line pedagogy, guaranteed government funding and little diversity in staff or student populations’ (p. 6). While many academics have been reluctant to embrace these new conditions, McWilliam notes that it is in the discipline of the creative arts that ‘special resentment is directed towards knowledge which demands academic time for organizational processes at the expense of aesthetic engagement’ (2002, p. 5).

If then, ‘teacher artists’ as professional experts in conservatoria persist in relying on past practices considered appropriate more than two decades ago, the opportunity to create and sustain a viable and vibrant institution may be lost. Furthermore, as McWilliam warns, failure to adapt to these conditions may result in what was once a secure academic position no longer being guaranteed. ‘Universities as performance-driven organizations, do not and will not continue to function as systems of patronage for the teacher-as-artist’ (McWilliam, 2002, p. 6).\(^40\)

It is apparent that the present under-graduate curriculum does not equip students with all the necessary skills, nor may this ever be totally possible during an under-graduate career. What may

\(^{40}\) The significance of this is critical for institutions such as Conservatoria, in view of the recent Nelson review into higher education with its questioning of the role of universities and the way in which they will be funded. (Nelson report, 2002).
be possible, however, is for students to be made aware of both the opportunities and skills they will need to both suit their particular aspirations and meet the diverse needs of the music industry. It is equally apparent that those who teach within conservatoria and universities will need to learn to use the processes of their organization to demonstrate their performance and adjust to the realities of the music industry. These are some of the challenges for conservatoires and those who teach within them in the 21st Century.
Chapter 3
Inquiring into student needs

The previous chapter reviewed current thinking relating to developments in the keyboard curriculum at the Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University. The literature identifies the need to provide a curriculum that is more relevant to student needs within a constantly changing cultural and economic landscape. It also highlights the ongoing debate as to whether existing courses and programs really do address the needs of the students they purport to satisfy, or whether the rhetoric is different from the reality.

This chapter provides an overview of the contestation within the Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University in relation to student needs. Following this, the chapter moves on to consider how feminist poststructuralism can inform the research design, making particular reference to the work of Nancy Fraser, Elizabeth Ellsworth, Patti Lather and Erica McWilliam. It then provides a conceptual lens with which to examine the complex and ongoing struggle to articulate student needs that is being enacted within the Conservatorium. Finally, the chapter moves to argue a design for this study as one possible investigation of student needs in the curriculum.

3.1 Contestation in the Conservatorium
The complexity of the ‘needs struggle’ at the Conservatorium has evolved and intensified since the 1970s as a result of issues arising from four factors:

1. Increased student numbers.
2. Changing employment opportunities.
3. Amalgamation with a large institution.
4. A ‘more for less’ funding context.

While the original aim of the Conservatorium was to train a small and select group of students in performance, while the increasing student numbers and changing cultural landscape have resulted in the need to accommodate students with more diverse needs and interests. Furthermore, any assured incomes from jobs in concert performance and tertiary teaching that might have existed twenty years ago have disappeared. Indeed, as Michael Hannan (2001) argues, ‘it is difficult to

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41 Although the Conservatorium opened with a total enrollment of 110 students in 1957, only 17 of these were full-time. In its first 25 years of operation (1957-82), the Conservatorium rendered services to 1,141 full-time students
make a case that even 10% [of total music graduates today] are finding this kind of employment’ (p. 14).

Since the introduction of the degree in 1974, many performance staff have argued that to encourage students to excel in all areas of the curriculum is to deny them the special opportunity of excellence in performance, thereby denying them a performance career. Conversely, members of the academic staff argue that not to train students in all areas is to deny them wider career opportunities (A. Lane, personal communication May 11, 2001). This continued contestation between ‘expert teachers’ is experienced by many students as confusion and uncertainty about which skills they need to acquire and what the future career opportunities really are (Hannan, 2001).

Another factor sharpening the debate between performance and academic staff is the nature of previous staff appointments. The appointing of full-time staff primarily on their ability to raise the profile of the Conservatorium through performance alone, rather than teaching expertise or accreditation, has until recently, remained the priority (Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University, 1994a). The legacy of these appointments has resulted in what some perceive as assymmetrical skilling of staff, a degree of anti-intellectualism, and confusion as to the true role of the Conservatorium.

This is particularly evident in the keyboard department where the main consideration for appointment has always been an ability to perform. Other considerations such as administrative experience, teaching qualifications or accreditation or an ability to research have not been considered a priority until very recently. With increasing pressure for universities to obtain government funding through research and a proliferation of administrative work associated with academic positions, there has been a call for staff to develop skills beyond performing and teaching. This has caused resentment within the department as some staff blame these demands on their inability to focus on the work they actually want to do. However, for others who have been more recently tenured, (such as myself) there has been a requirement by the university to embark on further research qualifications. I too was initially reluctant to embark upon further research for the very reasons given above. However, in my endeavour to seek fresh insights to support me in improving my practice, I decided to enrol in an EdD program.

A third event to have a major impact on the complexity of needs contestation was the loss of autonomy associated with the Conservatorium’s forced amalgamation with Griffith University in 1991. A large degree of decision-making that had once belonged to the Conservatorium and its ‘teacher experts’, became subsumed by a larger institution with differing and often competing

(an average of 45 students per year) and 1,376 part-time students (Queensland Conservatorium of Music, 1982, p.10).
objectives. Many continue to argue that this ‘hijacking of the arts’ has resulted in ‘widespread confusion and eroding of training standards’ (Gibbs, 1998, p. 11). Additionally, due to increasing government financial restraint, further power passed from the university to the government (p. 11).

The fourth event to have a major impact on the Conservatorium occurred in 1996. With increasing financial restraints and a mounting debt, ‘it was clear that the existing courses had become both economically and administratively impossible to sustain’ (Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University, 1997, p. 13). It was equally clear that the nature of the music industry had changed, necessitating the need to cater for a much more diverse student clientele (ibid). In order both to respond to the financial crisis and to cater for students ‘with diverse backgrounds, expectations and needs’, a review of the curriculum was deemed imperative (ibid).

During the review process, the question of the sustainability of the high cost delivery of the traditional one-to-one tutorial system was once again raised. The debate intensified with performance staff arguing that a decrease in this area would result in erosion of performance standards. Members of the keyboard department were particularly concerned, arguing that this could be ill afforded if the Conservatorium were to maintain its reputation as a ‘performance institution’ and a leading training centre for pianists in Australia (Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University 1996a, p. 2).

The strong reaction by my keyboard colleagues to the curriculum changes was reflected in the minutes of a departmental keyboard meeting (1996). It was stated that ‘the [curriculum] cuts are so extreme as to render courses unviable’ (Queensland Conservatorium Keyboard Department, 1996a).

The discussions also added to the atmosphere of job insecurity for both full-time and sessional staff, an atmosphere which was evident in most universities that were faced with the turmoil of having to cope with an overhaul of their operations (Coorey, Tideman & Healy, 1996, p. 47). Some staff were not only anxious to protect their own positions but were grappling with the ‘constant pressure of change’, thus making it increasingly difficult to pursue any objective or constructive debate (Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University, 1996a).
Managerial consultants were employed to assist in the review process and staff dialogue was encouraged in an attempt to unite and prepare all staff for change. However, this attempt was perceived by many staff as being authoritative, hierarchical and economically driven (Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University, 1996a). They argued that the discussion focused on the need to address the financial problems rather than the institution’s raison d’être. Throughout the review process and despite the rhetoric of ‘student-centredness’, students had minimal voice as players in the newly organised Conservatorium.

Although the 1996 review resulted in a cutback in one-to-one contact hours deemed necessary to meet the budgetary imperative, and broader areas of music study were introduced into the curriculum, the priority of performance oriented programs remained.

3.1.2 Mutual implications

In the Keyboard Department at the Conservatorium, there has been a long tradition of excellence in performance; the necessity to uphold this reputation remains the primary focus of the majority of staff who work within it. This philosophy is also reflected in the criteria for condition of entry in which the selection of students is based on an audition process demonstrating an ability to perform. Academic achievement, although desirable, is a secondary consideration (Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University, 2002a). The criteria for selection also provide the opportunity to offer places to overseas students whose main ambition is performance.

During their initial studies, many keyboard students retain high expectations of a career on the concert stage and this is reinforced by the many staff who are dedicated to fostering this objective (Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University, 2003b). Such students appear to be willing to devote the main part of their study to this end through rigorous and time-consuming daily practice. The emphasis placed on the performance area is also reflected in the curriculum design and credit point allocation42 (Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University, 2003a). Additionally students are encouraged by staff to be competitive and pro-active on the performance circuit and are provided with this opportunity through the scheduling of weekly workshops, master classes and special performances in the concert hall (ibid).

42 The performance and practical components are awarded considerable weighting, normally in excess of 50% of the degree. This is significantly reflected in the grade point average (GPA) calculations. (Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University, 2003c)
One of the features of progression through the course is that, as their study progresses, the
talented performers become differentiated from those whose inherent talent is perceived as being
insufficient to result in a concert career. The effect on students in the latter category may be
anticipated to result in a loss of motivation, a phase of uncertainty and discontent marked by
disappointment, lack of direction, frustration and concern regarding future employment prospects
(Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University, 2001c). Their initial enthusiasm and
commitment to practice and concentration on excellence of performance may rapidly diminish,
and it is at this point that the students might well start to consider alternative career options (ibid).

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\text{Many keyboard staff at monthly departmental meetings have expressed their frustration and
disappointment at the decline in student performance commitment. They perceive this declining
enthusiasm in the students as a lack of cooperation regarding their performance practice and
indolence in relation to their study ethic.}
\]

The majority of such keyboard students look towards a career in the teaching profession. For
many, choosing this alternative career to concert performance is thus ‘a necessity rather than a
true ambition’ (Uszler et al, 1991, p. 6). Others who do not fit into either of the above two
categories, ‘feel that they have already come too far in their music studies to choose an
alternative career’ (p. 6).

A discussion paper titled Current concerns and Strategies for Change (Savage, 2001) reflects just
this scenario. It states that there is ‘general agreement’ and ‘concern’ within the keyboard
department that

the gap has opened up between the public face of the [keyboard] area with
its acknowledged strength in terms of successful [sic] and committed [sic]
teachers and prominent artistic initiatives and an internal situation where the
majority of keyboard students are not sufficiently engaged with the
Conservatorium and its opportunities. (p. 1)

\[
The above discussion paper was tabled at an extraordinary keyboard meeting that was called in
response to the director’s (2001) concern over student apathy in relation to lack of attendance at
performance workshops and other related events. He stated through a memorandum to all
keyboard staff, that there was a need ‘to maximise interaction, engagement and communication’
between and within student and staff entities in the keyboard department.
\]

While many staff blame the ‘gap’ on the failure of students to engage with the performance
opportunities provided by the Conservatorium, others attribute student disengagement and
apparent lack of commitment to other underlying reasons. Some argue that the problem exists
because of the very lack of opportunity provided for those students who no longer aspire to the
concert platform. They contend that there is a wider educational responsibility to provide for all enrolled students and that equal commitment should be given to those who wish to engage in alternative career paths within the music profession (*Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University*, 2001a). Others are inclined to agree with the view of writers such as McInnes (2001) and Heggen & Dullroy (2002) who argue that the main reasons for student disengagement are that the rising cost of education and a drop in financial support are forcing university students to put jobs ahead of their study. These views are supported by a recent survey commissioned by the Australian Vice-Chancellors Committee (2001) in which it was revealed that seven in ten full-time students worked during the semester.

3.1.3 Political struggle
The contestations that occur in relation to determining the priorities of the curriculum are not restricted to staff and student struggles over course requirements and completion, but take place within a much larger political agenda. The Federal government determines budget allocation for tertiary institutions, an allocation that many see as being inadequate. This is made evident in a recent Labor policy statement *Knowledge Nation Report* (Australian Labor Party, 2001) which recommended significantly increased overall public funding for universities, including base operating funding, so that they can continue to provide quality education and attract the best academic staff. Indeed some industry experts argue that lack of funding for universities in Australia has reached such a crisis that the country is at risk of becoming a global irrelevance:

> Without urgent support for our centres of learning, Australia is at risk of becoming something worse than globally disadvantaged...It is no exaggeration to say we are threatened with global irrelevance. (Murdoch cited in Franklin, 2001, p. 31)

In a public address recently, media magnate Rupert Murdoch went on to say that, in Australia in 2000, the Commonwealth Government spent more on peacetime defence than on education. However, ‘if we are to improve the labour stagnation that threatens our country’s future…with the new millennium, this thinking must change’ (p. 31).

Academics have argued for some time that funding for the public higher education system is far from adequate. Indeed, according to Carolyn Allport, National Executive of the National Tertiary Education Union of Australia (2001), the rate of growth in higher education participation in Australia has declined, with the number of domestic university students actually falling by 0.5% between 1999-2000 (p. 17). Moreover, a recent Report of the Senate Inquiry titled
*Universities in Crisis* (2001) paints a picture of ‘a public higher education system struggling to meet the expectations and needs of students and the community, with a funding time bomb just around the corner’ (Allport, 2001, p. 17).

Australian universities are responsible for determining the educational priorities for resources across all faculties. In the context of limited funding, some areas are more vulnerable than others. It is in this ‘increasingly stringent economic climate’ (Renshaw, 2002b, p. 12) that Arts has to compete for funding, and the allocation of funding to music in particular with its very high cost of one-to-one tuition is constantly under scrutiny (Hannan, 2001).

With a growing commitment to greater accountability and transparency, the Administration of the Conservatorium in its budgetary allocation has to consider both equity between the departments and equity across the diverse populations of teachers who work and students who study within them (*Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University*, 2001a). There is also the need to balance a curriculum that provides both for training students in performance and equipping them to embark upon a career.

A further consideration is the necessity for locating these decisions within the context of the future directions and economic viability of the institution. The achievement of these endeavours can be clouded by staff who may be both fearful for their own job security, and fearful of accepting those ‘more for less’ changes considered by the administration to be essential to future survival. Renshaw (2002a), explains that it is not surprising that there is resentment by those Conservatorium staff ‘who wish to cling to the past, fearful that greater diversification and responsiveness to the market place will result in a dumbing down of standards’ (p. 12).

![Staff concerns over the perceived decline in focus on performance have been discussed frequently at Keyboard meetings that I have attended over the last five years - the most recent occasion October 2003. My colleagues have articulated their sense of ‘powerlessness’ to change attitudes towards what they perceive as lack of support and commitment to the real purpose of the Conservatorium.](image)

For keyboard students at the Conservatorium, however, a ‘double dose’ of powerlessness may well be experienced. According to Uszler et al., (1991), in their struggle for excellence in performance they will never be fully satisfied, for throughout their undergraduate years ‘there will always be the search for still better technique, still greater musical assurance, a still richer repertoire’ (p. 5).
The role of teachers as guides in student development is heightened in this context. Some students will no longer feel interested enough to perform according to course requirements. By choosing to direct their attention towards alternative areas in music, many students have indicated that they feel they are considered by their teachers to be less successful, less serious musicians. They are however, reluctant to voice their concerns in relation to these issues as they consider that ‘the ethos of the institution and its major methods of teaching perpetuate a dependency culture in which they are often patronized and their views not sufficiently acknowledged’ (Renshaw, 2002b, p. 13).

This anecdotal evidence has become more pronounced over the last five years of my twenty-five years of teaching experience within the institution. Students have indicated their views to me during course review discussions and in response to their declining interest in, and attendance at keyboard performance workshops. They have expressed frustration over what they perceive as a distinct favouring of performers as a group in terms of opportunities and resources. They have also expressed a reluctance to more openly voice these concerns, due to a fear of being penalized in their major study assessment. The assessment of performance examinations is conducted internally by keyboard staff, resulting in mistrust by students of the objectivity of the procedure. While there have been discussions over the need for more objective assessment procedures, such as the engaging of external examiners, many of my colleagues view the existing procedures as being adequate.

Given the number of stakeholders involving political, economic, social and educational spheres, it is not surprising that the Conservatorium, as with other educational institutions, continues to struggle with the question of how best to educate.

3.1.4 Redefining needs

In an attempt to understand the struggle to define student needs (including the complexity of the notion of needs and contestation over who gets to name them in this policy context), it is useful to examine the work of educational and social theorists, particularly those who focus on power relations within complex organisations like universities.
Critical theory\textsuperscript{43} has contributed much to this analytical work. Jurgen Habermas (1975) in particular has been important in his work to develop an ideal ‘not based on the notion of a rational society as is that of traditional critical theory but on the concept of an ideal speech situation’ (Marshall, 1998 p. 132). In his writings on the ‘legitimation crisis’, Habermas (1975) describes the problems relating to the increasing power within large organisations, progressively assuming the role of decision-making for the state.\textsuperscript{44} As part of a wider social institution (i.e., higher education), the Conservatorium is now part of such a larger organisational structure.

A simple yet profound idea has mobilised critical theorists such as Habermas; and that is that ‘whoever gets to name the world, rules the world’. Put another way, the defining of needs is a political issue, i.e. an issue about the power to define and thus to invite and de-limit. Habermas and others from the Frankfurt school argue that increasing bureaucratic power of Western social institutions manipulates public opinion, and this results in the ideal of free and equal discussion being blocked by the actual inequities of the system (Habermas, 1975). This ‘systemically distorted communication’, which inhibits free expression, has resulted in an imbalance of power which Habermas insists is counterproductive. Instead of producing stability, it produces a ‘legitimation crisis’ (Habermas, 1975).

Habermas claims that most modern states face a crisis because their citizens do not accept this ‘assymmetrical distribution of legitimate chances to satisfy needs’ (Habermas, 1975, p. 96). Thus women no longer accept an inferior status and demand equal pay without discrimination; patients are less sanguine about the advice of their doctors; Indigenous Peoples demand the right to determine their future. In addition, as more recently demonstrated, workers at factories demand their right to determine the most appropriate way to safeguard and guarantee their entitlements.\textsuperscript{45} ‘Student needs’ then, whether at a Conservatorium or anywhere else, must be

\textsuperscript{43} Critical theory, an influential paradigm in the post-war period, is regarded as highly particularistic and prescriptive and although its influence has been evident in many fields, it is in the area of curriculum research in which its affects have been far-reaching (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2001, p. 32). For many years it has been argued that the ‘most satisfactory account of the curriculum is given by a modernist, positivist reading of the development of education and society’ (Cohen et al., 2001, p. 32). This view, however, has been criticised for representing a closed system of planning and practice that sits uncomfortably with the notion of education as an opening process ‘and with the view of postmodern society as open and diverse, multidimensional, fluid and with power less monolithic and more problematical’ (p. 33). Since not all knowledge can be included in a curriculum, the justification for selection reveals the ideologies and power in decision-making in society through the selection of what is deemed to be worthwhile (p. 33).

\textsuperscript{44} The notions of ideology critique both in relation to the curriculum and the question of problems relating to power is central to critical theory, as evidenced in the early writings of Jurgen Habermas (1971/1975).

\textsuperscript{45} This refers to the recent dispute at the Tri-Star factory in Victoria (Davison, 2001).
considered as a *contested* issue framed by larger crises of legitimacy in social and economic institutions.

### 3.1.5 Communication needs

In his attempt to find answers to address the problem of the legitimation crisis, Habermas proposes a theory of ‘communicative action’ (Habermas, 1979). He argues that a requirement for rationality needs to be built into the nature of communication itself. An ‘ideal speech situation’ can only be achieved if the conditions of emancipation are built into the nature of human communication. Habermas further warns that these conditions are possible only ‘through argument, knowledge, mutual trust, and accord with one another’ (Habermas, 1979, p. 3). He argues, however, that there is an in-built discrepancy in communication in capitalist societies between those conditions required for the full exercise of reason and reaching truth, and those which govern how we talk to one another (Habermas, 1979).

For Habermas, the obvious implication is that we will want to move from the actual to the ideal conditions. According to Cuff, Sharrock & Francis (1998), this calls for further realization of the ideal of democracy ‘by creating an effective public whose free discussion is neither institutionally constrained nor subverted by the handing over of power to administrators and technocrats’ (p. 127). In order to achieve this ‘ideal condition’, Habermas proposes the concept of a ‘liberal public sphere’ to replace the bourgeois public sphere. The bourgeois ideologies have concealed the dynamics of capitalist development. This is because, while technocratic rationality appears to be value-neutral, it limits the ability of theory to enhance practical action (Habermas, 1971, p. 112). It chooses a scientific-technological reasoning as opposed to other theory-practice links, resulting in the conflation of the practical with the technical (p. 113).

### 3.1.6 Power and needs

Since the 1980s, Habermas’s theory of technocratic rationality has had an appeal for a new generation of sociologists and educational writers seeking to put social justice in the forefront of the schooling agenda, and consequently his work continues to underpin and inform much contemporary curriculum theory. In the recent *Handbook of Research on Teaching and Learning*, David Hamilton and Erica McWilliam (2001) provide a useful genealogy of sociological theory as it has developed in recent decades.
This summary situates ‘critical pedagogy’\(^{46}\) in a larger landscape of educational theory, as a critical alternative understanding of the nature of education. Hamilton and McWilliam argue that it was the 1980s that saw a new generation of sociologists (eg. Bates, 1983; Henry, Knight, Lingard, & Taylor, 1988) applying Habermasian understandings of technocratic rationality to their structuralist accounts of the role of schools and governments to show how what counts as legitimate knowledge has come to be constructed and in whose interest this knowledge operates (Hamilton & McWilliam, 2001, p. 31). Since then, ‘deconstructive’ educational researchers have used the tools of structuralist sociological critique to ‘set about confronting mainstream mythologies (e.g, the ideology of individual differences) and attempting to generate possibilities for denormalizing social process in their pedagogical work’ (Hamilton & McWilliam, 2001, p. 31). According to Hamilton and McWilliam, the new sociologists ‘armed with structuralist accounts of institutional power’ also used critical pedagogy to ‘unpack, locate, or interpret teaching and learning practices, rather than merely opposing or criticizing mainstream model schooling or education per se’ (p. 31). Thus critical studies, while continuing to frame teachers’ work as ideological, began to focus on the more mundane practices of teachers’ work. Educators sought to address the social character of language, by interrogating this phenomenon at the site of practice.

Feminist educational researchers, while responding enthusiastically to both these moves, nevertheless warned against what they perceived as a growing fascination with innovative analytical methods for their own sake (Greene, 1986; Grundy, 1989). They were concerned that the applications of findings out of context might lead to misrepresentation that could constrain teacher behaviour rather than promote professional autonomy (Evertson, 1987).

\(^{46}\)The idea of Critical Pedagogy begins with the neo-Marxian literature on Critical Theory (Stanley 1992). Early critical theorists (most of whom were associated with the Frankfurt school) believed that Marxism had underemphasized the importance of cultural and media influences for the persistence of capitalism; that maintaining conditions of ideological hegemony were important for (in fact inseparable from) the legitimacy and smooth working of capitalist economic relations (Burbules & Berk, 1999, p. 5). Systems of education are among the institutions that through the rhetoric of meritocracy, through testing, through tracking, through vocation training or college preparatory curricula, foster and reinforce beliefs that citizens in a capitalist society need both to know their ‘rightful’ place in the order of things and to be reconciled to that destiny (Apple 1979; Bowles & Gintis 1976; Popkewitz 1991). Critical pedagogy represents the reaction of progressive educators against institutionalized functions. Authors such as Henry Giroux (1986), Ira Shor & Paulo Freire (1987) and Peter McLaren (1988) raise questions about the inequalities of power, about the false myths of opportunity and merit for many individuals and groups, and about the way belief systems become internalized to the points that many students abandon the aspiration to question or change their lot in life (Burbules & Berk, 1999, p.5). Although there are significant women writing in this field, the chief spokespersons and most visible figures in the debates have been men. This has resulted in feminists being critical of what they regard as the attempt to ‘exclude the voices and concerns of women and other groups’ (Burbules & Berk, 1999, p.10). Feminists such as Ellsworth (1989) and Gore (1993) argue that Critical Pedagogy is ‘rationalistic’, that its purported reliance on ‘open dialogue’ in fact masks a closed and paternal conversation, that it excludes issues and voices that other groups bring to education encounters.
3.2 Feminist poststructural critique

Although education has long been a site for feminist work, feminist educators since the 1990s have played a critical role in the reconfiguration of deconstructing teaching and learning as a political and moral project. By taking up new French theory⁴⁷ and applying it to develop a framework for their poststructural analyses, they have challenged key philosophical concepts such as language, discourse, rationality and power, reinscribing them under the label of poststructuralism in their political work for social justice (St. Pierre, 1999, p. 1).

Towards the end of the 1980s, there was increasing discomfort in the feminist ranks ‘with the self-congratulatory and somewhat evangelical tone that characterized politicizing pedagogical work as a system of rhetoric’ (Hamilton & McWilliam, 2001, p. 33). Moreover, a growing number of feminists (Acker, Barry & Esseveld 1983; Berlak, 1986; Lather, 1988; Miller, 1990; Roman, 1988) pointed to ‘the dangers of researchers with liberatory intentions imposing meanings on situations, rather than constructing meaning through negotiation with research participants’ (Lather, 1991a, p. 13). Feminists such as Carmen Luke and Jennifer Gore (1992), Deborah Britzman (1995), and Elizabeth Ellsworth (1989), through their deconstructions of educational practice-as-discourse, revealed in their analyses how the very language of critique itself might have repressive effects.

The publication of Elizabeth Ellsworth’s paper (1989), Why Doesn’t This Feel Empowering: Working Through the Repressive Myths of Critical Pedagogy captured this new mood of unease about the social reconstructionist agenda, laying the foundation for the situating of the poststructuralist feminists⁴⁸ (Hamilton & McWilliam, 2001, p. 33).

⁴⁷ As in the work and deconstruction theories of Derrida (1974) and Foucault’s work on discourses (1983).
⁴⁸ ‘Post’ refers to ‘after’ structuralism although it is also engaged with structuralism. Poststructuralism is a theoretical position and is evident in the works of Derrida, Lacan, Deleuze, Foucault and others. Theories of poststructuralism evolved to contest the assumption that structures do and must exist outside language. Poststructuralism engages with but at the same time makes problematic both Neo-Marxism and instrumentalism as research approaches. Weiner (1993) suggests that poststructuralism relies on a number of central ideas. The first is the role of language in defining social meaning, social organisation and individual consciousness. Language is considered to be the major system through which and by which meaning is constructed, cultural practices are organised, and individuals understand their world (Scott, 1988). Moreover, poststructuralism uses the principle of discourse to show how power relationships and subjectivity are constituted. Fraser (1992) describes these discourses as ‘historically specific, socially situated, signifying practices. They are the communicative frames in which speakers interact by exchanging speech acts…set within social institutions and action…the concept of a discourse links the study of language to the study of society’ (p.61). Emerging from poststructural debates is a feminist take on poststructuralist theory that rejects taken for granted assumptions and established meanings of gender and sex difference, which collapse the ‘Other’ into the familiar (Hamilton & McWilliam, 2001). The linking of feminist action in education and poststructuralism has challenged the universalities of predominant curriculum epistemologies and has consciously positioned feminist educators within educational practices (Weiner, 1993). Feminist poststructuralist theory
Lather argues that, through poststructuralism, feminists like Ellsworth ‘displace[d]…the view of language as transparent and the critical theorists’ view of language as ideological struggle’ (Lather, 1991a, p. 13). Consequently, they turned attention away from ‘what is “really” there’ and shifted it instead towards the productivity of language, the constitutive role of language in the construction of the objects of inquiry (Lather, 1991a, p. 14). Lather explains that

Poststructuralism demands radical reflection on our interpretive frames as we enter the …shift from paradigm to discourse. Here, we shift from a focus on researcher ontology and epistemology in the shaping of paradigmatic choice to a focus on the productivity of language in the construction of the objects of investigation. (p. 13)

According to St. Pierre (1999), the feminist poststructural critique of epistemology has been particularly useful for educators who work to produce different knowledge in different ways and to trouble what counts as truth. She argues that through its theories of discourse and language, poststructural analysis has allowed educators ‘to understand how knowledge, truth, and subjects are produced in language and cultural practice as well as how they might be reconfigured’ (pp. 7-8). Hence poststructural analyses, in contrast to previous theories, demand that language be

identifies discursive practices and demonstrates, where they come from, whose interests they support, how they maintain sovereignty, and where they are susceptible to change (Weedon, 1987). According to McWilliam, Morgan & Lather, (1997), unlike previous theories that work out of the assumption of a unitary, rational and developmental ‘self’, feminist poststructuralist researchers are ‘condemned’ to locating their work in a range of places simultaneously rather than making frames into one large and coherent ‘picture’.

49 Ideology from a poststructuralist perspective, according to Lather (1991a), remains a much disputed term (p.14). Orthodox Marxists define it as false consciousness and oppose it to the ‘true’ knowledge of scientific Marxism. According to Lather (1991a) Foucault argues for the concept of power/knowledge to replace the reductionist Marxist usage of ideology, which he believes is too embedded in assumptions of ‘false consciousness’ (p.14). Others view ideology as a constitutive component of reality: the production of meaning, the positioning of the subject, and the production of structures of affect (McLaren, 1988, p.69). Teresa Ebert (1988), a postmodern feminist cultural critic defines ideology as:

…not false consciousness or distorted perception…[but rather] the organization of material signifying practices that constitute subjectivities and produce the lived relations by which subjects are connected-whether in hegemonic or oppositional ways - to the dominant relations of production and distribution of power… in a specific social formation at a given historical moment. (Lather, 1991a, p. 23)

49 Lather (1991a) argues that the feminist postmodern epistemology focuses on how science creates its ‘truth-effects’ via language used towards persuasive ends. It encourages multiple epistemologies and methodologies in order to explore the paradox of needing both a ‘successor regime’ powerful enough to unseat scientific orthodoxy and a keen awareness of the limits of any new ‘one-best-way’ approach to doing science (Lather, 1991a, p. 25).

51 The poststructural understanding of language troubles the idea that language mirrors the world. Poststructural thought accepts de Saussure’s idea that there is no correspondence between a word and a thing, that signs have no intrinsic meaning but obtain meaning because of their difference from other signs in the language chain. However it radically modifies de Saussure’s theory by positing that the meaning of the signified is never fixed but is constantly deferred (St. Pierre, 1999, p. 4).

52 Bové (1990) argues that, in its analysis of structure, whether linguistic or social, the poststructural critique is concerned with a different set of questions than that of traditional critiques of discourse (p.54). Questions such as ‘How does discourse function? Where is it to be found? How does it get produced and regulated? What are its social effects? How does it exist?’ (Bové, 1990, p. 54). Bové also explains that discourse provides a privileged entry into the poststructural mode of analysis because it is the organized and regulated, as well as the regulating and
interrogated asking different questions that might produce different possibilities. In this regard, Joan Scott (1988) suggests that

the questions that must be answered...are in what specific contexts, among which specific communities of people, and by what textual and social processes has meaning been acquired? More generally, the questions are: how do meanings change? How have some meanings emerged as normative and others have been eclipsed or disappeared? What do these processes reveal about how power is constituted and operates? (p. 35)

In thinking about method for a ‘student needs’ study then, it is necessary to consider how the ‘normative’ or ‘common sense’ is constructed and reconstructed. Elizabeth St. Pierre (1999) suggests that poststructural critique ‘can be employed to examine any commonplace situation, any ordinary event or process, in order to think differently about that occurrence--to open up what seems ”natural” to other possibilities’ (p. 2). The point, however, is to denaturalise that ‘common place situation’ rather than endorsing it, or simply insisting that it is an outcome of ‘State Oppression’.

3.2.1 Revisiting needs and the state - Nancy Fraser

Fraser is one feminist who both acknowledges the usefulness of ‘denaturalising’ a situation without losing the importance of Habermasian concerns about communicative competence. While admitting to the usefulness of Habermas’s theory of the liberal public sphere, she also expresses her sense of its limitations. In her attempt to articulate welfare needs, she states that it
designates a theater in modern societies in which political participation is enacted through the medium of talk. It is the space in which citizens deliberate about their common affairs, hence, an insitutionalized arena of discursive interaction. (Fraser, 1997, p. 70)

Fraser also maintains that the public sphere is ‘a conceptual resource that can overcome…problems’ (Fraser, 1997, p. 70). Her position aligns with Habermas’s view that the distinctions between state apparatuses, economic markets and democratic associations are essential to democratic theory. Although generally acknowledging that the public sphere is indispensable to critical theory, Fraser argues that the specific form in which Habermas has elaborated this idea is not wholly satisfactory.

constituting, functions of language that it studies: its aim is to describe the surface linkages between power, knowledge, institutions, intellectuals, the control of populations, and the modern state as these interest in the functions of systems of thought (1990, pp. 54-55).

71
Fraser interrogates Habermas’s theory and seeks to reconstruct it in four respects. First, where Habermas argues social differences can be overcome in a public sphere, Fraser (1997) argues the essential need for the ‘elimination of social inequality’ (p. 92). Second, where Habermas favours a single comprehensive ‘public sphere’, Fraser argues that a multiplicity of public spheres is preferable to a single sphere in both ‘stratified and egalitarian societies’ (p. 92). Third, while Habermas argues that discourse ‘should be restricted to deliberations about the common good and that the appearance of “private interests” and “private issues” is always undesirable’ (p. 92), Fraser asserts that in certain cases discussion must countenance ‘not the exclusion but the inclusion of interests’ (p. 92). Last, while Habermas maintains that the public sphere requires a sharp separation from the state, Fraser argues for ‘both strong and weak public spheres to theorize the relationships between them’ (p. 92). Through her arguments, Fraser identifies a new ‘postbourgeois’ conception seeking to remove the taint of social inequality from discourse.

In her conceptualisation of the politics of welfare needs, Fraser (1989) shifts our focus from that of needs to the ‘struggle over needs’ by identifying the competing power-play that confuses a rational approach to problem solving (Fraser, 1989, p. 162). Fraser illuminates the ‘politics of needs interpretation’ by defining the contesting discourses which compete with one another and develops a language to study and express these conflicting forces, coining the term needs talk. In her analysis of the way in which welfare needs are articulated, Fraser provides a ‘map’ of the axes along which these discourses compete. What this sort of theorizing allows is an investigation that is premised on the view that the needs of students at the Conservatorium might not be a simple matter of excellence-in-performance ‘versus’ vocational necessity. Indeed, this binary formulation may well obscure more complex ways in which the struggle to articulate the needs occurs.

3.2.2 Types of needs talk
In adopting this approach, Fraser argues that needs talk ‘functions as a medium for the making and contesting of political claims: it is an idiom in which political conflict is played out and through which inequalities are symbolically elaborated and challenged’ (Fraser, 1989, p. 161). She identifies three major kinds of ‘needs discourses’ in needs talk generated by and for a number of different publics. Oppositional needs talk, according to Fraser, arises where needs are politicized ‘from below’ giving new social identity to subordinated groups. In response to oppositional needs talk, reprivatization needs talk emerges, allowing for articulation of entrenched needs interpretations that might have previously been ignored or denied (Fraser, 1989,
p. 172). By their very act of articulation of pre-oppositional claims, they simultaneously modify these ‘incorporating references to the alternatives they resist, even while rejecting them’ (Fraser, 1989, p. 172). In their denial of oppositional claims for legitimacy, they further politicise *needs talk*. While together, *oppositional* discourses and *reprivatization* discourses define one axis of needs struggle, a ‘second line of conflict’ according to Fraser, is no longer ‘politicization versus depoliticization’ but rather, ‘the interpreted content of contested needs once their political status has been successfully secured’ (Fraser, 1989, p. 173).

Fraser identifies yet a third axis of needs struggle, that being the role of *expert talk*. Forms of *expert talk* tend to be restricted to specialised publics through expert vocabularies and rhetorics and are closely connected with institutions of knowledge production and utilization, thus becoming a bridge discourse ‘linking loosely organized social movements with the social state’ (Fraser, 1989, p. 174). Erica McWilliam (1992) summarises Fraser’s notion of the complexities of this struggle:

> The terrain of social struggle... involves the contestation not only between politicised *oppositional needs talk* and the *reprivatization needs talk* of powerful organisational interests bent on shaping hegemonic needs interpretation, but also between *oppositional needs talk* and *expert needs talk* in and around the social state. These encounters in turn define additional axes of struggle which are highly complex in that social groups must continue to seek state provision while at the same time opposing administrative and institutional needs interpretations. (pp. 106-7)

Thus, any study of (student) needs is rendered, in Fraser’s terms, a very complex geometry in which the struggles to articulate needs are understood to be enacted in a multiplicity of ways through complex exchanges between individuals and groups of individuals. Further to these struggles, Fraser also cautions that ‘leaky’ or ‘runaway’ needs have the potential to generate alternative vocabularies and to challenge dominant discourses (1989, p. 169).

Fraser’s conceptual framework, as outlined above, is helpful in framing the struggle to define student needs as an effect of power relations within and outside the Conservatorium. When it comes to determining student needs in a curriculum, what is played out between hierarchies, teachers as experts, students and broader publics, is an ongoing struggle to articulate what each party has assumed to be relevant and axiomatic. This involves borrowing language, shedding language and developing new ‘hybrid’ ways of speaking.
3.2.3 From society to pedagogy - Elizabeth Ellsworth

Whereas Habermas and Fraser define the ‘spheres’ or ‘terrain of social struggle’ in which contestations occur, Elizabeth Ellsworth (1989) has further developed this concept in her interrogating of the role of individuals in their social struggle within pedagogical processes and activities. In her quest for a transformative pedagogy that challenges relations of dominance, Ellsworth (1989) ‘raises provocative issues about the nature of action for social change and knowledge’ (p. 297). She is skeptical of the critical pedagogy literature, arguing that ‘it is based on rationalist assumptions that give rise to repressive myths’, thereby perpetuating relations of domination in classrooms (Ellsworth, 1989, p. 297). She discloses her own struggles within the context of teaching an anti-racism course within a university by confessing that

[a]s I began to live out and interpret the consequences of how discourses of ‘critical reflection’, ‘empowerment’, ‘student voice’ and ‘dialogue’ had influenced my conceptualization(s)… and my ability to make sense of my experiences in the class… I found myself struggling against … key assumptions and assertions of current literature on critical pedagogy, and straining to recognise, name, and come to grips with crucial issues of classroom practice that critical pedagogy cannot or will not address. (1989, p. 303)

Ellsworth’s experiences led her to ask of herself and others ‘What diversity do we silence in the name of critical pedagogy?’ (Ellsworth, 1989, p. 299). She disputes the theories of educators who claim to be dedicated to ending student oppression through their acknowledgment of the socially constructed and legitimated authority.

Ellsworth challenges the three strategies that these educators propose to assist in the ending of student oppression (Ellsworth, 1989, p. 306). According to Ellsworth, the first strategy that ‘critical pedagogy’ advocates is to empower students by giving them ‘the analytical skills to make them as free, rational and objective as their teachers’ (Ellsworth, 1989, p. 306). Ellsworth, however, argues that, in the absence of an analysis of the institutionalized power imbalances between teachers and their students, strategies such as student empowerment and dialogue, while giving the illusion of equality, in fact leave the authoritarian nature of the teacher/student relationship intact (p. 306). In other words, according to Ellsworth, ‘it treats the symptoms but leaves the disease unnamed and untouched’ (p. 306).
The second strategy of ‘critical pedagogy’ is to redefine the teacher as learner, making the teacher more like the student in the sense that the teacher ‘relearns’ the object of study through the student’s less adequate understanding (p. 14). Ellsworth disputes this ideal, arguing ‘that this leaves the implied superiority of the teacher’s understanding and the undefined ‘progressiveness’ of this type of pedagogy unproblematised and untheorized’ (p. 307). In other words, the call to transformation and liberation of students can actually serve the interests of those academics who make it.

The third strategy proposed by ‘critical pedagogy’ theorists is to ‘acknowledge the “directiveness” and “authoritarianism” of education as inevitable’ and judge particular power imbalances between teacher and student to be tolerable or intolerable depending upon ‘towards what and with whom [they are] directed’ (Ellsworth, 1989, p. 307). Ellsworth disagrees with this third strategy, arguing that in such cases, authority becomes ‘emancipatory authority’. She cites Nicholas Burbules (1986), who argues that ‘acceptable’ imbalances are those in which authority serves common human interests by sharing information, promoting open and informed discussion, and maintaining itself only through the respect and trust of those who grant the authority (p. 108). Ellsworth states that this suggests that teachers make available for rationalist debate

the political and moral referents for authority they assume in teaching particular forms of knowledge, in taking stands against forms of oppression, and in treating students as if they ought also to be concerned about social justice and political action. (Ellsworth, 1989, p. 307)

In this context, the question of ‘empowerment for what’ therefore becomes ‘the final arbiter of a teacher’s use or misuse of authority’ (p. 307).

Ellsworth argues that in such a situation, she could not unproblematically bring subjugated knowledges to light when she is not free of her own learned experiences. Importantly, Ellsworth also asserts that, nor is any teacher free of these ‘internalized oppressions’ (Ellsworth, 1989, p. 307). She goes on to say:

I am ... suspicious of the desire by the mostly White, middle-class men who write the literature on critical pedagogy to elicit “full expression” of student voices. Such a relation between teacher/student becomes voyeuristic when the voice of the pedagogue himself goes unexamined. (1989, p. 312)

Ellsworth claims that power relations in minority groups make conventional dialogue impossible arguing that ‘no matter how committed the teacher and students are to overcoming
conditions...the imbalance of these relations and the way in which these injustices distort
communication cannot be overcome’ (Ellsworth, 1989, p. 316). Furthermore, she argues that the
very term ‘student voice’ is highly problematic as ‘it is impossible to speak from all voices at
once, or from any one, without the traces of the others being present and interruptive’ (Ellsworth,
1989, p. 312).

In summary then, due to the nature of the student body and its splintering into many sub-groups
of class, race, and gender, with the same voices being silenced and others ‘defiant’, the concept
of fostering student empowerment certainly in any ‘meta-political’ sense, appears unrealistic
(Ellsworth, 1989, p. 310). According to Ellsworth (1989), it is more useful to ‘theorize the
consequences for education of the ways in which knowledge, power, and desire are mutually
implicated in each other’s formations and deployments’ (p. 316). In this way, Ellsworth points to
the value of Fraser’s work.

Drawing on her own experiences in the classroom, Ellsworth suggests several ways in which
educational researchers can attempt to construct meaningful discourses about the politics of
classroom practices. First, she suggests that because all voices within the classroom ‘cannot
carry equal legitimacy, safety, and power in dialogue’, alternative ground rules for
communication need to be put in place (Ellsworth, 1989, p. 317).

Second, once there is acknowledged existence of affinity groups, rather than attempting to build a
democratic dialogue between individuals, a coalition must be built ‘among the multiple, shifting,
intersecting, and sometimes contradictory groups’ (Ellsworth, 1989, p. 317). Ellsworth suggests
this coalition-building should be defined not only in terms of what is shared but in terms of what
is not shared. These differences, argues Ellsworth, can be used as ‘an opportunity to build a kind
of social and educational interdependency that recognizes differences as “different strengths” and
as “forces for change”’ (p. 319).

Third, Ellsworth argues that interventions and the process by which they are arrived at have to
make sense - both rationally and emotionally - and interpretations have to be based on attention
to history, to concrete experiences of oppression and to subjugated knowledges (Ellsworth, 1989,
p. 320). In reflecting on her experience of working with a multi-cultural group of students,
Ellsworth concludes:
The terms in which I can and will assert and unsettle “difference” ... are wholly dependent on the Others/others... My moving about between the positions of privileged speaking subject and Inappropriate/d Other cannot be predicted, prescribed, or understood beforehand by any theoretical framework or methodological practice. It is in this sense that a practice grounded in the unknowable is profoundly contextual (historical) and interdependent (social). (p. 323)

If then, the point is to ‘unsettle difference’, not just simply to try to find it, then any inquiry into that practice is similarly contextual. What is needed, is a method of inquiry that can provide better questions rather than solutions, and a method that is reflexive rather than just simply descriptive or critical.

3.3 From pedagogy to method - Patti Lather

Like Ellsworth, Patti Lather (1991a) uses the situated pedagogy with which she is most familiar to disclose ‘how [the] very efforts to liberate perpetuate the relations of dominance’ (Lather, 1991a, p. 86). Lather places a central focus on how research and teaching methods can better challenge the relations of dominance. She attempts to address the problem through her analyses of how research and researchers function in relations of unequal power by calling into question the role of critical intellectuals concerned with using knowledge and engagement in potent ways’ (Lather, 1991b, p. 14). Thus, Lather questions Critical Theory, which she argues, in relation to ‘attempting to speak for others’, can be dangerous once it assumes an excessive faith in the powers of the reasoning mind on the part of subjects theorized. Her concern is its potential to ‘position the “oppressed” as the unfortunately deluded and the critical pedagogues as “transformative intellectuals” with privileged knowledge free of false logic and beliefs’ (Lather, 1991a, p. 94).

Again like Ellsworth, Lather voices her concern ‘with the dangers of researchers with liberatory intentions imposing meanings on situations, rather than constructing meaning through negotiation with research participants’ (Lather, 1991a, p. 13):

To make something available for discussion is to make of it an object. This suspicion of the intellectual who both objectifies and speaks for others inveighs us to develop a kind of self-reflexivity... With this self-reflexive context, the central question becomes: what would a sociological project look like that was not a technology of regulation and surveillance? (Lather, 1991b, p. 15)
In her search for a more emancipatory pedagogy, Lather asserts that there must be a shift in the role of critical intellectuals from that of the ‘universal spokesperson’ to that of a role of ‘cultural worker’ in order to dissolve ‘the barriers that prevent people from speaking for themselves’ (Lather, 1991b, p. ix).

In her quest to break down the distinctions between emancipatory research and pedagogy, Lather argues for a more collaborative, praxis-oriented, advocacy model,\(^{53}\) one that acts on the desire for people to gain self-understanding and self-determination both in research and in their daily lives (Lather, 1991b, p. x). She argues that, for researchers with emancipatory aspirations, ‘doing empirical research offers a powerful opportunity for praxis to the extent that the research process enables people to change by encouraging self-reflection and a deeper understand of their particular situations’ (Lather, 1991b, p. 56). Simply put, she is ambivalent about the researcher as saviour of the oppressed, whether they are students, staff or any other group.

In her struggle to rethink the role of those with liberatory intentions in the field of teaching, Lather has posed two questions (Lather, 1991a, p. 95).

> How can we position ourselves as less masters of truth and justice and more as creators of a space where those directly involved can act and speak on their own behalf? How do we do so without romanticizing the subject and experience-based knowledge?

A possible theoretical solution, she argues, is to ‘position intellectuals as other than the origin of what can be known and done, some positioning of ourselves elsewhere than where the ‘other’ is the problem for which we are the solution’ (Lather, 1991a, p. 95).

In other words, one way of overcoming the problem of relations of dominance between teachers and students is for pedagogues to ‘create pedagogical spaces where students can enter a world of “oppositional knowledges” and negotiate definitions and ways of perceiving’ (Bowers in Lather, 1991a, p. 101). The nurturing of these spaces, according to Lather, allows students to see ambivalence and differences not as an obstacle but as a way of working towards justice (Lather, 1991a, p. 101).

\(^{53}\) ‘Praxis oriented’ means ‘activities that combat dominance and move toward self-organization and that push toward thoroughgoing change in the practices of… social formation’ (Benson, 1983, p. 338). Lather uses the term to mean the dialectical tension, the interactive, reciprocal shaping of theory and practice which she sees at the centre of an emancipatory social science. She argues that those who do empirical research in the name of emancipatory politics must discover ways to connect research methodology to theoretical concerns and political commitments (Lather, 1991a, p. 172).
Through interweaving three themes, Lather indicates the implications that the quest for empowerment holds for research design. First she argues there is a need for reciprocity which implies a mutual negotiation of meaning and power and operates at two primary points in research - that between researcher and researched and between the data and theory (Lather, 1991b, p. 57). Second, she calls for dialectical theory-building versus theoretical imposition, explaining that the goal of the former is to create theory ‘that becomes an expression and elaboration of progressive popular feelings rather than abstract frameworks imposed by intellectuals’ (p. 62). Last, Lather calls for a conceptualization of validity ‘appropriate for research that is openly committed to a more just social order’ (Lather, 1991b, p. 66), one that ‘recognizes the power and political dimensions of the issue of demarcation’ (Lather, 2001, p. 241).

Such research, according to Lather, calls for similar scientific rigour to that of all qualitative research, but its multi-variable nature does not lend itself to scrutiny by the usual methodology to establish validity in qualitative research.55

3.3.1 Deconstruction

One way of achieving a more emancipatory and therefore more valid research, according to Lather, is through a deconstructing/deconstructive inquiry.56 Lather uses the term ‘deconstructive’

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54 As indicated by Hamilton and McWilliam (2002), notions of ‘progressive’ and ‘critical’ are not easily separated. Indeed, they are complicit with each other, in that critical standpoints tend to become integrated over time into ‘mainstream’ visions of a more ‘democratic’ society or pedagogy or other activity. What Hamilton and McWilliam note, however, is that notions of ‘difference’ are prone to collapse into the ‘familiar’ as this ‘mainstreaming’ process occurs. This might be understood, in Gramscian terms, as the ‘hegemonic principle’, i.e., the capacity to turn genuinely radical ideas into ‘safe’ versions of themselves. ‘The difference that difference makes’ may therefore be occluded, and so newly critical standpoints tend to work in this space.

55 The conventional criteria for judging validity and adequacy in qualitative research include internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity (Guba and Lincoln, 1989, p. 234). While these are, according to Guba & Lincoln (1981), perfectly reasonable and appropriate for logical positivism, they are unworkable for constructivist responsive approaches on axiomatic ground. In 1995, Lincoln shifted fully into an antifoundational discourse interested in research as relational and in fostering of action and social justice (Lather, 2001, p. 245). This resulted in a move beyond the search for uniform criteria and resulted in a call for ‘a profusion of situated validities, immanent validities, within the context of a particular inquiry’ (p. 245). Moss (1996) argues for a reflexive complementarity between varied approaches to the social sciences and urges toward a critical reflection on the very criteria of validity. She argues for the concept of validity to be enlarged to open up the field of assessment and permit the ‘learning to live with rival pluralistic incommensurable traditions’ (p. 28). Lather (2001) argues that there is a need to rethink the terms in which we address validity in such a way that it becomes a site of an attempt to transvalue the end of scientificity (p. 242). Although the debate over the problem of validity continues, Lather (2001) states that the exhausting discussion exemplifies how the effort to answer the problem is always ‘partial, situated, temporary’ (p. 244).

56 According to Lather (1991a), the deconstructive procedure involves three steps: (a) identify the binaries, upon which the argument in the text is constructed; (b) reverse or displace the dependent term from its negative position to
as a way of reading and defining a position in text. She sees deconstruction as the ‘postmodern equivalent of the dialectic’ in the sense that it allows examination of the constitutive effects of our uses of language through a ‘permanent critique of our own texts as well as others’ (1991a, p. 13).\textsuperscript{57}

She draws on Spivak to explain deconstruction as:

different from searching out the ‘weaknesses’ of an argument. Instead, the focus is on how we might be suspicious of the text itself, its own conditions of construction. This is a kind of reading ‘against’ the text, against the assumptions that shape it. ... [D]econstruction is not about destroying what we are against... it is about examining the limits of what we think we cannot think without, our most cherished assumptions. (Spivak in Lather, 1991a, p. 5).

\begin{quote}
My ‘cherished assumption’, as an academic, is for a vocationally related curriculum. This springs in part from my experience as a keyboard teacher at the Queensland Conservatorium since 1979. During this period, the Conservatorium has produced very few classical keyboard performers who have succeeded in making the proceeds of solo performance a significant part of their income. My views have been further influenced by my recent research into curriculum offerings at three American universities and the increasing unrest within the student and staff bodies regarding curriculum content (Carey, 1997). My position as a teacher of several disciplines within the keyboard area has, combined with these experiences, led me to question the relevance of a keyboard curriculum that continues to favour a strong performance oriented curriculum. However, I agree with O’Leary (1997) that my personal experience is not a self-authenticating claim to knowledge. I acknowledge like Scott (1991), that my experience is already an interpretation and therefore in need of interpretation. Ellsworth’s (1989) warning that we are always implicated in the very structures we are trying to change rings true for me.
\end{quote}

Lather argues that through this inquiry, intended liberatory pedagogy might function as part of the technology of surveillance and normalization in our work. She states this is because, rather than commenting on a text or practice in ways that define it, a deconstructive approach ‘links our reading to ourselves as socially situated spectators’ (Lather, 1991a, p. 101). Furthermore, it draws attention to ‘the variety of readings, the partiality of any one view and our implications in historical social relations’ (p. 101).

According to Lather (1991b), the accomplishment of deconstructing/deconstructive framework requires three key objectives. First, she observes the problems of description and interpretation

\begin{footnotesize}
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    \item a place that locates it as the very condition of the positive term; and
    \item (c) create a new conceptual organization out of the binary logic of the transcended text, one that is both and neither of the binary terms (p. 5).
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}

\textsuperscript{57} The terms postmodernism and poststructuralism are used interchangeably although there are some acknowledged differences. Lather (1993) differentiates the two terms as follows: postmodernism ‘raises issues of chronology, economics (eg. post-Fordism) and aesthetics whereas poststructural[ism] is used more often in relation to academic theorizing ‘after’ structuralism’ (p. 688). Postmodernism is thought by others e.g. (Waugh, 1992) to represent an era of thought which includes a range of theoretical approaches including poststructuralism. The core of postmodernism ‘is the doubt that any method or theory, discourse or genre, tradition or novelty, has a universal and general claim as the “right” or the privileged from of authoritative knowledge’ (Richardson, 2000, p. 928).
arguing that in deconstructive research we describe rather than inscribe in discourse (p. 90). This requires that we decentre our own ‘intrusive voice’, thus allowing for the articulation of other voices (p. 91). Second, Lather argues that we should understand the use of language as a narrative rather than being for the purpose of empirical validation. This challenges us to ‘vivify’ interpretation as opposed to supporting or proving it (Lather, 1991b, p. 91). By bringing the reader into the analysis, the text becomes a display and interaction of perspective fragmenting univocal authority (p. 91). Last, Lather affirms the importance of the social relations of research that mediate the construction of knowledge i.e. ‘who speaks for whom becomes a central question’ (Lather, 1991b, p. 91).

In examining this question in detail, Lather (1998) voices her concern in relation to what she argues is a demand for research in curriculum studies to be centered around such concepts as ‘empathy’, ‘voice’ and ‘authenticity’ as a movement away from scientific thought in education (p. 1). Sharing Lather’s view, Deborah Britzman (1997) warns that too often in poststructuralist research, there is a tendency to avoid the difficult story and our efforts fall back into the too easy to tell story of salvation via one sort of knowledge or another (p. 35).

Similarly Ellsworth (1997) warns of the risks of empathy in research and speaks against empathy as ‘the beautiful fit’. Instead she advocates counter-practices of querying, disidentifying, denaturalizing, defamiliarizing - producing difference instead of the same, arguing that ‘we need to act from the abject space of the between, to make that space material so that we keep it unsettled’ (Ellsworth in Lather, 1998, p. 3).

In attempting to address the problem of the ‘wish for heroism’ (Britzman, 1997) in poststructuralist research, Lather suggests troubling the ethnographer as ‘the one who knows’ and whose task is ‘to produce the persuasive text that elicits reader empathy’ (Lather, 1998, p. 1). She advocates more adequate methodology ‘toward a learning that can tolerate its own failure of knowledge and the detour of not understanding’ (Lather, 1998, p. 1). In terms of this study, this means an inquiry into students’ needs begins with a concern to challenge the residual elitism in the Conservatorium, while at the same time putting that very advocacy under scrutiny.
3.3.2 Reflexivity

Central to the validity of Lather’s deconstructive inquiry is the issue of reflexivity. Reflexivity demands that we interrogate ourselves regarding the ways in which our research efforts are shaped and staged around the binaries, contradictions and paradoxes that form our own lives (Lincoln & Guba, 2000, p. 183). Lather (1991b) argues that reflexivity is central to a study in order to make meaning of the researcher’s interaction with the data and the politics of creating meaning (p. 79).

According to Olesen (2000), reflexivity can provide every researcher with a set of resources that can ‘guide the gathering, creation, and interpretation of data as well as their own behavior’ (p. 229). Through reflexivity, researchers seek ways of demonstrating to audiences ‘their historical and geographic situatedness, their personal investments in the research [and] various biases they bring to the work’ (Gergen & Gergen, 2000, p. 1027). By bringing our own biases forward for scrutiny as ‘versions of reality’ rather than ‘the truth’ is, according to Lather (1991b), to ensure that we do not ‘impose our definitions of reality on those researched’ (p. 73).

In grappling with the issue of my own voice and, by implication, the nature of the account, Virginia Olesen (2000) offers a possible solution. She explains that

the dissolving of the distance between the researcher and those with whom the research is done and the recognition that both are labile, nonunitary subjects…steps beyond traditional criticisms about researcher bias… and leads to strong arguments for “strongly reflexive” accounts about the researcher’s own part in the research… and even reflections from the participants. (p. 229)

Put simply, while there is no innocent space for inquiry, the caution here is to ensure that research is always on guard against its own potential tyrannies.

3.3.3 Reciprocity

As indicated earlier, Lather (1991a) argues for a similar research process, one that involves both researcher and researched in a process of ‘self-reflection’ (1991a). In addition to reflecting on our own part in the research, she argues that we need to constantly use our research ‘to help

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58 Reflexivity is the process of reflecting critically on the self as researcher, the ‘human as instrument’ (Guba & Lincoln, 1981).
participants understand and change their situations’ by building varying degrees of reciprocity into our research design (1991a, p. 57).

In her own research with Chris Smithies in *Troubling Angels* (1997), Lather demonstrates how reflexivity and reciprocity in research can work to allay the concern that researchers have in relation to emancipatory research. Likewise, in her post-positivist analysis of student teacher needs, McWilliam (1992) also demonstrates the importance of reflexivity and reciprocity by retrospectively critiquing her own methodology. By exploring a methodology of interactive interviews, McWilliam attempts to help students to confront their own ‘subjugated knowledges’ (Ellsworth, 1989, p. 309) by using Lather’s deconstructive inquiry ‘to encourage participants to analyze and explain their own writing and engage as co-theorists toward reciprocally educative processes’ (Lather in McWilliam, 1994, p. xi).

McWilliam’s reflections offer valuable insight and guidance for future researchers and are particularly relevant to my study since it is also examining the skilled development of students in undergraduate tertiary programs. Key features of McWilliam’s (1992, p. 271) reflection on her analysis include the following:

1. Her story telling approach was not nearly enough to interpret the tendency of her students to privilege her text as ‘the truth’ about their experience, and to passively presume their own presence in it.
2. Her questioning should have been conducted in a more ‘overt way’ in order to genuinely engage with students as co-theorists.
3. Reciprocity and negotiation in the context of unequal power relations need more interrogative research than narrative ‘exposition’ in order to open up possibilities for dialogic exchange.

In heeding McWilliam’s caution and in keeping with the emancipatory intent of this study, it is clear that this research design will need ‘to encourage self-reflection and deeper understanding on the part of the researched’ (Lather, 1991b, p. 60). Lather suggests the following procedures for achieving reciprocity in the research design:

1. To scrutinise data in a way that does not reify it.
2. To conduct interviews in an interactive, dialogic manner that requires self-disclosure on the part of the researcher.

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59 Reciprocity, according to Lather (1991b), implies ‘give and take, a mutual negotiation of meaning and power’ that operates at two primary points in emancipatory empirical research: ‘between the researcher and researched and data and theory’ (p. 57).
3. To use sequential interviews to facilitate collaboration and a deeper probing of research issues.
4. To negotiate meaning by involving research participants in a collaborative effort to build empirically rooted theory (1991b, p. 61).

3.3.4 Implications for design

There are important implications in design when using feminist poststructuralist theories. These are demonstrated by McWilliam (1994) who draws extensively on the work of the three feminist poststructuralist writers elaborated in this chapter. McWilliam uses the terminology and conceptual framework of Fraser to argue that both teacher education and social welfare needs are an item of expenditure for the increasingly anti-welfarist state.60

In her analysis of how pre-service teachers articulate their professional needs, McWilliam (1994) uses Fraser’s term ‘expert’ as an appropriate hinge word to link the many voices of both lecturers and students. She argues that the term ‘expert’ ‘is simultaneously both and neither of these categorisations, but well suited in terms of the perspectives of pre-service teachers’ (McWilliam, 1994, p. 65). In qualifying her position, McWilliam argues that

from [pre-service teachers] “bottom up” point of view, both dominant and avant garde discourse may be undifferentiated as teacher educator “expertise” which ought to be critiqued when failing to produce “expert” practices. The extent to which their courses are terrains of ideological struggle may simply be experienced as lecturers who “can’t get their (collective) act together”, or who are “so heavenly minded that they’re no earthly good”. This is especially so if the pedagogy through which “teacher knowledge” is disseminated appears hierarchical, monologic, sterile or laissez-faire. (1994, pp. 65-66)

Since previous reviews of the curriculum at the Conservatorium have been limited to a ‘top down’ approach, McWilliam’s concept and application of Fraser’s theory may provide an alternative understanding of unresolved problems. Furthermore, as demonstrated by McWilliam (1994) in her study of the needs of pre-service teachers, Fraser’s analysis of the ‘struggle for hegemonic needs interpretations’ in late capitalist society (1989, p. 173) can be meaningfully applied to struggles over ‘educational’ needs as a dimension of ‘welfare’ (p. 72). It might also be argued that the pedagogical ethos similar to that described by McWilliam exists at the Conservatorium, as a superficial examination of the ‘expert practices’ appears to reveal a

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60 McWilliam (1994) states that initial teacher education may be regarded as a form of social welfare in that it makes large financial demands on the public purse and, as such, is subject to constant scrutiny about whether it is achieving the ‘right’ objectives. Like welfare work, the work of teacher educators is a type of politics ‘in which the “truth” [about schools and teaching] is produced and contested’. And like welfare work, these discursive versions of appropriate
hierarchical culture perpetuated by the traditional tutorial system of one to one teaching. This
form of teaching is well described by Uszler (1993) who states that ‘the master is the model who
demonstrates, directs, comments and inspires [while] the apprentice is the disciple who watches,
listens, imitates, and seeks approval’ (p. 584). This model could be seen to promote what Cuff,
Sharrock and Francis (1990) describe as ‘preparing students for a compliant role…equipping
them with the knowledge to do the relevant work and with attitudes making them accept
authority’ (p. 124).

As outlined earlier in this chapter, there is a dominant way of speaking ‘student needs’ as a
binary debate. On the one hand, there are those experts who argue for a more traditional
performance training at any cost, thereby supporting the elitist view that while many are called,
few are chosen. On the other hand there are those experts who are inclined towards a more work-
place-oriented curriculum that addresses the need for diversification and multi-skilling for
occupational needs. However for students at the Conservatorium, curriculum needs are
articulated through many competing discourses, as these competing positions are themselves
located in, and competing with, needs discourses that are constituted out of larger political
realities and shifts in the nature and value of knowledge itself.

As a tenured academic at the Conservatorium, it is my ‘expert’ opinion that this Conservatory
model of teaching which is relatively strict, authoritarian and mechanical, has resulted in many
keyboard students displaying an inability or reluctance to express a considered opinion outside
the guidance or directions of their performance teachers.

Given that a major focus of this study is on analysing how students perceive their own needs in
the academy and how this changes over time, Fraser’s analysis of ‘the politics of needs
interpretation’ in welfare (1989, p. 163) appears most appropriate. Fraser’s demonstration of the
multiplicity of types of needs talk that continue to be recreated and contested in a highly political
struggle, is useful in interpreting and better understanding student needs in the academy.
Furthermore, her understanding of needs talk as both political and politicizing enables the
complexity of relevance of the curriculum to be more fully investigated (p. 169). Because it has
also been recognized that the issue of curriculum relevance is not just a simple matter of
‘performance-versus-vocational studies’, a further advantage of drawing on Fraser’s work is that

practice are neither fixed nor pure, but are constantly shifting, accommodating, resisting, threatening to collapse, and
being shored up by a variety of publics (pp. 16-17).
it provides new vocabularies that allow for the transcending of binary categorizations eg., teacher/student; institutional/personal; vocational/performative.

For Fraser, needs discourses are political when matters are ‘contested across a range of different discursive arenas and among a range of different discursive publics’ (1989, p. 167). If the ‘needs’ of Conservatorium students are discursively organised, and if this organisation is in a constant state of struggle, then the object of a study of needs must explore the tensions and accommodations between the discursive practices of policy makers, academics and students as arenas of daily struggle over needs articulation.

3.3.5 Discourse analysis: Turning talk and text into data

In order to understand and examine the complex and ongoing ‘needs’ struggle being enacted within the Conservatorium, the study in this thesis focused on discourses as systems of language use, drawing on Fraser’s framework of discourse analysis (DA) to provide a rigorous framework for understanding how needs are articulated.

According to Silverman (2001), because discourse analysis is quite heterogeneous, it is difficult to arrive at a clear definition (p. 178). He does however state that discourse analysis focuses on how different versions of the world are produced through the use of interpretative repertoires, claims to ‘stakes’ in an account, and constructions of knowing subjects (Silverman, 2000, p. 826). Potter (1997) suggests that discourse analysis has an analytical commitment to studying discourse as texts and talk in social practices; it is particularly concerned with rhetorical or argumentative organization (1997, p. 146).  

Before moving to the analysis, it is necessary to provide some definitional clarity, particularly in relation to the use of the word ‘talk’. Silverman (2000) contends that talk is a feature of both formal and informal interactions. In this thesis ‘talk’ is taken to mean both formal and informal

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61 The concern with the rhetorical organization of talk and texts, Potter (1997) argues, has given DA three unifying assumptions (p.146):
- Anti-realism: DA is resolutely against the assumption that we can treat accounts as true or false descriptions of ‘reality’. It emphasizes the way versions of the world, of society, events, and inner psychological worlds are produced in discourse.
- Constructionism: DA is concerned with participants’ constructions and how they are accomplished and undermined.
- Reflexivity: DA considers the way a text is a version, selectively working up coherence and incoherence, telling historical stories, presenting and, indeed, constituting and objective, out-there reality.
spoken data rendered as text. This ought to be differentiated from Nancy Fraser’s term *needs talk* which is a theoretical idea that addresses discourse.

While some discourse analysis studies use transcripts of talk from everyday or institutional settings, others are based on transcripts of open-ended interviews, or on documents of some kind (Potter, 1997, p. 146). However, it is not unusual for these different materials to be combined together in the same study. In keeping with Fraser’s framework of discourse analysis (1989), which advises that discourse is concerned with a wide range of forms of articulation, both written and spoken, data for this study came from a plurality of sources which are nevertheless local, and highly focused on the matter of keyboard curriculum relevance. It came from relevant texts (i.e. texts about what is relevant to student needs) that have been management-generated, staff-generated and student-generated.

Silverman (2001) argues that texts are based on transcriptions of interviews and other forms of talk. He uses the term ‘text’ to identify ‘data consisting of words... written in documents or spoken by interview respondents’ arguing that the ‘mere act of transcription of an interview turns it into a written text’ (p.119). According to Silverman (2001), ‘written texts may also include...e-mail messages and official documents’ (2001, p. 128). In this study, ‘text’ is understood to be an instance of writing or speaking which conforms to certain discursive rules. It refers to data such as official documents, e-mails and transcripts of interviews. In keeping with the advice of Lather (1991a), Mishler (1990) and Silverman (2000) who argue that discourse analysis depends upon very detailed data analysis to make it effective, in this study a limited body of data was drawn upon from each of the above sources.

Three data sources of management-generated, staff-generated and student-generated texts were examined:

1. Key institutional documents.
2. Staff feedback to open ended questions, (including staff minutes; course outlines; formal and informal email).
3. Student feedback to open ended questions, (including email, fragments within course policy documents).

The first of the data sources, institutional documentation, exists in public relations documents such as:

1. Marketing material.
2. Policy documents.
3. Curriculum development.
4. Minutes of meetings.

The materials are understood as ‘social facts’ that are ‘produced, shared and used in socially organized ways’ rather than as ‘transparent’ representations of the truth about student needs (Atkinson & Coffey, 1997, p.47). The implications for this are clear. These documentary sources should not be used as surrogates for other data. In other words, we cannot learn through records alone how an organization actually operates day-by-day nor extrapolate a set of underpinning beliefs about or within the institution. The approach to documentary data, therefore, must be ‘for what they are and what they are used to accomplish’ (Atkinson & Coffey, 1997, p. 47). The publications and documents in this research were used for the purpose of providing an understanding and insight into how truth about ‘student needs’ is constituted in the Conservatorium. Slices of texts were examined to investigate the possible contestations and struggles between administrators and other related opinion.

The second data source for textual analysis is ‘academic talk’. Language generated through oral and written accounts was examined in order to identify the tensions and contestations within and across ‘expert talk’. ‘Academic’ sources were deemed to be those officially sanctioned by the Conservatorium as curriculum documents, namely, program and course outlines that have been staff-generated. However ‘academic talk’ was also sought by way of unstructured interviews with academic staff who are employees of the Conservatorium enlisted to teach formal curriculum studies. These were transcribed for analysis.

The third data source is ‘student talk’. Evidence of student language and all its complexities was examined through the following oral and written accounts. These included formal and informal email, student evaluations and unstructured interviews (transcribed for analysis) or spoken mode (audio recordings). These data sources provided a vehicle for eliciting students’ thoughts and feelings in order to provide an insight into their views of curriculum needs.
3.3.6 Research subjects

The research was conducted in three stages. In phase one of the research, all keyboard staff, recent graduates and keyboard students currently enrolled in the undergraduate curriculum were initially invited to provide feedback to a small number of open-ended questions, namely:

1. What do you think Conservatorium students need to know?
2. So what do you consider our music undergraduate curriculum should include?
3. Is that happening here?

These questions were purposely designed to allow for the transcending of binary categorisations (Fraser, 1989) in order to avoid the impasse that has curtailed many previous debates. They were designed to gather information not only about student needs, but also the matter of the ‘fit’ between the undergraduate course design and versions of curriculum relevance perceived by the students themselves.

The possible participants for this first phase of the research were:

1. A total of nine keyboard department staff who fall into two main categories.
2. A total of six recent (i.e. 2001) keyboard graduates.
3. A total of thirty-four keyboard undergraduates enrolled in the three-year program (*Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University, 2002c*).

The second phase of the study was based on the responses to the above questions. These were examined and analysed in terms of the sort of power relations that is represented within them. Key factors for the selection of research subjects for this second phase included:

1. A representative sample of the two main categories of keyboard staff.

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62 Ethical clearance for the above collection of data for analysis was given by both Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University and Queensland University of Technology. Participation was voluntary and anonymity has been assured (See Appendix C). Details of the project and the initial contact letter, were distributed by the Director of Undergraduate Studies at the Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University. Phases 2 & 3 of the study were conducted while the researcher was on Academic Studies Leave for a period of six months. The researcher therefore had no teaching or supervisory contact with the participants.

63 See Appendix D

64 The two main categories of keyboard staff are: a) those who teach performance only b) those who teach both performance and academic courses. See Section 4.1.2 for more detailed explanation of each of these categories.

65 At the time this study was conducted (2002), in the first year of the course there were thirteen students in total: 3 males and 10 females. Of this total there were 5 overseas students and 8 Australians. In the second year there were a total of 12 students: 3 males and 9 females. Of this total there were 4 overseas students and 8 Australians. In the third year of the course there were a total of 9 students: 3 males and 6 females. Of these there were 3 overseas students and 6 Australians (*QCGU student class lists, 2002c*). The limited size of these cohorts means that the confidentiality and too ready identification of the subject could be at risk. A more detailed account of gender and of international/local status in each of the above categories has therefore not been outlined.
2. A representative sample of gendered difference and of Australian and overseas graduates.
3. A representative sample of undergraduate students in each level of the three-year undergraduate degree program in order to determine the extent to which attitudes over needs might change over the course of time.
4. A representative sample of gendered difference and of Australian and overseas students at undergraduate level.

Based on the above, the following participants selected for the second phase were:

1. A total of two out of nine keyboard staff.
2. A total of two out of six graduates.
3. A total of six out of thirty-four undergraduate students – two from each level of the three-year undergraduate degree program.

The second phase of the study involved a revisiting of the research issue with the above selected participants, through an interview with the researcher. The interviews were relatively unstructured and involved a more ‘interrogative’ research approach (McWilliam, 1994). Feedback from the participants was obtained through questioning and deeper probing of research issues, in order to open up possibilities for dialogic exchange.

The third phase of the research involved a follow-up interview between the researcher and each of the participants. In order to effectively capture how the participants use language to name their needs, in this phase of the research, the researcher reflections of the interviews were discussed with the participants. Participants were also encouraged to examine their own texts. This follow up interview took between one hour, and one-and-a-half hours.

3.3.7 Data analysis

The work of the analysis was to *vivify* or *display* the unity and coherence as well as the fragmentations and contradictions of these texts as discursive elements (McWilliam, 1994). The texts therefore, were analysed not just for the purpose of ‘illuminat[ing] the lived experience’ of students, but to ‘illuminate their struggles’ (Lather, 1991b p. 55). It was also hoped that these extended texts would allow for the exploration of the relationship ‘between the discursive construction of teaching and the versions of curriculum relevance that are shaped by competing versions of “[student] needs” struggling for hegemonic articulation in the text’ (McWilliam, 1994, p. 77).

The analysis examined the textual logic within and across the extended texts, using Fraser’s theorizing of power and needs. In Foucauldian terms (i.e. the epistemology that underpins
Fraser’s analysis), this meant noting the way in which the field of ‘student needs’ (or any other field) is discursively organized. The purpose of such an approach was look at how language about needs is also language about institutional power. For poststructuralists such as Fraser, the approach to discourse analysis such as that used by Jean Carabine (2001) is appropriate because it acknowledges the complex relationship between discourse and power relations in an institutional setting. In her Foucauldian discourse analysis, Carabine (p. 281), stresses the usefulness of the following:

1. Looking for evidence of an *inter-relationship* between discourses.
2. Identifying the discursive strategies and techniques that are employed.
3. Looking for *absences* and *silences*.
4. Looking for resistances and counter-discourses.

Fraser’s discursive categories are crucial for enacting this work, since the categories themselves have been arrived at by her own analysis of the complex interrelationship of competing discourses about needs. Thus, the categories refuse simple binary formulations of ‘needs talk’ such as, teachers as distinct from students, or, managers as distinct from lecturers. The fundamental task was to undo this logic and to reveal what it has not been possible to say about ‘student needs’, because of the way the vocation- or-performance binary organizes student needs in the Conservatorium.

Figure 3.1 is an attempt to simplify this complex analytical task in terms of its intention. What it shows, is how an ‘obvious’ categorization of ‘dominant’ and ‘progressive’ positions (i.e. ‘elite’ or concert artist versus student-centred ‘vocational’ curriculum), can be overturned by refusing this distinction in favour of an ‘avant-garde’ position which is both and neither of these binary terms. It is Nancy Fraser’s work (1989) that provided the lens for developing this ‘both-and-neither’ avant-garde category of discourses.

The analysis of the data sources (management, staff and student-generated) identified instances of this binary logic in the rhetoric of the texts and also identified propositions that appeared to counter this binary logic or appear to destabilize it. What was important here, was to keep open the possibility that oppositional or runaway needs may be articulated from a range of possible subject locations, and may also be identified working across subject groupings. The following questions were used as a starting point for identifying multiple locations and multiple relationships around needs:
1. How do the texts work as a set of propositions, i.e. what is the confusion, the struggle, what are the tensions in the text?
2. How is this contested elsewhere? (i.e. In what way do any of the particular propositions in the text compete with, or contest the logic of experts?)
3. How are they legitimated as expert?
Figure 3.1 Overturning the binary in keyboard pedagogy

Task 1: "Description" of the dominant binary

- Elite position
  - Performance
- Progressive position
  - Vocation

Task 2: "Re-description" : deconstructing the binary (Fraser)

- Expert Talk (Dominant discourse)
  - performance/vocation
- Oppositional Talk (Avant garde discourse)
  - ?? both & neither

Task 3: Identification of political issues:
So what for pedagogic relations?

- power relationships
- tensions
- contestations
- institutional culture

- what possibilities?
- what new tensions?

Towards a New Understanding of Needs Struggle
as a Politics Within the Conservatorium
(as a discursively organised site)
3.3.8 Summary

When taken together, Chapters 2 and 3 have provided a rationale for the study and have elaborated a number of key imperatives that have informed the design of this inquiry. First, the literature review and issues raised by Ellsworth and others have demonstrated that a key imperative for the design is that, the struggle over needs is constantly shifting. It is not static. When it comes to determining student needs, issues such as the rapidly changing cultural landscape, difficulty of unemployment and present student disquiet are clearly important. However, the struggle over needs is neither transparent nor simple in terms of its characteristics. The design therefore, needed to have an understanding that pedagogical questions are not so easily resolved in terms of what it means to do the right thing by students.

Second, the contestations that occur in relation to determining student needs are not restricted to staff and student struggles over course requirements, but take place within a much larger political agenda. The nature of the struggle over student needs in the Conservatorium has been demonstrated to be about issues of power – the power to articulate what version of needs talk is to be legitimate and thus what investments are to be made in terms of pedagogy and resourcing. It followed that a key imperative for the design was an educative research model that had regard for the (discursive) context of power relations in which the research was carried out.

Third, the nature of student needs is a discursively constituted struggle. Needs are contested and articulated through discourse which is not pure but is a complex tapestry. The struggle over needs is articulated through systems of language use that make possible and de-limit what can be said and thought. The design therefore needed to have a capacity to examine the systems of language use that people employ (whether in policy documents, minutes of staff meetings, interviews etc) to speak their ‘truth’ about needs.

This chapter has provided an overview of the contestation within the Conservatorium in relation to student needs and has provided a conceptual lens with which to examine the complex and ongoing struggle to articulate student needs that is being enacted within the Conservatorium in the curriculum, and a design, as one possible investigation of student needs. The following chapter will provide a poststructuralist reading of student needs at the Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University - specifically using Fraser’s framework of discourse analysis and theorizing of power and needs.
Chapter 4

Poststructuralist reading of student needs

This chapter provides a poststructuralist reading of student needs at the Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University – specifically using Fraser’s framework of discourse analysis and theorizing of power and needs. As was made clear in Chapter 3, the purpose of this reading is for an understanding of how needs are articulated and discursively organised in the Conservatorium.

I argued in the previous chapter that by drawing on Fraser’s notion of politicised needs talk, (i.e. Reprivatization, Oppositional and Expert talk), it is possible to overturn the binary debate (i.e. ‘elite’ or concert artist versus student-centred ‘vocational’ curriculum) and reveal what it has not been possible to say about ‘student needs’. The textual data under scrutiny, management-generated, staff-generated and student-generated text, were examined to identify instances of this binary logic and were also examined to identify any propositions that appear to counter or destabilize it. What was important here was to keep open the possibility that the discourses may be articulated from a range of possible subject locations and may also be identified working across subject groupings. The questions used as a starting point for driving the analysis of these texts and for identifying these multiple locations and relationships were:

1. How do the texts work as a set of propositions, what is the confusion, the struggle, what are the tensions in the text?
2. How is this contested elsewhere: (i.e. In what way do any of the particular propositions in the text compete with, or contest the logic of experts)?
3. How are they legitimated as expert?

As stated in Chapter 3, for poststructuralists such as Fraser, the approach to discourse analysis such as that used by Jean Carabine (2001) is appropriate for this purpose. As outlined in Chapter 3, the analysis was therefore framed by:

1. Looking for evidence of an inter-relationship between discourses.
2. Identifying the discursive strategies and techniques that are employed.
3. Looking for absences and silences.
4. Looking for resistances and counter-discourses.

This chapter is organised into three sections. The first section interrogates institutional documentation and thus the initial data under scrutiny were provided by marketing materials, policy documents, curriculum development and minutes of meetings. The purpose of examining
these publications and documents for this study was to provide an understanding and insight into how truth about student needs is constituted within the management documents of the Conservatorium.

The second part of the analysis puts under scrutiny the textual documents that have been staff-generated. This came from curriculum documents, namely, program and course outlines that have been staff-generated. However, the main focus of the analysis was the examination of instances of text generated through oral and written responses to the three open-ended questions and unstructured interviews with academic staff (see Section 3.3.6 and Appendix D). The analysis aimed to investigate the possible contestations and struggles between staff and other related opinion.

The third part of the analysis examines student language through oral and written accounts including student evaluations and unstructured interviews. Again the purpose of this approach was to investigate the possible contestations and struggles between administrators, staff and student opinion.

The final task of the chapter is to re-interrogate the analyses to generate a meta-reading about the deep structures of language that organise ‘needs talk’ across these sites of language use.

4.1 Management-generated texts
The Conservatorium, like most other tertiary institutions and organizations, produces policy documents, marketing materials, brochures and course information to sustain, augment and evaluate its work. As indicated earlier, the aim of the analysis of these documents was to identify the binary logic in the rhetoric of the texts and also identify how the texts work as a set of propositions. As stated in Chapter 3, these materials are understood as ‘social facts’ that are ‘produced, shared and used in socially organized ways’ rather than as ‘transparent’ representations of the truth about student needs (Atkinson & Coffey, 1997, p.47). For the purpose of this thesis, only selected elements of text are incorporated into this chapter, given that it is these specific elements that are the focus of this analysis.

The Conservatorium, according to its vision statement in the Strategic Planning document (2001b), is ‘a dynamic music making community inspiring the contemporary musician to create,
communicate and engage’ *(Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University, 2001b, p. 3)*. This document further states that

The Conservatorium’s primary emphasis is in the maintenance of music as a living art form... Students undertake a range of generic and ensemble studies that promote business development and life skills. ...These are designed to prepare flexible and well-equipped artists for a range of musical and related artistic and industry outcomes. ...The Conservatorium is committed to remaining at the leading edge of teaching and learning practice in music education and development. The changing role of the musician and the great diversity of employment and music-making opportunities informs (sic) our programs and techniques to ensure that the Conservatorium student emerges equipped and confident to take a role in contemporary artistic life. *(2001b, p. 2)*

What is of interest here is an ‘ideal’ of service which involves ‘great diversity’ ‘opportunities’ and the notion of ‘a living art’ all at the ‘leading edge of practice’. The above terminology reflects highly idealistic talk and an expression of both desire and commitment to both individual skill development and to personal development.

The goals and commitments of the management are also outlined in the Conservatorium’s *Mission Statement* which states that the ‘QCGU exists to support the development of the creative musician through progressive teaching and learning and community interaction, underpinned by integrated professional practice and innovative forms of research achievement’ *(2001b, p. 3)*. In pursuit of this mission, several values considered by management to be of importance are outlined including:

1. Rigorous standards of scholarship and music practice.
2. Innovation in the pursuit of excellence.
3. Lifelong learning and personal development. *(2001b, p. 3)*

According to the *Strategic Plan 2001-2003* *(Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University, 2001b)*, the first measure of critical success for the Conservatorium is ‘undergraduate and postgraduate programs which meet student and industry needs’ *(p. 3)*. In pursuit of this goal, the document states that the Conservatorium aims to create graduates who are ‘committed to making a positive contribution to the future of contemporary musical practice’ *(p. 4)*. It is also committed to ensuring that the Conservatorium graduate ‘is an artist of quality with a strong sense of personal direction...[is] flexible, creative...[has] excellent communication skills, and is adaptable within a dynamic and constantly changing musical world’ *(p. 4)*. Finally, that ‘the
Conservatorium graduate is dedicated to the maintenance of music as a living art form of relevance to the broader community’ (ibid).

The above statements appear to articulate management’s commitment to preserving the quality of artistic and performance practice while acknowledging the need to meet the vocational needs of students. These documents clearly perform a sort of work for the institutional ‘quality assurance’ and shopfront. They are, however, primarily produced by Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) and are intended for other CEOs and government bodies.66 The audience for these artefacts therefore is not so much the students nor, it could be argued, do they occupy a predominant position in the daily thought of those who teach within the institution.

The main source of information more readily available for continuing and prospective students at the Conservatorium is the annual publication of the Undergraduate Degree booklet67 (Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University, 2003e). In addition to containing information on courses available, the above sources include an overview of performance graduates, career outcomes, an introduction to teaching staff and facilities available, including:

1. 607 – seat concert and opera theatre.
2. 200 – seat recital hall.
3. World-class recording and music technology facilities.
4. One of Australia’s most extensive and advanced music libraries.
5. More than 200 teaching studios, rehearsal rooms, offices and performance spaces. (Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University, 2003e, p. 3)

The role and achievements of the Conservatorium which are encapsulated on the inside cover of the glossy booklet state that, ‘since 1957, the Conservatorium has provided talented and committed young musicians with the guidance, inspiration and resources to achieve their artistic aspirations and prepare for a professional career in music’ (Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University, 2003e). Indeed, the principal source of information contained in this booklet focuses on attracting students and inspiring them to pursue their ‘artistic aspirations’ in preparation for a professional career in music.

66 The Strategic Plan Document (2001b) which contains the mission and vision statements is not readily available to students either in hard copy or on the website.
67 A copy of this is also available on the website http://www.gu.edu.au/academicprogramsandcourses/
Students can choose from one of three undergraduate degrees. As outlined in the *Undergraduate booklet* these include:

1. Bachelor of Music course.
2. Bachelor of Music – Music Technology.

The Bachelor of Music course, which is the focus of this study, is designed to provide students with an academic program that enables them to concentrate on their major area of study. It aims ‘to produce graduates who are highly skilled, musically adaptable and equipped to enter professional life as a creative and flexible 21st-century musician’ (*Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University*, 2003e, p. 10).

Graduates of this program, as stated under the ‘Career Outcomes for Bachelor of Music Graduates’ (*Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University*, 2003e, p.12), will be realistic, self-motivated, have a clear sense of direction and a repertoire of relevant professional skills acquired through practical experience, and, where possible, on the job training … The Bachelor of Music in Performance provides instrumentalists…with a strong professional platform from which to launch their careers in the performing arts. Graduates will have a clear sense of their professional options and requirements of these fields. They will also possess an understanding of the entrepreneurial needs of the performing artist working in instrumental… ensembles… the entertainment industry and community arts.

The publication further details the traditional professional roles that are open to those graduates ‘with appropriate levels of skill, drive and motivation’ (2003e, p.12). For keyboard players these include roles such as solo or ensemble players and accompanists’ (p. 12).

Examples of graduates who have realized such ‘artistic aspirations’ in terms of performance careers, are highlighted on Page 2 of the booklet. Performers named in this section come from various departments including, Keyboard, Vocal, Strings, Woodwind and Jazz vocal. They are readily recognisable by experts or by those who work in the field.68

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68 It is worth noting that all of the classical keyboard and instrumental performance graduates listed, graduated approximately between twenty and twenty-five years ago. One example is the classical pianist Piers Lane (p. 2) who graduated in 1978. It could be argued that the absence of graduation dates of these graduates might render the text misleading or confusing to a prospective applicant who may be unaware that there have been no keyboard graduates who have achieved such goals since this time. While, therefore, the promotional material contained in the booklet aims to excite student interest and encourage their performance aspirations, there is no commitment to informing students about ways of achieving such hopes or goals in a ‘dynamic and constantly changing musical world’ (*Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University*, 2001b, p. 4).
In addition to information published in the *Undergraduate booklet*, each department at the Conservatorium provides more specific and detailed information for prospective students. This information, which is primarily published for distribution at Open Day, and prepared by department heads, appears in the form of an information sheet. Information contained in this one-page document is largely intended to inform or convince prospective students and their parents of the advantages of studying at the Conservatorium. For intending keyboard students, the undergraduate information sheet (*Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University, 2003b*) for the Keyboard Department states that:

The Conservatorium possesses the human and artistic resources, and equipment to provide the best environment for the training, development and preparation of young keyboard players. You will get the most from us as you develop your commitment, curiosity, time-management skills and musical awareness. With hard work from us all we know we can attain the end we all desire: to give you the means to take your place as a fulfilled and functioning member of our industry and profession.

This document further states that when keyboard students ‘choose to study with us’, they will have the ‘best opportunity to develop...performance skills and apply them across the spectrum of solo, chamber music and accompaniment performance, and piano pedagogy’ (2003b). Other opportunities include:

1. Ample practice facilities.
2. Opportunities for performance: workshops, concerts and competition experience.
3. Visiting artists from leading overseas and interstate schools chosen for their outstanding combination of high-level performance and teaching.

Above all, the document states that the Keyboard department is ‘a division committed to maintaining its strong traditions and encouraging you to explore and expand your limits towards the goal of maximising your skills, commitment and enthusiasm’ (*Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University, 2003b*).

### 4.1.2 Staff and student-generated texts
The keyboard department at the Queensland Conservatorium, a ‘department for training in classical piano, harpsichord and organ’ (*Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University, 2003b*) is comprised of a total of nine full-time and part-time staff who fall into two main categories:

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69 Open Day is an annual event held by most Australian universities and is primarily intended to attract prospective students. Students and parents are provided with information about the institution and its facilities including resources and teaching staff.
1. Those who teach keyboard performance only.\textsuperscript{70}

2. Those (including myself) who teach keyboard performance in addition to the teaching of other academic courses.\textsuperscript{71}

The number of keyboard students enrolled in the three-year undergraduate Bachelor of Music program totals 34 (\emph{Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University, 2002c}). The number of students who graduate from the three-year undergraduate program varies from year to year. In 2001 however, a total of six keyboard students graduated.

As previously stated, all of the above staff, students and graduates were initially invited to provide feedback to three open-ended questions outlined in Section 3.3.6 and Appendix D.

1. What do you think conservatorium students need to know?
2. So what do you consider our music undergraduate curriculum should include?
3. Is that happening here?

These questions were designed to allow for the transcending of binary categorisations in order to avoid the impasse that has curtailed previous debate.

Responses were received from five out of a possible nine keyboard staff including:

1. 3 staff members (out of 6) who teach keyboard performance only.
2. 2 staff members (out of 3) who teach a range of academic courses in addition to keyboard performance (3.3.6).

Responses were also received from 23 (out of a possible 34) undergraduate students including:

1. 9 from an enrollment of 13 students in first year students.
2. 9 from an enrollment of 12 second year students.
3. 5 from an enrollment of 9 students in the third year of the course.

\textsuperscript{70} Keyboard performance refers to the area of ‘major study’. All keyboard students enrolled in the B.Mus program receive individual tuition in performance. There are two strands of ‘major study’ courses: a) ‘standard’ b) ‘intensive’. The majority of classical keyboard students are enrolled in the ‘standard major’ course, which entitles them to 50 minutes (1\textsuperscript{st} & 2\textsuperscript{nd} year) or 60 minutes (3\textsuperscript{rd} year) individual contact per week with their major study teacher (20 Credit Points). However, after completion of the first year of the program, students who meet appropriate criteria can apply to enrol in an ‘intensive major’ course which allows them 90 minutes individual contact per week with a major study teacher (30 CP). In 2002 there were six students enrolled in the intensive major (\emph{QCGU, 2002c}). Some major study teachers i.e. (keyboard performance teachers) also do a limited amount of teaching in the areas of chamber music or accompaniment studies.

\textsuperscript{71} Examples of academic courses include: Music Literature, Music Theory, Contemporary Contexts and Pedagogy (\emph{Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University, 2003b}).
Of the six graduates, it was possible to contact five only, all of whom responded.

Each participant provided extended writing to each of the above questions.72 From these responses, which as earlier indicated were examined and analysed in terms of the way in which student ‘need’ is articulated and how this connotes power relations, a total of two keyboard staff, six undergraduate students and two graduates were invited to participate in the second phase of the study which involved a more ‘interrogative’ and in-depth interview.

Two students from each year of the three-year undergraduate years of the program were chosen to participate in this second phase. As mentioned in the previous chapter, what was important for the researcher was to determine the extent to which attitudes over needs might change over the course of time. The group chosen not only spanned a range of years but were also a representative sample of gendered difference and of Australian and overseas students. Of the five graduates who responded, two were also selected for the second phase of the study on the basis of gendered difference and of Australian and overseas representation. The two members of staff selected were representative of the two main categories earlier outlined in section 3.3.6.

In order to provide the oral text generated in the first interview, the participants revisited their written responses to the three open-ended questions. This allowed both participants and the researcher to reflect on and provide an appropriate knowledge base and starting point for a more ‘interrogative’ interview. The data was analysed in order to generate a picture of overall trends through the identification of categories of responses. The findings revealed the following categories were the most frequently referred to by the interviewees.

1. Performance focus.
2. Career outcomes.
3. Generic transferable skills.
4. Cross-fertilisation of courses and areas.
5. Cultural ethos.
6. Equity of opportunity.

For the purpose of this thesis, only selected elements that are the central focus of this analysis are incorporated in this chapter. In applying Fraser’s (1989) notion of needs talk to discourse, I

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72 Three of the undergraduate students who responded to phase one of the research, requested that they not be contacted for phase two i.e. the in-depth interview.
initially wanted to examine the language the participants used and determine to what extent did
the needs interpretation ‘closely approximate ideals of democracy, equality and fairness’ (p.182).
I was also interested in seeing how closely the staff’s ideals related to the students needs
interpretations. To pursue this further, I attempted to look firstly for evidence of an inter-
relationship between the discourses of staff and students and secondly to probe the discursive
elements of text in order to identify the strategies and techniques that were employed. The
following interviews and the order in which they are analysed are therefore categorised in terms
of staff and student responses to each question.

The initials used in this analysis are representative of the following:

1. Academic staff: Academic One (A1) and Academic Two (A2).
2. First year students: Student One (S1-1) – Student Two (S2-1).
3. Second year students: Student One (S1-2) – Student Two (S2-2).
4. Third year students: Student One (S1-3) and Student Two (S2-3).
5. Graduates: Graduate One (G1) and Graduate Two (G2).

4.1.3 What do you think conservatorium students need to know? Staff-generated texts

The comments of the first academic staff member interviewed would appear to indicate a
dominant discourse of performance-centred practice. What was primarily important for this
participant was the need for keyboard students to have a strong ‘background’ and the ‘skills’ to
understand and relate the ‘musical, social and historical perspectives’ of repertoire to their own
performance practice.

Gemma: You have said that students need to know ‘the musical, social and
historical background from the time of Bach to the present’.

A1: Well I think it’s a matter really of having background so that the pieces
of the works being played are seen in some kind of historical and even
sociological perspective. By sociological I mean why is it, for example, that
19th century music develops the way it does from the way society is also
developing? One aspect of what I mean by the social aspect but, musically,
too, is just how it is that things develop, so that when a student, let’s say, is
playing what is obviously going to be a rather limited repertoire in
comparison to the whole, he or she knows in broad terms where it’s at and
how it got there and almost may be if he was playing that later music – how
that later music was influenced by the earlier music...
Gemma: The next point you mention in relation to what students need is ‘working knowledge of the principles of tonal harmony in counterpoint so that students have the ability to analyse musical structures’.

A1: Well I suppose this is more having the skills really, to know what it is that’s going on. I think we notice this with students that although they may take components of this they don’t seem to relate it to what they’re learning in a piece they’re performing.

It is clear that A1 is primarily focused on students having the knowledge to inform traditional performance practice. It is interesting to note that performance skills are not specifically named but rather implied. This becomes evident in the following statement.

Gemma: One final point you make is that students ‘need to know how to teach the piano’. Would you like to elaborate on that?

A1: Well, obviously they [students] do need to know how to teach. I know the apparent traditional divide between being a pianist or being a piano teacher which needs to be broken down. So when we say, ‘The need to teach the piano’, it’s the need to teach the piano from a point of view that you are also a decent pianist and that also that you have the – that you are within a culture where that’s not kind of a side line at all. And how to teach well...so that it actually starts to interface a little bit more with what they are hopefully doing in their own playing. I mean obviously you have to start on the ground floor but again they also need to link what they are doing in their own playing. I think this is the problem with students, they don’t establish links between one thing and another.

What is particularly noteworthy about this piece of A1’s text is that although teaching is mentioned, it is in the context of performer/teacher. Furthermore, it is the only career mentioned. A1’s responses to both Questions two and three not only also strongly reflect a performance focus, it is clear that A1 advocates a further strengthening of this area in the curriculum. In response to question two, ‘what do you think the curriculum should include’, A1 stated:

A1: All the above [i.e. musical, social and historical background] plus aural training and instrumental training...I mean obviously their instrumental training as in major study. I suppose that in recent times the students – at least after the first year, students have been able to really make their own way through devising a curriculum...Obviously there should be choices, but I think the idea...that students need to make their own choices, is...well as I’m fond of saying, they don’t know how much they don’t know – so, in other words, why shouldn’t they think they are going very well?

Gemma: So you’re suggesting they be given more direction in terms of what they actually need?
A1: Yes. Oh, yes. Hopefully before they get here - that would be the ideal world thing.

Academic One continued to articulate the need for students to be better informed before they actually come into the first year of their degree. In response to the question ‘Is that happening here’ (Question three), A1 replied:

A1: The structures may... need changing... There’s been a big shortfall, which is increasing, between what students actually know when they get here and what we - academic staff expect them to know when they get here. I don’t know that it’s anybody’s fault but somewhere along the track unless they’re very lucky – you know – of having a teacher who could take an overall view, these things don’t seem to sort of cross-fertilise enough. There is an inadequate background and training of the primary and secondary levels.

Gemma: Could you tell me more about this gap?

A1: Well, one thing, of course is that we’re producing the teachers who are teaching these people so if there is shortfall here, then the shortfall gets transferred back. I suppose this is also a cultural thing. You know even when you get extremely talented kids, they on the whole – their teachers don’t seem to make that link that they should go to the Conservatorium earlier. I mean I think of a student who I state was a very worthy person but I mean my goodness if he could have just had more expert teaching about two or three years earlier... You know there doesn’t seem to be a mindset there which says ‘You know – there’s a talented lad here. Maybe he ought to go to someone who is actually active as an artist’.

The second staff member, (A2), provided a more comprehensive text in response to all questions. Although A2 was reluctant to order the responses, in reply to question one, (What do Conservatorium students need to know) there was a particular concern about the notion of ‘preparing students for one particular job’ because ‘different people need very different sorts of things’. Rather, A2 argued:

It’s more and more evident that we need to be instilling good practices, be developing skills that will continue to grow as they go through their life. I suppose on the bottom line, I’m quite fond of this idea that we give them [students] generic transferable skills that will enable them to deal with a range of situations... rather than trying to actually give them the sum total of what they need... So it’s a matter of planting seeds, giving them the skills to be able to water those seeds and, hopefully, in a longer term, not when they graduate but for the remainder of their professional life...
Academic Two elaborated on the ‘generic skills’ required for performance and why they were important.

Being able to play the piano goes well beyond the concept of just practising and having lessons. It is about an engagement with the essence of what music and music making is over a long enough period...I’m not sure that it’s about knowledge which might be imparted as much as about a depth of experience both as performers and most importantly as listeners, a breadth of awareness, the ability to think critically and problem solve....

A2 emphasized that in terms of performance, ‘critical thinking’ was one such skill that is crucial for keyboard students.

A2: I suppose I would be very concerned if students feel that they can’t learn their [performance] repertoire on their own. You know exactly what we don’t want is reliance on teachers. We want the teacher to enable them to have the skills to apply their own ideas. I think it’s a very common problem in music institutions because we have come from a tradition that’s very much the ‘Master-Apprentice’ model. The master drops down his wisdom upon the student who picks up as little or as much wisdom as he can. The master has the solution, knows everything and this poor student is under that shadow. There is an attitude that the student is right at the bottom level, having to soak up as much of the good wisdom that the master/mistress demonstrates.

Highly developed communication skills, both verbal and written, according to A2 are also essential requisites.

A2: To be able to communicate it seems to me is important on so many levels. I mean clearly as a performer you have to communicate in a certain way but it’s not just the sound that communicates. I think music has too long suffered from that thought that, Well, if I just worry about the sound I make that’s all I – that’s my main responsibility. Certainly if students are going to teach and most of our graduates of course are, then at some point as part of what they do, even if they’re performers, you know, these days they need to be able to talk with audiences. They need to engage...convince people that their music is worth listening to.

It is clear that in relation to keyboard performance A2 advocates that students be provided with an ‘enormously rich range of experiences’ beyond that of mere preparation for the solo concert platform. A2 continues:

A2: A lot of people [students] when they get a sense of self-awareness, it’s sort of devastating that they’re not going to be the next Horowitz and yet
that’s not the goal of it really. The world of music is broad enough to encapsulate enormously rich ranges of experiences and they need to be tapping into the ones that are meaningful to them and not just thinking in professional terms but in deep human terms of why they’re doing it.

A2 does however concede that even when this self-realization occurs, the traditional career options for keyboard players that once might have existed are now limited, so students, in addition to having essential generic skills associated with performance, need to have other generic skills such as the ability to ‘write’ and research.

A2: I think the nature of the musical world is changing. There’s a sense in which fewer and fewer people are going to move into institutionalised jobs as a clear career path and most of our graduates will be required to make themselves useful in a range of different ways. Although there is actually plenty of music going on in our community and there is a rich array of possibilities out there, the thought that one will just graduate, move into a job and stay there for twenty years is actually not the way it is going to work. They [students] need to know that their professional options are limited and that they may need to make their own opportunities happen – be flexible enough to take on a number of professional roles. Performance on its own is certainly not enough. I think research skills are skills that all educated people need to have these days. We have to have graduates who can move and get employment in fields other than music and their musical degree should...provide them with useful tools and training to get those jobs.

A2 further explains:
A2: Music is not just about sound it is about physical, psychological and social factors and so interpersonal skills are a requirement of success in that direction. The piano is such a rich world and one can get lost in it in a way that sort of has it isolated from the world around it, but it’s really only in relation to the world around it that it has its meaning. I mean the physical, the psychological and social factors are all very different – the social one, though, you know seems to me the crucial one for pianists.

Gemma: Can you tell me a bit more about what you think the social factors are? Can you elaborate on that?

A2: A concentration on solo performance can result in a feeling of isolation, disappointment and a lack of interpersonal skills. I think that sense of how we train people to engage with others is something that we very often overlook. I think they [students] need to be able to be flexible enough to one day be playing music in a kindergarten and the next day perhaps in an old people’s home and if someone says at a party, ‘Do you know this song?’ They should be able to sit down and – you know – be useful. So that the model of just having a solo virtuosic repertoire seems to me less important than being actually flexible enough to engage with the social things of what people want their music to be.
And I mean even for me it’s something that I wish I’d had much more experience and training on when I was a student – you know – that sense in which – you know I was very precious and sort of removed from that. And I wish my sight-reading was better and I wish I could sit down at a party and play popular songs. So I think in terms of learning, we should be encouraging people to explore and build up some skills – and acknowledge those that do have it.

The use of words such as ‘precious’ and ‘removed’ in relation to performance skills seems to indicate that A2 equates the notion of performance with that of self-indulgence and removal from the real world. The proposition for the notion of performance to include more than just ‘solo’ performance is reinforced in A2’s responses to question two. When asked ‘so what do you think the curriculum should include’, the responses were both comprehensive and challenging of convention. First, A2 questioned the need for the traditional Master/apprentice model of teaching, offering an alternative method that A2 felt would be more ‘socially’ beneficial and ‘intellectually’ challenging.

**A2:** I think the way the individual lesson is sacrosanct and that leaves not enough money to do anything else except in big groups, is a really dangerous option. I’d much prefer if the core of the curriculum involved small groups for a number of reasons. I’m partly concerned with the social interacting thing – also tied up with the sense that I think they can learn off each other an enormous amount. I think there’s a sense in which that informal sharing of experiences is invaluable.

**Gemma:** Could you just go back and clarify that point for me.

**A2:** I suppose I would say that I consider the possibilities of group tuition offer some very real advantages if it’s done intelligently. I mean it seems to me that one might move that way, irrespective of the financial pressures to do so. It seems to me that [in terms of major study] even if there’s a lesson of three people simultaneously there’s a tremendous amount to learn there in terms of observing someone else’s problem, observing how a teacher deals with it and being drawn into the same situation. Clearly however, the teachers need to be skilled or trained to handle that situation. There are huge advantages that can be gained from the student perspective by sharing all of that awareness. I mean again, it comes back to the breadth of musical experience. One hour of intensive individual tuition is valuable, but if you had four hours of musical experience that showed you different repertoire, that showed you different things to consider, different ways of problem solving, different ways of working...then that has a certain richness that would be enormously valuable and in fact in terms of resources, is perfectly possible.

In response to the Third question, ‘Is that happening here’, A2 offered the following.
Gemma: You have also stated that for you, the solution is to offer courses which draw in a range of skills and training. You have also mentioned that the staff concept of the specialist who does one thing and considers every other aspect of music irrelevant or outside their interests or expertise is a serious problem------

A2: I think there are historical reasons for this. It goes back to what we were saying before about the ‘Master’ performer. It goes back to what seems to me to be a main trend of the mid-20th century. It was towards a specialisation that was ignoring anything outside of its particular domain. I think it’s a general change in the world that we have moved away from revering the specialists, towards actually trying to get a holistic understanding of topics that involve cross-disciplinary understanding and so – you know – it’s the way a lot of us in the staff have come through... that training with the belief that if we’re a specialist in one little area then that is sufficient. I think the world view is changed and it’s very threatening for us to adapt to that. But you know the thought that education really does have some responsibility of preparing the student for professional outcomes that are real – that are not idealistic, is deeply challenging the training that most of our staff had and that’s – you know – the major issue in I think probably every institution.

4.1.4 Student-generated texts – First year students

As mentioned in the previous chapter, when examining student needs talk, what was important for me as researcher, was to determine the extent to which attitudes over needs might change over the course of time. Because of the entry requirements for incoming graduates73, I felt it would be likely that the initial needs talk of the first year students in particular, would be idealistic and very much in favour of a performance oriented program. However their status as students in addition to their nine-month exposure74 to the institution also had within it the potential to generate forms of ‘defiant speech’ (Ellsworth, 1989). The interviews took place in late November 2002, at the end of their first academic year. The three open-ended questions however, were given to the students some three months earlier.

When the first of the First year students responded to the question of what students need to know, S1-1 initially wrote:

73 As mentioned in Chapter 3, entry requirements are and have traditionally always been reliant upon an audition process only. Academic achievement, while desirable, is not a pre-requisite for entry.
74 All participants initially responded to the three questions at the end of their first semester. Interviews were conducted in the middle of the second semester. A further interview was conducted with each participant three months later in order to allow them to further explain their own writing.
S1-1: I’m not quite sure what Conservatorium students need to know as yet.

However, when asked to elaborate on the original text three months later, Student One replied:

S1-1: Well, now I have a better understanding because I’m nearly at the end of my first year and in my opinion we should know everything that will prepare us to be good musicians.

Gemma: Could you tell me what you mean by a good musician?

S1-1: An all-round person, who knows about everything.

Gemma: Could you tell me what some of those things are?

S1-1: Um...maybe things about how to perform in front of people. I don’t know about the majority of people here, but I’m one of those people who are (sic) more interested in the practical side of things.

Gemma: When you say practical side, what do you mean by that?

S1-1: Ah like piano, performing solo performance and also chamber music and things like that. I think we need to apply our knowledge to our practical things. I think the subjects that are surrounding these things should be aimed in helping do these things.

Student One’s ideal notion of a performance-centred ‘practical’ curriculum is also strongly evident in the responses to questions two and three. In response to the former of these two questions, ‘So what do you think our curriculum should include?’ Student One’s suggestions once again were restricted to areas of a ‘practical’ nature.

S1-1: As a pianist, I would like to see the curriculum include more piano lessons. One lesson a week isn’t sufficient. Maybe two lessons a week would be much better. I also think the curriculum should include more practical aspects of music making... more performance and chamber music.

When asked ‘Is that happening here?’ Student One replied:

S1-1: Well no it’s not actually...We’re not having two piano lessons per week. That’s basically why I’m here. To do lots of practical things and I’d like to see more of that. I think the other stuff is important like theory, but I guess I don’t want to do different things at the same time.
Student One’s response to Question three would indicate that the curriculum should not only be all performance centred but that the inclusion of any other area is of secondary importance.

Student Two from first year indicated strong support for S1’s concept of the need for keyboard students to acquire strong performance skills.

S2-1: Conservatorium students need to know how to play the piano brilliantly.

Gemma: Can you elaborate on that?

S2-1: I just think we need more subjects that just focus on us as pianists in addition to our major study and accompaniment subjects. Other subjects like lectures and stuff that tell you about performance techniques and like maybe watch videos and analyse how people perform... more things to do with piano playing.

Although S2 was predominantly focused on performance-oriented needs, there was an awareness that in terms of providing career opportunities, the B.Mus degree might be limited. It is interesting to note however, that S2-1’s text reflects a presumption that post-graduate studies in music might more likely result in a secure job prospect.

S2-1: Conservatorium students need to have a clear sense of where they’re heading with this degree and what can be offered to them after graduation... after one year I still don’t really know what I can do with music. Like I love studying and everything but as a job – not really sure. I’d like to know what it’s like studying music overseas and the standards over there. I just get the impression that if you just finish with a B.Mus it’s probably not enough to get a job so may be you need to study more like do masters and doctorate in music.

Student Two’s responses to Questions two and three further reflect the desire for a performance-centred curriculum. When asked what ‘the curriculum should include’, S2-1 responded:

S2-1: I think pretty much, the undergraduate curriculum should have more to do with what instrument we are playing. It’s pretty much related to what I said before about watching videos and pianists and playing...

In terms of whether Student 2-1 thought that was ‘happening here’ the response was succinct:

S2-1: No. I would like to be able to study more subjects that I can relate to more as a piano student...In general I just wish first years could do more things like more piano subjects...Things to do with performance and technique and repertoire.
The predominant focus of the 1st year participants i.e. the acquisition of the skills required for classical performance, appears to reflect in many respects the views of Academic One, the first academic staff member interviewed. The responses appear to indicate a dominant discourse of ‘performance-centred’ needs, in that the comments are primarily centred on the need for traditional classical performance training even in relation to career prospects.

4.1.5 Second year students

For the Second year students, the emphasis on performance oriented skills ceases to be such a high priority. Indeed the focus of the talk changes from performance centred skills to that of skills required to be a ‘good musician’ or to ‘get a job’. What is particularly noteworthy about the following discursive fragments is that they are also informed by a dominant discourse of a desire for teachers to be more understanding of student needs. When Student One from Second year was asked what ‘Conservatorium students need to know’, the response was:

S1-2: We [Conservatorium students] need to be taught good practice time management skills but we also need to have information available to us on what opportunities will be open to us after we depart with a B.Mus.

Gemma: Could you elaborate on what you mean by ‘good practice time management skills’?

S1-2: Well, it’s all well and nice to come to the conservatorium to be taught music, but its also important to be taught how to manage the time to be practising, to achieve that end goal performing that piece for the end of your recital. I mean it’s nice, ...you know the teachers are great staff – they help us through musically, but we also need the stepping-stones from which it comes. We come to a lesson and it’s already expected that the music is ready to a certain standard where the teacher can work with you *musically* without having to worry about technical issues. It seems that the teachers, our major study teachers, some of them if not most are renowned performers themselves and have gone to a conservatorium – and would have a fairly high standard of performance which would have come from practising, so it’s all about how you practise to get to the performance as well as practising performance.

Despite S1-2’s emphasis on the need to develop ‘more efficient time and practice management skills’ in relation to performance practice, it is clear that S1-2’s concept of what students need to know extends beyond the First year’s ideal of performance centred needs and of ‘mainly having courses relating to being able to perform in front of people’.
S1-2: [Conservatorium students need to know] what job opportunities in particular are available, because when we leave... ah a lot of students are saying “well we’ll have our B Mus and I don’t know what we’ll be doing or where there is work for us”. For piano majors in particular, there are not too many opportunities, unless you become a repetiteur or accompanist full time or things like that. But it isn’t made known to us where these opportunities can be found as such, and we’re sort of left to our own devices to find them. Maybe I’m not looking hard enough perhaps...but I think the Conservatorium is a good place to let us know, you know some life skills – they should show us how to make it in the real world with a music degree.

Unlike the two First year students, this Second year student’s concept of a musician extends beyond the notion of just ‘performing and concentrating the practical side of things’, or of being able to ‘play the piano brilliantly’.

S1-2: In addition to what opportunities there are out in the real world, we need to have an overall idea of what music is all about, not just being able to play an instrument and that’s it. You know, having some theory obviously behind you, some historical background... you know to be a musician, not just a musical performer of an instrument.

This Second student’s concerns in terms of employment prospects are further reflected in the response to Question two. When asked to comment on what the ‘curriculum should include’ S1-2 responded:

S1-2: I think the undergraduate curriculum should include workshops, seminars or classes to help us realise our full potential...We also need more emphasis on developing ourselves as all round musicians, not just performers of our instruments. Some, if not most of us might become part-time teachers when we leave because that’s where we’ll...be able to or just have to find some work to make money. We need guidelines on how to teach you know youngsters...or how to teach older people and have the knowledge of music behind it, the theory and all that... not just the practical side...I also think the undergraduate curriculum should include knowledge of more avenues of work - if they’re available!

In terms of ‘Is that happening here’ this student responded:

S1-2: Well no, not that specifically. But you know if things were better publicised at the con students might say “Oh, that looks fairly interesting I might give that a go”...You know if they put up posters or notices, more about personal development, positive practice routines, personal help to make ourselves more aware as a person as well as a musician and including
more information on possible opportunities after we finish the degree in music. You know...show some encouragement - that’s what is lacking here...and the floodgates open and everything’s gone downhill.

In the text provided by the other Second year student (S2-2), it is clear that there is strong agreement and support for the need for students to know more than just performance skills. According to this student, they need to have an overall idea of ‘what the music world is all about both during and upon completion of their BMus degree’.

S2-2: Conservatorium students need to know what they’re getting themselves into right from the start. Before entering the Con I think students need to be more fully informed as to what they will be studying and learning in their course. They need to be enlightened on how tough life can be as a musician out there in the world and need to be aware of the avenues opened to them.

S2-2 elaborates further, providing a more detailed and discursive talk of why this knowledge is imperative.

S2-2: Well it is so easy to get into the Con if you are a good performer. They don’t look at the other areas so students think they can get by just from a performance point of view, but there is so much more to it it’s not funny. You can be a brilliant performer but if you can’t do the aural side of it or you don’t know how to study, and if you don’t know how to do or have a basic understanding of theory then you are let down – it’s not much fun. So students need a lot of academic help... I think half of the students don’t understand what they need to be doing and they really need to know the support services available to them in times of need – they need to realise when they need their help they know how to get it.

Gemma: So what do you mean when you say support services?

S2-2: Academic help but also – well I know everybody has bad [piano] lessons but sometimes they just keep building up and you start to think, “Do I really want to put up with this? Do I really want to be here?” I mean they’re all wonderful teachers here but I get the feeling sometimes they don’t understand how busy and committed all the students have to be to their other subjects. I know my own [major study] teacher doesn’t understand my desire to get High Distinctions in my other subjects and when my piano is not quite up to the standard, the heavens fall basically.

Student Two’s response to the second question, ‘what do you think our curriculum should include’ suggests that in addition to including more courses that might relate to job prospects,
there not only needs to be less importance attached to solo performance but a greater understanding of what effect this focus has on all students.

Gemma: You have also suggested that the curriculum needs to prepare students for life outside the Con.

S2-2: The curriculum needs to show students how diverse the music industry world can be which will open up more opportunities for them...A lot of students tend to just go through their course and then suddenly they get to the end and think “Oh what now? Can I go and study something else? Can I go back to school?”...A lot of them don’t know what they can do or what’s available.

S2-2: The curriculum could also include more support from the university – more available counselling or professional counselling from those who can relate to student situations...There is a lot of focus on solo performance and there’s a high level of competition and rivalry among students. I think the undergraduate curriculum however, should include more encouragement across all levels of the year –not just the stars...

Gemma: Could you explain more about that?

S2-2: It sort of relates to the major study teachers. A lot of them tend to pick out the really good ones [students] and tend not to show much attention to the lesser students, the ones who aren’t child prodigies or the ones who don’t want to be concert pianists – the ones who just want to do their BMus and then go and teach privately or teach in a school or do accompanying or something like that.

In terms of ‘Is that happening here’, Question three, this Second year student was divided in the responses:

S2-2: Some [things] are but they could be more effective...Some other things are definitely not happening. At least I don’t know about it.

Gemma: Could you elaborate on that?

S2-2: I suppose a lot of people myself included don’t know that there is a counsellor ...So often at the Con it’s all criticism and not enough encouragement and this can really weigh on students’ minds and get them down. ...In general I associate this with major study.

Gemma: Could you just elaborate more about that?

S2-2: I suppose this might just be my own personal sort of view on it. But my piano teacher ...is this dominating teaching figure that I am sort of a bit scared of...

S2-2: I would also like to see more ‘cross-over’ in the curriculum. I’m doing a classical piano major...we barely ever get the option to delve into
the jazz side of piano. I’d love to sort of have improvisation classes for jazz piano because it would open up more options for me...you can earn some money. I think if there was a bit more diversity in what we study here it would make it more interesting. You know going from one classical theory class to jazz improvisation and then back to accompaniment instead of going from the same sort of mindset – classical to more classical to more classical.

The Second year students, unlike the First years, clearly articulate the need to be exposed not only to performance, but to more academic and career-oriented areas. It is also interesting to note that there appears to be a considerable ‘gap’ between what is expected by major study teachers and what students are able to deliver in terms of performance outcome.

4.1.6 Third year students

While the first student in Third year and, to a lesser extent second, maintained and even augmented the argument for the need for an awareness of career oriented outcomes, their talk reflected a more disillusioned and negative attitude. By the end of Third year, their final year of the degree, they had completed most of the courses available and were in a more knowing position. For the former of the third year students, there appeared to be little doubt that this student equated the value and success of the BMus degree with an ability to ‘get a job’.

In response to the first question ‘What do you think Conservatorium students need to know?’, Student One replied:

S1-3: I think students need to know how to gain employment post-graduation.

When asked to elaborate on why this was, the initial reply S1-3 made the following oral response:

S1-3: I think it first comes back to the kind of impression that I had of the Con. When I came, I thought, ‘cause of the way that it comes across in books and their own documents and that sort of thing... you come here to do a Bachelor of Music and then you can leave and you will get employment. That’s kind of the point for coming here, but I could, not that I would, but I could name many brilliant students who have left here and then had to get jobs as cleaners or secretaries because they cannot get employment in their field other than getting say teaching work. They don’t want to become teachers, they can become performers they just find ... well there’s no employment and had they known that earlier, perhaps they would have gone about a music career in a different way. So I think that
three years is a long time to spend thinking you are going to get a job and then not end up with one at the end of it.

This Third year student proceeded to argue why skills beyond ‘just performance’ were necessary.

S1-3: The music industry is multi-faceted so students need to have more exposure to areas of music such as ethnomusicology, music therapy as well as history of performance.

Gemma: Could you explain what you mean by being multi-faceted?

S1-3: I think particularly now, if you look at the music industry, with technology and with just the way everything is changing, classical performance isn’t really the thing any more. We’ve seen orchestras collapse into one, and there’s just not that much performance for classical musicians. I think if you want to become a musician, you need to be able to do technology, do teaching and be multi-skilled. The cross discipline co-operation plays a large part in this, things like dance, drama, psychology, cultural and historic studies.

Gemma: Can you tell me more about your idea of cross-discipline co-operation?

S1-3: Well I was thinking in terms of other degrees and how you get so many double degrees these days. Everyone’s kind of realised that you can’t be a specialist and I was thinking with music we don’t really get that. I was trying to think of the ways in which music is used in real life, where you can get employment and I was trying to think off the top of my head of other jobs that you could use music for.

Despite S1-3’s pre-occupation with the need for career-oriented skills, this student nonetheless does in one fragment of the text, mention the need for students to understand the physical and technical demands associated with performance practice. S1-3 comments that:

S1-3: You need to have a knowledge of the physiology involving your instrument ...particularly the need to know about Repetitive Strain Injury, (RSI) - the cause and preventions.

Gemma: Could you elaborate?

S1-3: To me it’s strange. I don’t really know anyone who hasn’t experienced RSI to some degree and there are many students who even have to stop playing for several months. There has never been a course or any kind of structured way of learning about this unless you go out of your way to read a book on the physical aspects of playing. It struck me that I don’t know how my muscles work when I play the piano.
As with Question one, this student’s response to ‘What do you think our curriculum should include?’ was specifically employment oriented.

S1-3: I think that pedagogy should form a large and much emphasised stream of the undergraduate curriculum. The reason is because everyone that I know teaches and a lot of them don’t want to. I mean it is not their first preference but they to do it because they can’t make money performing.

Gemma: Can you explain more about that?

S1-3: Oh, I mean just for employment sakes. Most people can’t make enough money performing alone, so they do need to teach, but even if you have had twelve years of your own [major] study, most people don’t really know how to teach. I didn’t know how to teach before I did the pedagogy course and I think it is dangerous just to have all of these kids out teaching when they have no training in teaching.

In response to ‘Is that happening here’, S1-3 further articulates:

S1-3: None of the above is being adequately addressed. It frequently seems that completing a B. Mus. at the Con means spending 3 or 4 hours daily focussed upon playing the piano and becoming the best performer possible, only to graduate and work for the remainder of your life in a job musical or otherwise.

Gemma: Can you tell me more about that?

S1-3: Yeah, sure. Um…. it seems that, well you do the degrees mainly based on performance, and admittedly it is a performance degree. So you do performance and….when you leave here, there just isn’t [sic] any performance jobs…Very little cross discipline cooperation exists.

Gemma: What do you mean by cross discipline co-operation?

S1-3: Subjects or that sort of thing that aren’t purely to do with music. I don’t think I have done any in my entire 3 years. There is like music technology and that sort of thing where you do technology and computer work, but it is still music related … I just think it would be handy to have many music and business related, or music and marketing music and music therapy, music psychology and that sort of thing as well…. I guess it would always have to be relevant to music since you are doing a performance degree, but um …Well, I see it at the moment as a performance degree, but I don’t think that is what it should be. That’s my view - just from the reality of getting employment in the 21st century. It’s called a Bachelor of Performance…I don’t think that that’s realistic when you leave as being kind of relevant to the music industry today. I think that it should maybe a
Bachelor of Music, and maybe you could major in performance, maybe in your third year, but in first and second years, I think you should definitely do business subjects that teach you how to do well, you know entrepreneurial marketing things, and critical thinking, and the physiology of playing so I think it should be more generic and more kind of wider spanning across lots of different areas, rather than very specialised all the way through.

While the other Third year student’s responses are more evenly divided between performance-related and career oriented needs, S2-3 talks about performance skills in the context of being a good ‘musician’ rather than just ‘a solo performer’.

S2-3: There should be more emphasis on making music together, that is in an ensemble, rather than being locked away in a practice room by yourself. I’ve tried to do that... alleviate the isolation by calling in a friend every now and then to read through some duets.

Gemma: So you’re suggesting that to engage in music with other people is more important than just being on your own.

S2-3: Yes. It fosters musicianship and camaraderie.

This student is also critical of what is considered to be lack of support and mentoring.

Gemma: Can we go on to this comment you’ve made. You say students need to be better informed of the choices they can make. Can you tell me what you mean by that?

S2-3: When I came here at the beginning of the year, ...I mean in the first year they tell you exactly what to take but I found out in subsequent years that I could have actually taken other ensemble subjects... I didn’t know about that.

Gemma: So you’re saying that the information wasn’t imparted to you.

S2-3: No it wasn’t. And then the later years, you have to go and look for all the subjects, and even if you do look for them, you need prior knowledge because all they give you is a list to pick your subjects from, and you don’t know anything about these subjects – you’ve got to look them up manually on the internet by number. It’s really hard...it’s a pain, especially when dialling out from a modem takes forever.
S2-3 however, places equal importance on the need for students to know what job opportunities there are at the completion of a BMus degree. Like Student One from Second year, S2-3 articulates the need for guidance and counselling in this area.

S2-3: Students need to know about career counselling and development so they know where they’re going with this degree and the justification for learning.

Gemma: Could you tell me more about that?

S2-3: Well, a lot of people get the feeling that performing is really a dead end, however...that’s the major proportion of what we are all doing... all performing and learning to perform.

Gemma: Could you just clarify that?

S2-3: Well music is a luxury, ...it’s a very big luxury actually. I mean undergraduates are learning to perform but there aren’t that many opportunities available and well throughout my degree, I’ve sort of floundered, wondering what I would do afterwards, and a lot of the options are things that I would have to start from scratch. There’s not really much you can do with your degree other than the obvious teaching or at least that’s the biggest outlet for conservatorium graduates. I mean you can go into other fields, but you know the intake is so small.

Gemma: Can you tell me more about the other fields?

S2-3: You can take things like accompanying, but how many people go into accompanying because it’s too competitive unless you’re already very good. And there’s well, radio. But how often does a position in radio come up and you need experience for that, and there is also publishing but there are not too many publishers out there. I think I’d like to know more about Arts Administration. It is less intense than having to practice and I’ve sort of figured out that it is also more interesting than living like a pauper.

Although the above students’ responses to Question one strongly reflect a preoccupation with employment, S2-3 nonetheless stresses the importance of catering for both performance and employment outcomes in the curriculum as evidenced in the responses to questions two and three. When asked what ‘the curriculum should include’, S2-3 stated:

S2-3: Well I think that ensemble work [in the curriculum] is terribly undervalued and should be given more credit points. I also think that if I had two [piano] lessons a week it would be good... that’s an ideal. I don’t expect it to be a reality.

Gemma: Why do you see two piano lessons as ideal?
S2-3: Well we’re tertiary now and there is no one to watch over you. If I had two lessons a week I would be prodded along. You know if you live away from home it’s hard... so career counselling and development is important...
S2-3: It would also be good if there were opportunities in the curriculum, you know work experience or something like that. Maybe some career orientated course work.

In terms of ‘is that happening’ S2-3 responded:

S2-3: It’s happening to a very small extent. Career research happens only with student initiative. I tried to go to Griffith University career counselling for help. They had no idea...They just floundered when I asked ‘what can I do with a music degree’? And I thought I was in real trouble – there really is no one who has an idea about it. I mean I don’t want to leave music – I’d hate to because I have spent so much time you know I couldn’t.

Gemma: Are you saying you see this as a possibility?

S2-3: I mean I’m tertiary educated. I don’t want to work manual labour and I don’t want to work at McDonalds...I dislike the corporate body that we’re associated with. I just don’t like big corporations in general and our university is a money making machine.

Gemma: Could you explain what you mean by that?

S2-3: Well it’s all about profit. The university is a factory.

The students’ awareness of the lack of availability of jobs is clearly evident as they progress through their degree. However, the following graduate discourse reflects even harsher criticism in terms of a perceived failure of the institution to ‘provide us with an idea of what jobs are available’ upon completion of a BMus degree.

4.1.7 Graduates
The two graduates interviewed completed their three-year degree at the end of 2001 and had now experienced nine months away from the institution. Again their responses were strongly career oriented. However, in contrast to the undergraduates they were more critical and self-assured in their responses. When asked what ‘Conservatorium students need to know’, the first of the graduates responded: ‘The reality of the job market in the real world and the lack of job opportunities’. G1 explained:

G1: Many students come into the Conservatorium feeling as though they will have a job, pretty much performance jobs, and it’s not the
case...particularly because there certainly aren’t the job opportunities, and most people hit their third year and they have a big panic attack. Many of my friends have a complete rethinking of thought because they come to third year and go, “What’s going to happen with the rest of my life? I’ve spent three years at the conservatorium, what job can I have?” They’re very different to I think the jobs that we thought we were going to get when we were back at the beginning of first year.

Unprompted, G1 further elaborated on the limited job opportunities.

G1: There are definitely no opportunities for concert artists or piano type work and many people just think they are going to go into teaching and a lot of them just cross over into education because of that. They finish their degree and then study something completely different, like high school, primary school teaching, and in fact a lot of them just cross over into education because of that.

Gemma: Could you tell me more about the ‘cross-over’ into education?

G1: I think it is necessary if a music student wants to have a long-term career that’s going to sustain them financially. Otherwise, we have to start a whole new degree again...

For this graduate, writing and research skills were high on the list of what students ‘need to know’. G1 argued that students needed the skills and knowledge required to ‘being an academic rather than just to performance based’ needs. G1 explained:

G1: These skills [writing and research] are essential skills for students to develop, especially if you decide to go on and do an honours year and write a thesis. The credit point weighting towards your performance however, limits the amount you can do in this area at undergraduate level. Also, we [keyboard students] can actually get through our whole degree without handing in a research paper because of the way the assessment choices are optional. This allows you to be performance and listening oriented but does not train you for research.

As with the undergraduate students, this graduate also stated that ‘students need to know how to be a well-rounded musician’. G1’s concept of a ‘musician’ very much reflected that of the second and third year students, in that it was not entirely dependent upon performance skills.

G1: Music isn’t just performance, it isn’t just theory or history, it’s the whole thing combined, and I’m not sure how many people actually focus on the entire musician. Obviously people specialise, but I think we do get stuck in our particular niches and don’t necessarily incorporate all aspects of music.... I feel to be a well rounded musician you need to be doing your performing, you need to know your history, you need to know your theory, and you need to know them to a high level, to have that knowledge from all
aspects, than just, oh I perform, so I’ll just get by with passing my theory and history subjects, just passing. I don’t feel that’s enough.

Graduate One’s final statement in regard to what students need to know revealed an awareness of the competitive nature of the music world and the resultant lack of equal opportunities for students.

G1: Students need to know ‘the politics and rivalry between students and teachers and that this occasionally reflects on the student’s assessment’.

Gemma: Could you tell me what you mean by this statement?

G1: Well from a student level for starters, we come into first year and everyone is looking over their shoulders to see who is better than whom because it is very competitive in the arts and music. It is certainly noticeable in as much as who you learn from. There is a hierarchy depending on who your teacher is, as to who is better than whom. And this occasionally reflects on the student assessment. I do feel that depending on who you learn from, your mark is definitely affected...I really do feel that we should have external examiners that don’t know us because then the assessment system can’t be influenced.

Graduate One’s response to Question two echoes the views of both third years in that there is an argument for the need for the undergraduate curriculum to include ‘preparation skills for the real world, including music technology and business skills’.

G1: If you’re a musician in the real world... you need to be multi-faceted in running your own business, promoting yourself, um, and they’re skills that maybe we should learn independently by ourselves, but ...that’s where the majority of our students are going to go … they’re going to go and teach, they’re going to be doing gigs, they’ll be performing in small kind of you know restaurants, or concerts, things like that.

In terms of whether the above ‘is happening here’, Graduate One replied, ‘in many areas I feel that we do fall short of the mark’. G1 elaborated:

G1: We are able to produce a very small number of fantastic players that even now five years out of the conservatorium cannot find jobs in orchestras. They have studied overseas, and we are still unable to have most of our graduates placed in the jobs that I suppose they expected to have, or that their degree was supposed to prepare them for. It’s a reality of the job world out there in Australia in music and the arts.

Gemma: Could you elaborate further?
G1: The reality of being a concert pianist these days, is not just flying around the world travelling and playing the piano. I think it is highly unrealistic for any of the people in the piano department to almost expect that they would get a job performing on the piano, particularly classically anyway. That era kind of ended many, many years ago. If we develop them [students] more academically, then we’ll be likely to have a job I suppose. Really the only jobs for music graduates are kind of in music education. We can place as much emphasis on performance as we like but the jobs just aren’t out there.

The second graduate was clearly even more determined to express disillusionment with what G1 argues is a degree that does not cater for the needs of students in the ‘real world’. When G2 initially responded to the question of what students need to know the response was:

G2: They [students] need to know what employment is about for music graduates... You walk out of the degree and go, “Right. Where’s Centrelink?” Students need to know how to apply their skills to relevant positions that are available within the music industry and how to find those positions...

Gemma: What do you think those skills should include?

G2: Well, for example piano pedagogy courses that teach you how to teach the piano. Also how psychology is combined with teaching.

G2 further elaborated:

There are also many fields where musicians need to have a business side to their degree. These skills, such as how to make money out of your instrument should be combined with other fundamentals such as music history etc.

Although Graduate Two’s initial comments were largely focused on career outcomes, the talk also included the need for other areas of knowledge including academic expertise. There was however, no elaboration as to what these might include just simply:

G2: I think the B.Mus course [should include] more academic... requirements... there is a gap between the quality of intake of students that are being accepted into the course. And I think that’s a lot of waste of money, a lot of waste of time and there is a lot of heartbreak for a lot of students... when they get to the end of their degree.

In response to Question two, Graduate Two reinforced the argument for the need for pedagogy to be a mandatory course for all keyboard students in the curriculum. G2 stated:

G2: Apart from business administration and job opportunities, I think that pedagogy courses should be compulsory for all students. Not only do you
learn how to teach a subject you learn how to talk to people and you also learn how to explain actually how to do a particular technical movement. If you can’t explain it then you obviously don’t know what you’re doing and that can lead to injuries within your own playing and also within the people that you’re teaching. Perhaps the Alexander technique\textsuperscript{75} within the curriculum would be a good idea.

In terms of ‘Is that happening here’, (question three), this graduate’s sense of disillusionment continued:

G2: Well the general feeling among students is that students are used to promote the reputation of the [piano] teacher.
Gemma: Do you want to elaborate on that?

G2: Well, I also think that reflects the opinion that unless you’re doing a performance side, you’re nobody and if you’re nobody then you are just – you know - another half hour slot within the week.

Graduate Two continued:

G2: The majority of instrumental teachers forget to ask the simple question “What do you want to achieve from these three years of study and what is your lifelong plan?” I think that there are a few piano teachers who don’t realise that a majority of their students come into the conservatorium – enthusiastic – loving their work and leave the conservatorium hating their work. They have a very low self esteem, no confidence and never touch the piano again and I think that is a result of the teacher not saying, “So what do you want? How can we achieve this?”

Gemma: Now, your final point is pedagogical subjects are currently being offered as electives but they should be made compulsory for all students in order for students to understand that they have to actually get up and do.

G2: Not only do these subjects teach students how to teach they require students to examine the technique of simply doing it... If you can’t explain in the minute detail of how to play... then how do you know if you’re really doing it correctly in the first place? And how do you know which muscles you’re using and how to protect your muscles so that you don’t get injuries and so that when you do teach another person you can explain this so that they do not get these injuries and actually know what they’re doing.

Gemma: I notice you have singled out teaching?

G2: I think that [teaching is] the only aspect of the degree that is providing me with a bit of money. I mean it’s nice to be able to sit down and say, you know, I know all about romanticism and classicalism but hey, I can’t really

\textsuperscript{75} The Alexander Technique is a method of learning aimed at consciously changing counter-productive habits of movement involving posture, breathing, and muscle tension. It is offered as an area of study at some music institutions.
get any money out of it, but I can teach and still love and still make a bit of money out of it instead of going ... there is not only a diversity of employment but the graduate can and will move seamlessly from academy to industry.

4.2 Analyses of texts

What follows is an attempt to apply the conceptual work elaborated in previous chapter(s) to the context of these data as discursively organised texts. The first section is a micro-analysis of data emanating from the three different groups of participants. While these three groups do not necessarily represent three different sorts of talk, they nevertheless represent locations, at the same time with quite clear differences and distinctions in relation to needs talk.

The second section moves to distil these analyses into a reading of the Conservatorium as a discursive (and thus political) landscape. The study does not purport to be an exhaustive or comprehensive speaking for everyone at the Conservatorium. It is a ‘close-up’ look at individuals who are located within a particular group of stakeholders at a particular point in time.

Finally, the third section seeks to understand the implications of the political landscape and the ways in which teaching and learning are politicised within the Conservatorium.

4.2.1 Re-interrogation of analyses – Management-generated texts

The examination of institutional documentation such as marketing materials and policy documents is an attempt to track how the management texts move to integrate an exterior ‘reality’ and the institution’s own marketing needs to attract students. This is shown in Figure 4.1. The marketing texts (M1 & M2), by a set of claims about itself and its students, move to refuse a distinction between student need and industry need by insisting on the close link between the Conservatorium and community life, industry and other artistic professions. These texts work to align the two sets of needs, through the proposition that there is not only a diversity of employment but the graduate can and will move seamlessly from academy to industry.
Figure 4.1 Management-generated texts
One way this proposition is set up is through a move to integrate the personal skills and the industry skills so that students will be ‘equipped and confident to take a role in contemporary artistic life’ (Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University, 2003e). Certain binary formulations in the text work to conflate these two sets of interests:

1. Undergraduate programs /student and industry needs. (p.4)
2. Personal direction/ broader community. (p. 4).
3. Art/community i.e. in achieving artistic practice you will ‘connect’ with community needs. (2003b, p.1)
4. Artistic capacity/professional career. (p.12)
5. Intrinsic reward/entrepreneurship. (ibid)

In refusing an ‘in-here/out-there’ distinction, the management texts (M1) reconcile industry and artistry with the effect being the shaking off the demonisation of ‘industry’ as being ‘anti-creative’ eg. ‘[students] will be achieving life skills’ and therefore by definition, will be meeting the great diversity of employment and industry outcomes’ (Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University, 2001b , p. 2). The proposition here is that the student’s artistic capacities will necessarily be part of the larger landscape where music is an industry and named as an industry in the profession. An implication that flows from this proposition is the necessity for the institution to attract talent!

In the management-generated text (M1) we see the student located in the third person (they); the text provided by the keyboard department provides a distinct change of register, an apparent attempt to move to the ‘inside’ (you) (M2). This change of register is significant. The appeal here is for individuals to see themselves in the picture of ‘student-ship’, an appeal that works much the same way as Althusser’s (1971) notion of ‘interpellation’. There is much intrinsic value in the statement that ‘when you choose to study with us…you will get the most from us as you develop time-management skills’…(Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University, 2003b). Students are invited to see themselves in the picture of a developed ‘self’ through the Conservatorium. To that extent the Conservatorium and the student are represented as having a mutual agenda.

It is interesting to note, however, that there is no formal (or informal) course in time-management. It could equally be argued that neither is performance mentioned! Hence, there appears to be an insistence that this is a ‘university thing’, and it’s about study. What the texts imply is that

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76 I note the nomenclature of ‘Creative Industries’ at a neighbouring institution doing similar work.
students, even before being admitted to the institution, in addition to functioning at a high level in music performance, display competence in other related areas. The proposition is that students are already able to integrate these aspects of their working life as reflected in the following:

As a student you will be encouraged to determine your own artistic directions and shape your own musical career...[this] demands excellent business... communication skills [and] considerable flexibility... Above all, [this] requires a strong creative urge and passion for music making in all forms. (Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University, 2003b, p. 3)

This management needs talk it could be argued, articulates a utopian notion of the autonomous learner. The marketing source likewise has a utopian view of the student-as-learner, which suggests that the student need will be very small because s/he is so highly skilled. It is interesting to note that few students’ texts articulate this same utopian view of themselves.

4.2.2 Analysis of academic needs talk

Unlike the generic texts of management, the academic texts reflect two contrary propositions about relevance, namely, the importance of the traditional performance work at the Conservatorium (A1) and at the same time a strong critique of a traditional location of the Conservatorium and their work within it (A2). This is shown in Figure 4.2. Yet there are also claims about the desirability to maintain notions of disciplinary distinctiveness, while stretching the notion of performance to include more than the traditional orthodox approach (A2). Whereas A1 locates student needs as being very much within a set of cultural traditions, A2 locates student needs within a present set of social conditions and notions of engagement.

The text of A1 articulates the need for more traditional disciplines such as history, sociology amongst those already existing within the academy, and thus the need to maintain the notions of traditional disciplinary orthodoxy where students are able to ‘understand and relate the musical social and historical perspectives of repertoire to their own performance practice’ (A1). On the other hand, the rhetoric in the text of A2 articulates the need for a wider view of performance as more than simply a playing of music performance and ‘practising and having lessons’. The argument here is for performance to be inclusive of ‘generic skills’ such as communication, articulation and awareness, given that it is these skills that will assist performers to ‘talk’ ‘engage’ and convince audiences ‘their music is worth listening to’.
Figure 4.2 Academic needs talk

ELITE POSITION

Traditional Disciplinary orthodoxy with a focus on excellence of performance as key outcome  
A1

Teacher as disciplinary expert

Student development conceived vertically

PROGRESSIVE POSITION

Stretching of notion of performance to include generic, transferable and marketing skills  
A2

Teacher as ‘guide on the side’  
Life long learning

Student development conceived horizontally

KEY
Tensions  
Discursive relationship
Evident in A2’s text is the notion of generic skills being fundamentally human rather than merely situation specific. These texts endorse the students’ capacity to move across social settings and their ability to integrate relatively quickly into any given situation. By stretching the notion of performance to include such skills as ‘life-long’, ‘marketing’, ‘transferable’ and ‘generic’ – all of which are needed for ‘flexibility’ and ‘diversity of employment’ A2’s responses frame students as social learners. The texts of A2 reveal a hierarchy of values constructed of many references about ‘lifelong learning’: ‘We need to be instilling good practices...be developing generic transferable skills that will continue to grow as they go through their life...that will enable them to deal with a range of situations...’. The generic capacities in these latter texts articulate advancement as ‘humanising’ rather than technological.

A2 articulates an autobiographical past for justification of the social emphasis. Due to a personal concentration on solo performance as a student, there is a sense of ‘feeling precious’ and ‘removed’. For A2, the ‘psychological’ and ‘social’ factors are both ‘crucial for pianists’ yet A2 argues that this sense of ‘engag[ing] with others’ is something that is often overlooked in the training of students, ‘something that I wish I’d had much more experience and training on when I was a student’ (A2). The text of A2 particularises through self-experience, a ‘missing out’ which gets translated into student needs, resulting in a move that suggests that this feeling of loneliness could be solved by social collaboration. This may be seen to parallel current teacher education policy (Commonwealth Department of Education Science & Training, 2003) where studies of the arts, social sciences and humanities are increasingly being seen to play a larger part in contributing to innovation in curriculum and pedagogy in order that students might develop life-related skills.

While notions of social learner inform the academic texts, there is also evidence of a hierarchal notion of teaching of students on the ‘ground floor’. While A2 suggests that for students ‘it’s a matter of planting seeds... over a long enough period’ in order to give them the skills for the remainder of their professional life, A1 views the students as appropriately at the bottom of a hierarchy, suggesting that students need ‘to start on the ground floor’ and then grow upwards. A1 locates students as problematic in that ‘they don’t relate’ components of what they’re learning to their performance and ‘don’t establish links between one thing and another’. A1 argues further that when considering students’ needs there are wiser heads: ‘the idea that students... make their own choices, is...well as I’m fond of saying, they don’t know how much they don’t know’.
There is a no single location of students in the academic texts - two locations seem to emerge. While it appears that A1’s notion of teaching connotes a hierarchical construction of the learning experience, it is clear that A2, while being very aware of the orthodox position, is clearly speaking counter to it. This is particularly evident in A2’s texts relating to the traditional Master/Apprentice teaching model, which is argued to create ‘an attitude that the student is right at the bottom level’ leaving ‘the poor student under a shadow’. A2 suggests that an ‘alternative method’ which involves the teaching of students in small group situations, rather than the traditional ‘sacrosanct’ one-to-one lesson, would be more ‘socially’ beneficial and ‘intellectually challenging’.

When working across the management and academic texts, it would appear that there are three distinct locations of needs talk. For A2, the notion of an elite performer embedded in classicism is seen as being ‘precious’. While not rejecting outright such performance, A2 appears rather to prefer the concept underpinning it broadened. This is distinct from the view of A1, who would argue that the elite performer should be seen as being on the ‘top floor’. The needs talk in the management texts however would view these as all embracing. The refusal to have an ‘in here/out there’ is precisely what the academic texts (and student texts) insist upon.

4.2.3 Analysis of student needs talk

First year texts (S1-1 & S2-1)
The needs talk of the First year student texts, when taken together, (See Figure 4.3) tends to reflect a highly individualist and pragmatic approach towards what it is that students need to know. S1-1 asserts that students need to be ‘all rounders’, but speaks of this in terms of ‘performance’ only. Likewise S2-1’s notion of the need for students ‘to play the piano brilliantly’ reflects not just the notion of a performer needing to be ‘precious’ but a return to elite terms. The talk of the First year students closely echoes A1’s position rather than A2’s in that there is an emerging discourse about excellence relating to the traditional performance work at the Conservatorium rather than a refusal of the ‘precious’ position. Whereas A1 talks about being a ‘decent pianist’, S1-1 speaks of the need to know and concentrate on how to ‘perform in front of people’. Likewise, S2-1 talks about needing to ‘play the piano brilliantly’.

While the First year texts align with some of the issues to which A1 refers, there are differences. In the text of A1, there is talk about a whole tradition of learning which
Figure 4.3 Student needs talk

1st year students (S1-1, S2-1)
- Focus on brilliance
- Dominant discourse of performance centred needs for traditional classical performance
- Investment in higher music degrees

2nd year students (S1-2, S2-2)
- Discourse of consumerism
- Discourse of provision
- Concerns about job prospects (S1-2)
- Awareness of self management
- Career oriented discourse (S2-2)

3rd year students (S1-3, S2-3)
- Destination Discourse
- Evidence of disillusionment
- Blaming of institution for lack of employment opportunities
- Texts characterised by anecdotalism
- Sensationalising of the negative
- Discourse of provision

Graduates (G1, G2)
- Credential orientated discourse
- Blaming of teachers
- Continued blaming of institution
- Increased disillusionment
- Where’s Centrelink?

KEY
Discursive relationship
students need to access so that ‘the works they play are seen in some kind of historical and even sociological perspective’. A1 speaks in disciplinary terms using terminology unfamiliar to students. Throughout the text, A1 enacts what Bourdieu (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977) terms ‘cultural capital’ in that students need to know ‘in broad terms where [their repertoire] is at...how it got there...and how later music was influenced by earlier music’. It is this disciplinary terminology that creates distances between the text of A1 and the student text (S1-1 & S1-2).

While in S1-1’s text there is no mention of anxiety regarding either performance or employment opportunities upon completion of the degree, S2-1’s text does reflect concern regarding the issue of ‘destination’. There is evidence of the ‘in here/out there’ in S1-2’s text, in that S1-2 concedes that while the BMus degree will probably not be enough to get a ‘job’, all that is required is more study ‘like … [a] masters and doctorate in music’ to bring students closer to the ‘out there’. On the one hand, therefore, it could be argued that while the first year students share A1’s notion of the need to be ‘a decent pianist’, there is nevertheless a difference in terms of what the students name as being valuable. S2-1’s ‘hope’ for example, that more investment in being a student, (such as the completion of Masters or a Doctorate solving the problem of getting a job), is a position that certainly differentiates the groups of students as their course progresses.

4.2.4 Second year texts (S1-2 & S2-2)

In the Second year texts, there is evidence of both a discourse of provision and another of self-management (See Figure 4.3). The former is strongly evident in S1-2’s text which suggests that all opportunities, both ‘in-here’ and ‘out-there’, should be made known to students. S1-2 asserts, ‘we need to be taught’ and ‘we need to be given the stepping stones to learn’. S1-2 continues, that students also ‘need to have information available and be made known to us’ and ‘be told what job opportunities are available’, rather than being ‘left to our own devices to find them’. This passive talk, which is all about consumerism, appears to reflect a cultural position, one possibly learnt within the academy. What is interesting here is to juxtapose S1-2’s talk with the marketing talk, which states that the Conservatorium is committed to creating graduates who will have a ‘strong sense of personal direction’ in addition to ‘drive and motivation’ (Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University, 2003e, p. 4). The ‘consumerist’ talk of S1-2 is in stark contrast with the ‘life-long’ learning notions of A2 who argues for students to be given ‘generic transferable skills that will enable them to deal with a range of situations…rather than trying to actually give them the sum total of what they need’.

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In addition to knowing ‘what opportunities there are out in the real world’, S1-2 also speaks of the need of having some theory ‘behind you’ so ‘you know [how] to be a good musician, not just a musical performer of an instrument’. This appears in contrast to A1’s talk about the need for bringing disciplinary knowledge ‘with you’ so that there is not a ‘big shortfall between what students actually know when they get here and what we academic staff expect them to know when they get here’.

In strong contrast to S1-2’s somewhat ‘consumerist’ discourse, S2-2, the other Second year student text, indicates evidence of a discourse of self-management and of readiness. S2-2 speaks of the awareness of students needing to know ‘right from the start...what they’re getting themselves into’ because if you ‘don’t know how to study’ and if you ‘don’t have a basic understanding of theory...then you are let down’. The proposition of S2-2’s text is that the individual can and should accept responsibility for their own limitations and learning, rather than being necessarily ‘taught’ all that they need to know.

Further evidence of the awareness of the need for self-management is reflected in S2-2’s comments, ‘I think half of the students don’t understand what they need to be doing...they think they can get by just from a performance point of view, but there is so much more to it, it’s not funny’. While there appears to be general agreement with S2-1 in that students need to know ‘how diverse the music industry world can be’, unlike S1-2, it would appear that S2-2 views this necessity more in terms of acknowledging and of being prepared for ‘how tough life can be...out there in the real world’ as opposed to S1-2’s argument of ‘having information [made] known to us’ so that students are not being ‘left to ... [their] own devices’ (S1-2).

4.2.5 Third year texts (S1-3 & S2-3)

While there is evidence in the second year texts of the need for students to be informed of future ‘job prospects’, the third-year texts are characterised by negativity and anecdotalism particularly in relation to the issue of ‘destination’ (See Figure 4.3). The texts provide a more ‘folkloric’ account of student needs. S1-3 reflects that when students initially enrol in the Bachelor of Music, the marketing material leads them to assume that they will ‘get employment’. Indeed, the main focus of S1-3’s text relates to destination discourse or employment prospects. The text is particularly critical of the marketing material, which S1-3 accuses of being misleading in that it encourages students to assume that ‘they will end up with a job’ rather than ‘not end up with one at the end of it’. The marketing material to which S1-3 is referring, - the same given to all
prospective students - states, ‘Graduates of the Bachelor of Music will be realistic, self-motivated, have a clear sense of direction’ and will be provided with ‘a strong professional platform from which to launch their careers in the performing arts...they will possess an understanding of the entrepreneurial needs of the performing artist...and the entertainment industry...’ (Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University, 2003e, p. 12).

S1-3’s texts reinforce this sense of disappointment by sensationalising the negative. Statements in the text include, ‘the kind of impression that I had ...when I came here’ (to the Con) is that you ‘do a Bachelor of Music and then you can leave and you will get employment’. However, ‘there’s not that much performance for classical musicians’ and ‘I could, not that I would, name many brilliant students who have left here...had to get jobs as cleaners or secretaries because they cannot get employment in their field....’. This negative sentiment continues throughout S1-3’s text as stories are told about the ‘collapse of orchestras into one’77 ‘because of the way everything in the music world is changing’. The negativity and disillusionment in S1-3’s text extend beyond the criticism of lack of job opportunities. S1-3 expresses surprise for example that performance students do not know much about physiology, reporting that due to Repetitive Strain Injury ‘many students [have had] to stop playing for months’. These responses indicate how S1-3’s attitude has developed into a more ‘knowing’ one. It is not so much a question of what S1-3 draws upon in the talk but from where it is gleaned that is interesting. The fact is that S1-3 is working from ‘insider’ discourse - which appears to have been learnt within the academy.

S2-3’s text is like that of S1-3’s - mainly focused on discourse of destination. S2-3 is critical of the academy and accuses it of ‘failing to provide us with an idea of what jobs are available’. S2-3 expresses ‘the need for guidance and counselling in this area’ and talks of ‘floundering’ in terms of what to do after the degree, suggesting that in terms of employment, performance is ‘a dead end’ indeed, ‘it’s a very big luxury’. Although S2-3 concedes that there are alternatives to performance in terms of employment opportunities, ‘I would have to start from scratch’.

Interestingly however, the text of S2-3 like that of S1-2, also strongly articulates a discourse of provision in the responses. S2-3 speaks of the need to be ‘serviced’ rather than having to find out everything, as reflected in the following comments:

77 The Queensland Symphony Orchestra and the Queensland Philharmonic Orchestra amalgamated in 2002 to form The Queensland Orchestra.
I mean in the first year they tell you exactly what [subjects] to take but ...in the later years, you have to go and look for all the subjects, and, even if you do look for them...all they give you is a timetable...you’ve got to look them up manually on the internet by number. It’s really hard...it’s a pain, especially when dialling out from a modem takes forever.

Further evidence of this discourse is found in S2-3’s response to the second question ‘What do you think the curriculum should include?’ The text of S2-3 suggests that students should have two private lessons per week because, according to S2-3, ‘well, we’re tertiary now and no-one’s to watch over you and I felt that if I had two lessons a week I would have been prodded along’.

4.2.6 Graduate texts (G1 & G2)

The Graduate texts, unlike those of the undergraduates, are very much credential-oriented. G1, for example queries what to do with the credentials, suggesting that the credit point weighting which strongly favours performance-oriented courses, limits the undertaking of courses in other areas. G1 argues that it is evident that ‘specialisation’ results in a tendency to ‘get stuck... in our particular niches’ rather than incorporating all aspects of music, necessary to being a ‘well-rounded musician’. In support of S1-3’s account of limited employment opportunities, G1 states that many students come into the Conservatorium ‘feeling as though they will pretty much have performance jobs’ but when they ‘hit third year’ most students have a ‘big panic attack’. This is, according to G1, because students realise that ‘there certainly aren’t the job opportunities...that we thought we were going to get when we were back at the beginning of first year’. G1 elaborates: ‘There are definitely no opportunities for concert artists or piano type work...and a lot of [students] finish their degree and then study something completely different’.

Disillusionment is not just evident in the credential oriented and destination discourse. G1 is also critical of the one-to-one system of teaching in the academy, arguing that students need to know that ‘there is a hierarchy depending on who your [piano] teacher is, as to who is better than whom’ and this ‘occasionally reflects on student assessment’. According to G1, the hierarchical nature of teaching within the system is ‘political’ and ‘depending on who you learn [piano] from, your [assessment] mark is definitely affected...’.

Both credential orientated talk and disillusionment are evident also in G2’s texts. Rather than talking about what the ‘degree’ gives you, G2’s text indicates more of a ‘looking back’ from the
outside rather than being on the inside. The following statement sums up these views: ‘You walk out of the degree and go, Right! Where’s Centrelink?’ G2 (like G1) appears to be equally critical of the hierarchical nature of the system of teaching within the academy suggesting that teachers are more concerned with ‘their own reputation’ rather than with the question of ‘what… [students] want to achieve from [their] three years of study’. G2 asserts:

I think that there are a few piano teachers who don’t realise that [the] majority of students come into the Conservatorium enthusiastic – loving their work and leave…hating their work. They have a very low self esteem, no confidence and never touch the piano again…and I think that is a result of the teacher not saying ‘So what do you want? How can we achieve this?

The above negative articulation continues throughout the text of G2 as reflected in the following statement: ‘There is a lot of heartbreak for a lot of students…when they get to the end of their degree’.

It is clear from the above texts that there are changing characteristics in student needs talk over the course of time. While the texts of first years reflect an enthusiastic embracing of the traditional performance oriented goals, there is a change in the tenor of student critiques from second year onwards. The majority of student texts in the latter years appear to reflect a growing view that performance goals are not realistically attainable and will not result in future employment. The view is expressed through negative anecdotalism and a blaming of the institution and those who teach within it. While, as earlier mentioned, it is clear that few student texts share the ‘enlightened’ discourse of management, re students as autonomous learners. This is so, despite the intentions and opportunities that exist within the Conservatorium for a shared or student centred talk.

4.3 Mining the discursive landscape - Tensions around academic texts
Because all research is necessarily reductionist, given the complexity of human activity, so too the full complexity of what is occurring in relation to student needs is therefore not fully captured in this study. Rather the intention is to demonstrate the tension that is being produced by the key textual propositions, which are themselves products of particular discourse communities. Although there are many propositions in the texts, some of which are mutually exclusive in relation to the identities and work of those involved in the pedagogical practices of the Conservatorium, for the purpose of this analysis, only key propositions that are central to this study will be focused upon.
It is clear from the texts that the range of propositions that exist and the tension produced by these do not all emerge from one particular set of texts. Rather, there are shared alliances in some places as well as a collapsing of these in others. This is most evident in the set of tensions around hierarchies produced by the academic discourse (See Figure 4.4). The preceding analysis clearly indicates that, in terms of student needs, the central propositions of the academic texts are highly contested and at times antithetical. On the one hand there appears to be an argument for a maintaining of the traditional ‘elite’ location of the Conservatorium (A1) while on the other hand there is an argument for a more ‘progressive’ vocationally oriented program (A2).

As earlier indicated, A1 locates student needs as being very much within a set of cultural traditions, arguing for the need for keyboard students to have a strong ‘background’ and the ‘skills’ to understand and relate the ‘musical, social and historical perspectives’ of performance practice to their own repertoire. It is interesting to note that in A1’s text, unlike that of A2 and the majority of student texts, there is scarce mention of the need to develop skills relating to employment outcomes (with the exception of piano teaching). Moreover, rather than being a call for the necessity to develop employment skills such as ‘transferable’, ‘generic’ and ‘marketing’, it is clear that A1’s responses reflect a need to further concentrate on strengthening performance-centred skills so that students are at least ‘decent pianist[s]’.

In contrast to A1’s text, it is clear that A2, while not rejecting outright the need for the development of performance skills, nonetheless does call for an inclusion of other areas that will ‘provide [students] with useful tools and training to get...jobs’ and prepare them ‘for a rich array of [career] possibilities out there’. While initially student talk (first years), which calls for a focus on ‘brilliance of performance’ as a key outcome, aligns with Academic 1, there appears to be increasing disillusionment with this notion as the students progress through their degree. What seems evident in the talk of these students from second year onwards, is the need to know more than ‘just performance skills’ and a need to have an overall idea of ‘what the music world is all about both during and upon completion of a BMus degree’ (S2-2). What is crucial here is that while the talk of the majority of these students parallels the ideals of A2, there is an absence of an overarching of this democratic ethos on entire sections of student talk. Indeed, the two distinct ‘entrenched positions’ in academic talk do not appear to be evident in the students’ talk. Furthermore, the perceived failure of the institution to realise its ‘responsibility of preparing...
student[s] for professional outcomes that are real…not just idealistic’ (A2) appears to have produced new articulations in second and third year undergraduates.

Figure 4.4 Tensions around academic texts
4.3.1 Tensions around student development

A further set of tensions arising from academic texts is the issue of students’ developmental needs. In A1’s text we see the teacher located as the disciplinary expert with the student development being perceived vertically. This appears to be in contrast with the management’s portrayal of the teacher as more of a ‘guide on the side’ – a teacher who is there to ‘support the development of the creative musician…through progressive teaching…[and] to encourage “lifelong learning”’ (Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University, 2001b, p.3). A1’s text is also contrary to the view of the second academic (A2) who calls for an end to the traditional Master/Apprentice model, which A2 argues results in an attitude that ‘the student is right at the bottom level’ and produces ‘reliance on teachers’ rather than equipping students for learning beyond graduation. This latter position in the text of the second academic is also evident in some of the students’ texts, particularly those in the latter years of the course. The [major study] teachers are viewed as ‘dominating figures’ of whom they are ‘a bit scared’ (S2-2). Major study [keyboard] teachers are also considered by some students to be unfairly influential in terms of both assessment outcomes and the status of the student, as reflected in G1’s comments ‘there is a hierarchy depending on who your teacher is…and this occasionally reflects on the student assessment’ and ‘the general feeling among students is that students are used to promote the reputation of the teacher’ (G2).

4.3.2 Tensions around management texts

While there is strong evidence of tension within academic discourses, there is another set of tensions across management and student discourse (See Figure 4.5). This is evident in how the management articulates students as autonomous learners, ‘adaptable within a dynamic and constantly changing musical world’. The value of ‘lifelong learning’ is also part of this enlightened ‘expert’ discourse of which the institution speaks, as outlined in its mission statement: ‘In pursuit of our mission… to support the development of the creative musician, we support…lifelong learning and personal development’ (Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University 2001b, p 3). These notions however, appear contrary to what the majority of students in this study (except S2-2) articulate in their texts. Students’ texts in general locate students as consumers of the institution’s services as opposed to the ‘givers’ indicated in S1-2’s text ‘we need to be taught’ and in the text of S2-3’ who states the need ‘to be prodded along’. Their texts also indicate that rather than being interested in this enlightening notion of the ‘student as learner’ student texts are more focussed on ‘credentials’ as the key outcome, one, which as indicated in the majority of student texts, has not been realised.
Figure 4.5 Tensions around management texts
While there are tensions in management and student texts, all three sets of texts (management, academic and student) reveal the tension caused by the ‘location’ of the Conservatorium ‘in time’. In the management text the institution locates itself (ideally) as embedded in the ‘real world’, aiming ‘to produce graduates who are highly skilled, musically adaptable and equipped to enter professional life… in the twenty-first century’. While this theory of practice (which is part of the legitimation work of the management) is shared by one academic in the text (A2), another (A1’s text) argues for the value and the need for students to be more fully connected to past traditions rather than being distracted or caught up by ‘real world’ now issues.

Although the text of the management does align with the ideal of the majority of students, what we see in the student texts (Figure 4.3) is evidence of a failure of the institution to deliver this enlightened theory of practice. As evident in student texts, the majority of students do not speak out of this progressive discourse. ‘We’re not being taught management skills’ (S1-2) and ‘I thought …the way that it comes across in books and management documents that you will get employment…well there’s no employment’ (S1-3). While the texts clearly indicate the extent to which students and management do share certain propositions, there are as earlier indicated, propositions around the notions of student needs that ‘collapse’.

In light of the above, it would appear that the issue of the student, the teacher and the institution ‘failing’ appears to be produced in the academy itself. Furthermore, because this landscape of tension is produced out of the pedagogical work in the academy, everybody is implicated.

The above analysis appears to justify four claims in relation to the Conservatorium as a discursively organised set of relationships:

1. Academic texts (in Fraser’s terms ‘expert’ needs talk) are internally inconsistent in their location of students and their learning world.

2. The language employed within ‘expert’ needs talk is different from the language students employ regardless of the presence or absence of a ‘democratic’ ethos within any particular academic text. Put bluntly, students speak their needs differently from academics, even ‘enlightened’ academics.

3. The utopian language used in management-generated texts to characterise students is generally not evident in student texts.

4. Student texts are characterised in general by increasing negativity the longer they pursue their studies within the Conservatorium. This negativity is argued to be a product of (1), (2) and (3) above.
Chapter 5
Discourse, Pedagogy, Power

The study in this thesis, as practitioner research, has focused on how student needs become articulated within one particular institution, namely, the Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University, together with the effects these needs articulations have on the practices of those who teach and those who learn within this domain.

The analysis in the previous chapter has demonstrated that the contestations and struggle over student needs in the Conservatorium may be addressed at least in part by investing in a pattern of communication that contributes to a shared language. The study has identified a number of different discourse communities that have the effect of delimiting possibilities for that shared language to develop. It has also demonstrated how a commitment to a democratic or student-centred ethos is gestural at best.

As outlined in chapter 2, previous research identified ‘an-over-supply of degree, tolerable [keyboard] players…seeking positions that are disappearing or being diluted’ (Uszler, 2000b, p. 7), and a rate of change in the employment environment so significant that if the future survival of professional musicians is to be assured, students will need ‘to break out of those categories that have largely defined being a musician in the past’ (Renshaw 2002b, p. 2).

The new understandings provided by this study are not in dispute with the findings of Uszler (2000b) and Renshaw (2002b). When as a practitioner-researcher I juxtaposed the work of past researchers with my own research, what emerged was a similar tale of significant diminishing and changing employment opportunities. An investigation of the employment environment within which the curriculum operates identified the need to provide a curriculum more relevant to student needs within a constantly changing cultural and economic landscape.

An examination of the pedagogical practices of the Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University identified that despite these findings and notwithstanding there being considerable empathy for students in the Conservatorium regarding limited employment opportunities, previous attempts to address issues relating to keyboard curriculum needs at the Conservatorium
have largely been unsuccessful. This is mainly due to the dominant way of speaking ‘student needs’ as a binary debate: a debate of performance versus vocational training.

The task set for this research, in light of the above, was to investigate how tertiary educators might better understand ‘relevant’ keyboard pedagogy in tertiary institutions. As a teacher in a Conservatorium, my main objective was to investigate the relevance of keyboard curriculum as currently delivered in tertiary institutions. The aim was to understand the complexity of the needs struggle as enacted at the local level rather than move to (solve) the problem of relevance through a one-size fits all macro-curriculum.

Considering the themes of the current literature, it did not surprise that the students did not share in any substantive way a needs talk vocabulary with management or with academics. Since the inception of the Conservatorium in 1957, when, in the words of the founding director ‘nobody in Brisbane had the faintest idea of what a Conservatorium was supposed to be, or what it was supposed to do’ (Hawkins, 1979), there has been contestation over the ‘core business’ of the institution. The continued contestation among expert teachers over the institution’s raison d’être and the many competing claims over curriculum needs continues to leave many students confused and uncertain about ‘which skills they need to acquire and what the future career opportunities really are’ (Hannan, 2001).

This thesis addresses student uncertainty as a condition of the community. As demonstrated in the analysis, separate propositions about student needs appear to be conflated in the official documents of the Conservatorium. In particular the depiction of students as creative people who will be ‘equipped and confident to take a role in contemporary artistic life’ and will thus have the ability to move seamlessly from academy to industry, can be argued to mis-recognise both the students’ sense of themselves and the requirements of the ‘real’ world of work. Utopian visions of both students and work are unhelpful in moving to a shared language.

Utopianism is certainly not the driving imperative of students’ talk about their own needs. Far from speaking of themselves as ‘social’ or ‘life-long learner’, students as they proceed through their program increasingly talk of themselves as ‘failing’ in the practical sense of preparation for work, and the idea takes root of the Conservatorium as blameworthy in that it has set them up for such failure. Students’ preference for ‘be[ing] prodded’ and of needing ‘to be taught’ (S2-3) does not appear to be spoken or represented at all in a utopian or romantic discourse about students’
capacities. Such preferences belie the ideal of the ‘good student’ (Amirault, 1995) as self-motivated and self-knowing. Instead students speak a preference for consumption and nurturance, which are out of favour in the new economy of education (Commonwealth Department of Education Science & Training, 2003). This appears to support Renshaw’s (2002b) argument that ‘the ethos of the institution and its major methods of teaching perpetuate a dependency culture in which...[students] are often patronized and their views not sufficiently acknowledged’ (p. 13).

The preparedness to both critique and challenge utopian representations of themselves within the institution are argued to be exemplars of what Fraser identifies as ‘oppositional talk’. In pedagogical settings this talking back or defiant speech (Ellsworth, 1989) is a product of the discursive organization of pedagogical work and the organization within which it is done. In Fraser’s terms, it is the product of the power relations that exist within the organization and its location in the larger economy, which is both discursive and monetary.

That there is no shared language is in Fraser’s terms highly significant. If, as Fraser (1989) argues, systems of language use are also systems of power (including its effects) then the preference in Conservatorium officialese for speaking the utopian student is an effect of power relations, one that de-legitimises students’ claims to be failing or pedagogically needy, or victims of a ‘con’ (in the double sense of that word). Following Fraser, it is argued that once enlightened notions of the student as perceived by management have done the work of de-legitimisation, then the institution is permitted to continue its traditional work and practice.

The fact that academics are not in agreement about student needs does not surprise. What is important here is that ‘progressive’ academic discourse does nothing to re-mediate - indeed may well exacerbate the problem of ‘meeting student needs’. The lack of a shared discourse between students and the ‘progressive’ academic in relation to student needs underscores Amirault’s (1995) point about the problem of academic/student relationships more generally in the academy. For Amirault, what passes as ‘progressive’ may well be a fantasy of good teaching. He argues that

a pedagogy that disparages hierarchical, institutionalized authority and dreams of eradicating and celebrating local, inter-subjective authority democratically shared with students is only fooling itself (p. 70).
Again the issue that is most compelling here is the absence of a shared language for ‘speaking’ the student as subjects of and subject to the pedagogy of the Conservatorium.

A conclusion that can reasonably be drawn then, in light of the above, is that the production of ‘failing’ and ‘blaming’ student talk, is a product of the power relations which have disallowed engagement in a shared community of discourse about student needs. Rather than the students themselves producing the discourse of failure, following Fraser, it is argued that the institution itself is actively producing failing and blaming students as discursive subjects.

If, in accepting Fraser’s view, the production of the discourse of failure is something that is occurring within the institution, it would appear that a notion of pedagogical work necessary within the whole institution is not just confined to one classroom or to one academic. Rather, it is about a means of communicating that disallows people from simply investing in an entrenched position – a position that is clearly occurring in this academy. It cannot be said that there has been no attempt to discuss student needs. Rather it has been demonstrated that the ‘expert’ needs talk (whether student oriented or not) makes connection neither with the utopian language of management, nor with the student discourse. Over time the situation increasingly seems to worsen and the issue therefore, is that students are not just simply a different cohort, but are discursively disconnected from all other needs talk communities.

5.1 So what for practitioner research

It is appropriate for me, as a practitioner-researcher, to reflect how it might be possible to move towards a community of practice, which despite the presence of either the traditional or progressive academics, allows students to engage in a discourse of language that is shared across all areas. What sort of forums are necessary to produce shared language? How do students get to articulate in forums? How can students be put in a position where they can voice what they really want to say, given as Ellsworth (1989) argues, they ‘cannot carry equal legitimacy, safety, and power in dialogue’ (p. 317).

In view of the conceptual framework, it would appear that in terms of developing a shared language, it is useful to re-visit the concepts of both Habermas and Fraser. As already discussed in Chapter 4, Habermas, in his theory of a ‘liberal public sphere’, argues that an ‘ideal speech situation’ can only be achieved if the conditions of emancipation are built into the nature of human communication. These conditions, according to Habermas, are possible only ‘through
argument, knowledge, mutual trust, and accord with one another’ (1979, p.3). In developing this concept further, Fraser (1989) argues not only for the essential need for the ‘elimination of social inequality in spheres’ but for the discussion to countenance ‘not the exclusion but the inclusion of interest’ (p.92). In other words, in the terms of Habermas and Fraser, unless there are forums in which there is a shared language across all communities of discourse, students will be powerless at the table.

Of course it needs to be acknowledged that a shared language can be imposed from above in much the same way that totalitarian systems are imposed. This ‘top down’ process however is to be avoided in terms of needing to engage students more fully. For students at the Conservatorium this is particularly critical, given that as earlier indicated in this study the pedagogical ethos has tended to perpetuate a culture that encourages students to be ‘compliant’ and accepting of ‘authority’ (Cuff, Sharrock & Francis, 1990).

It could be argued, in light of the above, that what is necessary at the Conservatorium is the creation of forums where there is a shared language across all discourse communities and forums where student representation can occur. As indicated in this study, it is only through such forums that it is possible to ‘remove the taint of social inequality from discourse’ (Fraser, 1989), thus enabling practices that allow students to both inform the institution and to be part of forums where this information occurs. It has also been demonstrated that the engaging of a shared discourse through such forums might also assist in refusing the ‘competing power-play’ which has confused a rational approach to solving the problem over student needs in the past (Fraser, 1989, p. 162).

If the Conservatorium invests in a sharing of discourse across all areas, and thereby a community of practice, the discussion over student needs will advance beyond that of the ‘obvious’ binary debate in favour of a more avant-garde position, which is both and neither of these binary terms. As earlier demonstrated, this involves borrowing language, shedding language and developing new ‘hybrid’ ways of speaking. For, as Fraser (1989) in her concept of needs talk reminds us, when it comes to determining student needs in a curriculum, what is played out between hierarchies, teachers as experts, students and broader publics, is an ongoing struggle to articulate what each party has assumed to be relevant and axiomatic. For the practitioner, the point is not to

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78 See Section 4.1.3; Academic 2
79 See Figure 3.1, Section 3.3.7.
anticipate an end to the struggle but to make strategic interventions to enable a new/different set of power relations.

5.2 From Curriculum to Communication
In an attempt to open up new possibilities for thinking relevance, this study has intentionally sought to move the thinking beyond the ‘vocational-versus-performance’ binary by offering an alternative way of thinking about student needs within the academy. As a practitioner researcher, I have accepted the challenge of St. Pierre (1999, p. 2) who urges researchers to think ‘differently’ about a commonplace situation by opening up what seemed ‘natural’ to other ‘possibilities’. Rather than endorse this ‘commonplace situation’, I have attempted to refuse a binary debate (Lather, 1996) by seeking to denaturalise it.

To achieve this, I have provided a poststructuralist analysis of student needs at the Conservatorium specifically using Fraser’s (1989) framework of discourse analysis and theorizing of power and needs. In taking this approach, my argument has been that needs discourses at the Conservatorium are ‘contested across a range of different discursive arenas and among a range of different discursive publics’ (Fraser, 1989, p. 167). Through Fraser’s notion of politicised needs talk (i.e. Reprivatization, Oppositional and Expert talk), the study has analysed the way that needs are articulated and discursively organised in the Conservatorium. Through a micro-analysis of the language generated from texts from three different groups of participants, - namely management, staff, and students, the study has been able to capture the complexity of the discursive organization of ‘relevance’ in music curriculum.

The analysis has demonstrated that dualistic thinking, i.e. performance/vocation; teacher/student; institutional/personal, is both a dominant and a limited way of understanding the nature of what has been occurring within the academy. It has revealed that the contestations and struggle over student needs in the Conservatorium are the product of power relations. It has demonstrated that there is an absence of a shared language about student needs by identifying a number of discrete discourse communities, none of which have the effect of allowing that shared language to develop. The study has also clearly demonstrated how the institution itself is actively producing ‘failing’ and ‘blaming’ students as discursive subjects.

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80 See Chapter 4, Section 3.2.3.
5.3 Implications for Practitioners

The challenge then for me, as a practitioner in the field, is to consider what is to be done, given that my own commitment has been to advocate a more work-place-oriented curriculum that addresses the need for diversification and multi-skilling for occupational needs. Before commencing this study, I was tempted to rush to provide the sort of massive curriculum change that might open up vocational possibilities. My research however has forced me to confront the fact that I am always implicated in the very structures I am trying to change (Ellsworth, 1989, p. 310). I therefore need to ensure against precipitate action of saving students in ways they would not necessarily choose.

While no practitioner-researcher can claim to be ‘innocent’ in a research project that inquires into their own ‘clients’ needs, I have, through a deconstructing/deconstructive inquiry (Lather, 1991b), attempted to step beyond the ‘traditional criticisms about researcher bias’ (Olesen, 2000, p. 229). By engaging in a ‘strongly reflexive account’, I have been forced to ‘rethink’ and reconceptualize the meanings and assumptions brought with me to the research, thus putting my very ‘advocacy under scrutiny’ (Lather, 1998, p. 1). What began as a goal towards helping students overcome resistance to ‘emancipatory’ pedagogy now no longer seems appropriate. I now accept that students can generate their own vocabularies to challenge expert discourses and by being more responsive to student language, I can now better understand their ‘versions of reality’, rather than ‘imposing my own’ (Lather. 1991b, p. 73).

At the very least, rather than continue to debate the progressive or traditional stands of student needs within the institution, this analysis has moved me to contemplate a different set of questions. In focusing on the management, academic and student language in the discursive contexts in which they were generated, it has sought to open up new debates and ‘to produce difference instead of the same’ (Ellsworth, 1997). In particular, it has helped me understand how the institution itself constitutes discourse communities as distinct from merely reacting to them.

5.4 Re-thinking student needs

I realize that what this thesis has not done is solve the immediate problems of the field, such as those outlined in Chapter 2. That was never the purpose of this work. What this thesis has done is allow me to raise more relevant questions about what it is that academics should be paying attention to and what it is that they should be investing in at the Conservatorium. The better questions are to do with what it means to invest in communities of practice and flows of information that promote such communities: What would a flow of communication look like that
was able to be constitutive across the three sets of management, academic and student talk? What would a pedagogy that operates beyond these boundaries look like?

These questions move beyond the binaries (i.e. performance/vocation; teacher/student; institutional/personal) because these categories have been shown to be limited in their power to understand needs as an institutional construct. They disallow thinking about a flow of communication across all three sets of talk identified and analysed in the study. What is needed, it would seem, is a move to genuine dialogue across all groups within the Conservatorium community rather than a salvation (or blaming) narrative. Put another way, the challenge is one of creating a shared language community, one that allows for the mutual examination of differences, contradictions and complexities over student needs – a condition that permits the borrowing, shedding and the developing of new hybrid ways of speaking (Ellsworth, 1989); a setting up of committees that engages with students, a committee where students are represented and encouraged to contribute to debate and a committee where all parties are ‘mutually implicated’ (1989). This demands looking beyond the culture of entrenched positions that have marginalised students and frustrated past debates or attempts at innovation.

In order to respond to this challenge, I as a professional have now been moving to consider how the various cohorts of learning communities in the Conservatorium can operate effectively as cohesive groups. In doing so, I have been looking to research which addresses the encouraging and fostering of group interaction in organisations such as universities. This has led me to look at writings on issues relating to communities of practice and learning communities. These include ‘Communities of practice: The organizational frontier’ (Wenger & Snyder, 2000a); ‘Learning in communities’ (Wenger & Snyder, 2000b); ‘Reconstructing Notions of Community in Academe’ (Meagher, 2001); ‘Reinventing Ourselves: Interdisciplinary Education, Collaborative Learning, and Experimentation in Higher Education’ (Smith & McCann, 2001); ‘Developing Education Leaders. A Working Model: The Learning Community in Action’ (Norris, Barnett, Basom & Yerkes (2002); and ‘The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organisation’ (Senge, 2002). As these and other writers assert, the Conservatorium can move beyond its entrenched position only if it sees itself as a learning organization - an organization that is understanding of its processes and practices. This is not a simple task. In doing so, however, the Conservatorium is more likely to become an organization where characteristics such as teamwork and learning are emphasized, where a cross-organizational working is fostered and where a system of shared beliefs, goals and objectives is created. As Peter Senge (2002, p. 3) argues,
Once we can give up the illusion that the world is created of separate, unrelated forces...we can then build “learning organizations”, organizations...where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning how to learn together.

To understand the Conservatorium in this way is to blur distinctions like teachers and students, management and academics in the service of building new communities of practice.
References


Griffith University. (2002). Funding Rates for Elements. In *Operating Funding Allocation* (p. 6). Griffith University, Brisbane, Australia: Author.


Ward, B. (1987). State and district structures to support initial year of teaching programs. In G. Griffin & S. Millies (Eds.), The first years of teaching. Chicago: University of Chicago.


APPENDIX A

Proportion of Persons Attending Classical Music Activities by Age: expressed as percentages of the total number of persons attending the following: Popular Music Concerts, Musical Theatre Performances, Dance Performances and Classical Music Concerts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Persons</th>
<th>1991</th>
<th>1999</th>
<th>2002</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-24</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-34</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-44</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-54</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-64</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 and Over</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>11.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 75*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


(The total will not equal the average of the sum of the components because a person can attend more than one venue/activity).

* The category of ‘Over 75’ first appears in the 2003 report. Previous documents include up to ‘65 and Over’.
APPENDIX B

American Public and Private School Music Teacher Counts for the 1998-1999 School Year and the 1999-2000 School Year by Category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1998-1999 School Year</th>
<th>1999-2000 School Year</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Music Department Chairs</td>
<td>6458</td>
<td>6486</td>
<td>+28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Music (Classroom)</strong></td>
<td><strong>33785</strong></td>
<td><strong>30848</strong></td>
<td><strong>-2937</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Band Directors</td>
<td>31194</td>
<td>31247</td>
<td>+53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choral Directors</td>
<td>32381</td>
<td>32520</td>
<td>+139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Music</td>
<td>28813</td>
<td>31589</td>
<td>+2776</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instrumental Music</td>
<td>15961</td>
<td>16165</td>
<td>+204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orchestra Directors</td>
<td>6929</td>
<td>7070</td>
<td>+141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Number of Job Titles</strong></td>
<td><strong>155521</strong></td>
<td><strong>155925</strong></td>
<td><strong>+404</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Number of Music Teachers</strong></td>
<td><strong>119539</strong></td>
<td><strong>119064</strong></td>
<td><strong>-475</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

APPENDIX C

To: Keyboard students currently enrolled in the undergraduate program at the Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University

Re: The Development of an Appropriate Model for Keyboard Pedagogy in Tertiary Institutions

Investigator: Gemma Carey

I am currently undertaking a Doctoral Research project investigating the curriculum needs of music students enrolled in keyboard undergraduate programs at tertiary level. This project is being conducted as part of my EdD studies at Queensland University of Technology.

I am interested in gathering information from keyboard students currently enrolled in the undergraduate program at the Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University for the above purposes. The gathering of data for my research involves the completion of three questions. As a keyboard student currently enrolled in the above undergraduate program, you are invited to participate in this survey. Your comments will be useful and beneficial in regard to future curriculum directions.

Your participation in this survey is voluntary and anonymous.

You may also be invited to participate in a more in-depth interview with the investigator regarding your answers to this survey. Your participation in this interview is also voluntary and anonymous.

Only the research team will have access to the information you provide. Your anonymity and confidentiality will be safeguarded in any publication of the results of this research, through the use of pseudonyms.

If you wish to participate in the project, could you please complete this survey and return it at your own convenience to a locked box marked ‘Curriculum Needs Survey’ at the security office in the main foyer on the second floor.

If you have any questions or would like to seek further information regarding this project, please do not hesitate to contact me. My contact details are below.

Gemma Carey
Ph: [07] 38756339
email: g.carey@griffith.edu.au
APPENDIX D

THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN APPROPRIATE MODEL FOR KEYBOARD PEDAGOGY IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS

Investigator: Gemma Carey
Ph: (07) 3875 6339
eMail: g.carey@griffith.edu.au

Supervisors: Prof Erica McWilliam
Dr. Bruce Burnett

QUESTIONS

1. What do you think Conservatorium students need to know?

2. So what do you consider our music undergraduate curriculum should include?
3. Is that happening here?

Many thanks for taking the time to answer these questions and assisting with this research. As mentioned in your initial contact letter, you may be asked to participate in a more in-depth interview with the investigator.

Could you please indicate, by ticking one of the following boxes, whether you are willing to be further contacted by the investigator for this purpose.

1. I do not wish to be contacted for a more in-depth interview.  
2. I am willing to be contacted for a more in-depth interview.
   My name and contact details are as follows:

   NAME: .................................................................................................
   CONTACT DETAILS: ............................................................................... 

If you have any questions or would like further information regarding this project, please do not hesitate to contact me. My contact details are below.

If you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the project, you are invited to contact the Secretary of the University Human Research Ethics Committee on 3864 2902.

Gemma Carey

Ph: [07] 38756339
email: g.carey@griffith.edu.au