Research Strategy for Music Education and Arts Education at the Academy of Music and Drama, University of Gothenburg

Background

Music education is a relatively young research discipline in Sweden, with roots in musicology, musical interpretation and education. It embraces all kinds of musical learning, experiencing and awareness, including the frameworks and conditions that govern these. Music is a human activity, which represents cultural identity, personal integrity and emotional aspects. This implies that purely musical/artistic aspects and social/cultural as well as individual dimensions are included in music education as a domain of knowledge. Internationally and nationally, the focus of the subject points towards educational questions connected to central subject didactical problems, as well as to the artistic knowledge formation in relation to the practice of music. Theoretically and methodologically it draws on different perspectives, such as hermeneutics, phenomenology, variation theory, discourse analysis, critical theory, post-structuralism, grounded theory, the social cultural perspective and so on, depending on the focus of the specific studies. Thus, music education as a research discipline orientates itself in a large cross-disciplinary area. Over the years, the academies of music in Sweden have developed different profiles regarding theory, methodology and research focus. These research profiles have probably established themselves gradually, depending on the preferences of the doctoral students and the supervisors and the institutional culture of the seat of learning. This has also been the case at the Academy of Music and Drama.

Research on Arts Education is another doctoral discipline at the faculty, established in collaboration with The Centre for Educational Science and Teacher Research (CUL) at the University of Gothenburg. It is a discipline that studies all forms of teaching/learning processes within the aesthetic field of knowledge, including the frameworks, prerequisites, traditions and conditions that govern the situations where these fields of knowledge make up the content of the different teaching/learning processes. Thus, problems are treated in contexts where music, dance, visual culture, etc., have been a part of upbringing, education, teaching or other influences brought to bear in a certain cultural situation. Arts Education as a field of research is interdisciplinary in character and applies theories and methods from fields such as education, psychology, sociology, philosophy, anthropology, musicology, art history and artistic research, in order to understand and explain phenomena within the aesthetic field of knowledge. Research education in music education at the Academy of Music and Drama can be seen as a host for this particular theme inside the CUL, which, at the time of writing, has six doctoral students.

When developing a research strategy it may be fruitful to consider which projects have been conducted over the years, in order to build on the research culture at the institution; however, it...
is also important to assess what the conditions for successful research education will be in the future.

Some strategic aspects are thereby taken into consideration:
1) The competence profile and research interest at the institution (supervisors, post doc researchers and doctoral students);
2) The importance of developing peak competence in relation to other academies of music and art, in as well as outside of Sweden (analysis of research areas with competitive strength);
3) An assessment of which research areas will be attractive in the future (market analysis);
4) The need to develop educational research in higher music and arts education.
5) Research areas that could play an important part in the dynamics between bachelor, master and doctoral educations and senior research and development at the institution.

Three research directions have been outlined according to these strategic aspects:
1) Music education with specialisation in teaching and learning of music in schools and teacher education.
2) Music education with specialisation in artistic knowledge formation.
3) Music education with specialisation in educational questions in wider societal environments.

Music education with specialisation in teaching and learning of music in schools and teacher education

This direction has two tracks. In one of them, there is strong interest in developing music educational knowledge around concrete teaching of music. Several interesting studies with this specific focus have been produced at the Academy of Music and Drama. However, this research direction has recently developed towards a wider framing that includes all pedagogical aspects, at most institutions of music education around the world. School issues of today are considered too complex to be discussed from a strict subject perspective. An examples of this is research connected to musical learning in schools and teacher education that focuses on governance, child and youth culture, contemporary art and contemporary culture, and on questions about democracy and sustainable development as well as on media and communication development—areas that increasingly have been integrated in the research conducted at the Academy of Music and Drama. Within this orientation there are several examples of completed and on-going research projects at the Academy of Music and Drama, with this more society-
related approach. We believe that an increased production of knowledge in this area is a matter of urgency. Given that this is an already well-established research direction already and that we have competence in this area, we consider it strategically wise to articulate this research focus as an important part of our research profile. This direction also seems to be attractive to doctoral students, as most of them have a background in teaching in compulsory school forms or in art schools (culture school, municipal schools of art).

**Music education with specialisation in artistic knowledge formation**

This second direction also has a pedagogic orientation, as studies within this area focus on teaching and education. It focuses primarily on practically based knowledge formation and the specific issues related to the learning processes of people practising music. Here, education in music as artistic interpretation is the pedagogically interesting aspect. A part of the research conducted at the Academy of Music and Drama has this approach, but we consider it urgent to develop and extend the research connected to this area. A prerequisite for this direction to be successful is an interest in pedagogical questions in higher arts education and for research education with a pedagogical approach to be considered an important aspect of a career within higher arts education.

**Music education with specialisation in educational questions in wider societal environments**

The research pursued at the academies of art in Scandinavia has a strong school-oriented framing, due in part, to the recruitment basis for research education in music education, which to overwhelmingly consists of music teachers. Consequently, there is a risk of too strong an emphasis on the music education connection with school practices. Music education is not only concerned with learning in schools. Other areas in our knowledge society should contribute to solving problems and pose new questions with the purpose of strengthening the general school area and teacher education, as well as higher artistic education. Learning in different forms of

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Lindgren; M & Ericsson, C (pågående). Konstruktion av estetiskt lärande inom lärarutbildningen
Olsson, B m fl.(pågående). "Sklämmesparadigm och undervisningspraktiker i skärmkulturen – bild, musik och svenska under påverkan
Olsson, B m fl. (pågående). Bedömning av högre konstnärlig utbildning
Lindgren, M. (pågående). Identitet och kunskapsbildning inom högre konstnärlig utbildning

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art nowadays often takes place outside of the institutions of education, which has implications for music education. Cross-disciplinary research projects where mutual research questions are raised, as well as cooperation between different types of environments and institutions where learning occurs are a third direction that we consider urgent to develop. This will have a vitalising effect on the other directions and can also be considered important for the Academy of Music and Drama, as it provide tools to keep pace with development in society. The recently established Open University Group at faculty level (The Open University Group for Art and Learning) should be seen as a part of such work, together with the ambition to improve development and research into “Community Music/Arts”, an international concept that captures different types of local music/artistic activities. A recently completed PhD project at the Academy of Music and Drama is positioned inside the framework of this direction.

Connections with Arts Education

The three directions of research in music education outlined above harmonise to varying degrees with the discipline Research on Arts Education. The description of the first direction, Music education with specialisation in music didactics, is fully applicable to the broader concept of Arts Education, and the descriptions of the two other directions also harmonise to a certain extent with the premises of research conducted inside the framework of the CUL. One of the focuses in the second direction, Music education with specialisation in artistic knowledge formation, is learning processes connected with the practice of music, which can also be seen as an aspect of didactics. Finally, the third direction relates to the premises of the CUL, as educational science also embraces educational activities within other societal areas than the general educational system and the academy. Thus, the description of the subject of music education outlined above can also largely be seen as relevant to the discipline of Arts Education. The difference is not to be found in the general description of the subjects, but is rather seen in the narrower details; for example, in the content of the research conducted.

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