Music Education for Inclusion

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'Behaviour, Structure and Interventions'
Research Network Launch
University of Glasgow, 27 October 2014

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Background of research area

- **Example from study in Northern Ireland (Odena, 2010)**
- **1 - Music as a sign of identity:**
  - ◆ **'politization of music' – e.g. two main NI communities different traditions: Irish folk music (*Catholic*) & flute bands (*Protestant*) (= *stereotypes*)**
- **2 - Music as means to reduce cross-community anxiety:**
  - ◆ **By playing/singing together, e.g. some orchestras and school music projects**
- **Exploratory research question:**
  - ◆ **How can we develop music skills while bringing children from Protestant and Catholic communities together?**

Methodology

- **1 Literature review**
- **2 In-depth interviews with 14 'key informants'**
  - ◆ **'Purposive' sample following a 'maximum variation' sampling approach (Lincoln & Guba, 1985)**
  - ◆ **Sample included practitioners from teacher training colleges, school of music, college, secondary, primary, nursery, inspectorate and freelance**
  - ◆ **Questions around: own musical background; work; music and music education in NI; project advice, e.g.**
    - ☞ **Could you provide some advice for successful music education activities where children from both communities participate?**
    - ☞ **When preparing activities do you try to include music from both traditions or do you try to avoid anything to do with them?**

- **3 Thematic analysis of full transcripts using software for qualitative data analysis NVivo (Odena, 2013)**

- **4 Writing up the discussion and educational implications for a variety of audiences**

- **DISCUSSION: 13 categories emerged; the following four are the most relevant:**

  - *Stereotypes & alienation*

  - *Socio-economic factors*

  - *Project advice*

  - *Music education potential*

Results: *'Stereotypes & alienation'*

- **QUOTATIONS:**

- *The historical background of brass bands is in the British military system…tends to attract more Protestants; similarly Irish traditional music is part of the folk culture of the Catholics.*

- *Flute bands petrify me because to me they signify the Twelfth of July and marching...for many it's a very appropriate way of being part of the community, but it still frightens me because it's an alien culture.*

- *Like any stereotype, once you start to dig into it, you see that that's not the case, but music has been used as a weapon to sort of define communities…it's like gang mentality.*

'*Socio-economic factors*'

- **Participants acknowledged their views were influenced by their upbringing**

- **The normalization and slow disappearance of segregation in more affluent areas brought with it a wealth of (*de facto* cross-community) music and music education activities:**

  - *It works on the professional level and the leafy green suburbs...and to a certain extent in grammar schools*

- **But cultural alienation remained in poorer areas**

'Project advice'

- **Singing and composing were regarded as ideal to engage all children. Specifically 'practical activities' that they could easily relate to: '*that's when they get interested…when they're getting involved in actually doing rather than listening or just watching*'.**

- **Consensus to ignore any type of music that could be related to one of the two main communities (exception: Integrated schools and particular denominational schools in affluent areas)**

- **Non-competitive activities, e.g. *Music Makers*, an innovative series of music workshops for all schools (which consequently brings together school children from each community who would not normally meet)...**

'Music education potential'

- **Certain schools were described as having a good music reputation, attracting parents regardless of their denomination (arguably from more affluent areas)**

- **Nevertheless, the potential to develop music skills while bringing children from both communities together regardless of their area was acknowledged by the participants' many positive experiences in their own education and work with children:**

  - *[Music] is a superb tool for encouraging children to work together…they throw themselves into it wholeheartedly and are quite prepared to work with other people in doing that.*

  - *They can inspire people like no other group of people can.*

Inter-group Contact Theory as framework

- **Pettigrew (1998) proposes 3 stages to reduce conflict between communities:**

- **(a) Initial contact: more anxiety; emphasis on personal identity and inter-personal interaction (in an effort to 'de-categorise' the individual);**

- **(b) Contact well established: optimal situation with less anxiety in which the old categorization of belonging to a particular group is highlighted, resulting in weakened prejudices that are generalised beyond the activity;**

- **(c) Final stage: after extended contact, individuals begin to think of themselves as part of a redefined new larger group that comprises all communities (development of the idea of a new community, or a 're-categorisation' of the old ones).**

- SOME IMPLICATIONS:
- Analyses illustrate the need for:
  - ◆ Schools/institutions to get involved in project design
  - ◆ Provision of development for practitioners
  - ◆ Provision of appropriate funding
  - ◆ Focus on deprived areas (in affluent areas institutions seem to come together when they wish to do so)

- Focussing on young children appears to maximise project impact: participants remembered first time they came across youngsters from across the divide in musical activities, which helped to dilute stereotypes

- In post-conflict zones, projects would need to offer something that entices children (fun), parents (quality) and schools (status), focussing first on quality musical experiences and leaving 'respect' to develop naturally.

- Steps ahead: ERC Consolidator 2015 bid on Music Education as a Tool for Inclusion

References

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