‘They give you tools and they give you a lot, but it is up to you to use them’: the creation of performing artists through an integrated learning and teaching curriculum

Abstract

This article explores the extent to which aspiring entrants to the performing arts industry have to develop both the forms of *vocational practice* employers require and *social capital* to enable them to operate effectively in external labour markets (i.e. contract-based and networked-generated work). It focuses on the work of one college – the WAC Performing Arts and Media College – that has developed and designed together with industry partners a programme to help aspiring entrants to enter the performing arts industry. Concepts from social capital and situated learning theory are used to illustrate the way in which WAC: (i) has accumulated the expertise and networks over the years to create an integrated learning-teaching curriculum; (ii) uses this curriculum to develop participants’ vocational practice and social capital and thus position them to make effective transitions into the performing arts’ notoriously tricky labour market. It concludes by highlighting the implications of this analysis for UK education and training policy.

Keywords

Creative industries, performing arts, social capital, situated learning, vocational practice

Introduction

The contribution of the creative and cultural (C&C) sector - advertising, architecture, art & antiques markets, computer & video games, crafts, design, designer fashion, film & video, music, performing arts, publishing, software, television & radio’ - to national economies has been acknowledged worldwide (Florida, 2002), in Europe (KEA, 2006) and in the UK (DCMS, 2001) for some time, as has the desire of a rising number of people to work in the sector. Studies in the UK have shown, however, that the entry into the creative industries is difficult for all sections of the cohort (e.g. Galloway *et al*, 2002) and in particular for black, minorities and ethnic communities (Eclipse Report 2001).

Post the publication of the Leitch Report (2006), the UK government tackles the issue of access to the labour market by affirming the importance of ‘skills’, treating qualifications as a

proxy measure for skill development, and assuming that qualifications are central to the recruitment of new staff. This stance about the relation between qualifications and employment presupposes the existence of 'occupational' and 'firm-specific' labour markets (Ashton, 1995). These labour markets have historically in the UK been characterised by transparent access to employment based on stipulated selection criteria for jobs, and well-structured and designed career-ladders plus access to training and development in firms. The efficacy of this assumption with regard to gaining access to the C&C sector has recently questioned by Guile (2006). This sector is predominantly characterised by external labour markets, that is, freelance and contract-based work that is rarely advertised in a clear and transparent way (Bilton, 2007). Guile has shown that qualifications rarely guarantee access to such labour markets. They usually have to be supplemented by developing forms of 'vocational practice' (i.e. mix of knowledge, skill and judgement) emppoyers are looking for and 'social capital' in this case, networks of contacts to help them to secure employment, that many accredited programmes struggle to develop.

To help aspiring entrants to do so, a diverse number of 'intermediary agencies' have sprung up over the last decade (Guile and Okumoto, forthcoming). Intermediary agencies offer rather different forms of education and training compared with community education. The latter offer courses that are usually delivered by cohorts of trained educators employed by local authorities (Tett, 2002). In contrast, intermediary agencies secure funds from sources such as the European Union, UK government departments, charitable foundations and the private sector to bring different combinations of conglomerates, small and medium-size enterprises (SMEs), freelancers and networks together to either offer aspiring entrants work placements/internships or to teach on accredited or non-accredited courses (Guile and Okumoto, forthcoming).

In light of these observations about the key role intermediary agencies play in coordinating the C&C sector's opaque labour market, this article focuses on one example of the work of one such agency – WAC Performing Arts and Media College (WAC)[1] - that specialises in developing expertise in the field of the performing arts. It looks at one programme that WAC has designed and delivers to help adults who aspire to enter the creative and cultural sector to do so. The article is structured in the following way. First, it looks at the development of WAC as an intermediary agency. The next section outlines the way in which we have integrated a number of concepts from learning theory and social capital theory to analyse the social and vocational outcomes that WAC facilitates, and the methodological approach we have used to do so. The following two sections identify what is distinctive about the design and delivery of WAC's integrated learning and teaching curriculum, and discuss the way in which that

[1] When the Weekend Arts College was renamed, it kept its acronym 'WAC'. The large part of the students at WAC is from Afro-Caribbean ethnic backgrounds (67 percent), and this proportion also applies to the members of staff (70 percent).The numbers of the staff are 14 full-time and 217 part-time (as of May 2005).

curriculum fosters the development of participants' vocational practice and social capital. The article concludes with a number of observations about the relation between social capital and situated learning, and about the implications of WAC's experience for further policy development for the continuing education of adults.

WAC as an intermediary agency

Background

WAC started 25 years ago as an intervention funded through the auspices of the Greater London Council to enable young people from low income families to access structured but unaccredited vocational training in dance and drama at weekends and during school holidays to develop their skills so that they could audition for conservatories and/or further specialist training (Celia Greenwood, Director, interview, March 2007). WAC has always been special, as Celia (2007) explains, 'because it is a community that is not based on location. It's a completely different kind of community with many of complexities, connections, histories, distinctions and separations.' So in contrast to community education where concept of "community" usually has local geographical, social and institutional connotations (Tett, 2002, p. 2), WAC supports a distributed community of aspiring and experienced 'creatives' – current participants, graduates, tutors and artists – to engage in mutually reciprocal learning[2].

Gradually, WAC developed a secondary function 'to re-engage disengaged young people in learning and to empower young people who were failing in other places to feel successful about themselves'. This function emerged because the reforms of UK secondary education undertaken in the late 1980s and the early 1990s put less emphasis on creative arts (Sefton-Green, 2006). As a result, young people who wanted to engage themselves in creative subjects increasingly began to enroll on WAC's out-of-school programmes funded via the European Social Fund (ESF). A further function emerged in the late 1990s in relation to the progression of WAC graduates and other self-taught adults working in the field of world art forms (e.g. DJs, African dancers, singers). Both lacked formal qualifications to validate the vocational experience that they had accumulated through contract-based employment and access to networks to extend that practice. Consequently, a question arose from those people who were facing a wall in terms of their career development: 'why can I not do further training at WAC?' WAC therefore developed into an organisation that balances 'opportunity alongside the aspiration to foster talent so that it preserves a social as well as vocational purpose'

[2] For example, WAC graduates such as Julian Joseph, the jazz pianist/composer/broadcaster, Ms Dynamite, the R&B/hip hop singer, Marianne Jean-Baptise, the actress, Sheron Wray, the dancer, who are now successful in the creative industries, continue their association by supporting the development of next generation of WAC graduates.

(Sefton-Green, 2006, p. 18).

The development of the Foundation Degree (FD) in Performing Arts

WAC began to look into the options for validating world art forms at the start of the new millennium. After a series of discussions with higher education institutions involved in the delivery of arts programmes and the Arts Council England, WAC concluded that the newly established Foundation Degree (FD) offered a qualification framework that could be customized to validate world art forms. Unlike traditional three year degrees that were designed and delivered by universities, the FD was predicated on the idea that agencies other than universities could use its framework, which offered guidelines for content and assessment, to design the component elements of a degree, agree their proportional weighting and identify the pedagogic proceses to delivery such a degree. The one proviso was that the resulting degree, which was of two year duration with the possibility of participants taking a further two years to gain a conventional honours degree, had to be validated by a higher educational institutions (QAA, 2004).

The FD in Performing Arts was developed and run by WAC through the auspices of the Last Mile Project,[3] which is a £13 million project funded through the EU's EQUAL Programme that focuses on inclusion in the creative industries. Drawing on its accumulated social capital, WAC created the FD by:

- assembling a team of employers to advise WAC as regards the content of the FD in Performing Arts;
- inviting three tutors to design and deliver the integrated learning-teaching curriculum. The curriculum balanced interdisciplinary and disciplinary elements. The former consisted of: (i) core curriculum - Integrated Performance Project 1 & 2 (1 at the end of the First Year and 2, the Second Year) and a Study Support module while the latter consisted of four separate disciplines – Dance, Drama, Vocals and Physical Theatre (in preparation while the research was undertaken), with eight modules per discipline (two technique modules and six style modules) – of which students were required to choose two (major and minor)[4].

On finishing the two-year FD, participants could either enroll in a university to gain a Bachelor of Arts Degree, undertake further bespoke training at WAC funded through The Last Mile or return to working as a professional in the industry.

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[3] The Last Mile looks at the following regions in the UK: Cumbria, London, Birmingham, Manchester, Sheffield, Slough, with special reference to BMEs. The Institute of Education is responsible for overseeing the research process.

[4] For example, in the discipline of Dance, there were Technique 1 & 2 and the style modules were African, Afrocuban, Capoeira, Tap, Kathak and Urban B boy. These modules make up 19 altogether, and students had to pass 18 of them to be awarded a FD.

Theorising social and vocational outcomes

To explain how WAC's FD supports participants to develop and enrich a range of world performing arts traditions as well as to gain access to networks to help to enter the performing arts' external labour markets, we have elaborated and extended a number of concepts from situated learning theory and social capital theory.

To explain the generative basis of WAC's FD we have reformulated Lave and Wenger's (1991, p.97) distinction between the 'learning' and 'teaching' curriculum. Lave and Wenger distinguished between these two curricula in order to highlight the difference between the forms of learning that they developed:

> *A learning curriculum consists of situated opportunities (thus including various exemplars often thought of as "goals") for the improvisational development of new practice. A learning curriculum is a field of learning resources in everyday practice viewed from the perspective of the learner. A teaching curriculum, by contrast, is constructed for the instruction of newcomers.*

Put simply, the learning curriculum gave newcomers access via participation in specialist communities to the 'technologies of practice' that experienced practitioners use to accomplish and develop that practice, while the teaching curriculum gave them access to the knowledge, skill and technique associated with a disciplinary field that may provide a grounding or a background to a specific vocational field. This position was considerably softened by Lave (1995, p.) in one of her subsequent articles. She argued that given that all forms of learning are situated, best developed through 'legitimate peripheral participation', and result in 'identity-making life projects of participants in communities of practice then it follows that:

> *Great teaching in school is a process of facilitating the circulation of school knowledgeable skill into changing identities of students*.

So instead of maintaining a position of absolute difference between the learning and teaching curriculum based on the contention that the former develops a capacity to engage with practice and the latter the acquisition of propositional knowledge, Lave acknowledged that it was possible, in principle, for these two types of curricula to complement one another. For this to happen, the teaching curriculum had to be conceived of as process of supporting learners to develop academic and vocational identities and practices so that they complemented, rather than clashed, with the learning curriculum.

To explain how WAC mobilized social capital to design and deliver its FD and to enhance

participants' vocational practice we have turned to social capital theory. This theoretical tradition has become increasingly popular throughout the social sciences over the last two decades because of its utility in explaining the 'well-being' of individuals and groups (Coleman, 1990). Well-being is however a rather under-developed notion, consequently, different forms of social capital theory have emerged in the fields of political science, economics, and youth studies (Fine, 2001). Nevertheless, they all tend, as Bassini (2007, p. 19) points out: 'to share the same foundational argument – that increased social capital is associated with increased well-being'.

Bassini (2007, p. 18) identifies five different, yet related, dimensions of social capital amongst theorists. They can be summarized as follows: (i) various forms of social capital influence well-being; (ii) a positive relation exists between social capital and well-being; (iii) social resources have to be transformed into social capital by being mobilized so that a group can benefit from their presence; (iv) the formation of social capital has two inter-related components – the 'structural' (i.e. who is in the group) and the 'functional' (i.e. how the people in the group interact); and, (v) 'mezzo-mezzo' interaction between two groups is the key component of the development of social capital in the 'secondary' group, the family normally being seen as the 'primary' group (Bassini, 2007, p. 28).

Furthermore, recent work in social capital theory has argued that in addition to the above dimensions there are three processes - 'bonding', 'bridging' and 'linking' - that play a part in consolidating these different dimensions (Stone, 2001, pp. 14-15). The former refers to the generation of trust and reciprocity in closed networks (i.e. where members know one another). The middle term refers to gaining access to new networks so that network bonds are strengthened because they now overlap. The last term refers to the development of social relations between networks and national and regional institutions to garner additional resources and/or power.

We are not entering the debate about the relative merits of social capital theory. Instead we maintain that the third and fourth dimension – the mobilization of resources into social capital and the interplay between the structural and functional components of social capital – in conjunction with the bonding and bridging process constitute the basis of a conceptual framework for explaining the effectiveness of WAC's FD. Our argument in a nutshell is as follows: to develop aspiring performing artists' vocational practice WAC designed an integrated learning-teaching curriculum that taught artistic techniques and developed artistic confidence and identity by enculturating aspirants in relation to the demands of the industry. This, in turn, involved: (i) the mobilization of human resources from its wider networks to provide the specialist teaching inputs; (ii) the establishment of networks of trust amongst the FDs' participants so they bonded as a group and used their collective strength to support one

another to develop their vocational practice, and (iii) the provision of opportunities for participants to participate legitimately and peripherally in performing arts' networks and, in the process, broaden participants' network of contacts and positioned them to move into the industry.

We feel maintain that this approach allows us go beyond recent work that has sought to extend and elaborate the concepts of situated learning (Hodkinson *et al*, 2004; Thorpe and Kubiak 2005) and social capital (Jackson 2006; Quinn 2005; Millar and Kilpatrick 2005) conceptually and empirically, and to shed light on a little addressed issue in the education of adults: the relation between the mobilisation of social capital to develop vocational practice and the pedagogic processes that generate new social capital.

Researching WAC's social and vocational outcomes

We set about collecting data on the social and vocational outcomes generated by WAC's FD in accordance with the principle of 'triangulation'. This is a multifaceted principle that, as Gorard (2004, p. 43) has observed, causes 'considerable confusion', and followed one of the definitions offered by Gorard: 'triangulation involves only a minimum of *two* points or datasets to tell something about a *third* phenomenon'. We collect data about the FD from three sources - Celia Greenwood, WAC's Director, the Course Co-ordinator and tutors and FD participants - via individual and group semi-structured interviews which were recorded and summarized between 2005 and 2007, and at three points: exploratory discussions at the start of the FD course, follow-up conversations and an observation in the middle and verification discussions at the end. During the period of the Last Mile Project, two cohorts were available for interviews: one was in the Second Year of the FD course in 2005 and in the Third Year or a 'Last Miler'[5] in 2006, the other cohort was in the First Year in 2005 and the Second Year in 2006.

The interviews with Celia Greenwood enabled us to gain a sense of: (i) the history the context of the development of the FD in Performing Arts and the ways in which the teaching and learning curriculum – expressed in Celia's terms as 'process' and 'products' - are integrated in the FD; and (ii) and the role of the WAC community in mobilising social capital to facilitate mutually reciprocal learning. Interviews with the Course Co-ordinator and tutors enabled us to identify the values that underpinned the design of curriculum, the choice of the pedagogic methods, and the support system develop participants to be 'industry standard', *i.e.* the requirement of the industry in terms of both artistic techniques and industry-specific elements such as professional attitude. Finally, interviews with the FD participants allowed us to

[5] After finishing the two-year FD course, the participants had two options in terms of their progression: one was called 'the Third Year' which meant the top-up year of a full-degree course at a university; and the other was staying at WAC as a 'Last Miler' to receive further bespoke training.

ascertain their progression within and from the FD. Four participants from the first cohort and five from the second volunteered to be interviewed individually on their tutorial days to discuss their hopes and fears. Second-round interviews were conducted a year later with five participants from the second cohort and three 'Last Milers' where we specifically probed participants' emerging connections with industry professionals – one of the important social and vocational outcomes – in order for them to move forward to the labour market.

Having collected information and insights about WACs' FD from three sources, we sought to deepen the triangulation process and therefore enhance the 'plausibility' and 'credibility' of our findings in the following ways (Boulton and Hammersley, 2006, p. 244): a dance session was observed to offer a different angle from participants' own reports on how they engaged with the process of instruction and responded to the feedback they received from tutors and peers; the FD and The Director and Dance tutors were interviewed at the end of the research period so as to contrast their perceptions of participants' learning and development with participants' commentaries; and, a final round of one-to-one and focus groups interviews were conducted with participants to discuss their post-course transition into the performing arts sector.

18 interviews were initially coded using NVivo, and four broad themes were extracted from the coding process, and then because of the small sample analysed in detail manually. The first three themes concerned particular aspects of the design and delivery of the FD that we deemed contributed to the development of participants' social and vocational development: 1) a balanced emphasis on 'process' and 'product'; 2) multi-faceted pedagogic methods; and 3) broad support mechanism. The fourth theme concerned participants' personal 'learning journeys' during the course and the extent to which they influenced their transition into the labour market, progression in to the third year of the FD or choice to become a Last Miler. We have used the four themes to describe the FD's social and vocational outcomes. Quotations from the Director, the Course Co-ordinator and tutors, and participants have been selected to exemplify the themes. To respect confidentiality, participants' identities have been anonymised.

The WAC Foundation Degree and its social and vocational outcomes

Balancing 'process' and 'product'

One of the enduring challenges of designing vocational curricula is to strike a balance between the social 'process' (i.e. learning and developing) and vocational 'product' (i.e. professional performance) in curricula and pedagogy. WAC's commitment to this challenge stems from Celia's (Interview, March 2007) own experience:

When I was a drama teacher, there was an ongoing tension between 'process' and 'product'. If you concentrate too much on product…you deny the process because you only care about whether the show looks good; if you focus on process…the show at the end of it doesn't communicate to the outside audience at all.

'Community arts' tends, according to Celia, to emphasise 'involvement, personal journey, group dynamic' (i.e. process) and be less concerned with the standard of performance (i.e. product), whereas 'professional training' stresses 'products and professional standards', and therefore, products are the priority. In light of this, WAC aims at offering participants 'something holistic that includes both of those'.

This commitment to holism led WAC to design a common artistic foundation for the FD that immerse participants in a diverse, yet related, number of world art forms. Although the FD's module specifications had to follow the current conventions in UK high education and identify module aims, learning outcomes, assessment strategy and instruments, learning and teaching methods and syllabus WAC avoided the tendency in many vocational programmes to interpret learning outcomes 'atomistically' and 'reductionistically' and teach techniques as though hey are separate and discreet elements (Guile and Okumoto, 2007). The interplay between the acquisition of (i.e. product) and teamwork and reciprocity (i.e. process) necessary to develop such techniques, and the confidence to perform them to an audience, was emphasized as the following example of learning outcomes from the module Naturalism – one of the drama techniques – indicates:

▪ Begin to be able to analyse and deconstruct a written text as a foundation of the rehearsal process;
▪ Learn how to work with directors and other actors to develop strategies to bring the text to life;
▪ Start to engage in appropriate research for the project;
▪ Have a professional respect for the creative reciprocity required in the work (WAC, 2007).

WAC sustained this combination of process and product throughout the two-year period in a number of ways. First, by continually reminding participants that artistic techniques are insufficient by themselves to realise their dream of becoming performing artists. From the outset, the FD alerted participant to the importance of learning 'how you go about meeting and getting an agent', 'how to take photographs of your practice' for inclusion in a portfolio or website or 'how to conduct yourself in an audition' (Charles, Second Year, June 2006). Second, by designing a core module - the Integrated Project – to provide participants with an opportunity to design, organise, manage an end-of-year performance, thereby allowing them to guage how far they had developed artistically, emotionally and professionally.

Multi-faceted pedagogic methods

In common with WAC's other programmes, the FD is based on 'a particular pedagogy and mode of practice' where members of teaching staff are 'recruited on the basis of their credibility as professional artists' (Sefton-Green, 2006, pp. 18-19). The FD is delivered by 18 tutors who are active in the industry in their own field of practice. This constitutes the cornerstone of a pedagogic approach that facilitates participants' learning and development in a number of ways. First, participants were supported to develop techniques associated with different world art forms, tutors provide participants with a range of challenging experiences to ensure that they 'receive a very modern training that connected to the needs of the industry at the moment Drama tutor Steve (Interview, October 2007).

Second, tutors created a stretching but risk-free learning environment so participants have opportunities to try things out in class without fear of being humiliated:

> *We do performance quite often in class; it took fear away. I now look forward to singing in front of people. I am not afraid to try new harmonies and stuff* (Christine, Second Year, June 2006);

Third, they also emphasised the cognitive dimension of performance by continually reminding participants to keep the relationship between performance and audience in mind when performing:

> *In every lesson, we have to think to ourselves what we are performing and why performing to audience* (Cate, Second Year, June 2006);

but encouraging them to develop self-confidence to perform solo or as part of a collective:

> *Because they [tutors] push you so hard, you think you can go out and perform professionally* (Charles, Second Year, June 2006).

The emphasis on performance is consolidated in tutorials by providing participants with opportunities to talk to tutors about their specific aspirations, fears and needs. Tutors are aware of the importance of supported participants accordingly to help them pursue their goals:

> *Some of them were able to identify earlier on what their gaps were and what they needed. We talked through finding something which would be suitable to give them confidence and experience in that area so that they could move on* (Martha, Dance tutor, interview, June 2006).

This climate of trust helps participants to sustain their motivation:

One-to-one tutorials are helpful to me. I can go and talk to specialist tutors when I needed (Charles, Second Year, June 2006);

and to accept that when tutors pressurise them in class they are not being 'teacherly' but rather alerting them to the reality of working professionally in their chosen sector:

When you show you are tired, Martha [Dance tutor] says 'you can't let that affect you. If you have an audition eight o'clock in the morning, you have to be wide-awake even if you are tired'…. Steve [Drama tutor] doesn't accept rubbish, and if you didn't deliver it…next time, you will be prepared because you have to do it. That kind of approach – you just have to do it and dwell on it (Christine, Second Year, June 2006).

Participants' acceptance of this pressure is underscored by their recognition that they are being taught by professional tutors:

Steve [Drama tutor] is active in the industry and sees this [auditioning] all the time. Teachers were approachable at the professional level. They give you very professional advice like what to work on, which is very helpful. It is like having a check-list for getting ready for an audition….Having this kind of approach everyday…gets you with the mind-frame that you would be able to be ready for it (Sally, Last Miler, June 2006).

In addition the FD also offered participants regular opportunities to judge the development of their vocational practice by providing 'showcasing' events, and by inviting external speakers who have built successful carers in the industry to share their experience of gaining access to the sector. In the case of the former, an event called 'Street Level' was organised every few months to enable those participants who felt ready to present their performing skills an opportunity to audition for the event and, if successful, to gain the experience of performing to an invited audience. This as most participants acknowledged not only enhanced their motivation on the FD by giving them something to work towards, but also to pave the way for performing to audiences outside WAC. In the case of the latter, meeting and listening to the 'war stories' of experienced professional gave the participants access to first-hand accounts about how to gain access to the industry by building networks:

We had directors, professional actors come in....Prunella Scales (famous actor) came in…to do a workshop with us…[about] how to say the speech but in your own way. We had Nica Burn (director of the Really Useful Theatre company). She's really useful. She told us a lot about the industry (Katherine, Second Year, July 2005);

and how to use those networks to sustain a career within the industry:

> *I've spoken to a few people[in the industry] just to get some advice and to find the wisest decisions to go forward so I'm kind of in a good place right now* (Robert, Second Year, July 2005).

Support mechanism

Despite participants' undoubted enthusiasm and sense of ambition, many of them often experience periods of considerable uncertainty and insecurity whilst engaged with the FD and, as a result, were in need of guidance and advice. Anticipating this 'pastoral' need amongst all their participants, WAC have appointed a member of staff to act as 'career adviser' for participants on all their programmes. Participants can discuss various personal matters, which range from financial concerns to issues confidence, with the career adviser:

> *we can talk through our plans with him [the career advisor]. He comes to our lessons to show that he is there for us. You can talk about personal issues as well because they affect your professional life* (Sam, Second Year, June 2006).

Participants who were less certain about their future direction were more inclined to use this support service to clarify their future plans:

> *I was thinking to…ask for some singing lessons, ballet and contemporary jazz lessons and work because I need to make money… [to have] some more dance lessons on my own* (Betty, Second Year, July 2005).

Director, module tutors and other members of staff also accepted that had a part to play in the provision of support and guidance and participants swiftly worked out who to see to help them to address their concerns:

> *We have a Head of each subject who helps with [disciplines]… [an administrator] is in the office, who is like information-based, for example, auditions, news letters. Celia deals with money issues – fund-raising. We know where to go* (Christine, Second Year, June 2006).

Participants' learning journeys

Participants' artistic and professional level varied considerably at the point of their entry into the FD course, during the transition from Year One to Year Two, and at the point of their transition into the labour market. Some had undertaken a training course at WAC and had already acquired certain skills and knowledge and were keen to gain an honours degree:

I'm sure I don't want to just do the foundation degree. I want a full degree (Zoe, First Year, July 2005);

whilst being already aware that a qualification itself would not bring them a job yet:

I'd like to... finish my degree, but I'd like to get into the business as soon as possible…I sent out CVs this summer. I want to be active….It's great training, but I want to put it into practice (Kim, First Year, July 2005);

Others had considerable industry experience, however, they were still aware of the difficulty of entering their chosen industry and were conscious that they would have to be proactive to start their professional career.

Second-Year participants tended to have developed more concrete plans based on the information given in the FD course about possible pathways into the sector:

I want to continue with acting and dancing, and musical theatre I'm definitely keen on, but also straight acting (Linda, Second Year, July 2005);

I will have another year dance training to broaden my skills…and slowly set up a hip-hop theatre company (Richard, Second Year, June 2006).

and were able to articulate their different needs and the challenges ahead of them as they moved into the Second Year:

Year One was more to develop your talent, but Year Two was more performance, performance and performance. So you haven't got much time to worry about. It is giving, giving and giving without thinking! (Sam, Second Year, June 2006);

and, could identify the interplay between their 'cognitive' and 'technical' development:

The First Year was a grooming process; they try to set you up with different techniques. The Second Year is about applying all those techniques and putting them together…. the Second Year is harder; they push you mentally and physically to get ready for the industry (Charles, Second Year, June 2006);

Nevertheless not all participants found it easy to negotiate the transition from Year One to Two:

> *there was a transition of tutors from mothering to saying 'deal with it!' and 'perform it!' It was quite harsh, but now I am grateful for it* (Sam, Second Year, June 2006).

Tutors were clear though that even if the FD assisted to participants by the end of the second year to reach the highest professional standards so that:

they are the fittest and the most expressive dancers they can be. Once they leave here [they will have to] *keep their skills up and not let them go. So, they all have to be quick to identify what they want to move on and carry on doing because your level of skills deplete* (Martha, Dance tutor, interview, June 2006)

For this to happen, it is essential for participants to appreciate their personal and professional growth and how it will position them to go on to realize their dream to succeed as a creative:

> *What it has taught me is a lot about what it takes as a person to do it [acting] – personal demands on your personality….It has taught me disciplines, professional standards and also how to work with different personalities….It really does bring out your personality, and you have to learn to adapt and also to take crap from people….[Learning was about] using your creativity, thinking intelligently, being free, and getting in touch with your inner-child as well, and maybe thinking about social issues that I wasn't thinking before* (Linda, Second Year, July 2005).

The learning-teaching curriculum, vocational practice and social capital

The curricula and pedagogic conditions for generating social and vocational outcomes

WAC is able to mobilise social capital to create an integrated learning-teaching curriculum and then to use the pedagogic processes associated with that curriculum to generate powerful vocational and social outcomes for a number of reasons. First, WAC's 'functional' ((Bassani, 2007)) resources - a flat organizational structure and industry-experienced tutors – and the FD's pedagogic processes – bonding, bridging, stretching, supporting – were aligned to mutually reinforce one another. Thus, they not only consolidated the '"family"-style ties and high degrees of motivation and investment' amongst staff and FD participants that are one of WAC's longstanding features, but also created the social and cultural conditions for the FDs' participants to bond with one another and their tutors (Sefton-Green, 2006, p. 22). As one participant succinctly expressed the environment at WAC:

> *There is no pressure here. It is competitive but friendly competitiveness. We are close, and everyone is friendly.' The participants grew a sense of identification as a member of the WAC community, which gave them safety and stability, and increased incentive for learning. As one participant put it, 'we feel we can go and talk to anybody* (Mary, Last Miler, June 2006).

In addition to reinforcing participants' solidarity and sense of identification with one another and the FD the family-style ties also, nurture respect and trust amongst the entire WAC community:

> *I like the way they treat you as an individual. It is very nice atmosphere. I know I have people to talk to if there is any problem. Peer relationship developed quickly and we encourage and support each other* (Richard, Second Year, June 2006).

and positioned the participants to accept responsibility for their learning and development:

> *It's the whole process getting ideas across, working with different people, being in a professional environment and maintaining that attitude, not storming off and acting like a child, accepting what you have to do, necessary changes that have to be made, responding like a professional because that's what we're training to be* (Linda, Second Year, July 2005).

Tutors consolidated this emerging sense of self confidence and responsibility by constantly reminding participants that if they were to succeed professionally at the end of the course they would have to be prepared to act independently both professionally and personally. The Dance tutor Martha (Interview, June 2006) observed:

> *By the time they [completed the FD], we say the emphasis on you now, there are a lot of possibilities, but you've got to chase it, and you've got to sort it out. I have to be flexible, and it seems to work out because they are now really juggling.*

This commitment to mutual respect and trust is highly significant for many of the participants who have, in Ball, Maguire and Macrae (2000, p. 150) terms, 'fragile identities' because they have not necessarily had positive experiences at school and/or at home. This emphasis on mutual respect and trust positions participants to gradually develop more 'secure identities' (Ball, Maguire and Macrae, 2000, p. 150) because they feel confident about not only sharing the hopes and fears with one another and with their tutors, but also taking advantage of the opportunities to develop their world art specialism and to develop their own burgeoning performing arts network. The net effect is that participants are gradually able to develop a sense of what type of person in individually and professionally they would like to become over the next few years whilst at the same time being realistic about the risks and competition they will face in realising their dreams.

Second, WAC's 'structural social resources' (Bassani, 2007) - an enthusiastic leader, Celia, participants and tutors, other members of staff and extended networks of artists and arts

organisations - and its aforementioned pedagogic processes, created the social and cultural conditions to bridge performing arts networks. On the one hand, WAC graduates, who are active in the industry, are willing 'to give something back' by tutoring on the FD and sharing their experiences of working in the industry to the next generation of learners (Sefton-Green, 2006, p. 19). This enables the learning-teaching curriculum to offer participants access to experienced performer-teachers who can not only teach them the techniques associated with different world art forms, but also offer them authentic and up-to-date knowledge and experience of the industry. Moreover, the active involvement of WAC graduates plays a significant part in ensuring that the forms of knowledge and skill associated with different world art forms circulate so that participants learn to appreciate the aesthetic value of different traditions' artistic techniques, respect and appreciate them and, in the process, begin to develop a more multi-faceted artistic identity:

> *Because this course gives an equal status to non-Western art forms, it gives you respect and understanding for say, African dance or Kathak. You are breaking a lot of stereotypes….You are dealing with people from diverse cultures….You really learn to respect everybody – no matter who you are, no matter where you are from. You learn to be humble* (Linda, Second Year, July 2005).

On the other hand, WAC's extensive performing arts network helps participants to become more 'outward looking' and to pursue their aspirations by learning to become a member of multiple 'overlapping networks' (Stone, 2003, p. 13). Access to such networks permits WAC to offer participants legitimate, albeit peripheral, opportunities to develop their vocational practice in industry settings:

> *WAC is very good for that. [They] put me into the Black Musical Festival in a bar in Leicester Square, and we choreographed and performed it. Media and other people were invited* (Richard, Second Year, June 2006);

and, opportunities to develop their social capital by exercising their agency and actively engage with 'media and other people' in order to consecrate their reputation in the industry:

> *Someone in the industry gives you a real good insight of what to expect and what's out there. That is really valuable* (Mary, Last Miler, June 2006).

This circular mobilisation of social capital plays a significant part in expanding and extending networks and reciprocity inwardly and externally within the FD. In the case of the former, participants gradually came to realise that in addition to developing their knowledge of and their skill in performing world art techniques, they also had to develop their professional judgment and confidence to evolve their specific vocational practice in ways that

differentiated them from other performers with a similar specialism. This is especially important given that contracts are awarded on the basis of having developed distinctive artistic qualities. In the case of the latter, participants also came to realize that it was essential to generate their own bridging social capital because it would help them to function in future as 'Moebius-Strip Enterprises' in the creative industries external labour markets (Guile, 2007, that is, to secure contracts based on their own reputation or contribute their expertise in some capacity to contracts that other performing artists had secured.

The effects of the social and vocational outcomes

To guage the extent to which WAC's FD positioned participants' to make their transition into the performing arts' labour market, we have modified the logic and terminology of Bassani's (2007, p. 30) argument about the development of 'well-being amongst youths'. Bassini's argument rests on the assumption that the 'double jeopardy' effect of low levels of social capital – remaining rooted in narrow communities - can be combated through increasing people's access - the 'compensating effect' – to new types of social capital that offer access to additional expertise and networks. We have elaborated and deepened this argument by highlighting that, in the case of aspirant performing artists, the purpose of the social capital is two-fold: access to industry-standard expertise and to networks to facilitate entry to the industry.

From our perspective, although the primary grouping in Bassini's taxonomy remains the family, WAC as the secondary group constitutes a very different type of 'school' compared with a state institution. First, because it is in the non-formal sector, WAC is exempt from the 'accountability culture' of secondary and further education that deters many people with fragile identities wanting to remain in full-time study (Ball *et al*, 2000). Second, its long and close association with world art community means that it has developed specialist networks that the aforementioned institutions struggle to make contact with.

INSERT THE FIGURE 1

Figure 1 'The interaction of social capital and vocational expertise and its affect on well-being' (modified from Bassani, 2007)

Our conversations with Celia, the FDs' tutors and participants established that: most participants came from relatively disadvantaged primary groups (i.e. families) and, a consequence, their primary group social capital was fairly low; and that WAC (i.e. their secondary group) had a high level of social capital. Thus it follows that the conditions exist, in principle, for a compensating effect to occur providing the FD's participants actively seek to develop their vocational practice and mobilize their own social capital.

We have seen from the innumerable positive quotations from participants about their experiences throughout the article that they clearly believe the FD has developed worthwhile social and vocational outcomes for them. These positive messages were further confirmed during interviews with participants and tutors at the end of the course. Participants commented that the FD had boosted their personal and professional maturity by:

> *instilling in me the discipline and skills needed as an actor. I suppose, also, that ultimately, I grew as an individual, and applied myself accordingly* (Linda, Second Year, July 2005);

> *giving you tools and they give you a lot, but it is up to you to use them. Nobody spoon-fed you at WAC* (Charles, Second Year, June 2006).

Furthermore, WAC found when it tracked the first cohort of FD graduates that 10 out of the first 11 graduates were working professionally (one had changed her career direction). It was clear from their professional pathways in the performing arts labour market that, as the Drama tutor Steve (Interview, October 2007) observed, they were:

> *working cross the borders; some are working as dancers/actors, one has got an album contract, and handful of them working as multi-field performers.…We've only tracked one year, but they are not just working a lot; it's a wide section of work they are covering. We feel like we are not feeding an aspect of the industry; we are actually promoting artists out there.*

This has partially happened because the combination of vocational and social capital created through the FD means that graduates are 'not just performers, but arts practitioners' seem to be 'heavily desired by employers' (Steve, Drama tutor, interview, October 2007).

Conclusion

This paper has explained the way in which WAC mobilised its accumulated social capital in its FD to develop participants' vocational practice and to expand their network of contacts so as to position them to gain access to the performing arts' notoriously tricky external labour markets. To do so, we developed an integrated perspective on the concepts of the learning and teaching curriculum and on the way in which the bonding and bridging processes were used in that curriculum to develop vocational and social outcomes. This enabled us to show how the FD's curriculum:

- circulated discipline-based 'knowledgeable skill' in a variety of ways that enabled participants to develop their personal and professional identity while they are a

member of a formal programme of study;

- provided opportunities for participants to further extend that identity by participating legitimately, albeit, peripherally, with the technologies of practice in authentic settings and thereby begin to develop the forms of judgement that are integral to vocational practice;
- provided opportunities for participants to bridge and link networks to develop the forms of social capital that will help them to gain access to the creative labour market.

Specifically, we have highlighted the way in which the FD offered participants an opportunity to not only acquire a recognized qualification, but also to develop industry-recognised forms of vocational practice and networks. This positioned the participants, as one of the Drama Tutors observed, to start looking:

> *at themselves as not just performers, but arts practitioner. It is a realistic dose of what you may need to do to continue to work in the industry over a long period of time. It may not always be performance-based work, so they start to explore the possibilities of how they would put programmes together – how they would choreograph, direct and deliver/transfer the skills they've learned* (Steve, Drama tutor, interview, October 2007).

Furthermore, we have demonstrated that WACs' commitment to establishing strong human relationships internally and externally enabled them to, on the one hand, mobilise a wide range of performing art and pedagogic expertise to develop participants' vocational practice; and, on the other hand, to continually renew the potential stock of expertise WAC could, in future, drawn on because FD graduates feel that they 'want to come back to WAC and teach at WAC' (Charles, Second Year, June 2006). Consequently, WAC avoids the tendency to adopt a predominantly inward-looking stance and develop the type of 'club' (Coleman, 1988, p. 104) mentality that can undermine the effect use of social capital. In addition, access to experienced professionals paves the way for future generations of WAC.

This multi-faceted approach to the creation of performing artists is hardly unique to WAC. Established institutions such the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, the Royal Academy of Arts and the Royal Academy of Music have for many years based their programmes on similar principles. These institutions are apart of, to borrow Bourdieu's (1993) phrase, the field of 'restricted production', that is, high art and thus recipients of a variety of sources of funding from the state as well as donations from corporate world and private individuals. In contrast, WAC is an intermediary agency operating in the non-formal sector and concerned with consecrating the profile of world art forms and the development of world artists and practitioners. Hence it has a much more marginal artistic status and a much more precarious financial position compared with prestigious artistic institutions.

One of the challenges facing WAC and other intermediary agencies in the post-Leitch demand-led education and training era in the UK is that the focus of government policy and funding falls primarily on the 16-20 group who have not yet entered the labour market, and the formal post-16 education and training sector (i.e. Further Education Colleges and accredited training providers), rather than adults who, like WAC's FD participants, are wanting to make a horizontal move (i.e. within a sector or from one sector to another) in the labour market (Deloranzi, 2007).

There are a number of un-intended but nevertheless pernicious effects of this policy. First, it marginalizes intermediary agencies such as WAC that play a crucial role in helping adults to become self-employed in the performing arts' notoriously tricky labour market and, in the process, facilitating a greater degree of social justice for those people who come from disadvantaged backgrounds to realise their creative aspirations. Second, it denies adults who want to up-date or broaden their qualifications or intermediary agencies who want to design programmes to combat labout market exigencies access to funding (Mason, 2008)

The challenge for the government is, therefore, to adopt a broader perspective on adult skill needs, the agencies best placed and the strategies required to develop vocational practice and social capital, and the realities of work in external labour markets. In the case of the C&C sector, it means recognising the role of intermediary agencies in devising bespoke (i.e. accredited and un-accredited) programmes to work with cohorts of talented socially excluded and/or marginalised people to fulfill their aspirations as well as to diversify and enrich the creative industries economically and socially. The current UK focus on the 16-20 group rather than 'adult skills updating and retraining' is unlikely to reach out to those undiscovered talents (Mason, 2008).

A coda: it has long been recognised that there can be a 'dark side' to social capital (Putnam, 2000) and this often arises because organisations and their partners are still in the process of mutual bridging and linking their respective institutional policies and practices (Stone, 2003, p. 3). The relationship between WAC and its partner higher education institution proved, for a number of reasons, to be more challenging than either party had anticipated and higher education validation was withdrawn from the pilot FD, although the programme itself continued as an un-accredited course and generated the vocational and social outcomes reported in this article.

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	Primary Group Social Capital (family)

Secondary Group Social Capital (WAC)		High	Low
	High	Boosting Effect	***Compensating Effect***
	Low	Compensating Effect	Double Jeopardy Effect

Figure 1. ‘The interaction of social capital in two groups and its affect on well-being’ (modified from Bassani, 2007)