

## 2. What musical experience, knowledge and skills do the students need at the TTC?

The daily practice of classroom teachers in primary schools is used as a starting point. They state which elements from the TTC courses have helped them to teach the subject. In addition, they mention the elements they have missed. Finally, they indicate which of those deficiencies prove to be an obstacle when teaching music now. Three separate sources are used to get insight.

### a. Reactions from teachers after an afternoon of refresher training

Teachers that have worked in primary school education for several years state that they experience too little self-confidence and do not dare to actually teach music. In the school-year 2014-2015, I have given a refresher training course on music education to teams at two primary schools:

- Krimpen aan den IJssel – ‘Admiraal de Ruyterschool’, a reformed primary school
- Hendrik Ido Ambacht – ‘Stadhouder Willem III-school’, a reformed primary school

Of both teams more than 70% have been educated at the TTC in Gouda.

At the end of the afternoon I asked the teachers two questions: ‘What stimulates you?’ and ‘What stops you?’. Several answers were given. The forms that were used are not digital and can be requested from me.

At both schools more than half of the team answered that they did not have enough self-confidence to teach the subject of music. The causes for the low self-esteem have been divided into three categories. The following table visualises the division into these three categories of both schools.

	Krimpen aan den IJssel (total 20 teachers)	Hendrik Ido Ambacht (total 23 teachers)
Limited knowledge of musical theory	7	6
Scared to convey the material in the wrong way	4	5
Lacking feeling of competence	4	3

This shows that too little knowledge of musical theory and musical background is a major cause of uncertainty. This should be an important element of the music module of the TTC.

### b. Teacher's reactions to six questions

Seven teachers were asked the following questions:

1. Why is musical education important for children?
2. When thinking back to musical education at the TTC (module 'In de maat' TTC1, module 'De toon gezet' TTC2, Choral singing, etc.), which elements/subjects should surely stay in the music curriculum at the TTC and why?
3. Which subjects are missing in the music modules when viewing the professional practice?
4. Which subjects are unnecessary or can be eliminated?
5. Which skills in the field of musical education should have been acquired by a TTC student at the moment he/she graduates from the TTC?
6. What tips/advice would you give the TTC in regard to musical education?

In [appendix 4](#) a summary of the answers can be found. The major aspects relevant to this research will be mentioned below.

The answers to question 5 clearly correspond. 6 out of 7 teachers state that a student should have the basic skills and knowledge themselves. This includes reading notes, clapping rhythm, clapping to the beat and playing an instrument. Above all, students should be able to sing. Furthermore, students should have knowledge of the didactics of the subject: how to teach a song, what are the curricular lines of the subject for the different grades in a school and how to teach a good method lesson (a prescribed lesson of a music method).

When viewing the answers to questions 3 and 6 (which subjects are missing in the modules and which advices teachers would give), it becomes clear that the teacher would like to have a broader view of the curricular lines within the subject. There is also a need for learning good lesson activities for classical music. Furthermore, specific things are named as: taking over tone, differencing in the music lessons, body percussion and a concrete way of using the five domains of the SFM-model. An important comment was: *"Have students enjoy musical education in the lessons of classes, so they want to teach the same way later"* (from questionnaire g, a teacher from Geldermalsen)

For a further elaboration of the answers, see [appendix 4](#).

### c. Musical education in primary schools: relevant aspects

The problem description already refers to the studies of Liz Silverenberg (Silverenberg, 2014). She has done an extensive study about the situation of musical education in 2014. For her study she has used the research *'Muziekeducatie in het primair onderwijs: een kwantitatieve en kwalitatieve verkenning van de stand van zaken'*<sup>6</sup> ("Musical education in primary education: a quantitative and qualitative exploration of the state of affairs"). This research was commissioned

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<sup>6</sup> Mariën, H., van Vijfeijken, M., van Schilt-Mol, T., Broekmans, A. (2011). *Muziekeducatie in het primair onderwijs: een kwantitatieve en kwalitatieve verkenning van de stand van zaken*. Tilburg: IVA

by Kunstfactor, Muziek Centrum Nederland and the Fonds voor Cultuurparticipatie, and conducted by the former IVA (Institute For Labour issues) policy research and advice in Tilburg. In this research it is mentioned that an unexpected number of schools were not willing to cooperate with the research by the IVA policy research and advice. The primary reason they state is that the classroom teachers are uncertain about the way they teach musical education and their skills and knowledge (Silverenberg, 2014, p. 24).

In 2014, a new study about musical education in the Netherlands has been performed. Attention has also been paid to the gaps experienced by classroom teachers. The results are discussed in the following quote:

*“A great number of schools do not offer musical education. An argument that is often heard is ‘I’m not a musical person (Boomkamp 2011, in Meewis & Ros, 2012). Boomkamp states that 96% of the teachers are confident about their didactical skills, but this confidence drops to 64% when asked about their personal qualities in relation to teaching music (Boomkamp, 2011 in Meewis & Ros, 2012). This uncertainty can often be found in (international) literature about musical education, as well. Especially in western society it is a strong belief that talent in music is an innate skill. Classroom teachers compare themselves with music teachers. Because of their lack of musical knowledge they feel uncertain. The problems that are mentioned in the research of Boomkamp (2012) were a lack of musical knowledge, inability to read notes, uncertainty about musical skills, inability to keep tone and too little time to prepare the music lesson.” (Schutte, Minnen - Minnema, & Oers, 2014)*

This shows that the degree of the teacher’s confidence is related to the measure of basic knowledge of musical theory. The problems mentioned correspond with the answers given by the teachers to part A and B of this sub-question.

#### d. Conclusion

To formulate an answer to the second sub-question, I use the three sources and incorporate my own view.

The TTC student must have his personal positive experiences first. This will enable him to understand the value of musical education for primary school children. Taking those musical experiences as a starting point, he can try to increase his knowledge and skills and to acquire didactic knowledge of the subject. According to the primary school teachers, the following elements are important:

For the personal skills and knowledge

- Reading notes
- Being able to clap a rhythm and to clap to the beat
- Being able to sing, this means in tune and clear sounding
- Playing an instrument, in particular to indicate the melody in the right key and possibly to accompany

For the didactical skills and knowledge

- Knowledge of the SFM-model and how to translate each domain to a practical situation
- Knowledge of the curricular lines of music for lower, intermediate and upper primary education
- How to teach a song
- Being able to teach and differentiate in a method lesson
- To teach a music lesson in which the different domains of the SFM-model are present