

Eszterházy Károly University
Doctoral School of Education



Theses of doctoral (Ph.D) dissertation

The role of common shared music in forming inclusive attitude
Model project and impact assessment

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The topic of the doctoral dissertation is the reflective practice and impact assessment of community music therapy and the Consonante method worked out for people with severe disabilities. The Nádizumzum Orchestra is a performing group founded in Szent Erzsébet Nursing Home from the residents of the institution in 2007. The approach of Community Music Therapy, which describes the interrelated dynamics of successful musical performance and social inclusion, provides a theoretical framework for the reflection of this practice.

Community Music Therapy

The theoretical framework of community music therapy displays the power of music in developing social consciousness and in building new pathways for social inclusion (Ruud, 2004, 2008, 2010, Ansdell, 2014). Stige & Aarø define community music therapy as an approach that expands the traditional concept of “therapy” associated with treatment to offer a wider understanding that includes care and service, health-promotion, and social change. They highlighted the most important features of Community Music Therapy in the acronym PREPARE (Participatory, Resource-oriented, Ecological, Performative, Activist, Reflective, and Ethics-driven). “Community Music Therapy encourages musical participation and social inclusion, equitable access to resources, and collaborative efforts for health and wellbeing in contemporary societies. It could be characterized as solidarity in practice” (Stige & Aarø, 2012, p.5.). In short, they define the main goal of Community Music Therapy as preparing marginalized groups or individuals for participation and preparing communities to accept and respect these previously excluded members. This holistic view of therapy is not far from the concept of new education that emphasizes the role of aesthetic education in the development of a wholesome human being. This holistic view of music education is not far from the Hungarian traditions. As a humanist and reformer, Kodály emphasized the importance of music education in the development of the whole personality. In his understanding, learning and appreciating music is a key of intellectual, emotional, and social development. Moreover, the major goal of his educational program was to alleviate differences in class and status and establish solidarity and mutuality through musical communities (Pethő, 2011, Gönczy, 2009).

The social exclusion of individuals with visible physical impairments is well documented not only in Hungary, but all over the world (e.g.: Ackerman et al, 2009; Clarke, 1999; Oaten, et al, 2011).

Exclusion as an evolutionary heritage

The exclusion of people with atypical physical features is a natural evolutionary-based reaction for protection coded deeply in our nervous system. Therefore, deformities of the body or the face trigger many subconscious mechanisms of rejection (Oaten, et al., 2011). According to the Terror Management Theory (TMT) (Greenberg, Pyszczynski, & Solomon, 1986; Greenberg, Schimel, & Martens, 2002; Mikulincer & Florian, 2002) individuals with visible signs of human fragility and vulnerability remind all human beings to their death. In order to preserve our self-esteem, we tend to treat these individuals as utterly different from us. Moreover, people with severe disabilities are frequently unable to adapt their behavior to the unspoken predetermined roles of the given society; thus, they are usually associated with unpredictable and dangerous behavior (Stier & Hinshaw, 2007). As a result, encountering someone with severe disability could evoke fear, insecurity, guilt.

The devastating consequences of social exclusion are experienced at individual, household and community levels. In the light of international research it is clearly proved that people with disabilities are the poorest and most marginalized subpopulation in low and middle-income countries. (WHO & World Bank, 2011; Groce et. al., 2011; Palmer, 2013). A comparative study in a representative sample of twelve European countries summarizes that “people with severe disabilities and/or with complex needs and their families are at risk of discrimination in almost all areas of life. They are mostly not considered in policy development and implementation at local, regional, national and European level.” (Schädler et al. 2008, p. 134).

Considering the challenges of these encounters, and the need of change in their marginalized social state, the main goal of Community Music Therapy is a potential pathway of bigger changes. Common shared musical activities hold the potential to establish a symbolic field of mutuality and equality where musicians with severe disabilities and adolescent music students experience enrichment based on their common shared passion for music. Instead of preparing

a social or disability-awareness program, they work together in common musical performances.

The Consonante Method and the Nádizumzum Orchestra

Although in the last decades, numerous methods have been established in the field of special musical education for people with different disabilities, there is a definite need for a method that offers musical participation for people with severe disabilities. In order to answer this need a method called Consonante was developed in Szent Erzsébet Home, a nursing home in Ipolytölgyes for adults with severe disabilities.

This method is based on the observation that regardless of their limitations in movements, people with severe disabilities are able to make dynamic responses to the music. Their spontaneous movements most likely follow the flow of the music in intensity, force, time and shape. Daniel Stern (1985, 2010) describes these cross-modal matching of music and movement as an innate human musical behavior, called vitality affects.

In order to build orchestral work on this innate basis, two key concepts were found. The musical instruments have to be modified to suit the physical abilities of each individual musician, and custom built musical instruments must be altered to give a consonant accompaniment. In order to meet this latter condition the pattern of the Hungarian zither was followed. Similarly to other folk instruments the Hungarian zither contains so-called guest strings which provide a firm accompaniment in base sound and its fifth.

The Consonante method is used by the Nádizumzum Orchestra, a folk band with 11 members. In the last 10 years they had more than 60 concerts and there are around 150 folk songs in their repertoire. Orchestral participation provides an opportunity for social, emotional and cognitive development. The theoretical framework of community music therapy considers the participation of a performing group as a preparation of inclusion, because musicians should learn a wide range of social skills, such as understanding the meaning of the obligations, learning to delay the gratification of their needs and adjusting their personal expression to the common performance

The method of the research

The second part of the thesis is a description of an action research, with the aim of mapping the impact of different community music therapy projects: a disability awareness project for 7th and 10th grade high-school students, and inclusive concerts with different co-performers. The method used for the research was a projective drawing test „draw a person with disability”. In addition to the primarily research questions the application and evaluation of this projective test became a secondary, similarly important topic of this research.

Attitudes are complex mental constructs consisting of cognitive, affective and behavioral components. They can be defined as evaluative statements which predispose the individual to respond in a preferential way, in other words, predispositions to react positively or negatively to a person, object, or event. (Csepeli, 2001; Hogg, & Vaughan 2005; Perloff, 2010).

Changing negative societal attitudes toward people with severe disabilities is one of the key factors of their successful inclusion. Community music therapy projects are considered to be more effective promoters of positive attitudes than social projects, because musical relationships are equal and mutual by their nature (Andsell, 2014) while social projects may lead to unequal relationships and hold the danger to establish the culture of pity and care. However, it is difficult to map the effectiveness of these projects due to the strong affective involvement of the participants and the social taboo of expressing negative emotions or difficulties related to disabilities.

In order to evaluate a disability awareness workshop I used projective drawing test. When it is difficult to express thoughts or emotions, symbolization can improve communication: visual expressions can open up space for self-disclosure and self-expression (Kárpáti & Kay, 2013; Wilson 2001). Moreover, drawing tests are sensitive enough to show a wide range of different, or even contradictive interacting factors in one's attitude towards disabilities. Drawing is a natural expression for children, but drawing tests can be used in all ages. Draw a Person test is widely used in psychology, education and research. The traditional use of these tests based on the assumptions that drawings serve as a self-representation of the examinee showing many characteristic of his or her personality (Hárdi, 2016, Vass, 2013). DAP tests are also used to assess children's representations about different topics. For example, social stereotypes and prejudice in inter-ethnic conflicts (Bar-Tal & Teichman, 2005, Teichman, 2001), friendship, (Bombi & Pinto, 1994) basic emotions (Brechet et al., 2009) or gender stereotyping (e.g. Chambers, 1983; Colley et al., 2005).

Vass (2012) defines projective drawing as „an inner structure externalized through drawing movements that consist of five elements, with variable ratio: learned cognitive schemes,

analogue or transformed signs and symbols of pictorial communication, expressive movements, a personal construct of an individual reality, and in some cases traces of unconscious projection” (p.82) .

The method

The model of this method was reported by Magyar and Meggyesné (2016). They instructed Hungarian elementary schools students as “draw a person with disability” to gain an impression about their inner representation of disability.

In the first sample 116 drawings of 7th, 10th grade students of ELTE Trefort Ágoston Gyakorlógimnázium was examined: participants of a disability awareness program with the Nádizumzum Orchestra and 2 control groups. The instruction was “draw a person with disability”. Tools: a set of 12 color pencils, A/4 size paper (drawers were not prohibited to use their own pencils or other tools). The test was taken in their classrooms in group by instructors and supervised by psychologists. The post test was to describe a personal encounter with someone with disability. After the first testing, two more questions were added to the post test for clarification: the drawer was asked to choose a title for his or her picture, and to describe the feeling of the person depicted. Furthermore, testers asked a control drawing to gain more information about the drawer’s visual language.

As there was no evident difference between the drawings of the participants and the control group, but there was a few drawings characterized by the use of colors, and ornaments and a higher the global quality than the rest of the pictures. Most of the authors of these pictures described an emotionally meaningful personal encounter with a concrete person, thus, the second test was taken with students who presumably have positive personal experience about disability. The 11th grade students of the Zoltán Kodály Kórusiskola participated in more than one community music therapy project with the Nádizumzum Orchestra. The control group was another school in Budapest specialized to music and choral singing. The third test was planned with a choir (mixed age) during the preparation process for a common concert and after the performance. Unfortunately the latter could not be realized. The last test was focusing on music teachers in a music schools and undergraduate music students, as the potential promoters of future community music therapy projects.

Research questions and hypotheses

H1: The first hypothesis was that projective drawing test is a sensitive tool to discover the drawer's attitude towards disability.

H2: The second hypothesis was that after a disability awareness workshop there will be a huge discrepancy between the verbal and pictorial feedback about the event, because the pictures will show the negative aspects and inner conflicts related to the topic.

H3: The third hypothesis was that there will be a clear differentiation between the drawings of the participants of the disability awareness workshop and the control groups.

H4: The fourth hypothesis was that the drawings of the participants of community music therapy projects will reflect more positive attitude than the drawings of the students participated only in one disability awareness workshop.

H5: The fifth hypothesis was that drawings of the same people will be different before and after a common concert with the Nádizuzum orchestra, because the experience of the common concert will appear in the drawings.

H6: The sixth hypothesis was that a **(a)** there are only a few music teacher open to teach students with disability **(b)** they were not trained or prepared for special learners **(c)** but they are open to prepared their music students for a concert with co-performers with disability.

H7: The seventh hypothesis was that **(a)** a few of the undergraduate music education students is open to teach students with disability **(b)** they were not trained or prepared for special learners.

Because of the complexity and heterogeneity of the drawings in the first sample, six independent professionals, two psychologists, a painter, a visual art teacher, and a special needs educator (trained in drawing analysis) and a lay person where asked to analyze one by one the drawings and find meaningful patterns in the whole sample. Their interpretations were compared, and the highly individual associations were neglected. The results was examined in the light of literature, and confronted with the theory seven step configuration analysis (SSCA) described by Zoltán Vass (2013). This method of projective drawing analysis is a complex approach based on 25 years of research of the author. Vass (2011, 2012, 2013) considers the picture, the drawer, the context and the process as a multifarious system, thus, the drawing is only a subsystem with incomplete information. He accentuates the complexity

and heterogeneity of drawings, thus, instead of isolated features the interrelationships of several features should be examined. The seven steps configuration analysis method consists of the following stages: (1) collecting preliminary information about the examinee, (2) observation of the drawing process: depiction decisions, production strategies, execution of movements, and latency after the instruction. The following steps are helpful to describe the picture: (3) phenomenological description (4) intuitive assessment, (5) global assessment, (6) item analysis of unusual phenomena and the (7) grasping of the essence of the drawing. These are consecutive phases, or viewpoints that help to identify interrelated patterns and configurations. The aim of Vass' method is the psychological interpretation of drawings and paintings, not the detection of the drawer's inner representation of disability. Therefore, the method is helpful to avoid superficial interpretation, but not all the steps and interpretation are suitable for present study.

Results 1: Categories of the projective drawing test

In addition to the primarily research questions the application and evaluation of this projective test became a secondary, similarly important topic of this research.

The most relevant aspect of the drawings was the visual expression of personal engagement of the drawer. The expression of personal commitment was ranging from simple stick figures associated with evasiveness and noncompliance (Hárdi, 2016, Vass, 2013). to the colorful depiction of personal experience and complex symbolic narratives. The presence or lack of narrative intention was the most evident feature of drawings. Narrative attitude typically appear in detailed pictures with complex scenes.

In addition to the personal engagement, different patterns emerged related to different stereotypes of disability, such as social status, active or passive social role, social isolation or inclusion. The test also holds the possibility to reveal the personal or problem-centered approach of the drawer and the affective component of the drawer's attitude.

Results 2: Hypothesizes

H1: The first hypothesis was proven to be true: projective drawing test is a sensitive tool to discover the drawer's attitude towards disability.

H2: The second hypothesis was proven to be true. While the verbal feedback about the workshop was extremely positive, there was discrepancy between the verbal and pictorial

feedback about the event, there are only a few pictures can be associated with the aforementioned narrative attitude.

H3: The third hypothesis could not be examined in details. While there was not a clear differentiation between the drawings of the participants of the disability awareness workshop and the control groups, during the analysis it became obvious that the test cannot be fully evaluated without the written narrative of the drawer.

H4: The fourth hypothesis was proven to be true. With a few exception drawings of the participants of community music therapy projects reflected more positive attitude than the drawings of the students participated only in one disability awareness workshop. However, the 11 garde students of the Kórusiskola have a classmate with disability, which definitely influence their attitude.

H5: The fifth hypothesis was that drawings of the same people will be different before and after a common concert with the Nádizuzum orchestra, because the experience of the common concert will appear in the drawings. This could not be examined due to technical reasons.

H6: The sixth hypothesis was that a **(a)** there are only a few music teacher open to teach students with disability **(b)** they were not trained or prepared for special learners **(c)** but they are open to prepared their music students for a concert with co-performers with disability. This hypothesis was partly proven: 13 of 28 teacher was open for students with disability, they were not trained or prepared for special learners, and 6 of the 28 teachers are not open for the idea of a common concert.

H7: The seventh hypothesis was that **(a)** a few of the undergraduate music education students is open to teach students with disability **(b)** they were not trained or prepared for special learners.

This hypothesis was proven to be false: undergraduate music students are more open for special learners than the teachers of the music school. There are courses in their curricula about special education, however, they do not feel prepared for this challenge.

According to the results one disability awareness workshop does not seem to be effective in changing attitudes towards disability, regardless of its deep emotional impact. The drawings of co-performances express more openness and personal engagement. As an additional result, the drawings of music students in control groups are generally more positive than the drawings of the first sample. Although, the sampe was to small to make a general statement, it

is possible that the social awareness is a benefit of learning music, which could be an important argument to implement similar community music projects as a part of music education. While the research can be considered as a pilot project, the reflection of the practice of the Nádizumzum orchestra can be useful for educational practice and future research projects as well.

The drawing tasks and subsequent interview questions are helpful to discover hidden dimensions of one's attitude towards disability express and verbalize uneasy emotional states by understanding visual metaphors associated with different stereotypes about the topic. While these tests reveal unspoken dimension of the attitude, it is highly important to listen and understand the interpretation of the drawer, and not forcing to confront with difficult or ashamed aspects of his or her attitude. In educational use of the test the experience of an art therapist can be highly helpful to encourage students to reflect their visual narratives, even those, not considered acceptable according unspoken social norms. The test can be used as a preparation or evaluation of disability awareness projects, students might collaborate in a same picture that could help to establish a deeper conversation about the topic. In order to develop the test for measuring attitudes more research is needed with larger samples and configuration analysis for establish validity and reliability of the test.

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