Music education as a vehicle for countering outsiderness?

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Abstract

In this presentation, we address issues of inclusion, exclusion and outsiderness in relation to the tenth UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) and music education. Inspired by dialogic and relational approaches to arts and education, we suggest the theoretical concept of *relational arts education* as a way of promoting intersubjectivity, inclusion and social sustainability in arts- and music education.

We worry about the dangers of social exclusion or outsiderness regarding sustainability: "Considering the knowledge acquired by mankind throughout the 20th century, we cannot, in the 21st century, afford to ignore outsiderness—neither on a group nor on an individual level".[1] Furthermore, it is – to us – decisive that education through the life span consider the development of social competence in general and empathy in particular as a core topic in any curriculum, and as such, our discussion is linked with Social Justice Education (SJE) principles.

Inquiring *how relational and dialogic arts education can contribute to sustainability through the empowerment and promotion of social inclusion of all* (to copy some terms from the SDG 10.2 target) we investigate previous and contemporary arts (education) philosophies that can represent hopeful as well as constraining discourses and theories regarding social sustainability in arts education.

Our theoretical concepts are relational aesthetics (Bourriaud) and relational education (Sidorkin), paired with Bakhtinian dialogue and principles of polyphony. Furthermore, the SJE approach leads us towards Rancière and his principles of democratic diversity as a strong voice against dangers of consensus.

Because the arts are characterized by unique layers of ambiguity, we believe that music and arts education can provide diversity and equity in education. However, this demands an applied ethics of equity in teaching, which seems to rely on practical training and on-going assessment among teachers. To exemplify this, we draw on empirical material collected from an educational design research project promoting teachers' and pupils' creativities.

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[1] Vist, T., & Holdhus, K. (in review). Excluding Social Exclusion: An Inquiry into the Arts' Potential of Inclusion as a Sustainable Development Catalyser. In: *Nordic Journal of Arts & Research*.