

"Music Schools - Masters of collaboration? Creating interfaces in music education"
Vienna, 10./11.10.2019

Practice Paper

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Everything works better with music! German as a second language for adults with refugee backgrounds in combination with elemental musical practice.

Since February 2019, the „Katholische Erwachsenenbildung“ has been collaborating with the Institute of Music of the University of Applied Sciences Osnabrück. An institute for adult education provides the framework for a concept in which German as a second language lessons are accompanied by musicalisation. In line with elemental musical practice, whole-body experiences with voice, movement, and body-percussion play an important role. Students with the career goal of „Educating Artist“ work alongside language teachers in this project, and are mentored by university teachers. The young musicians gain monitored teaching experience and have a great opportunity to witness and help shape the linguistic and social integration of refugees.

A consequence of increasing migration is that a large number of people need to learn the language of the country of immigration. Music and language are phenomena that share many common characteristics, such as melody, rhythm, and timbre. Music draws attention and can cause positive emotions. Music and movement are deeply rooted in the communication of emotional states and are considered to be the evolutionary biological basis for language. Thus the close relationship between language, music, and dance is evident: They all rely on differentiating perception, are able, as systems designed for social interactions, to connect people, and allow for both collective and individual expression.

The contents and procedures of the lessons are documented in a digital diary. The entire team meets at regular intervals, in order to reflect on the experiences and conduct further planning. For these purposes, video documentation of the lessons is also used. The project will end in November 2019 with a language exam; a musical final presentation is also planned. By then at the latest, findings will be available as to if and how the musical course content was able to support language acquisition. The collaboration enables the partners to realize the combining of different objectives (learning a second language, cultural participation and music making) by bringing experts together.

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