

There can be no two lessons that are alike

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What does individualized music education in a large group look like, what teaching strategies are being used? Which are the keys to individualized music education in a larger group? Are there negative consequences of such an education?

The current curriculum for the compulsory school in Sweden, Lpo94, and Lpf94, the curriculum for the upper secondary school, are both focused on the individual student and individualized education and learning. During my work as a music teacher I have not been in touch with any theories about this, or any research on the area. Sandberg¹ has been writing about how the framework surrounding music education is affecting music education. But what can the active music teacher do (what strategies can be used) to individualize the education under the given circumstances (frames) in a bigger group? How can music education in larger groups in the compulsory school and upper secondary school match the demands for individualisation set in the curriculum, and if possible – how? There are other research on inclusion and democracy in music education, that could be of interest in this study, although I haven't yet looked into that material deeply.

Or are the demands for individualisation impossible to reach in a classroom setting ?

The study is built upon the perspective of cultural psychology. Bruner² say that this perspective can reshape the western view of learning where the earlier praxis has been the omniscient teacher “feeding” the students with knowledge. In the cultural psychological perspective the group of students are learning (creating knowledge) together, and even from each other.

In short, the perspective claims that learning always takes place in a culture, which affects the learning in different ways. In Sweden the perspective have been represented by among others Säljö³.

Given this perspective it is not only possible but even necessary to individualize education of all types. All learning is specific for the “culture” where it is happening. No situation can be alike, neither can people. For a teacher to meet two students exactly the same would be impossible.

The method used is video analysis. Two different classes from the upper secondary school are being video recorded at several occasions. The common denominator for the situations recorded will be a teacher who is practising individualized education in larger groups of music students. The films will be analysed regarding what significant features of individualisation in teaching that can be found and what strategies, that are being used (from the teachers side), if any. The teacher in action will be myself, and therefore the videotapes will be commented and analysed by a couple of independent associate teachers/researchers. This is a strategy to try to avoid the problems generally associated with research on one self. By letting other music teachers/researchers comment and analyse the videotapes regarding strategies and models for individualisation can be found, I can use their information as a foundation for discussion, analysis, and conclusions. This way, the focus is set on the observations made by the other music teachers/researchers, and I have a fair chance to put as

¹ Sandberg 1996

² Bruner 2002

³ Säljö 2000, 2005

much as possible of my preunderstanding aside. (Although I am assured that you never can out it aside completely). What I will be analysing is their (the other music teachers/researchers) observations on the tapes.

The calculated results of the study can be found on two levels:

- 1) Teaching strategies that can be used while teaching individualised in larger groups, - and
- 2) advantages and disadvantages with these. (teaching strategies).

The study deals with individualised music education in large groups, to try to see, what strategies for individualisation music teachers are using, and (if any), if there are any “keys” to successful such education, plus what disadvantages such a education could carry. (I will not here define the term of “successful” even if I realize the problem connected to using such a term).

It is my hope that the expected results above will help shedding some light upon what strategies can be used in individualized music education in larger groups, and show us a little of how teaching and learning can change depending on the culture, in which it takes place. This should seem relevant to different kinds of education of music teachers to be and further education of already practising music teachers. It might also contribute to the reevaluation of some of the terms concerning individualised music education and hence it will contribute with new knowledge in the area of music education.

Currently I am in the process of connecting with other significant and relevant literature and research on the area, and also collecting data in the form of videotaping the classes mentioned above. I have gathered consent from the parents of the student in one of the classes, that their children are allowed to participate in the study. This is also the class that are currently being videotaped. In the second class, I have not yet asked for any consent, hence I haven't yet been able to film them. It is also yet to be done, to find music teachers suitable for the mission of watching the tapes, and commenting on them. How I will find them and what criteries important to think of is yet to come. I am also in the process of finding a useful method for analysis. I have been experimenting with the thought of using the term Classroom Management⁴, used in the USA and in Sweden represented by amongst others Christer Stensmo⁵. This is a relatively new thought to me, but I think it could present a framework relevant to me, and lead to interesting discussions.

In the middle of many things you all can see that there are a lot of work to be carried out in the future, but then again, nothing of importance have ever been gained easily, or?

⁴ Stensmo 2008, s11

⁵ Stensmo 2008

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