

Now you see me: Inclusive pedagogies and learning in primary school music

Music education in the global society of today faces several challenges, many of which concern coping better with inclusion in increasingly diverse and hybrid societies. Increased access to music education could stimulate social inclusion, which refers to ‘all children achieving and participating, despite challenges stemming from poverty, class, race, religion, linguistic and cultural heritage or gender.’ (Burnard et al., 2008, p. 110). An equally important issue is to rethink the pedagogies of music education, and the ways in which our pedagogies can shape meaningful music education for the diverse body of students that are actually there. The term ‘inclusive pedagogies’ concerns just that, the opportunities ‘the teacher offers the individual to participate, to be recognized, to engage and to be respected’, and the role of inclusive pedagogies ‘concerns the degree to which the teacher can engender an inclusive approach to music learning.’ (Burnard et al., 2008, p. 112). At the same time, it is reasonable to argue that music education should focus on musical learning and development, since qualification and empowerment could be seen as core elements of schooling and of what makes social participation possible (Biesta, 2020). Following this line of argument, a vital question for music education practitioners and researchers is to investigate what kind of pedagogies in the music classroom can give room for both inclusion, learning and motivation.

This paper reports from the early stages of a case study research project that investigates these issues through observation and interviews with student music teachers, teachers, pupils and school leaders at a Norwegian primary school. The aim is to explore the interrelated relationships between inclusion, learning and motivation:

- (a) inclusive pedagogies (what do music teachers do to make participation for all possible?),
- (b) learning (what pedagogical characteristics can be found in classroom situations where students experience mastery?), and
- (c) engagement (do inclusive pedagogies and experiences of mastery affect students sense of motivation?)

The paper will present the research design of the study, and initial findings from the first round of observations and interviews.

References

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