

Institution: Manchester Metropolitan University		
Unit of Assessment: C21 Sociology		
Title of case study: Promoting the educational, cultural, and heritage value of electronic dance music (EDM)		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2013–2020		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Beate Peter Pete Dale	Senior Lecturer in German Senior Lecturer in Music	2002-present 2013-present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2016–2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? No		
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>The research of Dale and Peter has had a significant impact on public understanding of electronic dance music (EDM) as cultural practice and as heritage. It has raised the profile of EDM with regard to its historical significance to the communities of Greater Manchester and its ongoing influence and worldwide cultural currency. Dale has promoted curricular innovation to enable the delivery of EDM-related music education in schools. His work has been presented to over 500 teachers, improved attainment amongst pupils, and informed plans to alter curriculum exam board specifications. Peter's ESRC and National Lottery funded 'Lapsed Clubber' project established an interactive online platform to capture and archive memories of rave culture and EDM. Since its launch, 3,262 individual users have accessed the Lapsed Clubber memory map in 4,811 individual sessions. While the origins of EDM lay in more marginalised youth sub-cultures, Dale and Peter's work has been significant in a wider societal re-evaluation of its role and importance in contemporary everyday life.</p>		
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>Sharing a passionate commitment to the critical sociological study of contemporary music cultures, Drs Dale and Peter have conducted groundbreaking and methodologically innovative research designed to alter popular perceptions of the status and socio-cultural value of EDM. Their research has been conducted within educational contexts and wider society, including communities of clubbers and former clubbers. Dale and Peter are foundational members of Manchester Metropolitan's Music and Sound Studies cluster (MASSMcr), and their research is also embedded within the culture of the Manchester Centre for Youth Studies (MCYS).</p> <p>Dale's research addresses the increasingly urgent need for a fundamental review of <i>'the provision of education of less traditional forms of music'</i> as argued by the <i>Greater Manchester Music Review</i> (2019, 12). The research originated in his own practice as a music teacher in an inner-city school in the North-East of England, positioned on the 97th percentile of Fischer Family Trust measures of severe socio-economic deprivation. Dale began to experiment with the stimulating and hugely transformative effects of EDM-related activities in the classroom (e.g. treating DJ decks as genuine musical instruments), with a particular emphasis on disaffected learners. The DJ decks proved to be highly engaging for working-class boys in particular, many of whom were intrigued to find their 'street culture' represented within a school setting. Dale further developed his pioneering methodology in two seminars as invited speaker on EDM and music education at Cambridge University's School of Education. This led to his monograph <i>Engaging Students with Music Education</i> (2017) [1], which revealed that EDM tended to receive extremely limited coverage in mainstream music education while pointing out the manifold pedagogical benefits gained from introducing it into music teaching and learning. A key insight of the research arose from reviewing the GCSE curricular requirements of the leading exam boards as they pertained to DJ skills, which enabled Dale to flag up problems with the language and descriptive detail of the specifications. In 2019, Dale undertook an evaluation of the <i>Tech Champions</i> project run by Musical Futures, a not-for-profit organisation that supports school music teachers in their efforts to enthuse pupils about music. His research has addressed barriers to EDM-related</p>		

music-making in schools, particularly with regard to teachers' confidence and their general lack of knowledge about EDM. He has demonstrated that DJ decks and other technology can be used effectively in classrooms, especially within 'informal learning' contexts [2, 3].

Conducted in close collaboration with community groups, Peter's research has recalibrated perceptions of EDM and dance as an intrinsically valuable leisure practice, demonstrating that it continues to be enjoyed by older people who were 'ravers' in their youth. Peter's analysis of EDM fandom identifies dance music in particular as a cultural practice that allows people to immerse themselves in a communal, identity-forming activity that has an enduring impact on individual life narratives [4]. Based on the results of an online survey of the 'lapsed clubber' community, Peter discovered that continuing engagement with EDM culture in advanced adulthood was grounded in notions of community, cultural value, and lifestyle choices – findings that challenged and contested more mainstream perceptions of EDM [5]. Peter's critical rehabilitation of rave culture as constitutive of contemporary British national heritage was supported by her Heritage Lottery-funded Lapsed Clubber project (G1), which culminated in the creation of an Open Access online map, to which former clubbers continue to be invited to contribute their memories in various multi-media formats. The concomitant research resulted in a significant contribution to ongoing critical debates as well as public discourse about popular music historiography and its inclusion of experiential knowledge as perceived and memorised by participants in EDM events [6].

While popular imaginings of the 'rave community' of the 1980–90s primarily construct it as an 'alternative', escapist, apolitical, and hedonistic subculture, Dale's and Peter's work retrieves EDM's historical import while demonstrating that it continues to play an important role in contemporary identity formation and community building among different generations.

3. References to the research

1. Dale, P. (2017) *Engaging Students with Music Education: DJ Decks, Urban Music and Child-Centred Learning*. Routledge. ISBN 978-1138858343
2. Dale, P. and Stahl, G. (2015) "DJ and MC Habitus and "Skillz" in Peer-led Learning Cultures." In Burnard, P., Trulsson, Y.H. and Söderman, J. (eds.) *Bourdieu and the Sociology of Music Education*. Ashgate. pp.147-62.
3. Dale, P. and Stahl, G. (2018) "Masculine Learner Identities in the Field of Student-Directed Musical Learning." In Albright, J., Hartman, D. and Widin, J. (eds.) *Bourdieu's Field Theory and the Social Sciences*. Palgrave Macmillan. pp.39-52.
4. Peter, B. (2013) "Beyond capital, towards myth: EDM fandom and dance practice." In Duffett, M. (ed.) *Popular Music Fandom: Identities, Roles and Practices*. Routledge. pp.47-64.
5. Peter, B. and Williams, L. (2019) "One Foot in the Rave: Ageing 'Ravers' Transitions to Adulthood and their Participation in Rave Culture." *Leisure Sciences*, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01490400.2019.1675560>
6. Peter, B. (2020) "Experiential Knowledge: Dance as Source for Popular Music Historiography." *Popular Music History* 12(2). <https://dx.doi.org/10.1558/pomh.39678>

Funding:

G1.Heritage Lottery Fund, Open Heritage award (OH-16-0256) Memories, Communities & Belonging: The Lapsed Clubber Heritage Map of Greater Manchester 1985-1995.

(2017). GBP38,300. PI: Peter

G2.ESRC Festival of Social Science - Lapsed Clubber events. (2015, 2018 and 2019). Total awards GBP3,320.

4. Details of the impact

Rooted in a close collaborative engagement with teachers, pupils and members of the public, the work of Dale and Peter has helped to reshape the contemporary status and cultural value of EDM. Their shared aim is to transform educational practices and resituate EDM as a valid constituent of our cultural heritage and contemporary social practices.

Developing and supporting DJ-orientated music-making practices in schools

Dale's research has directly improved teaching practice and increased pupil attainment. In 2019, Dale wrote a scheme of work for a series of DJ-based music lessons that were delivered in three North of England schools. The research found that a lack of teacher confidence with EDM-orientated technologies such as DJ controllers was a significant barrier to the adoption of EDM in the classroom. The teachers in the study were all from either a classical or conventional rock/pop background, and EDM-based music-making presented a challenge to their confidence. The scheme of work and an accompanying practical toolkit devised by Dale informed a change in practice. When the teachers were interviewed about their experiences, they all reported that they had gained new skills and confidence to deliver the scheme of work themselves. This confidence in applying new knowledge was effective in increasing student engagement, with one teacher illustrating this as follows: *'[I am] able to now see that it can work in terms of, well just in terms of the student's vocab. Even in year 8 the fact that they can talk about tempo more effectively [...] even though they're using beats per minute rather than adagio or allegro I'm able to slip that in as well, so you know their awareness of the elements would help GCSE as well as BTEC'*. The teacher at another school reported that 70% of her 2019 BTEC class attained higher marks than they would have done without the curriculum intervention and that eight of the learners would have failed the qualification. Underlining the importance of the initiative on attainment, she stated that *'their overall grade will have become merit or a distinction, whereas they would have got a Level 1 pass or a level 2 pass. Some of them probably wouldn't have even finished the course at all, because they wouldn't have been able to produce the work for one of the units'* [A]. None of the teachers had ever delivered EDM-oriented lessons, and all but 15 of the 102 students (who participated in the sessions between January and June 2019) had never performed on decks before. 60% of students were previously not aware that DJ equipment could be used within GCSE/BTEC Music performance assessments. The vast majority of students enjoyed the workshops (94%) and learnt new skills (98%) [B].

Dale's evaluation of the Musical Futures *Tech Champions* project required visits to all 10 participating schools, during which he provided guidance on best practice when using DJ-oriented Ableton Push devices for teaching, learning and assessment. Dale published the evaluation report on the *Tech Champions* project in June 2020 [C]. He also gave a presentation entitled 'Engaging Boys Through DJ'ing and Technology' as part of Musical Futures' Online Festival of Learning (3rd–5th June 2020) which had 500 viewers in total. Musical Futures have provided evidence of the value of Dale's contribution to the project as follows: *'The project led to a much-needed injection of both physical resources and innovation into schools in some particularly deprived areas such as Lewis School Pengam and Castleford Academy. Having Pete Dale from MMU as part of the project has been invaluable in providing us with a critical friend and ongoing evaluation of the project enabling us to refine the input and training offered to the Champion Teachers. Pete has presented his initial findings to the group of teachers and has also contributed to an online festival of music education, which was accessed by over 500 teachers'* [D]. Dale's work with Future DJs has attracted national media attention from *The Guardian*, which notably remarked on its influence in 'decolonising the curriculum' by allowing wider access to music education. The article was featured in news outlets in the UK, India and Australia with a potential readership across all platforms of 88,499,446. In a 2020 article in *Crack* magazine, also covering the GCSE curriculum, Dale was described as *'one of the true heroes of the movement to modernise music education'* [E].

Dale's research has had an impact on pedagogical understanding of national-level official assessment frameworks (GCSE) in music. Dale has supported the inclusion of EDM in the curriculum by informing the approach of DJ specialists who are working with exam boards to draft a new music curriculum. Dale's work with Future DJs and DJ School UK (independent, not-for-profit music schools promoting EDM and DJing in UK education) is informing the details of DJ-based GCSE specifications offered by leading UK exam boards Edexcel and AQA. Dale's consultancy with Adam Bell (Leeds Music Education Partnership), in conjunction with Jim Reiss of DJ School UK, was *'instrumental'* in helping these teaching

practitioners to 'understand how to fit the needs and musical practice of student DJs to the OCR board Music GCSE specification' [D].

Situating EDM as heritage and positive community identity

The Lapsed Clubber project has uncovered hidden histories surrounding the rave culture of Manchester between 1985 and 1995. Originating in an ESRC Festival of Social Science public exhibition and seminar in 2015, the project gained momentum through a series of strategically targeted public engagement events that captured national mainstream media attention with articles in [The Guardian](#) and [The Mirror](#). This led to a successful bid for Heritage Lottery funding for the Lapsed Clubber online map and accompanying documentary film (G1). In close collaboration with external partner the Manchester Digital Music Archive (MDMA), Peter encouraged 'lapsed clubbers' to share their memories of Manchester's dance scene in the 1980s and early '90s. The project used new forms of digital public engagement combined with more traditional live events and workshop activities. Participants were asked to contribute to the development of an interactive [Lapsed Clubber Audio Map](#) which has archived 375 memories about 123 Manchester-based places so far. Working with partners at the Manchester Histories Festival, the project organised a series of exciting public events that quickly helped to build up an online community of almost 1,000 'lapsed clubbers' from across Manchester and beyond. Events such as 'Bring a Rave Memory' and 'pinning parties' were often accompanied by live DJ sets and other nostalgic activities. 709 members of the public attended these events as part of the Heritage Lottery Funded project.

The evaluation report found that individuals attending the events had learnt more about their shared heritage, reviving a sense of community integral to Manchester's rave scene at the time. One participant noted: *'The early 90s rave scene was a formative time in my life. I'm interested in other people's experiences or versions of events'*. 120 volunteers on the project have developed a range of skills, including data analysis, working with archives, interview techniques, and the editing of recorded material. The Lapsed Clubber project produced a [unique documentary film](#), featuring old ravers, DJs, and academics talking about their experiences and knowledge of the period. The film premiered at community venue The Old Abbey Tap House on 10th Nov 2018 and has since been viewed 1,083 times on YouTube. A bespoke soundtrack was created for the film by local musician Samurai Breaks, which has been played 1,923 times [F]. Responses to an online evaluation survey on the Lapsed Clubber Facebook group (868 members) demonstrated that 75% of respondents reported feeling a greater sense of belonging to a community of Lapsed Clubbers as a result of the project [G]. As Abigail Ward, founder of MDMA states, *'the methodology of collecting memories through pinning parties and other events really allowed people to feed off each other's memories and remember things they had forgotten and there was a tremendous amount of community spirit and camaraderie. This led to a re-assessment in the participants of what that time had meant, it allowed people to look back and realise that some of the friendships that were formed at that time were life long and some of the confidence that it brought them was a crucial turning point in their lives'* [H].

Changing the heritage profile and public discourse around EDM

Memories of EDM culture and practice have never been collected by a heritage organisation in England before. Responding to the success of Peter's Lapsed Clubber project, Manchester Digital Music Archive created a new interactive heritage resource encouraging communities and heritage organisations to continue with the capture of co-created 'self-authorised heritage'. The resource is innovative both technically and in its content, as detailed by MDMA Director Abigail Ward: *'The project of the Lapsed Clubber map was completely innovative in its integration of Web RTC and Google Maps, on a very small budget, in terms of digital development. The other area that was completely new and innovative for the Archive was the idea of getting more nuanced and emotional memories. We really believe that that there isn't one version of history and want to present as many multiple versions of history as possible. The Lapsed Clubber map is all collected under one subject heading, under which there are 330+ short memories, some of which completely*

contradict each other. For me, this is how the collection is innovative. That discrepancy in how people remember is how we, at the archive, think history is' [I]. Peter's intervention also instigated a broader national reappraisal of rave culture and its memory, disrupting popular preconceptions by influencing media discourse on EDM, with articles on the project featuring in both local and national outlets, including *The Mirror* and *The Guardian*, reaching a potential readership from those publications of 122,055,462. The impact of the project on heritage practice has been externally recognised by the National Archives who feature the Lapsed Clubber Audio Map as a case study of innovative digital intervention [J].

Increasing intergenerational understanding of EDM

Peter and Dale have brought their respective research interests and beneficiary communities together to increase intergenerational understanding of EDM cultures. In November 2020, Peter and Dale led a workshop in partnership with DJ school Future DJs, which took place online due to COVID-19 restrictions. 24 students aged 13-15 joined up with members of the Lapsed Clubber community to talk about their respective experiences of EDM and to co-produce new musical pieces based around an examination of 'EDM then and now' with a particular focus on the 808 drum machine. The student participants indicated that this engagement had increased their understanding of the heritage of EDM, with 78% of respondents saying they knew nothing about the historical scene before the event and 100% saying they had learned more about it as a result of attending [K].

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

- A. Transcribed interviews with teachers; Evaluation summary evidences impact of Dale's work on school attainment and teacher confidence.
- B. Numbered survey responses from students.
- C. Evaluation report on Musical Futures Tech Champions project corroborates impact on music education innovations developed and delivered by Dale.
- D. Testimonial from DJ School UK; Testimonial from Future DJs; Testimonial from Musical Futures corroborating impact of Dale's work on the development of a national music curriculum.
- E. Guardian article URL, screengrab; <https://crackmagazine.net/article/profiles/djing-gcse-school-curriculum/> corroborating reach of Dale's research on music education.
- F. Evidence corroborating the reach and significance of the Heritage Lottery funded Lapsed Clubber project including: Lapsed Clubber [Audio Map URL link](#); Lapsed Clubber Project Evaluation report; Lapsed Clubber [Film URL link](#); Samurai Breaks Soundcloud URL; screengrab/ Manchester Histories blog URL, screengrab.
- G. Lapsed Clubber Facebook group survey.
- H. Testimonial from Abigail Ward, Manchester Digital Music Archive about the innovative nature of the Lapsed Clubber project.
- I. Media data from Meltwater corroborating the reach of Lapsed Clubber activities.
- J. Evidence of the use of the Lapsed Clubber project as [a case study of digital access and engagement](#) by The National Archives.
- K. Survey data from intergenerational project corroborating the impact on attendees.