



# Subjective insight into some selected competences of a music teacher

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## Summary

The subject of this article is the subjective insight into some selected competences of a teacher of music within the general music education which constitute a starting point in considerations on the role of a teacher of music in the process of the children's and the youth's education which is framed in the humanistic pedagogical mindset of education characterised with axionormative, fundamental, holistic, syncretic, contextual, diachronic and alternative character. As the authors see it, a teacher of music realises their vision as a counsellor, an integrator, an educator, a music-therapist as well as a reflexive and critical practitioner.

**Keywords:** competences, music teacher, music education, music at school.



## Introduction and defining the problems

The political, cultural and social transformations which take place within the; instant' culture make the teachers search for some effective ways how to prepare their pupils to function in the new reality. Having the suitable teacher competences related both to their personal predispositions and the process of the effective professional training is becoming the inseparable part of the processes of being and becoming the teacher of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Being competent means acting effectively in various complicated situations basing on both academic knowledge and experience. A music teacher is a person prepared to teach and raise children, youth and adults in accordance with the accordance with the accepted teaching method throughout their life. Lidia Kataryńczuk-Mania (2010) presents a particular model of a music teacher, their conditioning and the roles in which they appear during the process of cultural education, teaching and musical upbringing, completion of the additional roles related to the artistic vision

of the society. The authoress indicates some various model solutions (Kataryńczuk-Mania 2010, p. 13) in which a music teacher develops their pupils comprehensively, activates them through multiple contacts with music, prepares them to participate in culture and to promote the music culture taking the advantage of the artistic values of music for society education and upbringing. Music is of universal significance leading to the formation of the aesthetic attitudes towards not only the art but also the surrounding world (Kataryńczuk-Mania 2000) having the impact onto the socially demanded direction of the social development or developing such universal features and abilities like discipline, patience, openness, creativity (Reimer 1989, p. 235; Kataryńczuk-Mania & Łuczak 2002, pp. 231–232). It was Mirosław Niziurski (2003) that underlined the necessity of undertaking some actions with the reference to teachers' education, adjusting the music curriculums and the necessary instruments to the currents educational needs. In his opinion, bringing back the importance of the

school subject 'musical education' will fail if it is not supported by all the musical, pedagogical and psychological environments. The key to achieve the success can also be the teachers' attitude towards innovations, novelties and their openness can also be displayed in the readiness to get acquainted with the unknown (to them) trends. (Plummeridge 1991, p. 3). According to Henryka Kwiatkowska, the term 'competences' (derived from Latin 'competentia') means 'a subject's ability and readiness to perform some actions at the defined level; it is created as the result of the integration of knowledge, a great number of tiny abilities and capacities in making evaluations' (Kwiatkowska 2008, p. 35). The term 'competences' is comprehended as a collection of the following assumptions: (1) the possessed knowledge of the defined area (what I know), (2) abilities (procedural knowledge – I know how and I can) as well as (3) the attitudes (I want and I am ready to use my knowledge) (Whiddett & Hollyforde 2003). Stanisław Dylak (2004, pp. 553–566), presents three primary groups of teachers' professional competences:

- 'base competences' related to the intellectual, moral and social development (the ability to communicate with pupils and other co-workers in accordance with the accepted social and ethical rules);
- 'necessary competences' to perform one's job professionally in the defined educational situation, they include 'interpretation, auto-creative and realisation competences which are acquired during the process of professional training' (ibidem, p. 559);
- 'demanded competences' which can be very useful (i.e. the ability to play a musical instrument) but they are not indispensable. These competences result from the role of the teacher as: an animator of the education process, an intellectualist making their own choices, a creator of their personal pedagogical knowledge and their own professional styling and the maker of the desired series of successes.

With relation to a music teacher's profession Małgorzata Suświłło (2000, pp. 36–37) enumerates randomly such competences, like:

- cognitive (level of general knowledge, intelligence, the ability to apply the possessed knowledge – a conscious selection of educational programme and contents);
- communicative (through acceptance, rejection and disregard);
- pedagogical afterthought indispensable in completion the teacher-counsellor role.

In the audiation model of education Ewa Zwolińska (2007, p. 153) thinks that a competent music teacher is the one who: is conscious of the occupation, norms and qualifications as well as the ethical norms of their actions, is properly qualified, bases of the academic theory, operates skilfully in their occupation maintaining the methodological and methodical correctness, realises the defined educational standards, is of the authority and is effective as well as pursues to achieve the highest quality actions for which they are morally responsible. Making the considerations on the issues of a music teacher's competences more general, it has to be stated that the foundation of education is the possession of musical abilities, musical hearing, attention, abilities of the following characters: association, kinesthetic-motion and movement, voice emission-vocal, personal and characterological features helpful at the realisation of musical activeness – which, among others, include: openness, cognition flexibility, patience, kindness, tolerance, criticism, soft social competences.

The teachers' long-term developmental plans allow to notice such conditioning, like: biological potential, influence of the social environment, one's own adaptation activity to the reality being experienced. The course of teacher's professional career is characterised with auto-creation as the effect of one's own deliberations on reflection, internal (personal) motives of actions determining the development towards one's own ideals and values. Presently, the model of a teacher of the extended professional

profile and the creative (open) attitude towards the roles and functions of a school work is preferred. A teacher should continuously improve, develop consider the everyday (school-related) reality and search some new solutions. The foundation for the implementation of the new educational concepts, training and improvement is the conscious understanding of being professional.

### **Professionalism in music teacher occupation – the contemporary requirement**

Professionalism in other words is the high level of performing the specific occupational duties, devotion to work, and also following the standards and applying the ethical rules (Kaniowski 2010, pp. 20–31). Professionalism develops on the foundation of knowledge and abilities, deliberations and analysis of one's own actions, comprehension and interpretation of various events. At the same time professionalism is subjected to a continuous evaluation, making the effort, undertaking the afterthoughts and it is conditioned by the interpersonal competences. They are the abilities to build the proper relations and a friendly atmosphere at school, which is related to the type of work and the everyday personal contacts (with pupils, teachers, parents). It is the teacher that, second after parents, makes the pupils search for the dialogue with others, share their problems, failures and successes with. Teacher's professionalism is the never-ending process of improvement in their occupation which interacts onto the formation of the bonds, compromise and moreover, it can influence the effectiveness of artistic-pedagogical work. The relations with others, cooperation and communication can motivate to improve one's occupation, enhancing the self-education, self-improvement, exploration, pedagogical auto-creation and also other activities helpful at constructing the professionalism, overcoming some obstacles or searching the new solutions with reference to methodology, upbringing and the artistic issues (Kataryńczuk-Mania 2010; Kołodziejki 2014, 2016).

A teacher should especially enable the positive relations owing to their emotional competences which are displayed in the ability to 'both recognise, comprehend and express own emotions in the suitable manner regardless of the situation the subject happens to be, and the recognition, comprehension and reacting to other people's emotions' (Madalińska-Michalak & Górska 2012, p. 110). The pedeutologists pay the attention to the importance of building the proper interpersonal relations which constitute a perfect foundation of teacher's professional basic activity to be developed and seen to. Musical education especially praises the agreement which enables the proper upbringing and education constituting a perfect source of mutual learning and support.

### **Music teacher in selected roles – as a counsellor, an integrator, an educator, a music-therapist or a reflexive and critical practitioner.**

The first role is a **music-teacher – counsellor** where 'being a role model, an authority or a master for someone else is not the conscious performance of the defined social role related to a clear scenario and rules, but it is the acting the role in the meaning of acting the function' (Olbrycht 2007, p. 20). In the domain of the counselling competences of a music teacher one must present the following tasks as: supporting the pupils' development and character, diagnosing and prophylactic measures of the behaviours, a school activists (i.e. supervision of the students' school council, artistic clubs, and others,) an initiator and organiser of parents-school cooperation, a creator of the upbringing-related curriculum for a class, a (school) music band, a free-time organiser (school trips, participation in concerts and some artistic events,) providing the students with safety, building the feeling of pupils' self-esteem and the rational evaluation of the others (Day 2005; Gozdecka & Grusiewicz 2008; Ławrowska 2003; Madalińska-Michalak & Górska 2012).

Another role a the teacher is related to **being the educator of contents and forms of artistic expression** (compare: Kataryńczuk-Mania 2010) where education is understood as the assuming objective process and referring to the discourse awareness providing the knowledge on the world, a human being and their achievements. Additionally, artistic education emphasises here the world of the children's needs and the aesthetic creativity. Musical education displays what was created is being created, how it is done, what can be experienced, how it can be understood, how to express the experiences and emotions. Music, however, is not a simple art being the direct reflection of culture or biography, it can also function as a bridge, a window to decipher the specific cultural, social code but also to the abstract, aesthetic discourse (Swanwick 1999, p. 27). Moreover, it also enhances the development of personality, it educates through experiencing. Thanks to the various situations and events, the pupil can experiment, get to know the reasons and effects of behaviour, communicate with the other people. It operates mainly at the level of the current competences. The teacher's role – a music educator is planning the aesthetic, upbringing-related situations combined with the participants' experiences, modification of locality, activating and pursuing to development with the feeling of subjectiveness of the people taking part in this process. The teacher should use the knowledge of: the art of music (including knowledge of music literature, vocal, instrumental, movement expression,) pedagogical (especially when it comes to the issues of values and the upbringing effectiveness,) psychological (related to the psychology of personality and creativity) (Kołodziejewski 2011; Majzner 2015; Kisiel, 2008).

The music teacher's third role is **an integrator of educational contents, forms and means in musical education**. Two dimensions of the teacher's above role can be discussed here. Firstly – internal, dealing only with the domain of the widely understood

musical discourse (which incidentally is extremely necessary and required in the process of general musical education.) Here, the forms of musical activeness (singing, playing a musical instrument, music and motion, listening to music and making music) mutually interlock and at the same time condition one another. The other dimension of integration can be stated in relation to the interdisciplinary education. What must be underlined is the work significance of the integrated education and also the teachers of various disciplines at the higher levels of education (i.e. educational paths, school trips, and others.)

The fourth role is associated with the therapeutic context of **a music teacher as a music-therapist**. A teacher as a music-therapist supports the emotional processes, mental, physiological (motion, vegetative) states. Applying properly the therapeutic methods, a music-therapist teacher can make the recipient be subjected to various musical moods – it can be calming, relaxing, stimulating, unscrambling and so. Music therapy is the directed activity based on the defined theoretical assumptions aiming at particular therapeutic targets. Music therapy in education enables: non-verbal communication, solving problems without the use of words, acting spontaneously, improvising: vocal, instrumental, motion-dance, creative and others. Thanks to music a teacher-therapist possesses the possibility to diagnose their subjects – emotions, experiences, behaviours and others. Music therapy has the activating, dynamising, and relaxing roles and owing to these roles it should be present in all educational and upbringing centres (Kataryńczuk-Mania 2017).

The fifth role is **a music teacher as a reflexive and critical practitioner** (Kołodziejewski 2014). The (act of) criticism by such a teacher determines the type of control over the creations of their imagination and action, not hindering the imagination at the same time, thus it is possible to witness the appearance of some new concepts and ideas, applying the four of its areas:



- identification and challenging the assumptions,
- underlying the role of the context,
- imagining something and testing some alternative solutions,
- developing the reflexive scepticism.

Additionally, what is useful here is the afterthought understood as a special type of a teacher's consideration on their own psycho-pedagogical activeness, its conditioning, course and effects in the context of the defined didactic-upbringing processes comprising the teacher's educational actions along with the analysis of phenomenon, facts and events happening within its ranges. Such an afterthought is actually another teacher competence of a procedural character directed at monitoring one's own actions (thus, associated with self-evalua-

tion – compare: Kołodziejski 2011b), motivating some particular choices, finding one's own role in the musical education as well as the reference to the continuous making of the research queries related to one's own work and conducting the proper research on its values. Such an afterthought is combined with the emotional experiencing, as M. Kołodziejski (2014) puts it, of acting and in action, the results of which is realisation that an act takes place. Emotions partially play the function of an 'igniter crystallising' the motive(s) of undertaking a successful action. The co-deciding factors can also include the internal motivation, eagerness and dedication to the subject-matter, individual or collective pursuit towards the aim, internal research and actions as the conscious target acts (Kołodziejski 2014).

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