

Perspectives on Social Justice and the Curricula in Formal Music Education



FINLAND AND ICELAND

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Outline of presentation



- **Marja: Main Approaches to Social Justice**
 - Social contract theories
- **Helga: Music Education and Social Justice**
 - Music Education theories and perspectives
- **PAUSE? (10 min)**
- **Practical applications: Official curricula/ hidden curricula**
- **Examples from Finland and Iceland**
- **Student discussions**

Main Approaches to Social Justice



- Amartya Sen (2009): The Idea of Justice
- Case: Three children and one flute
- Child no 1: "I am poor"
- Child no 2: "I have built the flute"
- Child no 3: "I can play the flute"

Social Contract



European Enlightenment

Thomas Hobbes

John Locke

Jean-Jacque Rousseau

Immanuel Kant

John Rawls

Social Realizations



- John Stuart Mill
- Jeremy Bentham
- Karl Marx

Contractarian approach



- Transcendental institutionalism
- Just society
- Just principles and institutions
- Social contract, hypothetical agreement

John Rawls



- Contractarian theorist
- A Theory of Justice (1971)
- Justice as Fairness
- Institutional structures (e.g. for education)

Critics



- Principles created by rational men, heads of households – what about women, children, minorities?
- Within a nation state – not globally
- Utopian

Capabilities approach



- Amartya Sen, Martha Nussbaum
- A global view of justice
- The freedom an individual actually has to do something she/he values
- Unofficial spheres, women's and children's rights
- Injustice
- Social choice, comparative assessment, social realizations
- The voices beyond the contractarian parties

Curricula and Social Justice: Finnish Cases in Point



- Common (national) / local curricula
- Top-down (totalitarian)?
- Frameworks, guidelines nationally
- Process
- National core curriculum for basic education (general music education) and basic arts education (i.e. state-supported music schools)

Curriculum Contents



- *Who* has the right to decide *what* is taught?
- Society, teachers, parents, children?
- Home-schooling
- State schools / private schools
- Basic education
- Basic arts education, Association of Finnish Music Schools: repertoire requirements

Education for all



- Selection of pupils
- Groups
- Children with special needs
- Basic education: 8 % of all pupils attending comprehensive school get special education today
- Philosophy of inclusion
- State-supported music schools: selection by entrance examinations

Curriculum: process or product?



- Education has value for its own sake
- Education as a means *for* ...
- Finnish view: Lehrplan (läroplan)
- Product of political processes
- Flexibility, discussion on curriculum contents

View of education



- "guided development"
- Objectives, aims
- Basic education:
 - "the pupils will learn to recognize the importance of aesthetic experiences to the quality of life"
- "growth as person" (all education)
- Basic arts education: basis for vocational studies and facilities for self-expression

Views of humanity



- Growth as person
- Passive / Active
- "The tasks of music instruction is to help pupils find their objects of interest in music"
- New technology: dialogue, empowerment

A Finnish View



- Constitution of Finland: Education as one of the basic rights
- Basic Education Act and Decree
- Government Decree on the general national objectives and distribution of lesson hours
- National core curricula
- Local curriculum approved by the provider of education (municipality)
- Curriculum-based annual plan

Equality



- Basic rights
- Economic, social and regional equality
- Basic education: free
- Competent teachers around the country (qualification requirements)
- Human rights, equality, democracy, preservation of environmental viability, endorsement of multiculturalism as "underlying values"
- Gender equality should be promoted
- The diversity of learners into account

Curriculum in music



What IS music?



Why teach music?



How to teach music?



What to teach as music? (to whom?)

What is music?



Historically:

- 1) Music as an educative medium or a character building process
 - 2) Music as means of socializing individuals into societies
 - 3) Music as a way through which to facilitate other learning in schools
- (Varkøy, 1993)

"music is a way through which we develop our identity, sense of self, sense of belonging" (Ruud, 1997).

"...music is one of our basic modes of cognition, [that] music educates our subjective nature as nothing but art is capable of doing...[music] must also be what any other subject worthy of inclusion in schools must be - a valid curriculum offering learnings not available through the study of something else." (Reimer, 1989).

What is music?



“...the significance of music education depends on the significance of music in human life.” (Elliott, 2005).

“[music] is... a socially-created reality.”

“The cognitive category called “music” amounts to a ‘world’ of its own that is governed by a *habitus* (Bourdieu 1990); that is, the cultural values and social, conceptual, perceptual habits and practices (uses) that create and regulate the ‘music world’s of a particular society, region, or community.”

(Regelski, 2009)

WHY music education?

-towards what are we aiming?



“...music needs to help shape culture and the directions in which society moves. Teachers and education policy makers cannot afford to remain passive or reactive. Nor should they leave the work of transformation to others. Rather, they need to commit to transforming education toward a humane and civil society.” (Estelle Jorgensen, 2003)

“What will be sustained over time is the child’s interest in music and the use of the particular musical skills that s/he acquired in the musical environment of which s/he was exposed. In a society where it is not possible, or desirable, for everyone to become professionally engaged in music, this is surely the most valuable educational outcome.”

(Susan Hallam, 2006)

WHY music education?

-towards what are we aiming?



“Music mediates participation and cooperation...”

“It is the essence of performing which defines the core of music itself. It is the experience of human cooperation and participation which makes you get into the swing (or the groove) of music and this is why merely listening to music cannot replace the experience of playing an instrument.” (Even Ruud, 1997) [transl. to English, HRG]

“Perhaps the greatest challenge for [...] music educators is to sustain the joy of music and the musical creativity that are so clearly evident in the months or years that precede formal instruction.” (Sandra Trehub, 2006).

HOW do we teach music?



“In the early part of this century, curriculum evaluation concentrated on measuring student achievement in relation to highly specific objectives. When students failed to achieve the intended objectives, the fault was assumed to lie with the students, not with the curriculum.”

“When our levels of musicianship match the challenge-levels of the pieces we interact with, we achieve the central values of musicing and listening: namely, musical enjoyment (or “flow”), self-growth, self-knowledge...”

„...if we want to think reasonably about music and music education, it is a mistake to begin with pieces of music conceived as autonomous objects. Musical works result from human actions informed by histories and standards of musical practice...”

(David Elliott, 2005)

HOW do we teach music?



“It is more common than we might care to admit that performing and practical musical instruction emphasize technique and executive concerns at the expense of the bigger musical picture.”

“Too often, teaching and learning resemble training (or even indoctrination) more than education. The do-it-this-way mode of instruction, in which modeling rightly figures centrally, can, if not carefully monitored, foster critical compliance and nurture dependence rather than the independence and empowerment that are hallmarks of true education.”
(Wayne D. Bowman, 2005)

“Thus, ‘delivering’ instruction according to traditional ‘methods’ is the focus, not concern with what the student is *able to do* better or newly as a result of instruction.”
(Regelski, 2009)

WHAT to teach as MUSIC?



The main curricular question facing ‘school music’ educators, then, is whether it is “the music” that is to be served—that is perpetuated for its own sake—or whether music (in the sense of a conceptual category that includes many musics) and, hence, music education exist to serve the various social needs that bring both into existence in the first place.”

“Most music teachers in schools—public and private music schools—are trained in Classical music, and school music curriculum has typically favored Classical music. To the degree that what is taught in school has little or no lasting, life-long *musical* impact on students or society,..”

(Thomas Regelski, 2009)

WHAT to teach as MUSIC??



“This is as much a question of legitimation as a question of resources: what is really at issue is the power to decide what (and whose) music is taught in comprehensive schools, and on whose terms.”

(Lauri Väkevä & Heidi Westerlund, 2007)

“At their most basic level, these curricular issues concern the fair and equitable representations of musics -i.e., whose music is discussed and examined in the classroom and what repertoire is mastered in the applied music studio and presented on the concert hall stage.”

[...] The knowledge base of all students is enriched when they are presented with a broader understanding of the phenomena we call music.”

(Rosita M. Sands, 2007)

Music Education Practices in Finland and Iceland



Formal music education occurs in:

- General music education (classroom music)
- Music schools, publicly funded
- Private music schools (fees only)

Differences:

Finland has "music classes" in some schools

Different methods of selecting students for music schools

Finland and Iceland current issues

Finland

Intent of law: music for all

- accessibility
 - general music
 - music schools
- teacher education
- teacher qualifications
- repertoire question
 - gender
 - culture
 - ethnicity

Iceland

Intent of law: music for all

- accessibility
 - general music
 - music schools
- teacher education
- teacher qualifications
- repertoire question
 - gender
 - culture
 - ethnicity

Finland – Iceland

Law-based state support for music schools

The Finnish Music School Act

goal-directed

for children and the young

facilities for self-expression

open up the possibility of future vocational training and higher education in the arts (not the principal aim)

“...music schools [are] promoted as contributing to the cultural life of the surrounding society by arranging concerts as well as other musical activities.”

Mandate of music schools in Iceland:

To increase students' competence in performing, analyzing and creating music and to listen to and enjoy music.

To prepare students to make music on their own (independence)

To prepare students for further studies in music and related disciplines at university level

To promote and support musical activities in the society

Three categories:

- educational (bildung) goals
- proficiency /technical goals
- societal goals

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Issues for discussion



- Is there such a thing as “music for all” ?
- Who gets taught?
- What kind of music?
- By whom?
- For what purpose?

Specific problems

In regard to general education and classroom music

- The concept of "Music for all":
 - Can this be realized?
 - What are the benefits?
 - What could be problematic?
- Could the exclusion or inclusion of classical music from the music classroom be argued as being socially just or socially unjust?

In regard to music programs / music schools

Instrumental music lessons are expensive.

Which of the following solutions are more just/ or unjust than others?:

- providing music lessons for free to "gifted" students (according to tests)
- providing music lessons to students who apply on a first come first serve basis (waiting lists)
- providing music lessons to all who apply, but with a higher student-teacher ratio (more students per teacher, i.e. group lessons)
- providing music lessons for all as a part of compulsory education in schools with the resources available