

Educational Dialogue in Piano Ensemble Play and Environment in Latvian Rural Music School

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Introduction

In 20th c., in education there is an active interest in the educational dialogue. Scientists are searching for new educational methods, which would make school praxis more fruitful for education and lead people (teachers and students) towards a better pedagogical and psychological understanding. The results of dialogue always change environmental situation. Instrument play shows us the existence of a conversation between the artist and musical piece text or composer's idea, between the artist and another artist, or the pupil and the teacher. Finally, we have environment, where we must be interested not only in our views and ambitions, but listen attentively to other person's mind, experience, thoughts, needs etc., looking to the circumstances and situation around us. The aim of the research is to study the situation of the educational dialogue in Latvian rural music schools and to analyse pedagogical aspects and authority, constructing progressive environment in understanding between individuals.

Materials and Methods

The experience of being rural has a positive force and value in the world. Rural Latvia has been and continues to be a vital part of the nation. As of 2005, rural Latvia consisted of 4 regions. Like the rest of the world, they are steadily becoming more urban. Improvements in communication and transportation between urban and rural areas have reduced rural isolation and removed many cultural differences between the two areas.

Television, phone service, and transportation systems have helped in bringing rural and urban dwellers much closer together in terms

of culture, information, and lifestyles. No single definition exists to define rural Latvia music schools. American classification of the areas has 3 categories:

- a central city of metropolitan area;
- metropolitan but not central city;
- nonmetropolitan (Guthrie 2003).

Latvia is not so large and doesn't need such classification, but all that is not metropolitan is often said to be rural. The categories of rural or small town are often used to describe the rural segment of Latvian music schooling.

Table 1

**Basic differences between rural and urban areas
Adapted from Guthrie, 2003 and Nachtigal, 1982**

<u>Rural</u>	<u>Urban</u>
Personal/tightly linked	Impersonal/loosely coupled
Generalists	Specialists
Homogeneous	Heterogeneous
Non bureaucratic	Bureaucratic
Verbal communication	Written memos
Who said it	What is said
Time measured by seasons of year	Time measured by clock
Traditional values	Liberal values
Entrepreneur	Corporate labour force
Make do / respond to environment	Rational planning to control environment
Self-sufficiency	Leave problem solving to experts
Poorer (in spendable incomes)	Richer (in spendable incomes)
Less formal education	More formal education
Smaller / less density	Larger / greater density

Cultural and pedagogical atmosphere in rural music schools is an interesting basis for educational and social environment research.

In the rural areas, environmental conditions for communication are more complicated:

- 1) problems linked with long distance from home and school (transport);
- 2) time spent on the way;

- 3) specifics of ensemble play study, which includes many practising hours together – in any learning environment time is a valuable commodity.

Do the social and didactical aspects of dialogue in ensemble play help to overcome difficulties of these listed problems of complicated communication?

In 2005, a Music Teacher Training Course was offered in Tukums, where piano play teachers from all four Latvian regions participated. The course was carried out at the Institute of Education and Home Economics. A questionnaire about some aspects of social communication and study problems was developed for getting information for analyses and given to 44 teachers, who are practising at music schools in different rural regions of Latvia. The results of the questionnaire show us some aspects of social communication and study problems, which exist in rural schools. “Do children like lessons of ensemble play?” 40 respondents gave an affirmative answer – in most cases children gladly play music together. Very important is an answer to question 3: “Do children practice, play together without the teacher’s assistance?” (Fig. 1):

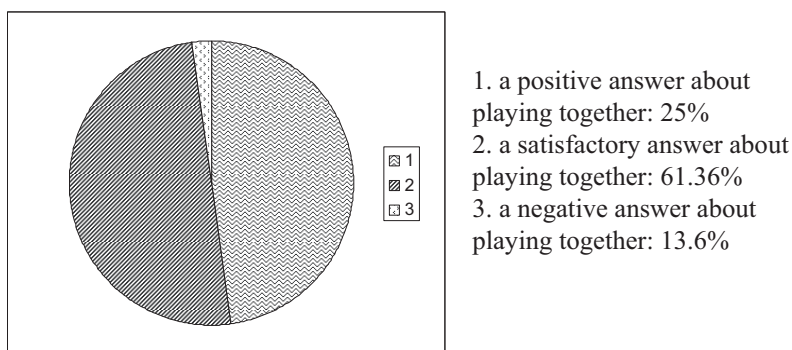


Figure 1. Do children practice, play together without the teacher’s assistance?

This answer shows us that children in most cases have a will and purpose to play together. It means that there is an important thing – motivation for such communication and study form. “Do children

have a wish to listen carefully to other person's behaviour in other musical performance? ”The answer in general is positive, only small part answered in a negative way (Fig. 2):

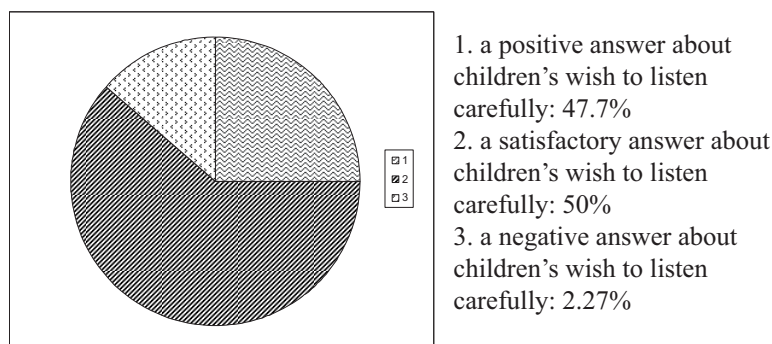


Figure 2. Do children have a wish listen carefully to other person's behaviour, in other musical performance?

Analysing the results of the survey we can see that most of all music teachers are interested to play together and to improve their dialogue skills.

Results and Discussion

Dialogue is researched by many scientists, especially in 20th century (M. Buber, P. Freire, N. C. Burbules). M. Buber, a famous philosopher, in his book "I and You" studied the religious aspect of the phenomenon of a dialogue. The central idea of dialogue philosophy is conversation between God and people, between people and the world. He stressed two general laws, which characterize interaction:

- 1) dialogical relation is characterized by animated attitude towards a living centre;
- 2) another sign of a dialogical relation is in lively, equal communication between individuals (Бубер 1993).

Dialogical nature is part of human being. Brazilian educator's P. Freire's interest of his creativity is devoted to pedagogical aspects of dialogue. The main part of his scientific research is studying the nature of dialogue. There are many books about dialogue, for example: "Pedagogy of Freedom", "Pedagogy of Oppressed", etc.

“Dialogue is the sealing together of the teacher and students in the joint art of knowing and re-knowing the object of study... Instead of transferring the knowledge statically, as a fixed possession of the teacher’s dialogue demands a dynamic approximation towards the object” (Freire 1999). N. C. Burbules looked at the dialogue as a source of knowledge and understanding, as a medium of interpersonal discourse, and as a pedagogic relation. N. C. Burbules observes: “Dialogue is continuous with conversation generally...” (Burbules 1993). In his research “Dialogue in education”, he has written about critical and inclusive types of dialogue (Burbules 1993). A critical dialogue in most cases was used by ancient Greeks; it is a teleological dialogue – all parties are researching a way towards the final purpose. The aim of an inclusive dialogue is ethical – by critically revising the problem or relations it aims to find new standpoints of understanding. This aspect of dialogical relation can be seen in children’s answers, which verify their motivation of the wish to play together, to communicate.

The didactic aspects of dialogue in the music school are being realised in the pedagogical process of instrumental playing (Fig. 3):

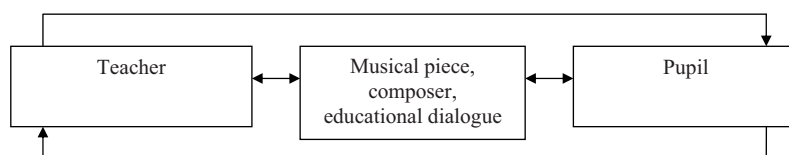


Figure 3. The dialogue as instrumental playing didactics (Lüse 2003)

We can see the dialogical interaction between three sources: teacher, musical piece and pupil.

There are face-to-face interactions – juxtapositions of two or more individual processes. One of the reasons of such interactions is the person’s inner and outer self expression. The inner self represents the person’s needs, attitudes, beliefs, opinions, feelings and motives. They are internal, known only to the person. The external self represents actions, gestures, physical habits, mannerisms of speech and movement. This “outer” self is considered to be a physical manifestation of the inner self. Dialogical attitude provides a way to

better understanding and connection of one person's expressions to the other person.

Conclusions

In the research the significance of the dialogue in music studies and social communication in rural music school was proven in the following two didactic aspects:

- 1) dialogical interaction can provide a higher motivation of ensemble play lessons, a better communication with other equals and these causes make it possible to solve transportation and long distance difficulties in Latvian rural areas;
- 2) educational dialogue improves the development of spiritual values in the teaching-learning process.

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Summary

Educational dialogue is researched as an educational and pedagogical method.

Piano ensemble play lessons provide creative conditions for teacher, pupil and environment interaction, which develop dialogical attitudes. The aim of the research is to analyse educational dialogue and environment

interactivity in Latvian rural music schools. The idea of dialogue in 20th century philosophical and pedagogical theories, analysed in the works of M. Buber, M. M. Bakhtin, P. Freire and N. C. Burbule, has played an important role in the development of dialogue theory as a pedagogical problem. The purpose of dialogue may be individual growth, improved human relations and development of pedagogical work.

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