

Towards a critical curriculum theory in music education

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ABSTRACT

Towards a critical curriculum theory in music education

The concept of 'Bildung' was incorporated into the Swedish curriculum two decades ago. This development was inspired by a Continental didactic and central idea of learning in combination with historical-philosophical curriculum theory, thereby breaking a long tradition of goal-rational Anglo-American curriculum discourse. Today, curriculum theory also enjoys a reawakened interest in Sweden as a result of our new teacher-training programme. This article provides a short historical background to earlier pedagogical and didactic influences in Sweden, points out influential thinking about curriculum generically in Germany and the United States that has an impact on Swedish curricula and describes recent curriculum trends in Sweden. The article presents tentative meta-reflections on curriculum theory and gives a brief outline of historical-philosophical curriculum theory. It offers a valid argument for the development of a critical curriculum theory with special reference to music education in the post-modern society. The aim of this article is to initiate a deeper discussion on the impact of curriculum theory on research in music education.

Keywords: curriculum theory, Bildung, music education, post-modern curriculum discourse

Introduction

Curriculum is a cultural document bringing the past into the future. Education is at “the eye of the event”, endeavouring to combine the classical humanistic values of learning with the new skills and knowledge created by the advancing information society. Here the term “curriculum” represents a wider concept than its equivalent in the Swedish language (*läroplan*). In this article, curriculum theory refers not to its normative function to control the political educational system on a national level, but to its historical emergence in the cultural, philosophical and scientific context. On this basis, and with the support of previous general and music education research, I intend to outline a critical curriculum theory model relevant to music education.

Curriculum development around the turn of the millennium may be characterized by the transition from a rationally developed curriculum wrought with the demands imposed by an industrialized society and its educational needs and organizational models, to a more humanistic and communicative curriculum discourse, associated with crucial changes in the relationship between schools and society. From this point of view, music education in school must be seen as a cultural venue for the interplay of, on one hand, its historically determined and evolved traditions and, on the other hand, the teachers and students that provides music education meaning and significance (Sandberg 1996, 2002, 2006).

These trends represent major challenges to school education in general and music education in particular. Young people today live in an international musical world and are especially sensitive to the changing zeitgeist. Their music is also closely linked to the dynamic music and media culture in which they live. More and more, young people's life projects include cultural and artistic activities in the post-modern society. They have acquired a special creativity in their spare time, which consists of creating their own musical productions with the help of their home recording studio, guitar, synthesizer, computer, MP3 player, and nowadays via mobile telephone, iPhone, iPod, iPad and iTunes. Young people's media creations give them more and more opportunities for musical creation, which they communicate to each other over the Internet. With the introduction of media technology in schools, it has also become possible to illuminate and discuss the history of music as well as the multicultural and international aspects of music (Ericsson 2006, Green 2008, Gullö 2011, Sernhede 2006).

Nowadays, researchers are talking about a new phase in history—the post-modern or post-industrial phase—and in this historical process society is expanding from a national, self-contained unit to an international and borderless entity (Hargreaves 2004). Another basic postulate among educational theorists is that there are essentially two ways by which we organize and manage our knowledge of the world: logical-scientific thinking and narrative thinking. Schools must cultivate more of the narrative arts—song, drama, fiction and theatre in balance with logical-scientific thinking (Bruner 1996/2002). Researchers are also talking about culture and creativity and their implications at regional, national and global levels.¹ Culture and creativity is characterized by an explosion of the pool of producers, so that it becomes increasingly difficult to distinguish between cultural producers and users (Sacco 2011). Researchers also refer to the linguistic and communicative turn and the renaissance of the philosophy of education and curriculum theory (Englund 2007).

Under the probable influence of a development of what we call a post-modern curriculum discourse, powerful changes are now taking place in the relationship between school and society. In this perspective, the evolution of curricula and teaching traditions also must be understood as a reflection of the needs of the zeitgeist. As a result of the increasing quantity of and access to information, schools now have to compete

as sources of knowledge with international communication systems that are especially attractive to young people. Society itself is changing from one that is national and clearly demarcated to an international society characterized by an ever-increasing exchange of information. This creates the need for new skills in order to live and work in a complex world. However, changes in our circumstances also mean that it is likely that we stand on the threshold of a major transformation and redefinition of the school's mission in a new world—a new formative period in the curriculum discourse.

Since the 1990s, the curriculum in Sweden has been a response to a changed society. The concept of 'Bildung' was incorporated into the Swedish curriculum two decades ago, inspired by a Continental didactic and central idea of learning, thereby breaking a long tradition of goal-rational Anglo-American curriculum discourse. From a post-modernist viewpoint, these aspects may be regarded as an expression of increasing suspicion of the rational changes in society, accompanied by a preference for modest personal projects, individualism and multiculturalism. The approach of the Continental curriculum tradition more closely follows dynamic changes in the interplay between school and society.

These are the starting points for my discussion of curriculum theory and curriculum trends in Sweden. My thesis is that the school's traditions and knowledge organization create certain conditions for the music curriculum that also represent a problem for its aesthetic and artistic uniqueness. Another problem in Swedish music education is the lack of initial debate on curriculum theory and critical analysis of its practical implementation. This article provides a short historical background to the influences on Swedish pedagogical curriculum trends that are derived from the German didactic tradition and the American curriculum tradition. Section 3 describes the intensive curriculum changes in Sweden after the Second World War, or what I call "the peace outbreak". The succeeding sections present some representative literature in critical curriculum research affecting influential changes in curriculum theoretical thinking, followed by an outline for a curricular model based on a historical-philosophical perspective relevant to musical education. Finally, I aim to present a few points of criticism against the latest curricular development in Sweden, which has a tendency to abandon the theory of human 'Bildung' and reintroduce a goal-rational curriculum tradition and a normative didactic thinking. It is hoped that the article will initiate a deeper discussion on the impact of critical curriculum theory in research of music education in both a Nordic and an international perspective.

Curriculum philosophies, trends and influences in Sweden

This section provides a short historical background to earlier pedagogical and didactic influences in Sweden in the late 1800s and the beginning of the 1900s, which had their impact on curriculum philosophies. In Sweden, as in most of the nations of

Northern Europe, education as a university discipline—or pedagogy—was formed within philosophy and came to follow a specific philosophical tradition. Within this tradition, pedagogy had two main tasks and purposes. One task was normative in character and treated education as a part of the cultural reproduction of society. The other task was to explain the limits and possibilities of education as a knowledge transmission process. Theories on the formulation and legitimation of curricula in society and schooling have existed within research in education and music education for rather a long time in Germany, the United States, England, Scandinavia and other countries in the Western world. This section deals mainly with curriculum trends in the United States and Germany, which previously exerted a significant influence on Swedish curricula, and also with the syllabus in music. The emergence of curricular theory is the result of transatlantic influences from various scientific discourses, most notably the Continental didactic tradition and the American curriculum tradition.

Wilhelm von Humboldt's (1767–1835) theory is a central reference point for German theories of curriculum. Humboldt's concept of 'Bildung'² originated in the second half of the eighteenth century and grew in importance for pedagogic thinking in the beginning of the nineteenth century in Germany. In contrast to its development in Anglo-American countries, education in Germany was established as part of philosophy and the historical-cultural sciences. The concept of 'Bildung' had an important part in understanding that continuing influence—for example, more in Denmark and Norway than in Sweden in the late 1800s (Gundem & Hopmann 1998).

From the early 1900s onwards, Johann Friedrich Herbart (1776–1841) had a strong influence on educational thinking in Sweden. Herbart combined classical rhetorical education with modern psychology (Hopmann & Riquarts 2000). According to Herbart, the tradition of 'Bildung' was more noticeable in the Swedish curricula during the first part of the last century. The history of the concept of didactics is slightly different in the other Nordic countries. Didactics has long been established in Finland and in Norway in the sense of *subject didactics*. In Denmark, didactics has also long been established, but with a tension between *general didactics* and subject didactics. In Sweden, the concept of didactics was introduced only in the 1980s, first as content-related pedagogical research and later as didactics. Didactics also made an impact on Swedish education politics among those favouring a goal-rational line of argumentation. Throughout the post-war Americanization of Swedish education, the 'Bildung' tradition lost some of its importance, with the exception of German didactics. As a result, normative didactics alongside the goal-rational curriculum tradition, inspired by Dewey, worked in tandem until the 1990s (Englund 2007).

During the first two decades of the nineteenth century, the basis for education and psychology as a science was formed in the United States, greatly influenced by European thinking. It was Herbart's educational psychology that John Dewey (1859–1952) introduced in America. John Dewey had studied German philosophy and he wrote his doctoral thesis on Hegelian philosophy. In the United States, Dewey delivered the

thesis of *The Child and the Curriculum* (Dewey 1902) as the main factor in a science of education. Dewey elaborated this idea partly by rejecting the new testing movement and the psychology behind it. The work of John Dewey (1897, 1902, 1916) and the Progressive education movement were the explicit forces in this curriculum thinking. The progressivists saw the goal and content of education from a pragmatic aspect and the method as derived from the individual student's needs and possibilities. Dewey's idea of transaction meant that pupils learn by experimenting with their environment, not when passively listening to the teacher. Dewey expressed a belief in the rationality of science and the ability of education to develop progressively. Education aims at the reproduction of the culture, but can at the same time be an instrument for a progressive development of the society. These fundamental ideas markedly influenced curriculum thinking. The pragmatic aspect has been placed foremost when determining rational-goals. In Dewey's pedagogy, there are three structural elements: *pragmatism*, *individualism* and *rationalism*, the basis of the rational curriculum code (Lundgren 1983).

In addition, the 1980s and 1990s saw renewed efforts to merge Anglo-American curriculum theory and Continental didactics and learning theories in Scandinavia (Gundem & Hopmann 1998, Nielsen 2007). Gundem points to the fact that work with curricula is now tied more intimately to the professionalism and professional development of the individual teacher. Gundem also describes certain international trends in curricular development by pointing to countries such as Norway, Sweden and Finland where a centralised curricular bureaucracy have moved towards decentralisation. On the other hand, countries that previously had decentralised curriculum development now tend to adopt national curricula modelled on those of the United Kingdom and the United States. What we are seeing is an international equalization.

But there are fundamental differences between American curriculum thinking and the German 'Didaktik' and 'Bildung' tradition. If American curriculum theorists focused on the functional connections of education to society, the German theorists looked at the structural relation of education to society—structures disclosed by historical analysis. In Germany, there was a great interest in content and subject matter and the potential for children's growth; American theorists focused on method and "how to learn". In Germany, the state's written curriculum directives were not seen as mandates that could or should explicitly direct a teacher's work; indeed, teachers are guaranteed professional autonomy, "freedom to teach", without control by a curriculum in the American sense. In the United States, the dominant idea of curriculum thinking is "curriculum-as-manual" and methods seen as guiding, directing or controlling a school system's day-to-day classroom work (Autio 2006, Westbury 2000).

Curriculum changes in Sweden after “the peace outbreak”

Swedish curricular development for the compulsory school has an interesting history.³ In Sweden, we can see two pedagogical traditions assuming dominance. In the first half of the twentieth century until the start of the Second World War, it was German theories of curriculum that influenced Swedish educational thinking (and even musical ideals). The work of reforming the Swedish school system, which led to the establishment of the nine-year compulsory school, was begun by the 1940 Swedish Parliament and by a parliamentary commission—the School Commission of 1946. Then, according to Dewey, the interest for the American curriculum tradition was rekindled. We can also see here a greater influence of Anglo-American media-borne music. After “the peace outbreak” all eyes (and ears) would turn towards the West.

Perhaps the most intensive and varied period of curriculum change was the period from the late 1950s through the 1960s in the United States and Northern Europe after the Second World War. More rigorous standards for student learning; reorganized, updated and new curriculum guides; challenging new learning materials; availability of helpful teacher training curricula; increased teacher/student planning; and other such innovative and often contradictory ideas are only some of the changes proposed in those decades. The period began with unprecedented federal support for curriculum reform in the public school when the United States was perceived as losing the “space race” to the then-Soviet Union. Traditional American curriculum studies would provide a structured framework for thinking about institutional issues, like school changes and reform, and ways in which institutional aspirations might be “implemented” in organizational worlds. This way of thinking explains the role of American curriculum theory in Sweden after the Second World War, when a “new” school and a new social and educational order was being sought and symbolized by the new comprehensive system of education.

The reforms of the 1960s and 1970s, beginning with the School Commission’s work, also marked the peak of the “modern project”. This can be seen not only in Nordic but also in other Western European countries. The development of the Swedish society was founded on the concurrent formation of industrialization and democratization. The result was the “Swedish Model” with an expansive public sector and a number of reforms in various sectors of society. These reforms might be codified using concepts such as centralism and social engineering. From 1962, American progressivism and especially the work of Dewey had a strong influence on curriculum thinking in Sweden. In 1969, national curriculum for the comprehensive school was changed and in 1980, a further change was implemented built on a goal-rational curriculum concept.

From the 1990s, there was a transition from the rule-based system of the previous curricula to the goal-oriented school system that was introduced.⁴ In connection with this curriculum, a Continental ‘Bildung’ concept was introduced into Swedish curriculum formation after both the German and French models, thereby breaking a long tradition

of goal-rational Anglo-American curriculum discourse (Broady 1992a, 1992b, 1992c).⁵ The ideas of the Swedish Curriculum Committee came to be called *Learning for Life* (*Skola för bildning* 1992). The work may be characterized as an in-depth analysis of the school system's societal mission, its goals and direction, and its role in imparting skills and knowledge in a changing society.⁶ This new curriculum for the compulsory school differed partially in form and structure from Dewey's concept and was partially new in content. It was adapted to a new system of managing and delegating responsibility in the schools, based on a revised approach to knowledge and learning. This new curriculum was associated with a marked decentralization of the Swedish school system.

Due to this new curriculum thinking, the school system became goals-and-results-oriented. Previously, schooling was governed by state formulated rules and regulations on how the schools should be run and what the content of education should be. With Lpo 94, the Swedish school system became less centralized and increasingly managed on a local basis, leaving room for individual local profiles. Accordingly, the system became more varied in its organization, affecting schedule planning, the school's profile, organization and content. This in turn required a more professional handling of aims and questions concerning the syllabus in the school's internal affairs, and, at the same time, the increased freedom of choice demanded a keener awareness on the part of pupils and parents.

Swedish goal-stating documents were concise, leaving room for local interpretations. A central part of the development of the teaching profession was to enable teachers to analyse and interpret the goals in curricula and syllabi, implement these in accordance with their own teaching goals for different levels of the compulsory school, evaluate their own teaching, and assess and grade their pupils' learning in subjects such as music. The syllabus for music was the primary guideline for formulating individual local teaching goals.⁷ A goal-oriented system sets objectives but does not define the means for attaining them. This implies that teachers have to assume more responsibility and have more freedom to determine priorities, content and working methods with respect to their teaching.

This system put new professional demands on teachers, who were thereby expected to take part in and assume integrated responsibility for organizing education; to take an active part in selecting course content from an increasingly heterogeneous body of knowledge; to help develop teaching materials, evaluate the learning and award marks; all in addition to developing their teaching and school activities with reference to local conditions. The introduction of this new compulsory school curriculum involved a transition to full implementation of a goal-oriented system.

An openness in terms of the pupils' and schools' freedom of choice characterized this new Swedish school curriculum. Responsibility was passed to teachers and pupils to choose the content and working methods that would help them attain the prescribed national goals for schools. Given these changes, there was a new development in the school's mission, whereby greater stress was placed on language skills, humanistic values and a concentration on history and culture. The classical views on education in Sweden

were the basis for the formation of the curricula and syllabi for the various subjects. The important aim was to endeavour to help pupils master and enhance skills and knowledge that had not been given to them in advance, by experiencing and understanding the overall picture, and perceiving the connections between the different forms of knowledge that the various subjects in school could offer them. The theory of Continental ‘Bildung’ was also revived to solve the problem of selection and individualization as pupils sought knowledge through experiences in science, language, literature, art and music.⁸

I have described in this section the interplay among various scientific discourses and curricular concepts, most notably the Continental didactic tradition and the American educational tradition that influenced Swedish pedagogical and curriculum thinking. In the next section, I present some representative literature and critical aspects in educational research affecting changes in curriculum theoretical thinking.

The theoretical and communicative turn in curriculum thinking

In the United States, one can see a line of curriculum thought developing, for example, from Ralph Tyler’s (1949) theoretical development of goal taxonomies, and taxonomies such as those of Benjamin Bloom (1956) and in aesthetic education as described by Decker F. Walker and Jonas F. Soltis (1986/1997), and Harry Broudy (1988). This behaviouristic period claimed that psychology should be built on objective and systematic studies of behaviour and how this behaviour was formed, rather than on subjective interpretations of the meaning of the behaviour. For curriculum theory, behaviourism became the base from which curriculum questions were addressed. It was important to find behavioural definitions of objectives and to construct and control responses, the products of this process. The behaviourists believed that everything that exists could be measured.

This view of learning has been criticized as placing students in very passive roles—a process controlled and reinforced by the teacher and designed to assure that students provide “correct” answers. Those research trends have been important for the development of curriculum and syllabus models and even techniques of evaluation. Ian Westbury (1992) indicates that American curriculum research is an institution which “talks to itself”, and which lacks a firm and productive relationship between the “research” that is done and both the real worlds of schooling and teaching and the cultural, social and economic orders. Westbury notes the tendency of American school ideology and organization to see the teacher force as passive labour to be “commanded” by the machinery of governance and management. Within this way of thinking, the label “curriculum theory” has been used to cover normative models of how to construct goals, content and methods of instruction. The base for these normative statements is found within philosophy and psychology, in the latter case by reducing processes of education to processes of

learning. Consequently, various curriculum theories reflect the value system and the culture within which they have come to exist, rather than any deeper scientific facts. This means that, in transforming educational research within the area of curriculum inquiry from one nation to another, facts are isolated from their context or various “theories” are used as scientific legitimations of political values.

Estelle Jorgensen (2002) maintains that curriculum in the United States is based on philosophical assumptions about the purposes and methods of education. It relates fundamentally to educational values and is justified philosophically rather than verified or refuted scientifically. Many music curricula focus on instructional approaches and frameworks that are often presented with little justification, or justified on experimental and practical rather than systematic and logical grounds. For example, the *National Standards for Arts Education* are justified briefly with reference to “commonplaces”. However, in recent years, American curriculum theory has assumed a more normative, philosophical stance represented, in particular, by Bennet Reimer (1978), David Elliott (1995), Estelle Jorgensen (2002), Kerry Freedman and Patricia Stuhr (2004), Cheryl Craig (2006) and Liora Bresler (2007). Among those curricula that are justified more extensively are Bennett Reimer’s (1978) defence of comprehensive arts programs and aesthetic education; David Elliott’s (1995) concept of “curriculum as practicum”; Thomas Regelski’s (1981) argument for an action learning approach to the secondary school general music curriculum; and Susan Wolf’s (1996) and Therese Volk’s (1998) defences of multicultural approaches to music education.

Music and other performing arts have become arenas for the re-establishing and maintenance of cultural identities threatened by contact and conflict in new communities. Awareness of connections between school and community cultures has escalated, as has acknowledgement of students’ cultures. In this complex context, music educators have to consider questions of culture, curriculum and instruction. Sensitivity to the relation of culture and schooling supports attempts to forge culturally diverse educational practices (Reeder Lundquist 2002). International arts educators have begun to move away from the emphasis on traditional fine arts disciplines toward a broader range of art education and cultural issues. In the process of this transformation, arts educators are replacing older views of curriculum and instruction with an expanded vision of the place of arts education in human experience. The current transformation of arts education is more than just a broadening of curriculum content and changes in teaching strategies to the immediacy and mass distribution of imagery. It includes a new level of theorizing about the arts in education that is tied to emergent post-modern philosophies based on this growing environment of intercultural, intracultural and transcultural visualizations (Freedman & Stuhr 2004).

Within Swedish curriculum research in the 1980s and 1990s, two main didactic traditions stand out in general education: *teaching and learning* and *curriculum theory* with roots in American as well as in Continental curriculum-theoretical tradition. These theories, in which socio-cultural perspectives on teaching were developed, are based on

Ference Marton's theory of *phenomenography* (Marton 1981, 1986, Marton & Booth 1997). Within curricular theory according to Urban Dahllöf and Ulf P. Lundgren, certain educational and socio-cultural perspectives developed (Dahllöf 1971, Lundgren 1983). Both these pedagogical approaches relate to each other and interact with other subject didactic theories. Tomas Englund has developed a curricular theory of *deliberative communication* (Englund 1997, 2004, 2006). Englund also speaks about the linguistic and communicative turn and the renaissance of the philosophy of education in the 1990s in Sweden. The linguistic and communicative turn characterizes both the constituting role of language in our concept of reality and the meaning-creative function of communication (Englund 2004, Kliebard 1992, Morris 2001).

The educational and socio-cultural subdivision of Swedish curriculum theory is based on a historical-philosophical curriculum theory. As compared with former curriculum theories, the researcher is now more interpretation-oriented than explanation-oriented. Also, a critical curriculum theoretical outset is emerging based on Continental research traditions after Bourdieu, Foucault and Habermas, differing from more normative Anglo-American curriculum theoreticians such as Dewey, Tyler, Bloom, Reimer and Elliott.

So far, I have provided a conceptual map of thinking about curriculum generically in Germany and the United States that has impact on Swedish curricula. I have presented some representative literature in curriculum research that points out influential changes in curriculum thinking. My point is that the Swedish national curriculum, like those of other European countries and the United States, underwent a theoretical and cultural transformation around the turn of the millennium. However, school education in Sweden, as in other countries, is torn between the ambition of implementing "the modern project" and solving the post-modern problem of adapting to constant change. Let us now discuss this problem in a historical and philosophical curriculum perspective.

Historical-philosophical curriculum theory – an outline

This section presents an outline for a critical curricular model based on a historical-philosophical perspective, including some argument for the development of a critical curriculum theory with special reference to music education in the post-modern society. Historically and philosophically oriented curriculum theory deals with the relationship between school education and society and how changes in society affect the organization of schools and education – and, in our focus, the impact of music education. Curriculum theory in this sense is concerned not only with the wording of curricula and teachers' and pupils' compliance with the provisions and syllabi set out in them, but even more with school education in a broader social and cultural context and with the external and internal factors that are present in the work of the schools and the concrete shape that this

work—its objectives, content and working arrangements—takes in the specific circumstances. This calls for a scientific study of the development of a critical curriculum theory based on the socio-cultural approaches that have emerged from general and music education research.

Curriculum theory describes the school as an institution with significance for the cultural reproduction of the society and re-creation of human knowledge, values and symbols over a historical period. In one sense, a curriculum reflects the public debate on schools and education. In another sense, curriculum theory illuminates how knowledge is selected, organized and conveyed via school and education. The starting point is the social consensus and the structural boundaries of the school and the dynamic change in these characteristic factors. Through the curriculum interpretation approach, the researcher tries to form an analytical tool for understanding current developments in curricula and the role of music against the background of a socio-cultural perspective.

To illuminate how music teaching takes shape in the school and society and how music curricula have evolved, I have established a curriculum-theoretical perspective as proposed by Lundgren (1979, 1983) and Sandberg (1996, 1997a, 1997b, 2002). Curriculum theory in this sense deals with the relationship between education and society and how the development of society and changes within it influence various ways of organizing schools and music education. The model uses the dialectically related analytical concepts *cultural production* and *cultural reproduction*. Cultural production entails generating the necessities of life and material objects, creating symbols and knowledge that give purpose to material objects and life, and producing the conditions in society under which such production may take place. Cultural reproduction consists of these processes that recreate the material base and culture in a broad sense. This relationship has shifted during various historical periods and in various cultures.

Cultural reproduction in societies with limited division of labour and with a homogenous culture occurs chiefly in the upbringing of young people in their primary group, the family or village collective, which is sufficient to transmit the necessary knowledge and skills demanded by life in that society (Fig. 1). In such a society, upbringing is based on a direct interplay with one's surroundings. The value and purpose of the work is taught simultaneously with the knowledge and skills required for the work itself. The concept of schooling arises when material objects, knowledge, experience, and values must be represented in some way other than direct learning in the context where experience is created and knowledge is produced (Fig. 2). The need for pedagogical texts arises. Things and processes must be given philological names and be represented by text and pictures. In other words, it becomes necessary to "think" in a pedagogic way and to establish special institutions for education and schooling. The term *curriculum* means a set of principles, in which knowledge and skills are to be selected, organized and transmitted.

Curriculum theory views schools and education as the institutions in society that contribute to the reproduction and re-creation of the social and cultural order, accumulated knowledge and cultural traditions. Principles for how upbringing, teaching and ed-

education take shape in a specific culture are linked to how the society is structured and what social, economical and political structures of life in that society look like. Thus, curriculum theory focuses on social and cultural production, and on the reproduction of knowledge, experience and traditions via the society's educational system. In this context, the term *curriculum code* is used as a concept for describing how education is influenced by significant tendencies in the development of the society over time and in space. Naturally, in our focus this also includes artistic, aesthetic and musical dimensions (Fig. 3).

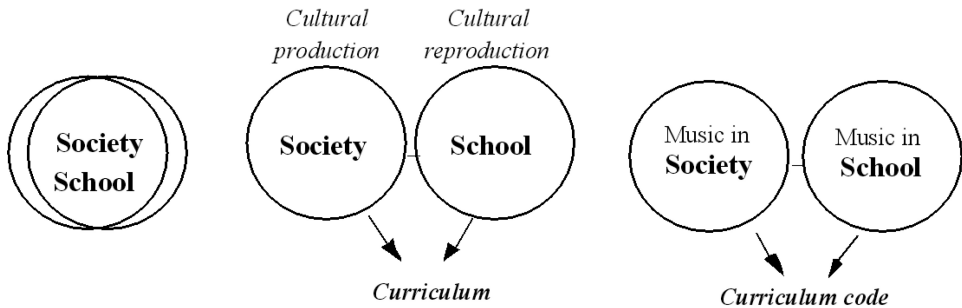


Fig. 1–2–3. A Strip: Cultural production and reproduction in societies.

Music in school is unique in the sense that the subject has a long history from ancient Greek times to the present, where music has been used as a tool for social and cultural education of both exclusive and inclusive strategies in curricula, as well as its role and relationship to other academic knowledge organization. Various curriculum codes are positioned in their historical context, from early educational endeavours until today's changes in curricula. From a historically and philosophically point of view, movements and changes in the relationship between schools and society are neither individual nor accidental phenomena but are structurally determined by on-going, historically given processes of development in the social, political, economic and cultural areas of society.

In various ways, these dynamic processes have an impact on each society's educational system and are codified in the schools' curricula. Curriculum codes are the connecting thread of the historical analysis: *the classical, the realistic, the moralistic, the rational, the "invisible" and the post-modern curriculum codes or discourses*. The codes overlap, earlier codes to some extent becoming the traditions of later ones, and there may be friction and rivalry between different schools during the same period. To illustrate this development, it is necessary to pin down a very basic narrative of curriculum codes over time.

Curriculum codes can be placed in a historical perspective from the beginnings of educational theory in ancient Greece around 400 BC up to the eighteenth century, during which time the adoption of the concept of education in Europe coincided with the develop-

ment of the natural sciences and industrialism. This was a period dominated by a classical and realistic curriculum code based on the need to meet the demand for cultural production in various forms (the formative period). Music had a self-evident role in curricula and course programmes under the classical code. Curricula gradually become more differentiated and music education more specialized under the realistic curriculum code.

As a result of the establishment of elementary schools, compulsory school systems inspired by patriotic and religious ideals and representing a link between the state and society emerged in the nineteenth century (*the period of mass education*). The moralistic curriculum code played an important role alongside the classical and realistic codes. The school music tradition that emerged under the influence of the moralistic code was an integral element of curricula, songbooks and teaching methods at least until the 1950s. Music had had a relatively prominent role in previous curricula too.

At some point in the first half of the twentieth century, education was increasingly viewed in economical terms, and as a result the focus shifted towards pragmatic vocational training and more rational organization. Curricula were also influenced by the growth of optimism encouraged by global economic growth. A *rational* curriculum code was adopted as education developed in relation to science, economics and politics. Education during this period was shaped by a progressivist approach based on individualism, pragmatism and rationalism that originated in the United States under the influence of John Dewey's philosophy (*the pragmatic period*).

The period after the Second World War was influenced by a rational curriculum code. This was a time of ever-more rapid economic, social and cultural expansion; school education was centralized and uniform school systems were established (*period of expansion and centralization*). After the introduction of phonographic technology and mass media distributed music in the 1950s and 1960s, there was a drastic widening of the gap between leisure music and the kind of music that was played in the classroom. With the adoption of a more goal-rational curriculum philosophy, the future of music as a school subject was called into question.

The status of music education was also significantly marginalized after the 1970s, a period of economic stagnation, increasing political instability and reorganization of the education system towards greater decentralization. A more fuzzy and indeterminate curriculum code is typical of the period (*the reification period*). This period heralded a change in the role of school education in an emerging media and information society – a *post-modern* curriculum code or discourse (*a new formative period*).

The curriculum theory model is complemented by a time-geographic conceptual framework constructed by Hägerstrand (1991). The time-geographic “world-view” is reminiscent of an orchestral score in which I try to use musical terms as metaphors to provide a perspective on the development of curriculum discourses. According to the time-geographic perspective, life in society follows an external, material progression but simultaneously produces an internal *fugue-like structure* of human thoughts, actions

and perceptions. This aggregate of knowledge and experiences, cultural traditions, and products of art is constantly created, kept alive and changed over time. Events in the world are illustrated with the help of various forms of time-geographic event scores that describe a fabric of events and development processes.

Time geography provides a flexible and dynamic picture of the development of a society. Musical notation as a descriptive metaphor and research tool constitutes the foundation for the time-geographic theory. The time-geographic conceptual framework describes how the organization of time and space influences social conditions and how we perceive our existence. The time-geographic method of observation is an integration of the natural and humanistic sciences that stress human values and cultural qualities. Like curriculum theory, time geography divides production in society into one side concerning material and economic production and another side related to the production of humanistic culture. The time-geographic conceptual model thereby contains possibilities for describing human situations based on external, material and economic conditions as well as internal, purposeful cultural contexts. Here I try to formulate the relationship between these two levels of description by constructing theories revolving around educational processes. In a very holistic perspective with the purpose of analysing development and change in the schools and music education, and inspired by a time-geographic conceptual model, I have constructed a curriculum theoretical “societal score”. It is a way to give curriculum development and music education a place in the society and in a historical perspective (Fig. 4).

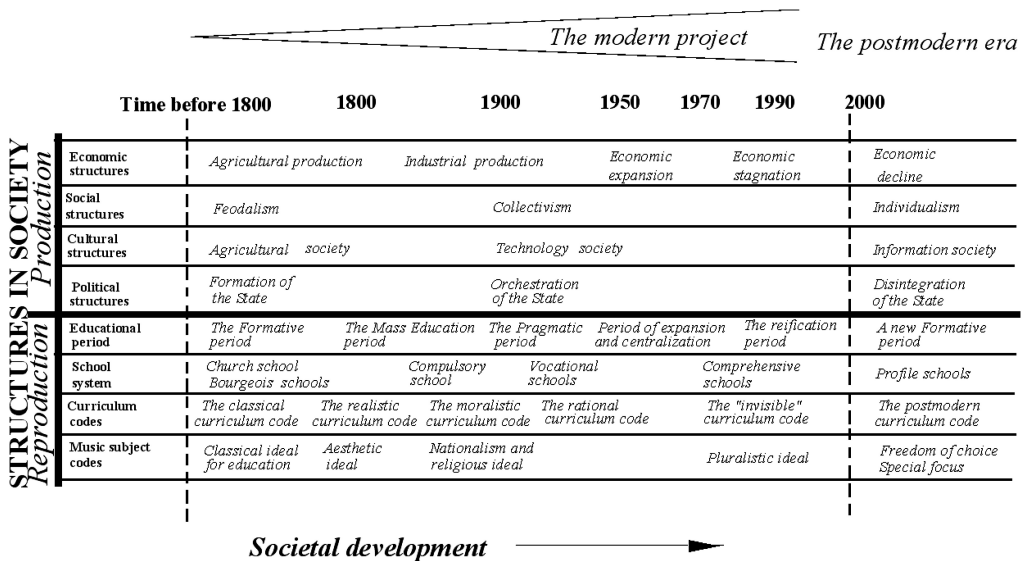


Fig. 4. Curriculum theoretical “societal score”

The “societal score” in the Figure 4 gives approximate indications of the chronological shifts for the different periods – how various curriculum discourses have been established during these historical periods in a very brief perspective. The foregoing summary gives a concise picture of invisible curriculum trends with reference to the curriculum discourses described. The analyses focus on significant social and cultural changes in order to highlight the main tendencies and long-term curriculum trend lines, as I have described in the previous section. I have in fact tried to “squint” at history (a trick used by artists to discern the contours and layout of a landscape or interior space) in order to focus attention on the main contours and dynamics of changes in society and education and in the curriculum changes in the field of music. I use historical-analytical curriculum theory to understand how schools as learning organizations evolve parallel with changes in society. The empirical foundation for the model is derived from Lundgren (1979, 1983), Ödman (1995), Sandberg (1996, 1997a, 1997b, 2002) and Reimers (2003).

Using time geography, I further develop the critical curriculum theory model with the aim of finding new angles of approach for tackling questions concerning changes in the relationship between culture and music production in society and the reproduction of musical knowledge in schools. In brief, curriculum theory is based on three levels of description and analysis that are interconnected with each other in a research program.

The first level deals with the effects of historical developments on the aims, content and functions of related curricula. An analysis is made of social conditions, interest groups, political compromises or educational considerations that can affect the formulation of specific curricula. The way specific educational requirements or educational ideologies shape and determine the direction and organization of education and learning processes is also analysed. Applying this research perspective, I ask how formal education comes about, how music curricula are established historically and attain legitimacy and how different teaching traditions and methods can be developed in school cultures and work environments.

The second level concerns the practical formulation of curricula, the delivery of school education, and knowledge tests and assessments. One important task for critical curriculum research is to examine the interplay between the external condition and inner life of music education. A subject didactic focus on studies should also be able to comprise research that takes into account cultural and musical aspects and their treatment in education. Another task is to examine the conceptual conditions for interpreting and understanding how music education takes concrete form within the school and how changes in the musical life of society and music traditions can influence music education.

The third level relates to the impact on the teaching process of curricula, syllabi, teaching materials, teachers and pupils and to the concrete implementation of this process within the organizational framework of school education. This would simultaneously entail a sharper focus on the theoretical approach using content and subject didactic dimensions aimed at music educational definitions of problems that relate music

education in the schools to the musical world of society and youth. The basic assumption is that music teaching must be considered as part of, and in some respects at odds with, the learning structure in the schools and the special conditions and opportunities offered by this structure, thereby establishing a framework that makes it possible to understand how the objectives, content and activities of school music education are implemented today.⁹

Some critical points on school and curriculum in music education

In this final section I return to the “red thread” of my introduction. The development of curriculum theory in Sweden has its roots in a critical curriculum-theoretical and cultural-sociological approach, which helps understanding the special role that the school has in relation to the lives and personal development of young people in a changing society. According to this approach, the school’s mission is to pass on a cultural heritage—values, traditions, language, skills and knowledge from one generation to the next so that it will be possible to adapt to living and working conditions in a future society. This mission changes, given the new skills and knowledge that develop as a result of new societal conditions. Given the greater supply and availability of information, the school system is faced with a competing influence of another mediator of information – international communications systems, which are very attractive to today’s youth.

To understand this rapid development, we must take into account how the schools, as knowledge-based organizations, relate to communicative and purpose-generating processes in society. Media and information technology are resulting in sudden change in the formative structure of music in society that has an impact on the subject of music in the schools. Through its musical and aesthetic subject content, music education in the schools has a direct connection to the surrounding society and its cultural and musical life. This has particular relevance in the sense that children and youth often have a close relationship to youth culture, via music and media technology, for example. Contemporary musical life is characterized to a great degree by international youth culture. Young people are especially open to expressing quickly disseminated transcultural shifts in style within the field of music. In this context, music is becoming the bearer of knowledge and ideas between cultures. The wells of knowledge for music, according to this approach, are derived partially from the common cultural heritage and partially from the new music emerging along with the development of media technology, the information society and cultural life. According to Ziehe (2004), it is moreover important to take account of historical perspectives as well as classical and theoretical knowledge in music education.

The perspective I have outlined indicates that music education may be seen as an encounter between, on one hand, a specific school culture, with its traditions and its

knowledge organization, and, on the other hand, young people's ideas and experiences of a musical world shaped by media and youth culture. The way music is taught in schools must be understood with reference to both external and internal factors, society and musical life, curricula, teacher training, teacher qualifications, the cultural and working environments in the schools, the importance of the parents and the home and, above all, the students' own musical world, their ideas about music and their musical activities in their spare time. Music teachers are (relatively) well qualified to make the most of this encounter and to organize meaningful musical activities of various kinds in the classroom. The biggest problem seems to be the prevailing school culture and the lack of space for music education in schools – not to mention the fact that music teachers do not always follow the curriculum anyway; they are “their own curriculum” (Sandberg 2006, Sandberg, Heiling & Modin 2005).

Conclusion

In this article, I have outlined the development of Swedish curriculum theoretical research and the reception of the American curriculum concept and the Continental ‘Bildung’ tradition as related to music. The article presents tentative metareflections on curriculum theory in a historical and contemporary perspective. I have pointed out changes in curriculum thinking that exhibit a greater transparency between school and society—a new humanistic and communicative curriculum discourse. On this basis, I have outlined a critical curriculum theory model with relevance to music education as a research program on three levels.

I do not claim completeness; the article is just an outline, which may, I hope, lead to further discussions on the role of curriculum theory on the academic, socio-political and school practice level. Public discussion on school and education needs more qualification on these levels, not less so when addressing music education. Curriculum theory also will be included as a central part in educational science research within music teacher training in Sweden.

Finally, I would like to put forward some critical points regarding the latest curriculum development in Sweden, 2011,¹⁰ which might be described as afflicted by a powerful profession pragmatically pressure supported by an anti-intellectual political rhetoric. The concept of ‘Bildung’ introduced in Sweden curriculum thinking (in a “bottom-up” perspective) about two decades ago was tending to become obsolete. In 2011 the Government reintroduced a goal-rational curriculum tradition and a normative didactic thinking. An active, future-related school policy instead became reactive, turning to the past, ignorant of the traditional meaning of ‘Bildung’ and its future potential opportunities.

In a wider perspective, this shows the state trying to strengthen the control of the

school system from above and centralize power over the professionals (in a “top-down” perspective). This will probably initiate de-professionalizing and strengthen a special school culture widening the gaps between school and society. There is a risk that what you learn at school will be useful at school only. At the present time, there are instead rapid changes within the post-modern and post-industrial society, patterns containing another cultural manifoldness and constant formation of new knowledge which did not exist before. From this perspective I consider that music education will in the future occupy a much more prominent place in a new “cultural symphony”.

Notes

- 1 *The European Commission* has set up a *European Expert Network on Culture* (EENC) to get advise and support in analysis of cultural policies and their implications at national, regional and European levels (see Sacco 2011. *Culture 3.0: A new perspective for the EU 2014-2020 structural funds programming*).
- 2 In the classical sense, the term *education* is associated with the belief that individuals strives to develop himself and their knowledge through their experiences with scientific knowledge, language, art and music. This way of thinking has its roots in ‘Bildung’, an eighteenth-century, central European idea of learning, culture and education. In a modern democratic society, the task of education is to create an environment where school students partake in a common cultural sphere.
- 3 A number of studies in music education have adopted a historical or curriculum theory approach in Sweden. For an overview, see Sandberg 2006.
- 4 The 1994 Curriculum for the Compulsory School System (Lpo 94).
- 5 Donald Broady, who has been concerned primarily with curriculum development in France, has discussed the issue of education in his study on the Swedish curriculum. See Broady 1992a, 1992b, 1992c.
- 6 Guiding also the construction of the Lpo 94 curriculum was *The National Evaluation of the Compulsory School* in 1989 and 1992.
- 7 For more exhaustive insight into curriculum and syllabi for music in *Lpo 94 (Syllabi for the Compulsory School 1994)*, see Sandberg & Gårdare 1992; Sandberg 1997a. Music, together with mathematics and Swedish language was a model subject for the design of the curriculum in connection with Lpo 94.
- 8 The discussion expresses a critical attitude towards the narrow-minded conception of the division between theoretical knowledge and practical skills. In the curriculum, *Lpo 94*, constructive, contextual and functional aspects of knowledge was used to define and renew the debate on knowledge in the work of schools.
- 9 In my own research in curriculum studies on these three levels, I have focused on international classroom studies, examining the goals, content and working methods of music education, and describing recent curriculum trends in Sweden. Using an empirical approach, I also map out some of the problems and possibilities that exist in Swedish music education associated with the introduction of a new curriculum and syllabus for music, Lpo 94. In addition, I outline a possible perspective of future music education development in Sweden.
- 10 *Lgr 11. Curriculum for the compulsory school, preschool class and the leisure-time centre* (2011).

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