

## Introduction

My name is Tine Stolte, and I 'm from the Prince Claus Conservatoire in Groningen, The Netherlands. At the Prince Claus Conservatoire I work as a programme leader of the Teacher Training Programme and as a singing methodology teacher. I am also involved in the Research Group "Lifelong learning in Music and the Arts". At the Prince Claus Conservatoire we developed a new Master programme for Instrumental Teacher Education. I am involved in this Master programme both as a programme developer and as a student.

Because of my work and responsibility for instrumental teacher training and the professional development of the teachers involved in it, I choose to research this subject for the purpose of developing and innovating the practice within my institution.

In this presentation I will talk about my research and share some of its first findings.

## Paint the landscape of instrumental teaching

Rapid changes within the music profession and the evolving changing professional roles of musicians in The Netherlands, and within Europe in general, require changes in the professional training and development of musicians.

Currently instrumental teachers should be able to train individual students in a responsible way, recognizing and developing their individual talents. The same teachers should also be able to function as teachers of group and ensemble lessons, create projects within or outside schools and in various contexts in the wider community. These teachers should be able to work in teams and participate in team teaching. This requires conservatoires to create a stimulating environment in which the learning of students can be facilitated. This environment should reflect in a flexible way the ongoing changes of the working field.

Also we find ourselves in a transition of focus. From teacher to student, from musical product to musical processes and from teaching to learning. A more holistic approach with increasing emphasis on developing the complete musician is at the heart of this transition. Higher education is focusing more on the processes involved in student learning, with a particular emphasis on student approaches to practice and self-regulating learning strategies. There is an emphasis on the importance of independence, self-correction, self-evaluation and appraisal skills."

## Research questions

At the Prince Claus Conservatoire we are in the process of renewing our teacher training curriculum with an emphasis on the features mentioned earlier. Special teachers (we call them instrumental methodology teachers) train students as future instrumental teachers. Until now, at least in the Netherlands, Conservatoires don't provide any training for such specific teachers.

What competences do these methodology teachers actually need in order to contribute to the development of our new Bachelor and Master programme in Instrumental Teaching and what does this mean for the professional development of methodology teachers?

Therefore the central question of my research is:

What knowledge, skills, attitudes and values do methodology teachers need to facilitate the learning of future instrumental teachers?

The research is divided into three phases:

- a literature review
- action research
- a description of implications and recommendations for the professional development of methodology teachers.

### **A literature review**

Through writing a **review** on literature from the field of instrumental Teaching&Learning I am looking into the following sub questions:

- What are important aspects of instrumental learning?
- What are most relevant aspects for training future instrumental teachers?

### **FIRST PHASE**

Based on the research questions and literature I designed a **Conceptual Framework** addressing four concepts: Teaching and learning, Team teaching, Attitudes and Values and Knowledge and Skills.

The concept of Teaching and Learning focuses on current aspects of instrumental learning and their implications for teaching. Team teaching focuses on advantages of working in teams. The other concepts focus on various aspects providing relevant information for the final definitions of methodology teacher competences.

### **SECOND PHASE**

#### **Action Research**

In my **action research** the facilitation of learning, team teaching and creating a meaningful learning environment are addressed.

The implementation of a new Module “Teaching and Observation” forms the background of my action research.

40 students divided into 5 groups were involved and teams of two teachers were responsible for every group. So ten teachers were involved in this module. Involved in the particular research were two piano methodology teachers, one classical and one jazz, and a classical flute methodology teacher and a classical singing teacher ( myself). The two students groups of these teachers were also involved in the research. Student groups consist of jazz students and classical students, Dutch students and students from various parts of the world. These classes therefore are taught in English

The **methodology teachers** in our institution are Jazz or Classical musicians, working in small mixed teams, teaching the methodology of their specific instruments and supervising students during their teaching practice.

### **Explanation of the goals and content of the module**

The module focuses on observing all kind of teaching situations and discussing all general topics involved in instrumental teaching, such as: parameters of instrumental technique, music making and didactics in order to develop observational skills and provide an overview of all important subjects of instrumental teaching. The module serves as a preparation for a profile choice for all second year instrumental students. The module aims to be learning centred, have an emphasis on student reflection, and also aims to bring learning strategies of the diverse students to the surface and make the implicit knowledge of students, coming from all their previous learning experiences, explicit.

### **Action Research Plan**

The action research developed in the following way: I individually interviewed the participating teachers before the module started. During the implementation both teams of teachers reflected on and discussed their lessons in a conversation. After finishing the module I again individually interviewed all teachers and four students. All lessons were recorded on video tape and both teams of teachers reflected on the materials of the tapes together after finishing the module. Teachers kept a reflective journal during the period of the research and will write a personal testimony based on their journal. All interviews and teacher meetings were recorded with a voice recorder.

### **First Findings from the action research data**

#### **I \_\_\_\_\_ Regarding the concept of Teaching and Learning**

This month I finished collecting all data from the action research and started researching it. I would like to share with you some of the findings I already collected from the data I worked on.

Observation 1:

During the first lesson students had to reflect on their learning experiences. During the last lesson of the module one of the students stated that this had been the most important and meaningful assignment to her because it informed her about what had been particularly important during her learning process. It became clear which needs and conditions are still particularly relevant and important for her learning. She states she feels empowered through this assignment and our conversations about it and talks about implications like setting new goals for her singing lessons and the possibility to discuss these with her singing teacher.

Reflection, what is this observation is telling me:I believe that this student

- Through reflecting with others on her learning process gained insight in what motivates her in her learning process.
- That her personal needs and conditions for learning became more clear.
- That she also is able to see some implications as a result of this insight: she intends to formulate new goals for her learning process, taking into account her personal needs and conditions.

I also looked at the role of the teachers in this lesson:

- they have been developing a question form and guidelines as a means for starting the reflection about personal learning experiences
- actively listened to the experiences of students, were observing students, were structuring the conversation and took part in the conversation

Reflection: This finding is informing me about aspects of facilitating learning like motivating the student, empowering her and promoting her independence to the extent that she is able to set new goals for her learning.

Observation 2:

I interviewed an Armenian student after the module. He spoke about of the importance of focussing on both the connections and differences between performing and teaching in this module.

Quote: "They give a totally different view on the same issue: playing an instrument. To play the flute or to teach the flute are totally different things. In my country they have a different approach: they assume that a good performer is also a good teacher."

He concludes that instrumental teaching requires a teacher with competences as performer and instrumental teaching also requires competences that focus on different knowledge,

skills and attitudes from those needed for performing. Performing informs teaching and teaching informs performing. He states that information like this will enable him to make an informed choice about whether or not he will choose a profile with or without teaching.

Quote: "it is nice to introduce teaching first and then let the student choose."

Reflections: what is this finding telling me:

- Because student groups in this module consist of students from different cultural backgrounds, like European, Eastern European, Russian and Asian. there are diverse opinions about training instrumental teachers
- This student talks about differences in a positive and constructive way without making judgements
- He is able to draw his own conclusions and make an informed profile choice

Again, to me, this statement about being able to make an informed choice is an example of stimulating students to become independent and of facilitating learning through offering a constructive learning environment.

So, I will look further into the role of the teachers:

Questions to me here are: how did they lead the conversation in this group, how did they build this environment. Also what has been the role of the peers of this students in relation to atmosphere and having positive and constructive, non-judgemental conversations about instrumental teaching between students from many different countries.

II Regarding the concept of team teaching the following first findings are interesting to me:

Observation:

The jazz and classical piano teachers have been teaching in a team for three years, they teach all their methodology classes together. In the first interview with the classical methodology teacher he talked about "the added value of teaching a methodology class with both jazz and classical students and teachers".

He said: "Classical students have different knowledge and skills than jazz students, the exploration of the identity and specific knowledge and skills of both jazz and classical pianists and importation of it into their practice forms the added value of teaching together". This works two ways.

In the interviews both piano teachers give many specific examples from their lessons, demonstrating how both jazz and classical students benefit from being taught together.

Reflections, what is this finding telling me:

- Team teaching needs to be justified. The justification for these teachers first of all lies in the content of the piano teacher training
- In the differences in skills and knowledge of jazz and classical musicians lies the added value of team teaching

For the implementation of this module we had diverse reasons to choose for team teaching. The piano teachers talk about their experiences of teaching jazz and classical students together in a very specific way. In the coming months I will explore this subject further because I believe it will lead to new insights in the meaning of and conditions for teaching groups of classical and jazz students together.

Finally I would like to share with you one of the comments from the piano teachers' final interview. He stated that the research really made him reflect on his teaching; that the profession of methodology teaching had been taken very seriously and that because of the time and effort spent on this research he, as a methodology teacher, had been taken very seriously. He believes this way of researching through reflecting on your own practice together with a group of colleagues could form a valuable model and provide means to improve teaching and education within our conservatoire.

Reflection: Action research is meant to provide a means of improving practice. But when a colleague experienced being involved in the research as a meaningful and empowering way of improving his own practice and also sees possibilities for using this as a model for improving education in general that's very motivating.

How to proceed: The findings I presented to you now are only a few first examples. It is too early to talk about results or conclusions. During the coming months I will research my data in a more in-depth way and will try to find answers to my research questions. I am very eager to look into the materials in a more profound way now. I will connect the findings of my action research to my literature review and describe this process. Final findings will be described before October 1 of this year and presented within the Research Group Lifelong Learning in Music and the Arts and in the Prince Claus Conservatoire.

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