

# Heading for a New Learning Culture: Pop in German Music Schools

Ilka Siedenburg and Eva Nolte

## Abstract

This article develops some ideas for the field of music education in German music schools, based on an analysis of the processes of learning how to play an instrument in the field of pop music.<sup>1</sup> It summarizes the research results of a qualitative study revealing the learning preferences of young German instrumentalists. On the back of this analysis, a model is outlined for providing a learning environment in music schools which gives the students the opportunity to learn in the way that they like. It concludes with suggestions for a pop learning culture, referring to sociocultural and constructivist approaches.

**Keywords:** music school, instrumental tuition, learning culture, informal learning, gender, Germany

## Introduction

For people who decide to learn an instrument, music schools are very often the first place to go in Germany. In most towns and regions, there are communal music schools which are partly government-funded and which provide instrumental lessons for children, adolescents and adults. In the recent decades, pop music has gained importance in these institutions. Consequently, two formerly separated cultural and educational traditions are getting more and more mixed up. One of them is the significant German tradition of instrumental tuition, the other is the tradition of informal learning. The latter was the most common learning environment for pop musicians in the early years of pop and is still crucial to most pop learners today.

Research results concerning informal and aural music learning have attracted a lot of interest during recent years, and there have been discussions about how these findings can be applied to music education. Even so, there remains a need to work out how to transfer the ideas deriving from this discourse to the different domains of educational practice. In the field of German music schools, this has not been done yet.

In this article, we will work out how these institutions can profit from the scientific discourse on pop music learning. As a basis for our suggestions, we will first pick up the existing findings. Thereupon, we will present data revealing the learning preferences of young non-professional instrumentalists in Germany, which allows us to consider the special characteristics of the music schools' target group. Finally, we will expose ideas on how to build a new learning culture considering the learning preferences we found.

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<sup>1</sup> We use the term „pop“ for popular music from the 1950's onwards which is characterized by its significance for the self definition of generational or youth cultures and distributed via popular media. Cf. Helms 2008: 78 et seqq.

## **The institutional context**

In the last decades, German music schools have faced a lot of changes: The range of activities has expanded, group lessons have become an important part of their work, and cooperation with primary or secondary schools have lent to new forms of educational work (Krüger and Höppner 2007). Nevertheless, the majority of instrumental teachers in Germany has been highly influenced by the eminent national tradition of learning and teaching classical music, which has been practised in the professional formation of musicians and instrumental teachers in conservatories over centuries. In this tradition, there usually is a strong master-disciple relationship. One-to-one-lessons are regarded as the optimal frame for learning, and working on written music is considered to be very important. This approach has had a strong impact on most music school teachers' professional training and their own way of learning (Richter 2012; Bork 2012).

It is a fairly new development that students can specialize in pop in German conservatories. This situation is changing more and more with the recent establishment of pop programmes. Nonetheless, the traditional conservatory learning tradition still has a strong impact on the professional formation even of the pop students: The entrance examination and the curriculum of pop programmes are usually constructed in a way that makes them comparable to classics or jazz.

Most music schools have taken up pop by now: They offer individual tuition, lessons in small groups, and playing in bands. This has brought in new ideas and alternative ways of approaching music. Learners may come into contact with many different teaching styles, and a variety of ways to approach music. Nevertheless, teaching in music schools is still influenced by the teaching tradition of conservatories. As we will discuss later on, this influence brings with it a lot of norms and assumptions which are hardly put into question and can be hindering for innovations.

On the other hand, music school teachers can profit from some advantages compared to music teachers in primary or secondary schools. They are freer in their curriculum and in the way they teach, and they are usually not forced to formally assess students' achievements, which makes it easier to realize their own ideas of learning and teaching. Consequently, teachers with a pop socialization have a good basis to initiate innovations.

## **'Lernen im Pop': A qualitative research project**

As already mentioned, during the last two decades substantial research has been done concerning learning processes in the field of pop music, and this has already been put into practice in secondary schools and university programmes. These results can also help us to develop new approaches in the field of German music schools. However, there is a need for more empirical data: There have been changes in the ways musicians learn due to rapid developments in modern technology and increase in opportunities to learn pop music with a teacher. Besides this, it is very likely that results cannot be transferred without modifications to other countries. We therefore need more information about the next generation of German pop musicians.

This was the starting point for the research project we undertook at the University of Applied Sciences in O.. As it was our aim to create an educational approach that allows young instrumentalists to learn in the way that they like in the context of a music school, it was necessary to find out more about the preferences of this group. An additional special interest lies on the questions of gender. As there are some significant differences between singers and instrumentalists – for example in the traditions, the learning practices and in the construction of gender – we decided to concentrate on the latter.

After a look at the current state of research, we will present our own results while integrating them into the context of former studies.

## Current state of research

The most important point of reference for our study is Green's findings presented in her book *How Popular Musicians Learn* (2002). Of particular relevance are the results concerning the learning techniques of pop musicians. Green indicates the relevance of aural learning practices like listening, copying and the use – or rather, lack of use – of notation. Furthermore, she explores group learning and peer-directed learning. In these contexts, musicians learn implicitly and incidentally, using strategies<sup>2</sup> such as demonstrating knowledge to each other, or listening and watching each other while playing (Green 2002: 77). Generally, for her interviewees, whether learning in a group or alone, learning to play means playing by ear in the majority of cases.

The relevance of aural learning strategies is by now widely accepted by experts. For example, a detailed analysis of playing by ear is given for example by Lilliestam (1996). He links aural learning with 'tacit knowledge', pointing out that there are other ways of transferring musical ideas and traditions than verbalization, which are important to aural learners. Nonetheless, there is also verbal exchange. When they talk about music, these musicians simply do not use music terms. Furthermore, they use musical formulas as a basis for their musical interaction. The importance of formulas is also illustrated by the findings of Johansson (2004) who examined the strategies of "ear players".

Lilliestam explains further that pop musicians show a reluctance to exhibit their knowledge of music theory. He explains this as a consequence of the myth of 'rock authenticity', which makes musicians dissociate themselves from formal music education. According to this myth, the most important skill a musician should have is 'feeling'. Playing should come 'from the heart' instead of being based on music theory (Lilliestam 1996: 201).

Green also mentions this myth as an influence on her interviewees (c.f. *ibid.*: 107 et. seqq.). She explains that the values and attitudes of the interviewees are characterized by the precedence given to the ideal of creativity, which is ranked higher than the ideal of being technically skilled. From this point of view, it is better to be a creative writer than a technical specialist. According to this approach, feeling is a more important ideal than virtuosity.

The idea of a feeling-based rock authenticity influenced the discussion of the respectively 'wild' and 'tame' cultures of informal and formal learning. As pointed out by Mornell (2009), the learning system of 'wild' learning is seen as aural and unconscious, in contrast to the 'tame' learning system of cognitive, explicit and conscious behaviours. She analyses the validity of this claim of a dichotomy and finds that the working styles, learning systems and goals which are used by musicians are too varied to be sorted into the binary scheme of formal/informal. Sometimes these systems overlap: Hemming and Kleinen (2003: 61) found that pop musicians use methods of deliberate practice in addition to their less structured proceedings. Mornell gives the example that every time a musician uses a conscious method in deliberate practice, he or she builds up unconscious motor memory. She consequently argues for a "holistic approach to a musician's work" (*ibid.*: 95), which takes into account the various styles of practice that musicians actually use. Instead of two pathways, informal and formal, which do not intersect, she advocates converging pathways leading to musical expertise.

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<sup>2</sup> Elsewhere, Green discusses different ways of using the term „learning strategies“. As common aspects, she locates a reference to learnt behaviours that are acquired through experience (cf. Green 2012).

Another suggestion to differentiate the ways of musical learning precisely is given by Folkestad (2006). He shows four different possible criteria for using and defining formal and informal learning: 1) the situation, 2) learning style, 3) ownership, and 4) intentionality (ibid: 141 et seqq.). When these aspects of musical learning are considered and analysed, informal and formal learning can be seen as two poles on a continuum. In most learning situations, both traditions of learning are present, and interact in a variety of ways.

New forms of informal and aural learning have developed with the internet. Especially YouTube has gained a high importance as an instrument for individual study (Cayari 2011; Munro Smith 2011).

As learning pop music takes place to a large extent in groups, social relationships and the musicians' ideas about working together have a strong impact. Positive relations between band members are important for the collective creation of music (Green 2002: 112-113; Rosenbrock 2006: 118). The group structures of bands are often characterized by the ideal of equality, which means that there is no formal leader (Scherr 2010: 80) and, pointing in the same direction, that proposals of every member are picked up (Rosenbrock 2006: 254). The fact that the music created is a product of the whole group also strengthens the band's sense of identity and reinforces team spirit (Spieß 2000: 287-288).

Analyzing social relationships in pop bands leads to the question of why girls and women are underrepresented. There has been some research to explain this phenomenon: One reason can be located in gendered socialization, which approves different musical activities for girls and boys (Siedenburg 2009). Other research concentrates on the construction of gender in band contexts, which allocate different roles for men and women (Zahnd 2005; Cohen 1997, Clawson 1999). This aspect is also discussed by Bannister (2006), who analyzes the discursive constructions of masculinity. Beside this, the ways of performing gender in popular music have been examined (Jarman-Irvens 2007; Loeser 2013, Whiteley 2000). For the field of music education, Green (1997) worked out how gendered musical meanings and practices are continually reproduced. Most of these studies are based on the constructivist concept of 'doing gender' and consequently do not focus on gender as an attribute of individuals, but rather on the processes of production and re-production of gender (West and Zimmerman 1987). Whiteley (2000) suggests solutions to influence these processes of constructing gender: she points out the possibilities for deconstructing gender roles and playing with masculine and feminine identities and performance.

Research on homosocial structures in other fields than music can also give hints at how we can explain the underrepresentation of female musicians in pop music. Among others, Schröder (2005: 292) found that in early adolescence, boys and girls often prefer same-sex groups. Jösting (2008) examined boys' views on homosociality and found that the activities in domains which are considered to be typical for men play an important role for developing a traditional male gender identity.

## Research design

In order to obtain information at first hand from our special group of interest we decided to conduct semi-structured expert interviews<sup>3</sup> with young German instrumentalists. The study sample is composed of eighteen musicians aged fifteen to twenty-five who play guitar, bass, drums or keyboard, including both self-taught musicians and those who have been taking instrumental lessons. We were aiming to

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<sup>3</sup> Our definition of the interviewees as experts based on the definition of the expert as a person, who has specific role-knowledge about practices in an institution (Przyborski and Wohlrab-Sahr 2014: 119).

have an equal number of interviewees of both genders as well as creating an even distribution amongst the instruments, but this proved difficult to achieve. While we obtained a more or less even distribution amongst the instruments, only one third of the interviewees are female. The musicians come predominantly from O. and the northwest of Germany. All of them play in a band, and none of them are professional musicians. All interviews were conducted by one woman, the scientific assistant of the study and co-author of this article.

To operationalize the topic of learning preferences, we identified two thematic fields: On the one hand the requirements of learning which were characterized by motivations and ideals, on the other hand the learning practices, which can be divided into different fields such as learning in a group, alone, or with a teacher. The interview guideline focused on these aspects and their interplay.

For the evaluation of the results, we used the method of qualitative content analysis as suggested by Gläser and Laudel (2010). They present a system to analyze data based on categories which have already been determined by the knowledge gained from other research. These categories can be revised and differentiated in the research process. Compared to other qualitative evaluation methods, this proceeding enables a relatively fast evaluation without loss of data.

To guarantee a close link to practice, we had regular round table sessions with teachers from the municipal music school of O.. Here we discussed our findings and our ideas for didactic innovation.

## **Research Results**

As our categories for analysis are widely inspired by earlier research, we will present our findings by relating them to these works.

### **Learning Practices**

Our results about the learning practices showed that the most remarkable changes compared to Green's results concerned the use of technology, particularly of computer based tools and the internet with YouTube as the most relevant site. Naturally, the latter was less relevant in Green's study which was realized in the late 1990s. As found by others (Cayari 2011, Munro Smith 2011), YouTube is used as an instrument of individual study. Our interviewees mostly learn by watching tutorials of other musicians and examples given by role models.

The shift in learning habits, in which the increased use of the internet plays a significant role also affects the central learning strategy of listening and copying. Our interviewees prefer to download chord changes and melodies from music websites instead of copying songs purely by ear. They explain that this is due to their wish to save time, which seems to be more important than the wish to improve their listening skills. This does not mean that listening and copying is not relevant: the musicians combine the strategies by using the material downloaded from the internet as a basis for their work with recordings. For composing, creating backing tracks or saving musical ideas and rehearsals, recording and sequencing software such as Audacity or Garage Band are commonly used. Nevertheless, our data reveals that these new learning techniques have not replaced the older strategies, but are used to enhance them.

The organization of the working process is mostly described by the interviewees as trial and error. In contrast to the findings of Kleinen and Hemming (2003), deliberate practice is relevant for only a few of the musicians in our study. Similarly, analysis and reflection are additional strategies which are sometimes brought in by teachers or particular members with advanced theoretical knowledge.

### **Effects of social structures and values**

Our findings suggest that there is an interplay between social structures and music making: social practices within the band influence the collective musical practice and vice versa. Consistent with Rosenbrock's findings (2006, see above), this can be observed in the process of songwriting, which, besides jamming and reproduction the rehearsing of repertoire, is one of the most important activities in a band. Songwriting is characterized by the division of work: everybody contributes to the song according to his or her individual abilities. All musical ideas are considered to be important for the development of the song, and so every member of the band is important. Each instrumental part is developed in relation to the others in an interactive process of exploration. During this process, the ideas of the different band members are connected and developed.

The basis for this kind of work is the ideal of equality between the members. Correspondent to Scherr (2010), the interviewees explained that they see no need for one person to lead the rehearsal. There is often one member, however, (normally the one with the biggest knowledge) who acts as an unofficial bandleader, as the musicians' descriptions of the songwriting process reveal. Nonetheless, while characterizing the group structure, our interviewees told us they do not have a leader.

In the process of rehearsing, it must be possible to achieve a consensus, as the interviewees pointed out. Everyone can contribute ideas, but it is not always possible to realize everybody's wishes. Unsurprisingly, it is easier to present ideas and find a consensus in a band if the members get along well with each other, according to Greens results (2002, see above). The more that friendship and team spirit grow, the better the musicians can collaborate. The interaction between the musicians takes place on various levels: oral respectively aural communication is the most important, but visual aspects are relevant as well, as musicians watch each other and react to body language signals. Visual learning through written music plays only a minor role.<sup>4</sup>

Furthermore, the ideal of autonomy is important in the songwriting process, which is expressed by the wish to be independent from teachers' requirements while creating music. The interviewees appreciate a self-directed process which allows them to classify their songs as their own creation. Similar to the findings of Spieß (2000), this evokes in the musicians a strong sense of identification with the songs and with the band.

### **Effects of gender**

Our analysis of the effects of gender reveals that a lot of musicians do not reflect on the absence of girls and women in bands. The male interviewees often even did not realize this fact before the interview. By contrast, the female interviewees were very aware of this situation.

From our male interviewees' point of view, the composition of the band "just happens". Women or girls are not excluded consciously, but having no female members in the band seems natural to most male interviewees. As the first bands are often founded by boys and their male friends in their early teenage years, the results of Schröder (2005) and Josties (2007) cited above can explain that for boys, same-gender peer-groups are considered to be matter of course.

Some of the interviewees also expressed gender stereotypes. For example, a male interviewee emphasized girls' supposed inability to 'groove'. A girl explained that boys

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<sup>4</sup> For more detailed results concerning the importance of team work see Siedenburg 2014.

were dominant in bands, and another girl saw it as an advantage to have male members in a band as they are “a bit rude”. By using these stereotypes, the musicians contribute to “doing gender” in accordance with the traditional gender images and reinforce the existing situation in the field of pop.

Interestingly enough, most stereotypes were expressed by interviewees who had no experience in playing in mixed bands, as they played in either an all-male or an all-female band. The girls and young women who did play in mixed bands had other perceptions: One of them saw no difference between playing with boys or girls, as she considered the common aim of making music to be central for the relationship among the band members. Another young woman decided to work against the situation of usually being the only female person in a band and initiated networking and further training for female musicians. Overall we found the ways in which our female interviewees deal with the circumstances of making pop music and being in mixed-gender bands to be very individual.

With our study, we tried to reveal some elementary aspects, but much more research is necessary in this field. For example, it would be interesting to explore under which circumstances female pop musicians are successful, or to find out how interaction in mixed-gender bands differs from interaction in homosocial groups. Pop music education in practice should develop specific methods to counteract gender stereotypes. To realize this, some propositions have already been made (Green 1997: 245 et. seqq.; Siedenburg 2009: 223 et. Seqq.) and can be taken up. Our data suggests that one important method should be to provide teenagers with opportunities to play in mixed bands. In this way, both girls and boys can experience having competent bandmates of both genders. This would provide better conditions for teenagers to gain a less rigid understanding/conception of gender roles and to develop a gender identity which is not limited by stereotypes.

### **Applying the findings to music education**

When looking for a way to apply our findings to music education in practice, we found helpful suggestions in other researchers' approaches. Green identified five characteristics of learning in informal contexts, which she transferred into the context of music education in British schools. She initiated the programme 'Musical Futures', where these characteristics have been systematically put into practice. The learning process in this programme is organized in seven stages. There has been an extensive evaluation of the programme (see Green 2008), and 'Musical Futures' has inspired many similar programmes all over the world.

The creation of the University programme “Boom Town Music Education”(BTME) in Borlänge, Sweden, was inspired by a variety of research concerning informal learning and learning by ear. The main references, besides Green's findings, were the studies of Gullberg (2010) and Johansson (2004). In addition to its empirical foundations, the concept of BTME refers theoretically to the sociocultural perspective and the idea of “situated learning” as developed by Lave and Wenger (1991).<sup>5</sup> While visiting BTME in Borlänge, we also observed a strong relation to constructivist approaches, as individualized learning and reflecting are central principles of the BTME concept. For application of our findings to practice, both the sociocultural and the constructivist perspective will be utilized.

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<sup>5</sup> This model has also been a point of reference for many others, for example for Green (2008: 6) and for Ardilla-Mantilla (2012), who suggested to adapt it to the context of Austrian music schools.

Another inspiration for our approach came from the practitioners. In our round table discussions with instrumental teachers from a communal music school in O., we realized that it is important to reflect on existing structures and didactic standards if we want to successfully build new ones, as there still are conflicts resulting from the intersection of different learning traditions. We therefore wanted to work out the differences between the tradition of instrumental tuition and the tradition of pop learning, and to build our proposals on this.

By taking a comparison of the learning traditions exposed above as a basis for our transfer to practice, we risk creating a dichotomy that is more polarizing than useful. On the one hand, this proceeding can help us to analyze the essential differences between these pathways of learning. On the other hand, it could be misleading if it creates the impression that learners are following either one tradition or the other. In fact, our interviewees combined different learning traditions very naturally. Correspondent with the aforementioned works (Mornell 2009, Folkestad 2006, Lilliestam 1996), we do not regard these traditions as antagonists, but as existing on a continuum. We try to go beyond a binary view by making use of sociocultural and constructivist approaches, which allow us to describe our conception of learning in a more general way. After that, we will compare the norms and assumptions of both traditions of learning and confront them with the learner's needs and preferences. Finally, we will outline a model for a new learning culture of pop in music schools.

### **Creating a new learning culture**

For conceptualizing our ideas, we make use of the term "learning culture" in the sense of the German "Lernkultur" as suggested by Arnold and Gómez-Tutor (2007: 90). They define it as the sum of transmitted and internalized assumptions – or "implicitnesses" – of people who teach or learn in a given context.<sup>6</sup> This means that learning is widely determined by attitudes that we do not call into question because they are so familiar to us. In institutional learning, one of these givens is how time is structured; others concern the teacher's and student's roles, and shared norms and values in general. As these attitudes are mostly being acted out unconsciously, it is important to reveal them if we want to successfully implement new concepts. This means that in order to apply our results to practice, we have to reveal both the attitudes taken for granted in the field of instrumental tuition and those in informal pop learning.

### **Theoretical background: situated learning and constructivist didactics**

The idea of situated learning which has been mentioned above corresponds strongly to the way popular musicians acquire their skills: learning takes place in a community of practice via participation and interaction with other participants, who can be either more experienced than or on a comparable level to the learner. "Learning is viewed as being holistic, contextual and relational", as Gullberg (2010: 128) puts it. Mandl and Kopp (2003: 74) also refer to the idea of situated learning and suggest to take it as a basis for the development of a new learning and teaching culture in different educational contexts. We will build upon these ideas and pick up the model for the development of a learning culture in music schools.

In addition to this, we intend to integrate some of Arnold and Lernem's ideas (2007: 38 et seqq.) for creating a "constructivist learning culture". One of their central ideas is to put the focus on the learners and to provide the potential for participation, forging of identities, self-directedness and active learning.

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<sup>6</sup> "die Summe der überlieferten und verinnerlichten >Selbstverständlichkeiten< des Umgangs mit Lehren und Lernen", translation by the authors.



Constructivist didactics have also been explained as “enabling didactics”, which focus on providing opportunities for learning (cf. Winkler 2009; Siebert 2010). From this point of view, they can be seen as an alternative to the instructive model of “producing didactics” which aim at “making people learn”. The idea of enabling musical learning instead of producing it will be central for our following suggestions.

### **The principles of the new learning culture**

Whenever people are learning in a certain cultural context, it is framed by norms and ideals which determine the thinking and behaviour of the participants. In the context of music schools, it is the main intention to teach playing instruments and to make pupils learn them. Considering this, it is striking that our interviewees mostly do not have the intention to learn anything when they handle their instrument. Instead, their aim is to make music. Hence we can identify a difference between the purpose of “learning how to play” in one context and “playing” in another. For a learning culture of pop in music schools, we want to suggest adopting our interviewees’ approach and seeing “music making” as the main intention instead of “learning how to play an instrument”. Consequently, playing in a band has to be the central activity. This corresponds with the idea of situated learning: Instrumental skills are developed by participation, while in traditional tuition, they are considered to be a prerequisite for ensemble activities.

Another important aim of music schools is teaching fundamental skills such as instrumental technique and reading music, which are commonly seen as being crucial for musicians, especially in a conservatory context. This ideal usually goes hand in hand with an ambitious and achievement-oriented attitude. We suggest focusing on values such as enjoyment, autonomy, equality, and self-expression instead. Consequently, self-determined learning should be a central principle, and the aims of education and achievement have to be redefined. In accordance with the ideals of our interviewees, we suggest that the main objective should be that music making becomes an important part of the learner’s identity.

Another issue concerns the accessibility of the learning contexts. It is widely accepted that instrumental lessons have to be paid by the learners themselves or by their parents – a fact which is obvious from the view of teachers, as it is often difficult to get enough public funds. Still, this results in the exclusion of children from families who cannot afford instrumental lessons. In the field of informal learning, smaller financial resources are needed, but there are other kinds of exclusion. As described above, most bands constitute themselves inside a more or less homogenous social context. In a lot of fields of pop music, the majority of musicians are male and white (cf. Bannister 2006), and there are few immigrants who are involved with these scenes. Some of these excluded groups find other ways to get into pop music.<sup>7</sup> Nonetheless, it is still evident that these groups are underrepresented in the pop scene although they are interested in pop music, and it is obvious that they would profit from additional support. Equality is an important ideal for pop musicians. However, it is not completely realized as certain groups are excluded.

At this point, we leave behind the practice of transferring informal learning practices into a formal context and suggest minimizing the disadvantages of informal learning in institutional contexts. Music schools should open pop music activities to everyone who is interested. Important steps for realizing this goal are:

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<sup>7</sup> For example, there are music scenes such as hip hop which are dominated by musicians from immigrant families. In educational programmes, girls find the opportunity to play in a band more often than in informal contexts.

- to find possibilities for funding pop music education programmes, for example by raising communal or foundation funds,
- to address girls directly, especially those who are already in the process of learning instruments, and help them to find bands and learn in peer-to-peer situations,
- to address young immigrants directly, ask them to join in and to contribute their musical ideas and learning preferences.

Thereby this can help music schools in their efforts to become attractive for a bigger group of people and to be accessible for everyone- not just for middle class kids. They can contribute to more social diversity and social mobility, and they can support the flexibility of gender roles and increase gender justice.

The intended changes of a learning culture also affect teacher's and student's roles. In the conservatory tradition, a master-disciple-relationship is the common standard. As explained above, it has an impact on the teaching style of most instrumental teachers who have received a professional education. This relationship is asymmetrical, and teachers are largely responsible for the learning process.

If the peer-to-peer-relationship of learners in informal contexts is taken as a model for the communication between teachers and learners instead, the teacher leaves the position of a "sage on stage" in order to become a "guide by the side". He or she takes on the role of a coach, making suggestions and being ready to help if there are musical problems and if assistance is needed. As a person who knows more about music, he or she can assist the students to find their way and to reach their self-set goals. Nonetheless, students maintain a very active role in the learning process. As it is typical in the field of pop, they have the opportunity to make their own decisions, set their own goals and find their proper ways of how to improve their playing. This is motivating and has a strong effect on the development of a musical identity.

Teachers have to respect the students' decisions and goals and support them in learning actively and self-directedly. As the process is highly dependent on the individual with his or her personal preferences, views and experiences, this way of learning corresponds with the main ideas of constructivist approaches and the idea of enabling didactics that Winkler (2009) developed for music teaching in schools.

In many cases, instrumental teachers in the field of pop have learned in both informal and formal contexts themselves. Nonetheless, our data suggests that their teaching style is often quite similar to that found in conservatories. Accordingly, they use traditional teaching methods, even if informal learning had been substantial for their own education. This corresponds with Green (2002) who found that rock musicians tend to teach in very formal and traditional ways, in spite of their own personal informal musical training (cf. Folkestad 2006: 139).

In our round table discussions with instrumental teachers, we found that the norms mentioned above have a strong effect on a teacher's decisions. Nonetheless they are very aware of the differences between informal and formal ways of learning. Usually they have compelling reasons for choosing a more traditional way of teaching, for example the wish to provide fundamental skills or to meet the parents' or head teachers' expectations. To solve this dilemma, we suggest reinforcing the communication about these learning and teaching methods among instrumental teachers and to initiate or continue the dialogue between teachers and researchers. This discourse can encourage teachers to adapt more of their own experiences in the field of informal learning to their teaching style.

The changes we have suggested up to this point also require methodological consequences. The traditional process of learning (how to play) music is characterized not only by the use of written music, but also by a very systematic and deliberate approach. Following research results, we suggest reducing the use of music sheets and concentrating on aural teaching methods instead. This requires developing these

further, for example by enhancing strategies of learning by ear and the use of modern technology. In addition to that, we propose that students should be given the opportunity to learn in a widely subconscious and intuitive way, as many of our interviewees did not choose to learn through deliberate practice themselves. We suggest that deliberate practice should emerge from a student's own motivation and should be a consequence of his or her own experiences made while playing.

As friendship among band members and the identification with the group are important requirements for the learning process, musicians-to-be should have the opportunity to form a group on their own. Very often, this is not the case in music schools. As the students tend to hardly cross paths when they have individual lessons, it is the teacher's job to form bands based on the students' ages and playing levels. We suggest to instead create an environment in which the students have more opportunities to get together based on their own decisions. This can strengthen their feel of autonomy and evoke a stronger identification with the band.

From an educational point of view, however, it could be a problem if the relationships among peers were to be the only criteria for forming bands in music schools. We mentioned earlier that there are groups who have less access to peer music activities. As music schools should be open for everyone, they should provide a social frame where young people who are interested in music can meet, even if they would not belong to the same peer group in other contexts. This can be realized in workshops or music camps for beginners where the students can get to know each other and find out who they get along with and share interests with.

Picking up the working methods of our interviewees, the varied use of modern technology shall be an important element of the new learning culture. This can support self-directed learning and help to integrate new forms of acquiring skills in a group. Social media will be used to increase communication, to share material and to build a musical network of students and teachers.

In order to create a new learning culture it is also necessary to rethink the set-up of the learning process. First of all, this concerns the environment of learning and music making, especially the premises in which the learning takes place. Institutional rooms usually have a mostly functional and sometimes clinical character while the atmosphere in informal rehearsal rooms corresponds better to the needs of pop musicians. Garages, basements or bunkers may not always be too cosy, but they can provide some free space: the band members can furnish them in their own style and act without being exposed to the expectations of a teacher. Thus the rehearsal room becomes an ideal environment for the social life of the band.

In music schools, the students' identification and motivation can be increased if the rooms in which pop programmes are realized do not look like institutional rooms. To create an environment of this kind, a cooperation with youth centres or cultural centres can be beneficial. It is also helpful if the learners are involved in choosing the interior equipment and furnishing. Thus, even inside a more or less institutional setting, the rehearsal room can attain the character of a free space.

The next aspect which needs to be rethought is the structuring of time. In institutional contexts, there is a fixed timetable which regulates the beginning and the duration of music learning and which provides a framing for a sequenced learning and teaching activity. In informal contexts, there are more or less regular appointments for rehearsals as well, but there is more flexibility: the duration varies and is adapted to the musician's needs during the process of playing, rehearsing and composing. The participants also have the possibility to shift the date of a rehearsal or to interrupt it for a break. This way of dealing with time is not compatible with the organizational system of a music school. Nonetheless, a compromise between the formal and the informal way can be found if we fix a timeframe, but give the learners the autonomy to make their own decisions what to do during this period. They can make choices depending

on their personal needs and decide if or how long they want to practice on their own, jam, learn with a friend or profit from the advice of a teacher. Again, this is supposed to create a wider reach of play for learners. At the same time, the music school is still able to plan and schedule rehearsals, lessons and events. Similar concepts have already been partly realized in primary or secondary schools, for example by teaching methods like 'open learning' or classroom projects. Music schools can benefit from picking up these ideas and combining them with the approach of informal learners in the field of pop.

The following model summarizes the ideas which we have discussed. It suggests that the learning culture we want to realize can be regarded as a system determined by the interaction between different aspects of the structural context and the actions of the participants.

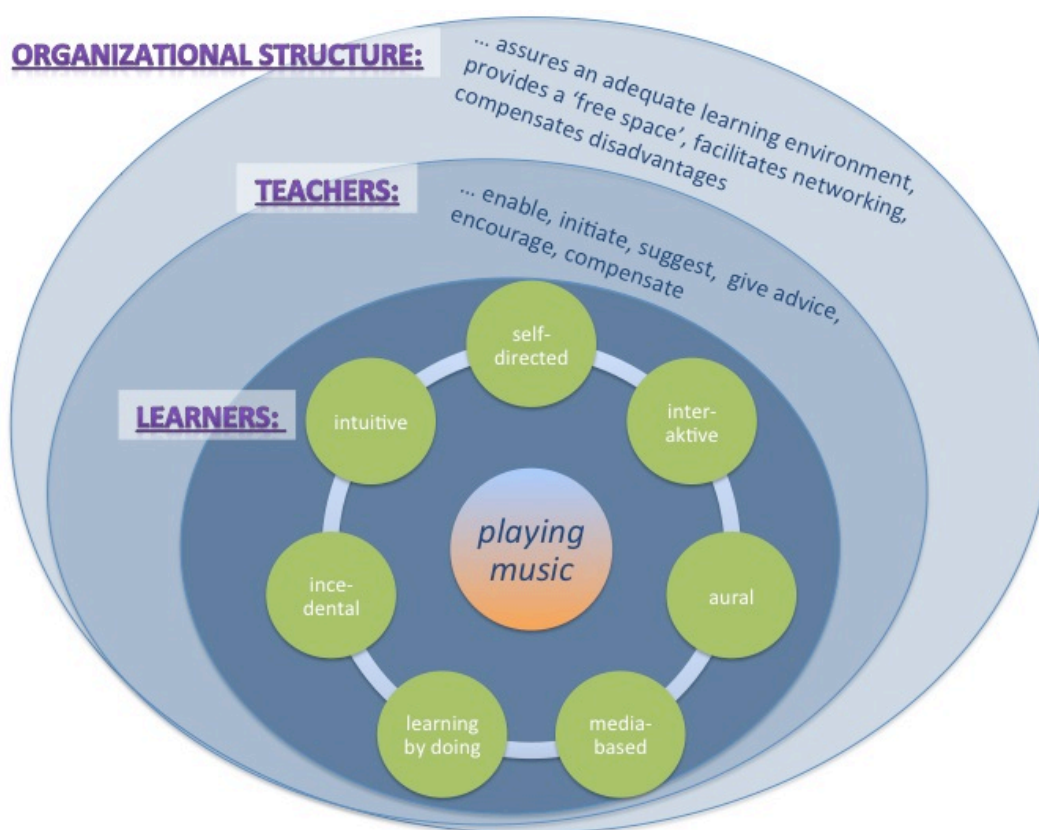


Fig. 1: model of a learning culture of pop in music schools

The organizational structure is the basis of the system. It provides the physical context in which learning takes place, such as rooms and music equipment. It also provides time for different kinds of musical and social activities and facilitates getting in contact with other musicians and building up a personal network. By realizing programmes which are accessible with a low budget and activating both deprived and middle-class girls and boys, the organizational system of a music school can also make a contribution to reducing social disadvantages.

The people acting in this organizational structure build the social context in which learning takes place. The teachers' functions are to enable learning processes and compensate differences in the learners' pre-conditions and abilities. They give advice, make suggestions and encourage the learners to find their own forms of musical

expression and learning. Thus they initiate learning processes without predetermining the learner's way to achievement.

In this environment, learners are free to learn in a self-determined way. This happens in interactive processes with other learners and the teachers. Usually, their process is characterized by a mostly intuitive approach. Learning happens incidentally and subconsciously. Aural learning and the use of modern technology are central characteristics in the process of acquiring skills. The main goal is not "learning", but "doing" – in other words: playing music together.

## Realization

We intend to realize this type of learning culture in O. in cooperation with the Communal School of Music and aim to develop a programme for boys and girls who are just getting into pop music. The programme will consist of three succeeding parts which have different aims: A try-out day to find one's preferred instrument, a startup-camp to find likeminded bandmates, and a continuous long-term programme to acquire skills and to develop skills together as a band. There will be efforts to reach teenagers of different social backgrounds, nationalities, and gender.

To create a musical learning community, different groups of musicians shall be involved. Besides the teenagers and the music school teachers or coaches, there will also be pop students from the University of Applied Sciences who take part as trainees. As they are close in age to the teenagers, they are relevant role models for them and can induce learning situations which are very close to peer-to-peer-learning. In cooperation with a local youth centre, jam sessions will be organized which can make a contribution to create a musician's network.

The coaches will keep exchanging thoughts throughout the programme and reflect methodical and pedagogical aspects together with the researchers. Further evaluation is planned and shall bring forward the development of this learning culture. We hope this research can inspire pop music education in praxis and contribute to a transformation of learning environments in the way we have described.

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