



Music education in the Teacher Training College

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Abstract

“There will be good music education in the schools only when we educate good teachers” (Kodály, 2002, p. 59).

This quote from Kodály inspired me to start this research. In the Teacher Training College (TTC) there are quite a lot of students who, after completing the two year music module, do not feel confident enough to organise well-balanced music lessons in primary schools.

Apart from this, music education is underappreciated in primary schools.

I would like to examine, by using the method of Practised-Based Research, how to change the music-modules in the TTC in order to provide students with a profound inner motivation and equip them to give well-balanced music lessons in primary schools. In this new music module the students will personally experience the joy and pleasure in music-making and they will be inspired to pass on this feeling of joy to the children.

I expect that the Kodály-concept will give students the knowledge and skills necessary to feel confident enough to organise their music lessons.

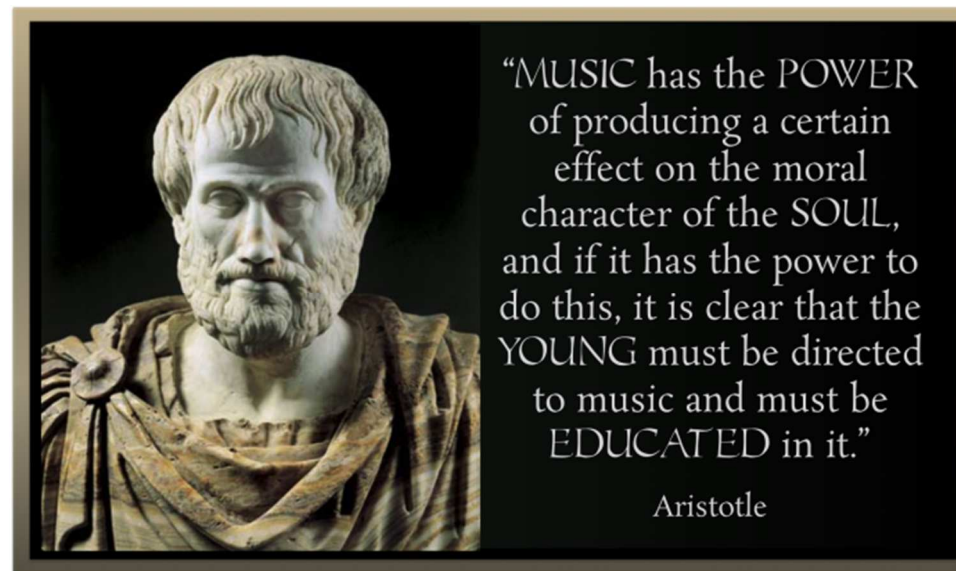


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Preface

I have worked as a class teacher in primary school since 2003. Between classes I regularly use music to give new energy to children, for example by singing or by moving along with songs. The children enjoy it, which is manifested by the glimmer in their eyes and the smile on their faces! It creates a good atmosphere in class. After singing and moving to music, we start the next lesson with refreshed energy and a good focus.

The music lessons themselves are also great fun. The children have improved their singing over the course of the year. We listen to a musical piece every day in class, taken from the 'Luisterland' ('listening land') method (Baaijens & Veer, 2007). The children enjoy it and try to memorise the name of the week's composer.

Whenever I speak about these experiences in the staff room, I notice how my colleagues listen to me with a hint of jealousy in their eyes. "Of course you can do this– you are musical. I would never be able to do it, because I am not musical at all."

The longer I reflected on this statement, the more it occupied my mind. Is it true that a teacher that does not consider him/herself musical, is not able to organise an engaging music lesson?

Since January 2012 I have had the opportunity to teach musical education at the Teacher Training College, Hogeschool Driestar Educatief, in Gouda. It was a chance to train future teachers to teach music at primary school. I have met many students during the classes that told me: "I am not musical... I could never do it". During their internships or through cases discussed in class, they discovered, however, how cool it is to make music with children.

In 2013 I visited Hungary to see how music was taught in primary schools over there. I visited schools in Nagykőrös, Kecskemét and Budapest. It was wonderful to see so many groups of children enjoying themselves during music lessons and to hear them sing so well (This can be seen on video 1). My curiosity had been aroused: how was this possible? The teachers told me: everybody is musical and with the proper education you can develop children's musicality.

This experience gave me an inner drive to provide valid musical education at the Teacher Training College, so as to give each teacher the right tools to teach music at the primary school. Recently I was given the opportunity to underline this point in an interview with a national newspaper 'Reformatorisch Dagblad' (31-03-2018) and in the magazine 'Kunstzone' (05-2016). Both articles can you find in [appendix 0](#).

This inner drive has eventually also resulted in the present paper you are reading now, which was prepared with great pleasure. After all:

"There will be good music education in the schools only when we educate good teachers."

(Kodály, 2002, p. 59)

Thanks

I'd like to thank a number of people warmly:

- My employer at the Teacher Training College, because I was allowed to carry out this research. It has helped me to acquire more confidence in my profession.
- The students of class P1x, for their extra commitment during the project dedicated to this study. At times additional requirements were asked from you, but you cooperated every step of the way.
- My teachers and fellow-students at the Master's program, for their inspiration and support.
- Especially Suzanne Konings and Renee Jonker, who were my coaches and helped me ahead through the difficult stages of this study.
- Translation agency Quatra, for their fast and helpful cooperation to get the paper translated.

Guideline Paper

In this paper a start is made with the description of the problem in order to define the concrete research question. The main question has been divided in four sub-questions. First of all I will identify the particular research method applied for each sub-question, after which I will present the results for each sub-question separately. In the Research Catalogue (RC), the elaboration of each sub-question is illustrated on a separate tab-page. Concrete elaborations of questionnaires, preparatory lesson schedules, song lists etc., are inserted as attachments. In the RC video-registrations are also available to illustrate the results.

At the end, the general conclusion is drawn up, including recommendations for subsequent steps.

Enjoy reading!

Mariëlle Heidekamp



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BOSKOOP Mariëlle Heidekamp, groepsleerkracht op de Eben-Haëzerschool in Boskoop en muziekdocent aan de Driestarpabo in Gouda: „Mijn passie voor muziekonderwijs dient een hoger doel: Soli Deo Gloria.“ beeld Martin Droog

¹ Photo from national newspaper 'Reformatorisch Dagblad', 31st of March 2016 (Dijkhuizen, 2016)

Problem description

In my music lessons at the teacher training college (TTC) I meet a lot of students who, after following the music curriculum for two years, do not have enough confidence to give good and responsible music lessons in primary schools. The current curriculum should be the basis for teaching music in primary schools. But this is not the reality. I will describe out the details about this in sub-question one. In practice, many of the graduates do not give music education.

I recommend this when I visit primary schools. Music education in primary schools is not given a lot of focus. Many teachers do not have affinity for music or they say: 'I am not musical'. As a result, they often skip the music lessons. Or they say that other subjects are more important than music and they use the time which was reserved for music lessons for other subjects. These teachers and students do not recognise the value of music education in schools and its necessity for the development of children.

To change this situation the content of the music-modules in the TTC should be changed. It is very important that students will personally experience joy and pleasure in making music and they will be inspired to pass this feeling of joy on to the children.

Subsequently, these experiences have to be analysed enabling students to duplicate them during their internship in primary schools and also later in their job practice. It is also essential to keep reflecting on what happens during the musical activities and the lessons.

By changing and improving the music-module for the TTC, I expect that students will become more confident. I think this will inspire them to give music lessons in their job practice.

Social relevance

To underline this problem and my experiences, I will refer only to some literature and research papers. A lot of research has been done into this subject and it is not the main purpose of my research, so this will be good background literature.

1. The problem described at the beginning of this page is the same problem which led Lisa van Bennekom to write the article 'Muziek op de Pabo' (Bennekom, 2014) in the magazine Kunstzone. She did an interview with Christiane Nieuwmeijer, music teacher at the TTC in Alkmaar. In Alkmaar students were not able to follow a sufficient amount of music classes, because the small number of lessons of classes. Consequently, students did not have enough time to develop their musical skills. During their internship period, many students were told by the teachers in primary schools that they could not give music lessons, because it is too hard. This shows that most classroom teachers do not feel confident enough to give good music lessons. This situation in Alkmaar is like the situation in the TTC in Gouda.
2. I want to refer to a research done by music teacher student Liz Silverenberg 'Muziekeducatie in het primair onderwijs' (2014). In May of 2014 she did a study about music education in primary schools. This study gives a good overview about the current situation in practise.

Silverenberg have done a thorough study, which could be answers on questions which could arise before my research. She investigated the next points:

- a. What is the importance of music education in primary schools?
- b. What is high-quality and well-balanced music education?
- c. What is the current situation of music education in Dutch primary schools?
- d. What is the extent to which the classroom teachers have mastered the 'Kennisbasis muziek' (Meijerink, 2012) to give high-quality and well-balanced music education?

The 'Kennisbasis muziek' is a description of the knowledge, which a beginning teacher must have. So, it is also a final level of achievement for students, when they finish their studies at the TTC.

Liz Silverenberg explains in her study that the classroom teacher does not have enough skills and knowledge to give high-quality and well-balanced music education (Silverenberg, 2014, p. 35). I recommend this study to read, because it tells you a lot about music education in the primary schools.

3. In the recent report 'Muziek in samenhang' (Schutte, Minnema, & Bremmer, 2016) a problem analysis of the music education in primary schools is given. They have indicated various causes to these underlying issues. *"Musical knowledge and skills of the teacher training students are often insufficient."* (Schutte, Minnema, & Bremmer, 2016, p. 22). In the report you can find an explanation of this quote. This quote shows that the music-module in the TTC should be changed.

Research question

What content has to be included in the first-year module for the Gouda Teacher Training College (TTC) to give students the experience, knowledge, skills and confidence required to experience joy in making music with children and to enable them to teach good and joyful music lessons in primary schools?

I doing this research, I want to take the next sub-questions into consideration:

1. What is the current situation at the TTC in Gouda?
2. What musical experience, knowledge and skills do the students need at the TTC?
3. What do students think about being equipped with experience, knowledge, skills and confidence to experience joy in making music with children and having the ability to teach good and joyful music lessons themselves in primary schools?
4. What are good and meaningful music lessons at the TTC, preparing the students to be good teachers in the subject of music in primary schools?

Method of research

For every sub-question I will describe the steps I took and the method of research I chose.

1. What is the current situation at the TTC in Gouda?

I would prefer to perform a nationwide study about music education at the TTC, but due to the limitations of this study, I choose to do this at the TTC 'Hogeschool Driestar Educatief' in Gouda, because this is the school where I teach music. In this way I can improve my own professional practice and I hope to become a better music teacher.

To describe the current situation I have requested the course description from the music department and have described my own practical experiences complemented with my overall reflections.

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

There is a musical knowledge base: 'Kennisbasis Muziek' (Meijerink, 2012), describing the level of knowledge students must have at the end of the TTC. In my problem description however, it is defined that practice does not correspond to theory. To answer this sub-question, it is vital to know which knowledge and skills are considered to be essential for the graduated TTC-student by primary schools.

- a. In the past season I have given a refresher course for the subject of music at two primary schools.
 - 'Stadhouder Willem III school' in Hendrik Ido Ambacht

- 'Admiraal de Ruyterschool' in Krimpen aan den IJssel

The refresher course consisted of a practice afternoon, in which we briefly discussed the essence of the course, but mainly focussed on the didactical skills of the teachers. After each first team meeting I closed with the following two questions:

- What stimulates you to teach music?
- What stops you from teaching music?

I had them write down the answers. From the team's reactions a number of characteristic aspects arose. It is important to incorporate these aspects in the TTC's curriculum to prevent future teachers from encountering the same problems .

- Besides, I asked seven primary school teachers teaching at seven different schools to answer six questions about the music education they had received at the TTC and its relation to the professional practice. They mentioned a number of concrete concepts that should be included in the music module.
- Furthermore, I refer again to the thesis by Liz Silverenberg 'Muziekeducatie in het primair onderwijs' (Silverenberg, 2014).

To limit the size of this research I have used these three concise and small aspects to formulate an answer to this sub-question.

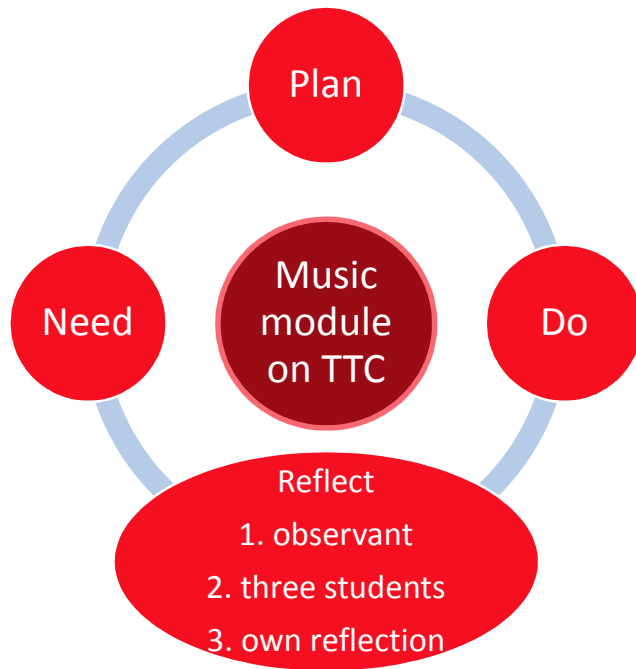
3. What do students think about being equipped with experience, knowledge, skills and confidence to experience joy in making music with children and having the ability to teach good and joyful music lessons themselves in primary schools?

I would like to answer this sub-question by asking the students that have followed my modified module to fill in a questionnaire. This questionnaire will mainly focus on the aspect of joy in music education. Their personal confidence to experience joy in making music at a primary school will be examined. They will be asked to indicate which parts of the module have been useful to them.

Before this I will shortly describe, from a personal perspective, how I experienced joy in making music. The students will also give a short description of their favourite music piece and what they like to do with music.

4. What are good and meaningful music lessons at the TTC, preparing the students to be good teachers in the subject of music in primary schools?

This is the most important sub-question. I intend to investigate this question by 'Practice-based research' (Vonck, 2012, p. 51 e.v.), using the intervention-cycle.



I have chosen the music module TTC1 at the Academic TTC for this study. The eight lessons, each lasting 60 minutes, will be adjusted. Each lesson will be taught in the music classroom and will be practical and interactive. Before each lesson I will make a lesson plan. Then the lesson of class will be given and reflections will be gathered from three sources: an observer, three students and my personal reflection based on my experience and an analysis of the recordings done by colleagues. The next lesson of class will be based on the information yielded by the various sources of reflection. By using this intervention-cycle, the insight into the contents of the module will be improved. The process is illustrated in the model on the left.

The students have unanimously given their consent to use the recordings in my study.