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Creating space for composing – Frames, tools and collaboration

Räume zum Komponieren schaffen – Rahmen, Werkzeuge und Zusammenarbeit

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Abstract

This article presents a study that investigates how a music teacher enables composition amongst high school pupils in a musical theatre project. The main aim is to explore the way in which the music teacher teaches pupils to compose music and play in band for a musical theatre project. The musical theatre project aims to encourage pupils to create a musical, whilst the present study shows which learning tools are used in this process. A sociocultural and ethnomusicological approach was employed, drawing on field studies and interviews with the music teacher. The results demonstrate that the music teacher strongly influences the adolescents in their learning process and the teacher creates frames that the pupils can respond freely to, making the pupils secure and free at the same time. This approach from the music teacher enables many compositions with his or her pupils.

Keywords: Composing, teaching, ethnomusicology, music education, sociocultural perspective

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Abstract

Dieser Artikel stellt eine Fallstudie vor, die untersucht, wie ein Musiklehrer das Komponieren von Schülern der Sekundarschule im Rahmen eines Musikprojekts ermöglicht. Das Hauptziel liegt zum einen darin zu erforschen, auf welche Weise der Musiklehrer den Schülern das Komponieren von Musik und das Spielen in einer Band in einem Musikprojekt vermittelt, das sie ermutigen soll, ein Musical zu erschaffen. Zum anderen soll untersucht werden, welche Werkzeuge für das Lernen in diesem Prozess sichtbar werden. Hierzu wurde ein soziokultureller und musikethnologischer Ansatz mit Feldstudien und Interviews mit dem Musiklehrer angewandt. Die Ergebnisse zeigen, dass der Musiklehrer einen starken Einfluss auf den Lernprozess der Jugendlichen hat und dass der Lehrer einen Rahmen schafft, auf welchen die Schüler frei eingehen können, wodurch sich die Schüler zugleich sicher und frei fühlen können. Dieser vom Musiklehrer angewandte Ansatz ermöglicht mannigfaltige Kompositionen seiner Schüler.

Schlüsselwörter: Komponieren, Lehre, Musikethnologie, Musikunterricht, soziokulturelle Perspektive

1 Introduction

Musical learning is diverse and influenced by the individual's former personal experiences and knowledge. Researchers need to chart the past to understand the present. The current study investigates how imagination and creativity amongst adolescents engaged in composition in different forms are used as a way of learning music. Fautley (2004) suggests that further studies is needed to develop an understanding of how creative processes can become responsive to the structural intervention that is distinctive in the compulsory school, and how teachers can make these interventions in an effective manner. The present study explores the teaching by one music teacher who enables composition amongst his pupils in grades six to nine of the Swedish compulsory school. By mapping a teacher's way of teaching, pupils' musical learning can be understood, as mapping the past helps us understand how learning is situated in the present (Vygosky, 1978).

This article presents a case study where the main aim is to explore a single music teacher's way of teaching composition in the context of a musical theatre project amongst pupils in grade nine and how the teacher involves creativity and imagination in the pupils learning process.

The primary research question is: Which tools are used in a written learning culture when teaching composition to high school pupils in a music project that aims to encourage pupils to create a piece of musical theatre?

Investigating a subject close to one's own practice, makes it important to get access to helpful tools dealing with the problematic issues that can occur. In the methodology section, emic and etic are described as these helpful tools. The theoretical points of departure in the current study are based on socio-cultural theories of learning, with a focus on how cultural tools are used in learning and teaching processes, and this will be presented further in the article. In the results the teacher and his actions are realized and connected to the theoretical framework and earlier research in the discussion.

2 Background

The new curriculum for the Swedish compulsory school (grades one to nine) states:

> Teaching in music should essentially give pupils the opportunities to develop their ability to:
>
> o   play and sing in different musical forms and genres,
>
> o   create music as well as represent and communicate their own musical thinking and ideas, and
>
> o   analyse and discuss musical expressions in different social, cultural and historical context. (Skolverket, 2011, p 95)

A core element of the new curriculum is that all pupils are given the opportunity to compose and learn about composition. In grades one to nine of the compulsory school, the estimated

length of school music lessons is 45 minutes per week (Skolverket, 2011). Class sizes differ from 15 pupils per music lesson to 30 pupils per music lesson. Teaching composition within this time frame and with these differing number of pupils is a challenge for music teachers. As composition demands a great extent of creativity, music teachers who teach composition face the complexity of teaching pupils how to be creative. This article will present how one teacher handles these obstacles encountered. The importance of imagination and creation is present in the curriculum for the Swedish compulsory school (Skolverket, 2011). Music teachers need to be aware of how pupils develop creativity and imagination. This will be discussed in the article by connecting this part of the curriculum to the thoughts of Vygotsky (1978). Vygotsky claimed that there is a difference between imagination of a child, adolescent and an adult and the imagination of the adult is more developed and richer since the adult carries more experiences that create various possibilities for the imagination. In the Swedish compulsory school curriculum, creative activity has to be part of the pupils' school day. Vygotsky (2004) states that experience and imagination are connected and are co-dependent, and that imagination can be viewed as a tool to expand the experiences of a human being. Furthermore, impressions from outside and inside the human are under constant revision, they are part of processes that grow and change. In the words of Vygotsky (2004):

> But in actuality, imagination, as the basis of all creative activity, is an important component of absolutely all aspects of cultural life, enabling artistic, scientific, and technical creation alike. In this sense, absolutely everything around us that was created by the hand of man, the entire world of human culture, as distinct from the world of nature, all this is the product of human imagination and of creation based on this imagination. (pp. 9-10)

Music teachers greatly influences the genre of music the pupils interact with in lessons, as music teachers chooses lesson content based on the guidelines set by the National Agency for Education (Skolverket, 2011). According to Stålhammar (2004) the education programmes for music teachers at the music academies Sweden has changed since 1980 – when it was the opinion that there was "good" and "bad" music; classical music was considered "good" whilst rock and pop were considered "bad". Now genres are measured in quality within their own context and not in comparison to other genres. Prospective music teachers receive education in all types of genre. When Swedish young people are asked about what influences them and asked about their sources of creativity, it seems that popular music is very important to them, both as individuals and groups (Stålhammar, 2004).

Social interaction and the joint involvement between pupils, teachers, as well as artistic co-workers creates an experience where everyone learns: from the novice to the professional (Törnquist, 2006). Mars et al. (2014) conclude that teachers ought not to always use the same methods for teaching their pupils as they experienced when learning themselves; teachers need an ability to identify the learning styles of their pupils and to create a learning environment that corresponds to this variety. Törnquist (2006) studied musical theatre projects at four different schools. In these projects, pupils and teachers worked together as a team and all of the pupils and teachers contributes and is unique in their efforts to jointly

create a show. The creative process showed in Törnquist's study to be time consuming, as well as the cooperation. Although it needs to be so in order to be experienced as meaningful as there is a learning process in all of the practising in the musical theatre projects that Törnquist examined. The result – in this case the show – becomes a part of the process. The learning continues since it does not take place in an empty space as a constant phenomenon, but as a flexible process with a living audience. The performance becomes a part of the learning process (Törnquist, 2006; Lilliestam 2006).

3 Theoretical framework

In the following sections, some aspects of music learning are highlighted in order to make the results understandable: tools, music learning and the social context, collaborative learning and composition in the classroom, the theoretical framework is influenced by the socio culture perspective on learning.

The concept of *culture* is central in the present study. Bruner (2002) states that culture is "the weave of meaning", through which human beings interpret their experience. Hence the concept of culture consists of figures of thought as well as linguistic expressions shared by a group of people (Lundberg & Ternhag, 2002). Such a way to define culture stems from social anthropology. Lahdenperä (2008) emphasizes that the view of learning, knowledge and education is bound by culture, in the same way as all other concepts in the social world. The anthropological concept of culture stands in contrast to the aesthetic concept of culture – the latter instead focusing on cultural artefacts and assuming a certain kind of knowledge. Based on a social anthropological definition culture includes systems of shared ideas, systems and concepts, rules and meanings that are underpinned and expressed in people's various ways of life. By that definition, culture refers to what people learn and not what they do or create. According to Säljö (2000) the Swedish school, as an institution, are focused on abstract communication and are strongly influenced by written traditions for communicating. The present study is uses this anthropological way of defining the concept of culture and states that the teacher and pupils in the study are influenced by a written learning culture.

3.1 Tools

Both intellectual, for example circle of fifths, and physical tools, for example music video mediate musical knowledge as well as learning. In this study tools are used as theoretical framework to realize the teacher's teaching practice in a musical theatre project. The intellectual tools in this study include encouragement by the teacher, the circle of fifths and practice; physical tools are, for example, music videos, written scores and lyrics.

Human beings create knowledge through interaction with others (Vygotsky, 1978; Säljö, 2000). Learning is created and exists within a person, and by communicating with others. The conditions for knowledge exist in the surroundings as well as within the person; thus, learning is dependent on a person's background and present conditions. Säljö (2000) states that thinking and awareness exist within the person, and contact with the world around the individual with the help of various physical and intellectual tools. From a sociocultural

perspective, it is fundamental that tools mediate the world to people in concrete situations. By studying tools that people use, it becomes possible to understand human learning and thinking. As language, culture and social factors are crucial in thinking and learning, it is unreasonable to think that thinking and learning would be the same in different cultures (Säljö, 2000). The present study takes place in a written learning culture. This perspective will influence the teacher's choice of tools when teaching.

Knowledge in itself and how it is created is dependent on the culture where the pupil's interactions with others take place (Vygotsky, 1978; Säljö, 2000). Knowledge develops in interaction between two different levels - social interaction and the mind of the human being. In social interaction pupils can borrow knowledge from the teacher or a more knowledgeable peer and imitate. Through cognitive processing the knowledge becomes the pupil's own and the pupil no longer imitates. This process can be described as the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978). When getting access to one's own knowledge, pupils can develop further by lending new knowledge, that also is processed cognitively, and once again the pupil has conquered new knowledge. Through this process, the mind develops and knowledge transfers from being borrowed from someone else to being one's own. The child imitates the adult's use of tools, and as the child grows up, several different models for learning can be used to solve a problem. Mediating tools are used to understand and to learn when being interacted with a thought process (Vygotsky, 1978; Säljö, 2000). There is a difference between knowledge created within different learning cultures. There is also a difference between what knowledge that is valued the most, as it is the knowledge that is harder to achieve that is most desirable. The cultural context of a person is influenced by what is considered as important to remember (Cole, 1996; Ong, 1990/2007). Thus teaching and learning is dependent on the culture in which it takes place.

3.2 Musical learning and the social context

With sociocultural theory as a starting point, the fundamental thought is that human beings learn by interacting with each other (Säljö, 2000). When studying knowledge and learning, culture can be seen as thinking embedded in culture (Rogoff, 1990). Säljö (2000) also places learning in a cultural context and underlines that knowledge and learning are created through communication with others. By using language it is possible to describe and problematize what is not physically present.

Holgersson (2011) highlights that students of higher music education use different cultural tools depending on which genre of music they play. In this study learning is seen as a social activity, and in order to understand and contribute in such an activity the pupils need to be participants. Which, by its nature involves bridging between different ways of understanding the situation (Rogoff, 1995). Earlier experience is inevitably a determining factor when it comes to how musical learning will take place at a specific moment in a specific setting. There is a connection between the learner and the master, where learner develops knowledge by borrowing cultural tools from the master. This creation of meaning and ability already takes place during a child's interaction with others (Vygotsky, 1986; Vygotsky, 1978).

Vygotsky (1978) also stresses the value of action, as he argues that intellectual development takes place as speech and language mix with practical action. The progression of thought and language grow in relation to each other, and they are sometimes more, sometimes less evolved when compared to each other. Thought and language can exist at the same level for some time, and even melt together, but they will develop differently and draw each other to a higher cognitive level. Systematic learning plays an integral part of the development of young people. Furthermore activities children do together with a more knowledgeable peer develop their minds more effectively, than activities they do on their own (Vygotsky, 1986). Teaching demands, according to Brand (2002), two prerequisites: there has to be a difference in the knowledge possessed by the teacher and pupil, and the teacher needs to have an intention to teach. Lilliestam (2006), claims that there are primarily three steps to musical teaching: listening, practicing, and performing. The teacher's earlier experiences heavily affect the cultural context in which learning takes place and knowledge is created. Learning is furthermore a complex composition of individuals, history, and cultural context that consists of several different dimensions. The conclusion is that knowledge does not stand separate from either individuals or culture.

3.3 Collaborative learning

Collaborative learning requires active participants with a common goal, in which the knowledge created is based on relationships (Dillenbourg, 2009). The concept describes a particular form of interaction that triggers learning mechanisms are expected to take place between people – although there is no guarantee that this will actually occur. Furthermore, Dillenbourg stresses that it is important to develop strategies aimed at increasing the probability of this interaction taking place. According to Wenger (1998) the goal of learning is to create meaning. The prerequisite for learning is that humans are social beings, who – to understand and learn – engage actively with the world. Learning in a community of practice brings forth principles of collaborative learning where learning is an aspect and function of that particular community of practice. A community of practice consists of people who share a common interest and passion for something that they want to learn, and who strive to do better with help of the interaction with each other and are not restricted to a certain environment (Wenger, 1998). The essence of collaborative learning is joint and democratic learning that is stimulated through participation, commitment, motivation and ownership. Interaction and learning in music brings, according to Stanley (2009), a collaborative endeavour. The collaborative learning context creates new common basis of understanding through cooperation and striving towards the same goal. Allsup (2003) states that learning and teaching in a collaborative learning context is not bound to the power position within the group, instead pupils and teachers learn from each other. Collaborative learning is also democratic and includes dialogue and shared decision-making. According to Stanley (2009), the collaborative learning context creates a space where pupils and teachers jointly strive to – democratically and in dialogue – create new knowledge. Shared understanding can be viewed from several different perspectives: (1) it can be seen as an effect if the goal is for the group to create a common ground that is necessary to perform well in the future, (2) it can also be

seen as a process in which pupils undergo radical change (3) and it can finally be seen as a prerequisite for the implementation of effective verbal interactions (Dillenbourg, 1999).

Ferm-Thorgersen (2013) introduces the concept of "critical friends" as a way to gain knowledge in collaborative learning. In order for the method of critical friends to create an effective build-up of knowledge, members of the group need to have confidence in each other. Provocative questions are needed, along with data that can be examined and a critical examination of work. Being a critical friend also requires time, in order to fully understand the context of the work presented as well as the goals that the team works together towards. Stern (1998) argues that something else happens when two subjective beings interact, compared to when a subjective being is metacognitive. Something in the room between the two subjective beings is created, regardless of whether it is teacher-pupil or pupil-pupil, thus together with others knowledge is broadened. According to Stanley (2009) deep understanding of a concept is created if pupils have problems to solve together. When knowledge is created in a social context, this contributes to a dialogic relationship within collaborative learning, where a process that allows everyone to grow as humans and in knowledge comes from honest discussions between teachers and pupils, and between pupils and pupils. Although the collaborative learning process in itself creates democratic conditions, the teacher still has authority by virtue of the knowledge that he or she possesses on the subject. The knowledge created in this context is not transferred from the teacher, instead there is a shared journey of discovery in which pupils work together to create new knowledge through the impressions they give and receive from each other (Allsup, 2003). Inter-subjectivity is the capacity of a shared understanding within a common group; this also creates condition for how the world is interpreted in the context of the common group. All mental and physical activities have determinants because of inter-subjectivity, as they are in fact present in the midst of the learning context. This affects teachers and pupils in the one-to-one learning context as what enters in their relationship takes up a lot of space and leads to a new inter-subjectivity in that relationship. For this to happen, however, it requires the attention that something has entered into the relationship (Collens and Creech, 2013; Stern, 1998). Collaborative learning is according to Sæther (2013) deeply rooted in Vygotsky's perspective on learning as it focuses on the social dimensions of learning. Through mentoring, a pupil, child, or member of a particular culture, can be socialized into a culture, and this socialization leads to individual and social development. As the world becomes increasingly globalized and cultures thus meet, Vygotsky's sociocultural perspective has been brought to the fore. When pupils receive room and space to explore freely and work democratically a context will be established that is familiar, curious, and based on dialogue (Allsup, 2003).

The dialogical relation in a learning context forms a power perspective, which in turn creates a dynamic of opposites where the teacher creates the context. In order to create a collaborative room a third position is necessary. Collaborative learning relationships between teachers and pupils include community, sharing and reciprocity, despite being asymmetric. It is the teacher who can create collaborative opportunities (Collens & Creech, 2013).

3.4 Composition in the classroom

Teaching composition in compulsory school is not without demands for music teachers' and according to Fautley (2004) the teacher's attention is drawn to organisational matters rather than to formative response towards the pupils' in a composing process. Bolden (2009) suggests that the design of the task affects how engaged the students will be. According to Burnard and Younker (2002) the pupils' capability to think divergently and convergent appeared unaffected even without formal instructions, although it is possible that formal instruction may have had an impact on the quality of the musical choices made by the pupils, but their prior musical experience seemed to largely affect how they approached composing. When designing a creative task such as composing meaningful musical activity should be included for both those who are skilled in playing an instrument and those who are not (Leung, 2008). Further more Leung suggest that peer teaching creates learning for both the more and less knowledgeable pupil as the former can apply what they have learned and the latter can learn from their more knowledgeable peers. When composing pupils' employ strategies including managing, moulding, memorising, mind-writing (or thinking) with sound, as well as finding and focusing ideas in order to successfully compose (Burnard & Younker, 2002). The knowledge the students carry with them affects the outcome of a composition (Folkestad, 2012; Bolden, 2009; Leung, 2008). When teachers' encourage the individual learner this is shown in different paths of the pupils compositions. This way of teaching composition requires independent choices by the pupil to be at the centre of the experience. As such, the responses to certain decisions defining the intricacies of the interactions of limitations and freedom may point to something unique in composing as a way of learning music in general (Burnard & Younker, 2002).

4 Methodology and Design

Based on a socio-cultural perspective and with the approach of ethnomusicology, a design of field studies and interviews with the music teacher was constructed. In order to avoid bias created by my own preconceptions, field notes were taken in the classroom. These maintained an insider as well as an outsider perspective, in addition to the perspective of emic and etic. The field notes were complementary to the video recording and its transcript and formed part of the empirical material.

Emic accounts for the native's description of his world and etic accounts for the researcher's description of the same world. This pair can be seen as a way for the researcher to move between these two worlds (Headland, Pike & Harris, 1990; Alvarez-Pereyre & Arom, 1993). Baumann (1993) argues that the aim of music ethnology must be to successfully secure knowledge in the areas covered by the descriptions in both emic and etic. According to Herndon (1993), Sæther (2003) and Finnegan (2006), it is impossible to be unaffected as a researcher and as the group studied; once the researcher has begun to execute field studies it is inevitable that the researcher affects the group through its investigation, as well as it is inevitable that researchers will be influenced by the group studied. Through emic and etic, it

becomes possible to see these effects and highlight them, to allow better analysis of the researcher's field study materials.

4.1 Participant - Cornelis a Swedish music teacher

The name of the teacher is fictitious and was chosen by the teacher himself. Cornelis is 33 years old and obtained his degree in music teaching from a music academy in Sweden, where he studied for five years. He specialized in teaching how to play in ensemble in the genres pop and rock. Cornelis is a singer and a guitarist, although he can also play the drums, piano, bass and conduct choir. At the time for the study Cornelis had been at the school for eight years and during his first years of teaching an experienced music teacher mentored him. Cornelis teaching is inspired both by his mentor and his father who is also a music teacher. His mentor introduced composition at the present school before it entered into the core curriculum. Together with his mentor, Cornelis created several composition projects for the pupils. Each year, approximately 650 pieces are composed at the school. The pupils work either by themselves, in pairs or smaller groups. The school has around 380 pupils from grade six to nine. In the current study the teacher was observed when teaching pupils in ninth grade composition and playing in band. The pupils had chosen to be a part of the music ensemble in the musical theatre written and composed by the ninth graders at the present school. The total number of pupils was fifteen but participation varied from seven to fifteen due to a varied schedule in this school project. In Sweden pupils' reach grade nine at the approximate age of fifteen and they graduate at the age of sixteen. The art of composing is used by Cornelis to reach goals set in the curriculum and to create music education that is both fun and educational – which he views as a perfect combination. He expresses that composition can be taught to all pupils, regardless of the musical ability the pupils have; the pupils can create music with the knowledge they have at the present time. As the pupils learn more, he increases the difficulty level and he is careful to adapt the teaching for each individual pupil. It is a challenge for Cornelis to meet the demands of the new curriculum within the time allocated to the subject of music and the number of pupils Cornelis meets every week. He expresses that it takes careful planning and he can never let any music lesson be without a specific goal connected directly to the curriculum. The pupils that Cornelis teaches in music achieve high grades and there are few pupils who do not pass the set grading criteria.

4.2 Materials and procedure

The field studies took place during a musical theatre project included in the pupils' timetable. I was well known among both the pupils and the teacher, as I was a former teacher at the present school but this also created a challenge not to be biased by my own preconceptions, actions where taken, as mention above, to handle this. The method used was field notes, filming and interview. Field notes were taken aiming to grasp actions of the teacher. When the field notes of the teaching had been written, it was given to the teacher who then returned it with his opinion of what had happened together with motivations for certain pedagogical choices. Feedback took place twice during the school year, which runs from August until June. Information from the field notes was given as feedback on the 19th of September 2013

and 27th of January 2014. The teacher's teaching was filmed on four different occasions. The first recording took place on 11th of September 2013 and was 61 minutes long. The second recording made 2 of October 2013 lasted for four minutes. The third recording was made on 13th of November 2013 and lasted for one minute. On the same day, the fourth recording was made and it lasted twelve minutes. As only the teacher was filmed when teaching the whole group of pupils, the lengths of the recordings vary. When the pupils were working by themselves or in smaller groups, the teacher and students were not recorded. These films were then transcribed in the software program Transana. Spoken communication was written down, the actions that were made visible and possible to describe, were also transcribed. During the work with the transcription, feedback was given to the teacher by informal conversations via email, telephone calls and physical meetings, which took place on 17th of April 2014, 20th of May 2014 and the 1th of June 2014. The conversations were based upon written summaries of the generated material and the teacher was given the opportunity to comment freely. The summaries consisted of the visible choices the teacher made in the classroom in relation to his pupils and the subject he was teaching.

4.3 Analysis

The analysis was conducted in several phases. The first phase involved reading through all data concerning the teacher whilst at the same time keeping a logbook in order to remain unbiased. During the second phase of data analysis, themes were created. These were partly based on previous research (Mars, 2014), but also included openness towards new aspects of the present study and its data. In phase three of the analysis, a concluding interview with the teacher was conducted via email. In this interview the music teacher was asked questions based on the summary that was made from the field notes, earlier conversations and the filmed material. In the fourth phase of the analysis, new data were added to earlier data and once more recurrent themes were summarised. In conclusion the whole analysis was presented to the teacher who received the opportunity to comment and provide his opinion on the results from the research. In this concluding round the teacher recognized certain aspects even though he did not fully agree with the analysis that was made. He made objections to the "time as a crucial factor for collaborative learning" category, as shown later in the results. Above all he did not give the importance as the analysis to the words that he had used in his teaching. This was taken to consideration when concluding the analyses although the etic view was kept. Working through these different phases, it was possible to analyse which tools for musical learning were used by the teacher and to what extent.

5 Results

This section describes the actions of the music teacher and the choices he made when guiding the pupils towards independent composition. The categories stated in the analysis were: "conception of quality", "framing tasks", "the weight of good relations", "creating space for learning through collaboration" and "time as a crucial factor for collaborative learning". In the first four categories different tools are identified.

5.1 Conceptions of quality

The teacher Cornelis was clear in his instructions to the pupils when teaching composition. He pointed out what he considered to be qualitative aspects in music.

Different music videos with artists and composers, that Cornelis considered to be good influences for the pupils when they were going to compose, were used in the teaching.

> Cornelis: … the reason I am showing you these songs is to show what can be done when writing lyrics, how you can think. That one was the political one, and here comes the witty one.

Cornelis played Ray Stevens "I'm my own grandpa" to point out that this was to be seen as witty and comic.

> Cornelis: Ray Stevens wrote a song called *my own grandpa*. It has comic lyrics about a complex family tree

The teacher smiled and laughed at the jokes within the lyrics and in such a way he also suggests to the pupils that this kind of lyric is humoristic. When changing to more sorrowful music he played "Skins" by Rascal Flatts. Cornelis explained to the pupils that this lyric is a good example of well-written music and lyrics.

> Cornelis: This could be one of the best texts ever written.
>
> ….
>
> Cornelis: Beautiful and well made, and, umm, well I am caught up in the moment. As you can tell I have been caught up by what I hear.

What Cornelis never did though, was to declare some music as poorly composed; he only showed what he considered to be good music. By showing the pupils examples he framed the task of composing, he gave them a starting point for their own compositions. He made his own view on quality in music to the mark of quality for the pupils composing.

5.2 Framing tasks

Cornelis framed the task in every composing project he introduced to the pupils. For the band in the musical theatre project he framed it by the use of the circle of fifths.

> Cornelis: I thought we should start by looking at what is known as the circle of fifths. (The pupils turn to the smart board where there is a circle of fifths and text about its).
>
> ….
>
> Cornelis: There is no right or wrong in composition. It is the person composing that decides how the music sounds. However, far back in history, we have taught our ears that some chords fit together better than others. Visually, it's very well made – the circle of fifths. It shows the six major and minor chords that best fit together.

He started teaching about the functions of the circle of fifths and soon he involved the pupils in practical exercises. Even though he told the pupils to suggest any chord they want, it became clear that he did not really allow that.

> Cornelis: Just to make it easy we will have eight bars. And I suggest that we write in A major.
>
> ….

> Cornelis: Let's put some chords on the whiteboard and see how it sounds. Totally random. Just throw in some chords. Name a chord that fits.
>
> Pupil 1: C
>
> Cornelis: Does C fit?
>
> Pupil 1: Oh you mean?
>
> Cornelis: With help from the circle of fifths.
>
> Pupil 1: D major.
>
> Cornelis: D major. Alright. Perfect. Anybody else? You can use the same chords again if you want you can go around [the circle of fifths]. Pick a new chord.
>
> Pupil 2: G major?
>
> Cornelis: Does G major fit? If you look at A (points at the circle of fifths).
>
> Pupil 2: Aha, E major.
>
> Cornelis: E major mmmm. We can take the chord from the inside of the circle as well.
>
> Pupil 3: G minor.
>
> Cornelis: G minor? We have A here, where is G minor?

Cornelis told the pupil to choose randomly at the same time as he framed the practical exercise to be connected directly to the function of the circle of fifths. He taught composition this way in all the music projects, but he changed the frame from project to project. When the pupils who composed outside of the given frame showed their music, Cornelis encouraged them and pointed out what was good about the music. So even if he taught in relation to a set frame, the frame was not a goal in itself. This was shown, for example, in the musical where one of the songs, written by a pupil, had the following chord loop in the refrain: / *D* / *D/B* / *Gm* / *Gm* / with G minor being the chord that does not fit the frame set by the teacher. The frame was meant to facilitate the composition.

He framed the task by encouraging the pupils to start composing at home, and in order to remember the song Cornelis stressed that they had to write it down or record it. The written in various form constituted a firm frame in Cornelis teaching.

> Cornelis: However, I just want to say that I am a strong advocate of you writing a little at home, if you get an idea, write it down, record it, or whatever you do.

He continued to emphasize that the pupil would not remember the composition unless it was noted or recorded.

> Cornelis: You think you will remember, but you don't.

Cornelis also made the pupils write down all the compositions that where going to be used in the musical. This so pupil could focus on other things as dynamics, tempo arrangement instead of remembering the cords and melody.

5.3 The weight of good relations

It was abundantly clear that the teacher had good relations with his pupils. In his classroom there was an easy-going attitude, not to be confused with lack of demands of what the pupils can, and should achieve. This was shown in different ways in his interaction with the pupils.

Cornelis: Now we are going to write a song. Does anyone have a suggestion which key to use? (The pupils are quiet.) Just pick one. (The pupils are still quiet.) Just pick a key.

Pupil: A

Cornelis; A major? (Teacher smiles encouragingly)

Pupil: Yes

Cornelis smiled a lot and his body language was warm and caring towards the pupils, in order to encourage them. He also encouraged the pupils by constantly pointing out the good things they do.

Cornelis: Good! Fantastic, I really must say. Well behaved and unbelievably hard working… Very impressive. Aren't they awesome (he looks at me as I am filming).

He repeated to the pupils what they just said and he was careful to give them a positive response. In the following example the pupils were trying to compose together without following the circle of fifths.

Cornelis: Let's start. Everybody name one chord each.

Pupil 2: D# minor

Cornelis: D# minor, that isn't any regular chord! Let's take that.

Pupil 2: A minor.

Cornelis: A minor? NICE!! I love it when you use the "wrong" chords, thinking wrong is good.

Pupil 3: D minor.

Cornelis: D minor?

Pupil 3: Yeah

Cornelis: Mmmm (laughs kindly and looks satisfied)

Pupil 4: E minor.

Cornelis: E minor (smiles)

Pupil 5: F.

Cornelis: F major? Nice Marie!

Pupil 6: Bb major

Cornelis: Bb major? Yes!!

…..

Cornelis: Woohoo! (To all the pupils for choosing different chords.)

The pupils trusted the teacher and even though he could be quite frank with them, there was always a smile and a kind word along with the demands he had expressed.

Cornelis: That wasn't wrong enough for me. But it was fun! Look here, these two match perfectly together (pointing out A minor and D minor)… if we look at the circle of fifths at A minor, where can it be found? Look at the top at twelve o'clock.

Even if the pupils did not succeed fully with the task, Cornelis still encouraged them, and after they had chosen the chords - he talked again about the circle of fifths, pointing out that some of the chords are connected to each other.

During all the time spent with the music teacher he never failed to smile and encourage the pupils. He seldom needed to be strict in order to gain discipline in the classroom. But even in those cases when he was strict he soon returned to his smiling and encouraging way of teaching.

5.4 Creating space for learning through collaboration

The collaboration between Cornelis and pupils, and the collaboration the teacher created amongst the pupils was significant when the pupils were composing in the classroom. Cornelis started by composing together with the whole group when introducing composition for the musical theatre project

> Cornelis: We will compose a song together

Subsequently they started to compose together, while Cornelis explained different components in the composition process.

> Cornelis: Ok, for next time I want you all to compose some songs, at least get started. Because when you start, you soon find it isn't that difficult to compose a song. As you noticed, we wrote an awesome hit together.

Cornelis complimented the students on the song they composed together, even though the process was conducted under his instruction and guidance.

The music teacher also nurtured the more skilled peers by encouraging them. At the same time as he encouraged, he was meticulous to ensure the pupil was correct. Cornelis made the pupils help and learn from each other.

> Cornelis: (to a pupil) If you take a Bb on the guitar (Cornelis moves the pupils finger to the right position, the index finger was slightly on the wrong fret). There it is! Show the other pupils (the teacher turns the pupils guitar so everybody can see).

Cornelis tried to make the pupils give feedback towards each other's achievements. It did not seem to work. He encouraged the pupils at the same time that he asked the critical questions.

> Cornelis: Good! Incredible! Is there anywhere in the song that you can't play with a flow? Or somewhere you need a little tip? (None of the pupils answer him.)

> Cornelis: Everything is crystal clear?

When the pupils did not answer, the music teacher gave the critique himself.

> Cornelis: Because now, it is very mechanic, I mean (he plays the chords, four beats in a bar, very static) do you have any ideas how this can be improved, musically?

The teaching was organized in such a way that the pupils worked in small groups when they compose, but this is not a goal in itself. When pupils ask to compose by themselves, it is allowed. According to Cornelis, the collaboration had different aspects. Firstly the pupils can help and complement each other, secondly it is more feasible to be able to supervise fewer groups. This meant he had both a pedagogical and a practical approach to create collaborative

composing. When the pupils worked collaboratively they were not critical towards their achievements even though Cornelis tried to encourage this.

5.5 Time as a crucial factor for collaborative learning

As the date for the premiere was getting closer the teacher did not let the pupil work in smaller groups. Instead, he was guiding and teaching the whole group in his classroom the whole time. I talked with Cornelis about this, and at first he disagreed with me. He confronted me and said:

> Cornelis: I don't agree, we did the arrangements together I don't understand what practising to play the composed songs has to do with the pupils working in small groups.

Cornelis had a clear view that both the quality of the music and the learning process for the pupils was his main focus when he made the choice to guide the pupils more in this phase of the musical theatre project.

> Interviewer: How do you view the completions of the compositions, would the pupils manage to arrange and get it done in the given time frame without you?
>
> Cornelis: No, the result wouldn't be as good.
>
> Interviewer: So the reason that you guide the pupils more now is it because of quality in the composition or the pupils learning, or both?
>
> Cornelis: Both
>
> Cornelis: It is a pedagogical necessity. The time issue is important, there isn't enough time for every song if they work by themselves [without the teacher]. At the same time I am in control I am very conscious and careful to allow pupils to be involved in the process and let their ideas permeate the arrangements and compositions. In this group there isn't at born leader in the band. Just because a pupil is skilled at playing an instrument it doesn't mean that that pupil is a good leader – this group in particular needs this from me instead.

Time was a crucial factor when making pedagogical choices in this phase of the project, and even though Cornelis wanted the pupils to work in small groups he chose not to allow it at this stage in the musical theatre project. When listening to the compositions it is obvious that the teacher's knowledge and guiding affect the quality of the composition in a very positive way.

5.6 Summary and realization of the tools

When creating "conception of quality" Cornelis used music video and lyrics as tools. Furthermore he used explanations as a tool to clarify for the pupil the different aspects of quality within his chosen music examples. The teacher used written text as the main tool when "framing the task". The written text was in the form of the circle of fifths, chords and sheet music. Cornelis also guided the pupils in choosing chords for their mutual composition by writing the chords on the whiteboard, instead of listening to the chords and choosing by ear. To create "good relationship" with his pupils, he used his body language and encouraging words as tools to achieve the goal of a good and creative environment for the pupils. In "creating space for learning through collaboration" Cornelis did not succeed in the

implementation of critical thinking as a tool. Instead he showed the pupils how to use it, and he was careful to be very kind and encouraging when demonstrating.

6 Discussion

Throughout this study Cornelis lends his set of tools to the pupils. By bridging different ways of thinking and understanding a situation he makes the students active participants (Rogoff, 1995). In a creative context such as composing, the adult should take a creative approach towards the task, so the adolescents can develop new skills, and provide the imagination to give further opportunities to develop (Vygotsky, 2004). It is therefore necessary to broaden pupils' knowledge and views on music to allow a basis for a creative activity. Cornelis does this by framing the tasks and sharing his musical knowledge and his concept of quality with the pupils. The frame in itself is not the goal of his teaching; it is merely his way to facilitate composition. Fautley (2004) states that structural matters when teaching composing occupies teachers, on the other hand Bolden (2009) suggests that pupils' engagement in composing is dependent on the teacher's design of the task. The quality of the composition can be affected by the formal instructions the pupils get although the pupils' prior musical knowledge plays an essential role when composing (Burnard & Younker, 2002). In the current study framing the task with a clear purpose is one of the keys in Cornelis' teaching for enabling composing. This creates a challenge for the teacher to make sure that the pupils' composition remains their own.

In addition framing of the task, Cornelis also creates room for collaborative learning, where the pupils work together in smaller groups and compose together. However, when the time is a crucial factor Cornelis gets more involved and he and the pupils compose together. The pupils can only reach a certain level of quality with their compositions and they do not question each other's creative decisions when acting as peers. It is when the teacher Cornelis enters the group of pupils that critical thinking is applied to the music, just as when the teacher enters, the knowledge is deepened and broadened and the compositions have a complete form. Vygotsky (1978) states the there is a difference in the imagination of an adult and a child and he stresses that imagination and experience are connected to each other (2004). Mars (2014) argues that the learning that takes place in a peer-to-peer situation is heavily influenced by the previous teacher pupils had, and the cultural background plays a role in how learning is manifested. Nevertheless neither pupils nor the more knowledgeable "peer" can create the same room for knowledge as an experienced teacher (Mars, 2014). In collaborative learning, the whole groups development is pursued rather than the more knowledgeable peer being given significant place in the group. However, the teacher organizes and creates the preconditions for effective learning; the teacher becomes in that sense more important in a collaborative learning than in the Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky, 1978).

Ferm-Thorgersen (2013) raises the concept of critical friends as a system for efficiently creating knowledge in this context where factors such as trust, critical review, time, understanding and knowledge affect the process taking place in the group. The teacher

Cornelis aims to create collaboration amongst the pupils when teaching. He is encouraging and at the same time careful to pay attention to pupils' actions and providing forward-looking critique. It is important to develop strategies aimed at increasing the probability of this interaction taking place (Dillenbourg, 2009), and in this specific project, the critical friends as a way of learning are not implemented. According to Ferm-Thorgersen (2013) time is a crucial factor in this respect. This is abundantly clear when the time for the premiere nears and Cornelis gathers the whole band in the classroom to guide them and to work collaboratively with them, suggesting changes, for example in the chord loops, or suggesting how to arrange the music. Törnquist (2006) makes it clear that the learning process continues after the show has started in front of a live audience. Learning cannot be viewed as a process that stops as soon as the result is finalised. As the premiere approaches, Cornelis changes his teaching methods, which also affects the pupils' learning processes. Cornelis still involves the pupils in the creative process but he guides them more and he fills the role of a critical friend at the same time as he continuously gives the pupil credit for their efforts.

Music teacher education has gone through a change, regarding what kind of music that should be part of the music teaching for children and adolescents. Dichotomies no longer exist between different genres of music where some music is considered "bad" or "good" (Stålhammar, 2004). Cornelis uses a lot of music from the pop and rock genres in his teaching, and he chooses the music he considers to be good examples, and never talks about "bad music" or "poorly composed" music. With this way of teaching the teacher affects the pupils view on quality. Cornelis uses his personal perception of quality when he teaches composition to his pupils and he also frames the task in a way that he is comfortable with. This creates a learning situation where the teachers' conception of qualitative music frames the composition task. Still, this framework is not the goal of Cornelis' teaching; it is merely a way of providing a space where the pupils can create their own compositions, and when stepping outside of the framework, Cornelis allows and encourage this.

Cornelis' tools are mainly connected to written culture. For example, he teaches composing by framing it according to rules, like the circle of fifths, and there is always sheet music or chords to remember songs by. According to Cole (1996) and Ong (1990/2007), what is considered important knowledge differs between different cultures, which in turn affects how teachers plan their teaching. The use of these tools helps the pupils' learn and compose. At the same time it seems like Cornelis is reproducing a written paradigm in the Swedish school, which creates both possibilities and boundaries for what tools the pupils will use in the future when composing.

Cornelis tries to implement critical thinking as a tool for learning amongst the pupils. It appears as though the pupils are not so comfortable being critical friends, as they do not comment each other critically or suggests editing in the compositions. So when time is an issue, Cornelis steps in, showing them how to use critical thinking as a tool to improve their compositions and arrangements. This is a way for the teacher to lend his tools to the pupils, so that they can try them and learn how to use them. This is consistent with Vygotsky (1986; 1978), who stresses that interaction with others and the borrowing of tools creates

development and knowledge. Burnard and Younker (2002) suggest, that the pupils need to be independent in decision-making when composing, so that the uniqueness of each pupil's composition is kept. By allowing pupils to make their own creative decisions they may transform what's around them, which creates a new and thriving learning environment. This helps pupils to explore limitations and freedoms, convergence and divergence, as well as other options; giving them more chances to deeply study their own paths of composing (Burnard & Younker, 2002). Mediating tools also needs to be interacted with a thought process in order for the knowledge to grow (Vygotsky, 1978; Säljö, 2000). Thus it is important for teachers to create an environment where the borrowing of tools, the interaction with others and the interaction with one's own thought process enables learning.

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