

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?

Before answering this sub-question, I will first explain my view on 'joy in music making'. I do not just mean fun. In my opinion, 'joy' has a deeper meaning. To clarify this, I will first illustrate some personal experiences and subsequently deduce some aspects that I consider to be essential to experience joy in music making. A separate study could be dedicated to this, but that is going too far now.

To determine what the students enjoy in music, I have asked them to mention their favourite music piece and to describe what they like to do with music.

This attempt to describe my view on joy in music making, is followed by my actual research in this sub-question. First, the research environment and the student profile are described. Subsequently, the results of the questionnaires are reviewed.

Joy in music making from a personal perspective

I will describe, from a personal perspective, how I have experienced 'joy in music making':

- During a rehearsal with a part of the TTC student choir (21-3-2016): I conducted a group of 60 students, who were singing 'Sound out His praises' by G.F. Händel. I experienced joy in singing, especially when everyone was concentrated, breathed at the same time, sang with conviction and enthusiasm and together tried to convey the text in the music. It was not always in tune, but I still experienced joy, because I noticed so many young people enjoyed singing together. (See for the concert of this piece video 2)
- During an open air concert of the children's choir I conduct (16-4-2016) there was a moment when the music sounded especially beautiful. This could be seen in the happy faces of the children. The text contained a deep, happy meaning about the comfort that God can give. Because the children sang with a confident tone, clearly audible and in perfect harmony, I experienced a great joy. During rehearsal we had worked on the way the text could be expressed in the music: clear phrases, articulating, and singing in key. At the concert this all came together.
- During a concert for the TTC3 student choir (23-5-2015), the students sang Cantata 106 by J.S. Bach⁷. This moment was so special! The concentration, dynamics, harmony, clarity, the interplay between the singers and the orchestra, intense text that was so beautifully expressed in music and the drive of the students to honour God by an excellent performance of this cantata. This made this concert one big joyful experience.
- During a rehearsal of the chamber choir where I sing soprano (15-1-2016), I have experienced joy. We were warming our voices up, strongly focussed on each other's sound by singing the same vowel in the closing chord. That harmonious sound of the vowel created an extraordinarily clear sound.

⁷ BWV 106 'Gottes Zeit ist die allerbeste Zeit'

- During a percussion workshop for adults (30-4-2016), there was a rehearsal-phase to get acquainted with the instruments. Not everyone had gotten the right rhythm yet. You cannot experience joy at such a moment, because it does not sound right and is not played equally. But after an hour of rehearsal the rhythms came together and the music came to life. We reached this by listening to each other and by controlling our own rhythm.
- During a rehearsal for piano lessons (31-3-2016), I was working on the Adagio from the Mondschein Sonata, opus 27 by Ludwig van Beethoven. This did not bring joy at first. I focussed on the regularity of the triplets, clear differences in dynamics, difference in accompaniment and melody, and playing the right notes. After half an hour I enjoyed playing the Adagio, however. My thoughts were no longer occupied with the technical aspects of studying but with the sound and the beauty of the music.

These are just a few of the many possible examples. In my opinion, which arrived by analysing these examples, “joy in making music” can be described by a number of aspects:

Musical – aesthetic aspects:

- Synchronicity of the rhythm when playing together
- Unity of the timbre
- Regular pulse
- The beauty of the music itself

Musical – functional aspects:

- Reaching a goal; for instance, honouring God
- Expressing emotion

Other aspects:

- Singing and making music with conviction and enthusiasm
- Interaction – listening to others when making music together
- Linking music and text

It is important for TTC-students to have these positive musical experiences first. This will motivate them to pass them on to children. Subsequently, it is important that they acquire the skills and knowledge to actually achieve this with children.

The students have answered four questions about what they enjoy about music, enjoy doing with music and what their favourite music piece is. This will be further elaborated appendix 5. Below I will mention the most important aspects.

- Enjoy doing with music: singing, playing instruments with children, singing together, playing musical games, listening to music.
- Enjoy listening to: classical music, gospel, Celtic woman, contemporary Christian music, light and instrumental music, religious hymns, piano and harp music, Coldplay, organ music, popular music.
- Description of your favourite music: for the specific descriptions I refer to appendix 5 Summarised: a nice, clear singing voice, link between text and music, alternation between tension and relaxation, combination of instruments.

These students appear to appreciate classical music and to like relaxing music. Only a few students occasionally listen to Coldplay or other popular music . They particularly point to the emotions evoked by the music. Being moved by music gives joy when listening to music.

My research environment

Of the different streams at the TTC, I chose the Academic TTC stream (AT). This is because of the following reasons:

- The music lessons of this group are scheduled in the period I can conduct the practical part of my research.
- The class size is manageable for a study, namely 10 students (2 male and 8 female).

Time period: Week 6 until week 12, which is from the 8th of February until the 24th of March 2016.

Number of lessons: 8 lessons of classes, 60 minutes each.

Student description

To have a clear image of what kind of students I have worked with, I will describe the Academic TTC student from three points of view:

1. Description Academic TTC student by the Hogeschool Driestar Educatief

The Hogeschool Driestar Educatief has the following student profile for the Academic student (Kraaiveld, 2015, pp. 6-7):

- *A fitting pre-education: secondary education: Athenaeum/Gymnasium, A propaedeutic certificate from Higher Professional education, Secondary education: HAVO with an average final grade > 7.75*
- *Characteristics (in connection):*
 - *Positive attitude to studying (proactive, inquisitive)*
 - *A feeling of responsibility*
 - *Mastered the learning process*
 - *Will power, perseverance, zeal*
 - *Immune to stress*
 - *Entrepreneurial, takes the challenge*
 - *Takes initiative*
 - *Ability to work alone and in groups*
 - *Reflective attitude and ability to reflect*
 - *Ability for conceptual thinking, abstraction ability, analysis*
 - *Fast acquisition and processing of new knowledge*
 - *Good planner*

- *The right motivation:*
 - *The ability to link scientific theories and primary school practice*
 - *The will to contribute to research within the school*

2. Description of the students' social environment

The students at the Hogeschool Driestar Educatief come from a Christian environment. This means that their lives and work are shaped by the conviction that God is the Creator and Mantainer of all things and the goal of life is to praise Him. This view is based on the Bible and the Confessions (the Three Forms of Unity).

This is beneficiary for the music course; the students are used to singing at home. They sing weekly in church during service on Sunday. Furthermore, the classroom days are opened by, amongst others, the singing of a psalm.

3. Questions to the students themselves

Before the first lesson of class started I have given the students a questionnaire with the following questions

1. *When do you come into contact with music in your life?*
2. *How often do you listen to music?*
3. *What are your thoughts about the importance of music for children?*
4. *What is your opinion, considering you will be making music with children in your future professional practice?*

This questionnaire has been elaborated in appendix 6.

Evidently, many students (at least six) come into contact with music on a daily base and enjoy it as well. Everyone knows the importance of musical education for children. They have different outlooks towards their professional practice in the future. Two students (student H and J) note that they are “*not musical*” and they are feeling a bit worried about it. And one student (student D) remarks “*that it can be difficult to lead/take initiative*”.

Subsequently eight lessons of classes were followed in which the music module was taught. The contents traditional module were modified and are described under sub-question four.

At the end of the module the students have filled out another questionnaire. The answers can be found in [appendix 6](#). Seven questionnaires were returned to me.

Below I mention the most noteworthy things, so they can be taken into account in the conclusions:

5. *In your opinion, which parts/exercises in the module lead to joy when making music?*

a. *For yourself*

b. *With respect to teaching music to children*

A great variety in short activities appears to be important. This results in a good involvement of both students and children. Joy is also experienced when singing and listening are combined with physical movements. Noticing growth in personal skills creates joy as well. This lowers the threshold to teach music to primary school children.

The use of materials when making music has also been experienced as very positive; both the non-musical materials (ball, bear, hoops) as well as the musical materials (rhythm sticks, instruments).

6. *Did you notice any changes in self-confidence after the module with respect to making music with children and teaching music to children? If not, what do you think you need to be more confident? If so, what has caused this growth in self-confidence?*

All students answer this question with a clear “yes”. Four out of seven students make this more concrete: in particular, taking part in activities with fellow students and discussing these, gives insight and yields a great learning outcome, which in turn gives a boost in self-confidence.

7. *Which skills would you like to develop further to focus on experiencing joy in teaching music to children?*

Different remarks are made. Students mention parts that are practised in the module:

- Making your singing voice sound more secure
- Developing a feeling for rhythm and for keeping steady beat
- The use of instruments
- Becoming more free when teaching music



Marching in the beat in two lines, throwing the ball to the person opposite of you. on music of Shostakovich

Subject that were less prominently present in the module are also brought forward, however:

- Creativity
- Being able to design lessons

Subconsciously, the creativity was worked on, but this was not special attention in the conversations afterwards (see sub-question four). This subject can certainly be elaborated further. Although designing lessons has been briefly discussed, this was not a focal point. This could be elaborated further in TTC2.

8. *This music module consists of several parts:*

- A basic test*
- The lessons of classes*
- An exam*
- A portfolio*
- A skills test*

Can you briefly explain your experiences for each of the topics? The following aspects are especially important: “how much joy do you experience” and “what can be put into practice in your future professional practice”?

It appears that everyone thinks that the basic test is useful, although the students did not experience a lot of joy. They all feel this is knowledge you should possess as a future teacher. The lessons of classes were unanimously considered to be very valuable. During these lessons all students experienced joy in making music, by working together, getting many ideas for lessons and going into the underlying didactics. The exam had not yet taken place at the time the questionnaire was filled out. The portfolio belongs to the traditional module and was not adapted for this research. It was not positively valued by virtually all students: a lot of work, not profound, low learning returns.

9. *What could be added to the music module, what did you miss?*

The students have not given a lot of feedback on this question. Several students, however, stated they would appreciate a more detailed discussion of what happens in a musical activity, so the organisation and goals of the music lessons would become even more evident.



The shape of the melody by moving the parachute... a lot of joy!

10. What could be left out of this module, in your opinion?

Few answers were given here as well. Again, the portfolio was not considered to be useful. A student who does not play any instruments, indicates that this element should be left out. According to another student, some songs from the song list that have to be learned by heart, will not be of much use later in his/her professional practice.

Conclusion

Summing up, the students have had a lot of positive experiences during the lessons of classes. This was largely achieved by short activities, singing, listening to music, the use of materials, having them do the activities and discussing them afterwards. To make this as concrete as possible, they feel more capable to teach music lessons. The theoretical knowledge is deemed a necessity.