

Instrumental teacher education in Kosovo: competences, roles and contemporary standardized curricula

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Abstract

This research paper is focused on the instrumental teacher education and training in higher education in Kosovo. It investigates the competences, roles and contemporary standardized curricula that should be adopted and applied in the instrumental teaching program in Kosovo higher music institutions. The many various pedagogical and teaching traditions, music education systems and musical cultures of the European countries suggest a multitude of possible approaches to address common goals. Therefore, the main part of this investigation focuses on the competences proposed for instrumental teaching and training, organized around the concept of teacher roles and explores implications for curriculum development and its standardization towards European Curriculum Frameworks.

The research explores widely the instrumental teaching process and praxis in the two higher music education institutions in Kosovo, respectively, the Faculties of Arts. And, by bringing an instrumental teaching framework, it calls for increased dialogues, interaction and collaboration at local and national levels, points to the need for ongoing international collaboration between higher music institutions, in keeping with the implications of the Bologna Process.

The paper also looks on different curriculum frameworks and training programs as well, by providing a comparison analysis, particularly, differences and similarities to Kosovo curricula for instrumental teacher education.

Finally, the research shows that instrumental teacher education in Kosovo needs to be developed and embrace European standardized programs and praxis, since, Kosovo teaching system is in an ongoing process and is reconnected to the most recent developments in education, science and culture.

Keywords: instrumental education, instrumental teacher training, competences, roles, standardized curriculum, European instrumental teaching framework.

Introduction

Supporting instrumental teachers in their efforts to integrate standardized curriculum into their daily practice remains a challenge for the instrumental education community in Kosovo. An essential step in meeting this challenge involves formulating a theory to describe curriculum frameworks. Such a theory may then be used to inform and guide teachers in their efforts to integrate and apply instrumental teaching syllabuses successfully. Indeed, in 2004 Trouche introduced the notion of Instrumental Orchestration to describe teachers' need to support their students in the process of instrumental genesis. During the last eight years, Drijvers et al. and other researchers have further developed the notion of instrumental orchestration (Drijvers, Doorman, Boon, Reed & Gravemeijer, 2010; Drijvers, 2012; Tabach, 2011). Yet, in order to have good instrumentalists and musicians, it is necessary to reexamine and possibly modify or expand the teaching curriculum accordingly towards European curriculum frameworks.

The aim of the current study is to critically examine and compare the instrumental teaching curriculum. The analysis is based on the syllabuses that have been used and begun integrating into their instrumental teaching practice since the beginning of the instrumental education in higher institutions in Kosovo. Regarding the curriculum, while the education system in Kosovo is in transition, the syllabuses and teaching framework causes problems to students confronted with the

old and the new system at the same time. Additionally, teachers of instrumental teaching should consider on their competences and roles by improving the syllabuses' design to a convenient curricula. Besides this, a thorny issue is that how teachers could find congruence between students' motivations and their roles and competences representation towards practice and productive learning-teaching outcomes. But, the lack of collaboration between such teachers and professionals of international organizations and Music faculties, even though, the cooperation between the instrumental teachers at the national and local level is relatively poor. An appropriate opportunity for Kosovo instrumental teachers is the participation in international projects, exchange programs, workshops and conferences. In such ways, their capacities and competences are expanded and enhanced and then, could be transmitted to their students by compiling a common appropriate framework based on their students' capacities and potentials.

Theoretical Background

These are some of the key components related to instrumental teaching and curriculum development based on international conferences and research on instrumental teaching and music education in higher education.

When we discuss about European standardized curriculum, the first that comes to mind is the Bologna Process that has been named after the Bologna Declaration, which was signed in the Italian city of Bologna on 19 June 1999 by ministers in charge of higher education from 29 European countries. Its overarching aim is to create a European Higher Education Area (EHEA) based on international cooperation and academic exchange that is attractive to European students and staff as well as to students and staff from other parts of the world. The Bologna process started in 1999 with the Bologna Declaration, in order to establish and develop the following issues:

1. The adoption of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees;
2. The adoption of a system essentially based on 2 cycles;
3. Establishment of a system of credits;
4. Promotion of mobility;
5. Promotion of European co-operation in quality assurance (QA);
6. Promotion of the European dimension in higher education;

The Bologna Declaration was extended with the following communiqués:

The Prague Communiqué (2001) focusing on:

7. Life Long Learning;
8. Higher Education institutions and students;
9. Promoting the attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area;

The Berlin Communiqué (2003) focusing on:

10. Doctoral studies and the synergy between the European Higher Education Area and the European Research Area;

The Bergen Communiqué (2005) focusing on:

11. Qualifications frameworks; European Standard & Guidelines for QA; social & external Dimensions; "The Bologna Declaration" AEC PJP Platform Lausanne, (2008).

In addition, Instrumental Teaching and Learning in Context (MANA, 1995) proposed a framework for instrumental teaching drawing on two models-one for 'areas of study' and the other for 'teaching styles' to be used in instrumental teaching.

According to Timo Klemettinen (2008), music teachers have different roles regarding teaching curriculum. Therefore, Timo Klemettinen presents the different roles of music teachers and the different kinds of music schools. There are many different roles of music teachers:

f "Specialist Teacher": high skills and competences in a specific field of music

f "Multi talented teacher": many different kinds of skills and competences

f "Community teacher": different kinds of target groups

f "Developer teacher": music schools role in local music life

f "Networker teacher": cooperation and projects

practice. It also sought to establish greater coherence and consistency in instrumental /vocal teaching by a holistic approach and a generic framework.

For example, through the generic framework students should be offered broad and balanced programmes of study that promote and develop musical playing. They should be given opportunities to: express their musical ideas and feelings use their creativity, imagination and intuition develop their skills, knowledge and understanding reflect on and evaluate their progress.

Another point is the assignments and projects that instrumental students can be engaged in and related to that issue Kate Buchanan, (2008) mentions the following areas, about students who study instrumental or vocal pedagogy in the UK:

- *f* Projects led by players/composers/creative artists
- *f* Cross arts projects including technology
- *f* Schools (primary, secondary, special needs, specialist music schools/academies)
- *f* Community e.g. festivals, young offenders

She also points out that in the end music graduates should stand out in performance and communication. They should have a flexible approach to new ideas and new ways of working and they should have an inquisitive attitude to collaboration and the ability to work across sector/age groups. Finally they should have leadership skills. Kate Buchanan (Director of Supporting Professional Studies, Royal Northern College of Music Manchester): Training music leaders and teachers in the United Kingdom.

Finally, the most important in professional training for music teachers is ERASMUS - Thematic Network for Music 'Polifonia'. Polifonia is a Thematic Network in the frame of the ERASMUS Program of the EU. The partnership in 'Polifonia' involves more than 60 organizations in professional music training and the music profession in 32 European countries. And, its main focus lies on the fine-tuning of the Bologna Declaration Process (Bachelor-Master structure) for the music sector.

Participants and data collection

In order to provide data for this research paper have been interviewed nine instrumental teachers and also as a second research instrument have been used the syllabuses of instrumental courses. Namely, were involved nine instrumental teachers, whereas, three other teachers refused to be part of the research. The data were gathered mainly through semi-structured interviews and analyzed by qualitative content analysis. On the demand of the participants, instrumental teachers' names are kept anonymous.

Data analysis

The analysis of the data highlighted the predominance of same frameworks and curricula used in instrumental teaching in both departments of music in Kosovo. The answers from the interviews show that teachers are not enough aware of their roles and competences on designing their courses and syllabuses. Despite this, they are also partly informed about European frameworks that could enhance their syllabuses and instrumental teaching classes. On the other hand, the analysis of syllabuses shows a "uniformity sample" used by nearly all instrumental teachers in both faculties of Music. In both student and teacher's side, lacks the critical thinking and creativity.

Through the interviews have been given answers about many other points out the importance of contexts which are continuously changing. Instrumental teacher training deals with many different changing contexts such as: musical context, social context, educational context (e.g. group teaching or one-to-one teaching), national context (e.g. qualifications) as well as institutional context. Moreover, regarding the question "What are the key competences to be developed in relation to syllabuses?" The interviewed instrumental teachers answered that knowing such competences and developing them help educate properly the future instrumentalists.

Ability to reflect in action.

Different needs from the society.

Know your students.

Improvisation skills, playing by ear, creativity, being involved and an inspiration for others.

Knowledge of different genres but maintaining your musical identity.

Knowing what's the point in making music and playing an instrument.

Team work skills, creating dialogue between colleagues.

Finding appropriate methods for different contexts, ability to arrange music for different needs.

The ability to develop a range of musical and pedagogical skills appropriate for different contexts

To engage and inspire the willingness to take risks

Beside the competences, teachers have been asked about their roles in teaching instrumental education, and how they apply such roles when deal with curriculum frameworks and syllabus design. Most of the interviewed teachers pointed out that instrumental teaching syllabuses need to be developed and enhanced and teachers should consider on their roles when it comes to that. Particularly, the question about the course objectives and contents, where, they stated that course objectives and frameworks are not reviewed and changed each semester and that is the issue to consider on in the future. Finally, the last point but not the least, the questions related to training programs that were included in the interview revealed that most of the instrumental teachers have been hardly included in such programs, workshops or conferences. And the need to be involved in training programs that examine instrumental teaching curricula and syllabus/course design programs are more than welcomed as well as necessary.

Findings and Discussion

Firstly, in both faculties teachers' visions and praxis related to instrumental teaching are individual and only partly negotiated with their colleagues. The findings from the analyzed syllabuses prove that approximately all the twelve syllabuses are more than necessary to be enhanced and expanded. That should be started from the content of topics, methods, techniques and strategies that are addressed to student's achievement and improved performing skills. But, what would happen if we lack the collaboration of teachers and the correlation of syllabus content? Students' capacities and skills would be less improved and they would be not ready to take place in an international context. The impact of teaching practice was considered essential, and was perceived as building connections between theory and practical application. While the instrumental teaching is more oriented to practice, students should have motivation to practice individually as well as in small and large groups.

Secondly, the syllabuses and curriculum that are used in both departments of Music have not been changed for many years, namely, the same objectives, goals, assignments, projects and content have been used for different students. While, the course syllabus should be designed each semester based on students' needs and by setting objectives and exploring the overall content that should also be based on a common criteria. Students' achievement is relied on teachers' roles and competences that should be known and previewed before they design the course and syllabus.

Finally, there are many European standardized curriculums on instrumental teaching that could be used to improve the syllabuses by adjusting to students' capacities and needs. Not all the students have the potentials to achieve the same goals in a course, therefore, should be considered on specific students skills, learning styles and strategies. This issue could be clarified by national and international instrumental teachers' cooperation.

Conclusion and Recommendations

To conclude, nevertheless, music education study programs have been provided since the establishment of the University of Prishtina, the instrumental teaching curriculum needs to be expanded and enhanced. University "Haxhi Zeka" is a new established higher education institution and the instrumental teaching is at the inception stage that should be expanded in programs and curricula towards standardized European instrumental teaching curriculum.

Regarding the issue of European standardized curricula, a great opportunity is ERASMUS - Thematic Network for Music 'Polifonia'. Polifonia is a Thematic Network in the frame of the ERASMUS Programme of the EU. The partnership in 'Polifonia' involves more than 60 organizations in professional music training and the music profession in 32 European countries. Its main focus lies on the fine-tuning of the Bologna Declaration Process (Bachelor-Master structure) for the music sector. Hence, to plan a curriculum framework based on the standardized European curricula, collaboration with Erasmus Network is more than necessary and prospective, even though, Kosovo is not part of the EU yet.

The research results also show that it is very important to organize training programs for Kosovo instrumental teachers in order to enrich and advance curriculum knowledge, besides this, workshops and training programs are an opportunity to urge collaboration and transparency between instrumental teachers of Prishtina and Peja.

Based on the findings and results of this research, it is widely recommended to:

- To consider on curriculum frameworks and syllabuses in order to enhance the overall instrumental teaching process.
- Always focus on the individual persons, despite all the rules and standardizations;
- To improve and analyze teachers' roles.
- To expand teachers' competences on choosing a framework and designing a course;
- To find congruence between faculty teachers and urge collaboration, not only organizing concerts but, primarily, considers the teaching frameworks.
- Teachers are free to choose and design the syllabuses that provide the opportunity to enhance the teaching frameworks.
- Even though, instrumental teaching is a compact subject, each syllabus should have specific objectives for each class/lecture and semester.
- Instrumental teachers should consider on achievable goals and objectives as well as convenient course contents.
- Universities should offer opportunities and possibilities for the teachers to be part of international training programs as well as exchange programs.
- To integrate pedagogy into students' curriculum to have a more holistic education, particularly, on professional development.

Many needs and opportunities exist for research and development in instrumental music instruction and teaching. Teachers' roles and competences are the core concepts towards a proper curriculum. Hence, the roles should be known and played properly when it comes to syllabus design, and teachers provide competences to develop it.

Implications for Future Research

The current study could be replicated in a variety of educational settings such as the pre-school instrumental teaching, the secondary school instrumental teaching, and especially to be expanded for the university instrumental teaching or any other educational setting where music education is administered. The data and findings could be adjusted to fit the observational needs of the researcher investigating younger or older students. Because of the conference criteria (10 pages), there have been shortly included the most important points of this research paper.

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