

Vol. 3, No. 1
April 2012

ISSN: 2190-3174

Andreas Lehmann-Wermser (ed.)

Electronic article:

Rolf Fasting & Jon Helge Sætre

Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences

**Getting behind assessment and learning in secondary school music:
A case study approach**

**Leistungsbeurteilung und Lernen im Musikunterricht der
Sekundarschule: Ein Fallstudien-Design**

Electronic version:

<http://www.b-em.info/index.php?journal=ojs&page=article&op=view&path%5B%5D=64&path%5B%5D=176>

© *Fasting & Sætre 2012 All rights reserved*

Getting behind assessment and learning in secondary school music: A case study approach

Rolf Fasting & Jon Helge Sætre

Abstract

The scope of the article is to explore and understand the intertwined connections between teaching, learning and assessment in music as a school subject. Music lessons at a Norwegian lower secondary school are explored through an empirical, methodological design aiming at obtaining valid and reliable information regarding learning and assessment. The article argues that such an understanding requires a thorough understanding of the phenomenon of assessment itself. In addition, the context of music as a school subject has to be included as a framing source to understand the interaction between teaching, learning, and assessment.

The discussion suggests that both the phenomenon of assessment and the contexts in focus are highly complex, and the authors argue that an empirical triangulating design is required to account for the given complexity. In particular, the relations between teachers' intentions, classroom practice, and pupils' experiences and perceptions are important aspects in exploring the significance, perils and possibilities of assessment in music.

Embracing the considerations made, a single case study design is outlined and discussed. To further explore the fruitfulness of the design, a forthcoming case study is proposed. As such a broad holistic approach is undertaken. The design also provides opportunities to analyse education in a larger social context, since classrooms are arenas where teachers and pupils act with respect to subject matters, school programs, society and cultural expectations.

Keywords: Assessment, Case study research, Methodology, Secondary School

Leistungsbeurteilung und Lernen im Musikunterricht der Sekundarschule: Ein Fallstudien-Design

Rolf Fasting & Jon Helge Sætre

Abstract (German)

Dieser Aufsatz will versuchen, die engen Verbindungen zwischen Lehren, Lernen und Leistungsbeurteilung im Schulfach Musik zu erforschen und zu verstehen. Musikstunden in der Sekundarstufe I Norwegischer Regelschulen werden empirisch untersucht mit dem Ziel, gültige und zuverlässige Informationen über Lernen und Beurteilungsverfahren im Musikunterricht einzuholen. Der Aufsatz macht geltend, dass ein derartiges Verständnis eine umfassende Kenntnis des Phänomens der schulischen Leistungsbeurteilung an sich erfordert. Zusätzlich müssen die Rahmenbedingungen des Faches Musik in der Schule in Betracht gezogen werden, um die Wechselwirkung zwischen Lehr-, Lernprozessen und Beurteilungsverfahren zu verstehen.

Der Aufsatz weist in der Diskussion darauf hin, dass sowohl das Phänomen der schulischen Beurteilung als auch die Kontexte, die in dem Aufsatz fokussiert werden, hochkomplexe Phänomene sind. Um die gegebene Komplexität erfassen zu können, plädieren die Autoren für die Forschungsstrategie der empirischen Triangulation. Besonders wichtig zu untersuchen seien die Relationen zwischen den Absichten der Lehrpersonen, der Unterrichtspraxis und den Erfahrungen und Wahrnehmungen der Schülerinnen und Schüler, um die Bedeutung, die Tücken und die Möglichkeiten von Beurteilung im Schulfach Musik zu verstehen.

Ein Einzelfallstudien-Forschungsdesign wird erläutert und diskutiert. Zur weiteren Erkundung der Tauglichkeit eines solchen Designs wird eine bevorstehende Fallstudie vorgestellt. Indem diese einen ganzheitlichen Ansatz wählt, bietet das Design auch die Gelegenheit, Erziehung und Bildung in einem größeren sozialen Kontext zu analysieren, da Klassenzimmer Orte sind, an denen Lehrpersonen und Schülerinnen und Schüler mit Unterrichtsstoffen, Schulcurricula, gesellschaftlichen und kulturellen Erwartungen umgehen.

Schlagwörter: Fallstudie, Leistungsbeurteilung / Assessment, Methodologie, Sekundarschule

1. Setting the scene

The ultimate goal of education is learning, which in school settings takes place through the interplay of curriculum expectations, subject characteristics, and the involved pupils and teachers. In addition, learning is purposeful, interactively designed and influenced by society, and not merely result of random teacher tasks and activities. These matters support the fact why, at the end of any learning process, scholars, educators and others with interest in the outcome of schooling, want to explore the extent to which learning has occurred.

The literature reveals that the assessment of learning can be done through pre-specified objectives (*objective oriented models*) or through open-ended approaches in which objectives are not clearly specified (*process oriented models*, Messick, 1989). Educational practice, however, appears to be a highly complex entity, in which crossing perspectives coincide. As the point of departure for the article, we will take a glance at the scene we intend to explore.

A lower secondary general music class has for some time been learning to play the guitar and other band instruments. The term is coming to an end, and their teacher has chosen the tune 'I'm Yours' by Jason Mraz as the last learning task. The chords are displayed on the blackboard, and the teacher demonstrates two possible A chords, three B minor chords and two different G chords. He then asks the pupils to practice on their own for a while. After some minutes he puts on a Garage band backing track of 'I'm yours', and encourages the class to play along. 'You are at slightly different levels', he says. 'Some of you should concentrate on mastering the chords, while others should be able to play the tune in reggae style'. After a while, the teacher picks up his list of the pupils' names, and starts walking around the classroom, thoroughly checking the pupils' playing. He is discretely clapping the beat, apparently checking each pupil's fingering, rhythm and timing. At one point he draws everyone's attention towards one pupil, and says 'That is a very nice, sort of ukulele-like way of playing. It very much resembles Jason's version' [...].

The teacher eventually finishes off the lesson by saying: 'Our aim this term has been to teach you some chords and riffs, and make you able to shift chords quickly and timely, making the music flow. That is a difficult task, but you have become much better at it during the term'.

This setting highlights several teaching, learning and assessment perspectives intertwined in a single event of educational practice. A body of music education research investigates and interprets such contexts for example through video observation (Gebauer, 2011) or teacher interviews (Wied, 2010). These studies have contributed considerably to the understanding of research within music as a school subject. Still, they encounter one major challenge, coping with the problematic relation or distinction between *intentions* and *practice*.

The aim of the article is to approach the "scene" from a different methodological angle. The main research questions are: How can the relations between teaching, learning and assessment in a Norwegian secondary school music class be described, and how can valid and reliable information regarding assessment in such a context be obtained? The aims are three-

fold. First, we argue that such an understanding requires a thorough understanding of the phenomenon of assessment itself. Secondly, the context of lower secondary school music is focused as a framing element to understand the interaction between teaching, learning, and assessment. Thirdly, a case study design is proposed to embrace the complexity of the classroom aiming to obtain information about teaching, learning, and assessment of music as a school subject.

In order to obtain relevant information from the “scene of action”, we argue in favour of including different sources of information and assessment perspectives. The complexity involves musical elements and activities as diverse as performing, composing, listening, practical skills and knowledge (Sætre & Vinge, 2010; Vinge, forthcoming). To account for the complexity, information regarding *the teachers’ understanding of the curriculum, the teaching of music, the pupils’ experiences and perception of the teaching sessions and the assessment procedures*, including the interaction between these elements, have to be taken into consideration. Further, the paper argues that a triangulation of empirical, qualitative methods and sources of information, i. e. teacher interviews, pupil interviews, and classroom observations, allows access to the relations between the educational elements. Thus, the aim is to present and discuss methodological perspectives and challenges that have to be accounted for investigating the intentionality and practicality of assessment in music in contextual settings.

2. Curriculum, assessment and teaching

In educational debates assessment has played a significant role in the discussion on pupils’ dividend of schooling, and different tools to enhance pupils’ learning have repeatedly attracted attention among scholars, researchers, and educationalists. A significant contributor in respect of an *objective oriented model* is the work of Tyler (1949) published through the “*Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction*”. The Tyler rationale centres on four major principles, which he considered essential in the development of curricula and in teaching.

1. Define appropriate learning objectives.
2. Establish useful learning experiences.
3. Organize learning experiences to have a maximum cumulative effect.
4. Evaluate the objectives and process and revise aspects that do not prove to be effective.

The Tyler rationale argues that devices that provide evidence regarding the progress of pupils’ knowledge and behaviour are appropriate means for education, and the model has greatly influenced curriculum development and classroom management both in the USA and in Europe.

An alternative understanding seems to grow out of scepticism to modernity and the “objective model”, and argues in favour of an “objectives free” curriculum approach. Stenhouse

(1975) argues that academics use the objectives model as a stick with which to beat the teachers. ‘What are your objectives?’ is more often asked in a tone of challenge than one of interested and helpful inquiry. The demand for objectives is a demand for justification rather than simply description of ends (Stenhouse, 1975, p. 77). He argues that pre-specified goals include a hidden danger of straitjacketing one’s thinking and, therefore, makes the teacher inattentive to the unforeseen. Further, he argues that the objective model is appropriate for training and instruction, but breaks down when it comes to inducting pupils into knowledge. Stenhouse’s (1975) alternative is the *process oriented model*, in which the pupils are regarded as subjects that contribute to how learning sessions evolve. The latter model involves getting pupils on the inside of the knowledge forms, getting them to think creatively and to make considered judgements. The latter emphasises also *means* rather than *ends* through the facilitation of the conditions in which learning takes place, and the interaction of teachers, pupils, and knowledge.

Another critic of the *objective oriented model*, Eisner (1985), accepts that objectives have a part to play. On the other hand, he distinguishes between *instructional objectives* and *expressive objectives*. *Instructional objectives* have the focal point of the teacher and the pupils to attain specific academic skills (i.e. cognitive and physical behaviours). Here the teacher has a predefined understanding of what to expect as outcomes of the learning process. By contrast, expressive objectives do not have specific expectations of responses or behaviour, but rather of what pupils can encounter through learning activities. Furthermore, Eisner advocates that an *expressive objective* is the “*outcome of an encounter or learning activity which is planned to provide the student with an opportunity to personalize learning*” (Eisner, 1985, p. 69). *Instructional objectives* sit comfortably within a visible pedagogy based on an objective oriented model, whilst an *expressive objective* is more invisible and assumes diversified learning contexts and responses. Consequently, *expressive objectives* will suit better a process oriented model with wide expectations to the outcome of the learning process.

Assessment in educational contexts is basically anchored in the objective oriented model, intending to provide insight in the pupils’ responses of schooling. The model advocates *summative procedures* to obtain insight into the extent pupils have acquired knowledge, and whether or not they have met curriculum expectations. The aim is to provide evidence of the pupils’ achievement to parents, educators, and their institutions, policymakers and employers, as well as to the pupils themselves. According to the *objective oriented model*, “*assessment of learning*” focuses on *the outcome* of the learning process (Black & Wiliam, 1998/2001).

A contrasting strand has received significant attention the last decades. This approach puts the *learning process* at the centre through interactive teacher–pupil collaboration and exchange of information. The aim is to explore obstacles along with skills and abilities, to scaffold the process of learning (Vygotsky, 1978) intending to fill the gap between what is achieved and understood, and what is aimed to be understood (Sadler, 1989). The strand is labelled “*formative assessment*” or “*assessment for learning*”, and promoted as a key to im-

prove pupils' learning (Black, Harrison, Lee, Marshall, & Wiliam, 2003; Black & Wiliam, 1998/ 2001). Recent studies of Hattie and Timperley (2007) have provided evidence that feedback is one of the most powerful sources to enhance pupils' outcome of education.

A branch of the last strand focuses on the pupils' involvement in the processes of both learning and assessment: "*assessment as learning*" (Earl, 2003). The approach enrols the pupils in the processes by inviting them to develop tasks to be used in teaching settings, to discuss and suggest assessment criteria and expectations, and to participate in pair-assessment. The idea of including pupils in the processes of teaching and assessment is to facilitate involvement, and thus enable a deeper understanding and learning (Biesta, 2008; Timperley & Parr, 2010).

3. Music within Norwegian Education

Along with the other Scandinavian countries, Norwegian curricula in the 1980s and 1990s were mainly grounded in post-modern, process oriented educational perspectives, advocating a pupil-centred ideology, creative learning, collaboration and process-oriented methods. A main characteristic has been the importance of accommodating the learning content and conditions to all pupils (Ministry of Church and Education, 1987; Ministry of Education Research and Church affairs, 1996).

A major shift in Norwegian education policy emerged at the turn of the century. The OECD-PISA (2001) report showed that Norwegian pupils' academic achievement (i.e. in reading, mathematics and natural science) were considerably lower than in neighbour countries, including an alarming number of pupils in the left tail of the distribution. The education ideology of the newly elected right-wing government (2001) and the following international studies (PIRLS 2001; TIMSS 2003; PISA 2003) fuelled the process towards a change in Norwegian Education. The result of the reform process, "Knowledge promotion", implemented in 2006 (Ministry of Education and Research, 2006) indicated a shift towards an objective oriented curriculum and the use of summative assessment on key stages throughout schooling.

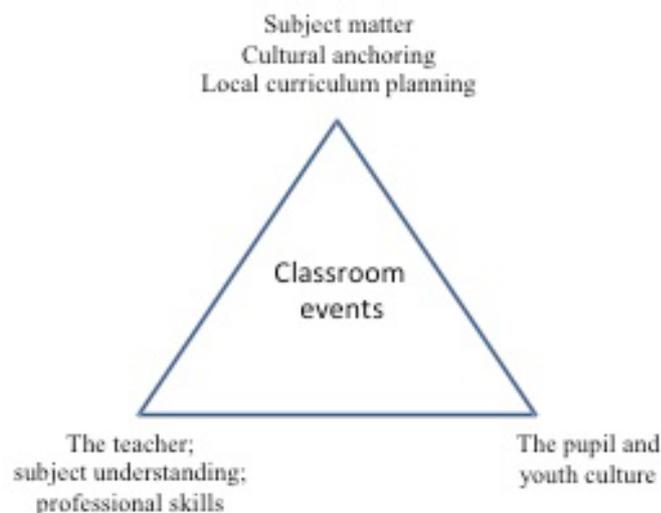
Music as a school subject is mandatory in Norwegian primary and lower secondary school, and the subject gives credits along with "theoretical" subjects for the admission to Upper Secondary Education and Training (Ministry of Education and Research, 2007). On the other hand, research regarding assessment within the subject has been modest, both in Norway as in the rest of Europe. In some contexts music has been included as second fiddle, for example as a reward when theoretical tasks have been completed (see Standley, 1996) or as a mean to facilitate the tasks in focus (Winner & Cooper, 2000). However, research on assessment in music is expanding, drawing on the body of assessment reports focusing both analytical and holistic positions; formative and summative perspectives – framing perils and

prospects of assessment within music as a school subject (Fautley, 2010; Vinge, forthcoming).

The Norwegian subject curriculum divides the educational content of music into three broad categories: a) *performing* (equals the German word ‘*musizieren*’), b) *composing* and c) *listening*. The logic embedded in the selection of categories and included objectives relates to the discussion of musical activities (‘*Verhaltensweisen*’, ‘*Umgangsweisen*’) (Elliott, 1995; Jank, 2005, p. 92ff; Nielsen, 1994; Venus, 1969/1984). Compared to these other models, a rather narrow series of musical activities is defined as curriculum ‘headings’ in the Norwegian subject curriculum. On the other hand, they are followed by a wide range of objectives, identifying improvising, arranging, dancing, reflecting, and analysing (and more) as vital musical activities and competencies. On this curricular basis, schools are given authority to define their local curricula (i.e. subject matter, teaching methods, and assessment strategies) suggesting a diversity of teaching, learning and assessment practices. From a methodological perspective, these varieties of conditions contribute to the rationale of empirical research in education.

In the following, we intend to outline and discuss an empirical design to get insight into the relationship between teaching, learning, and assessment in the subject music in lower secondary school. As our point of departure, we will outline a model that may be regarded as a combination of the classical ‘didactic triangle’ (see Künzli, 1998; Westbury, 1998) and central socio-cultural perspectives (Bakhtin, 1986; Säljö, 2004) and which frames and identifies our main research foci. In the light of Norwegian schools’ local curricula tradition, the model has to be understood as an “intellectual crutch” (Künzli, 1998, p. 34) to explore the factors involved.

Figure 1: *Contextual model of teaching and learning in music*



In the model, the ‘didactical triangle’ is adapted to the educational context of teaching music. It situates the core co-participants, *pupils* and *teachers* within a context of *cultural and institutional* factors (Jank & Meyer, 2009, p. 68). The top of the triangle shows the local and national curricula as the basis for teachers’ understanding of the subject matter, largely influenced by schools’ traditions manifesting the local culture and subject related expectations. To the left is the teachers’ *doctrinal* and *magisterial* competency and interpretation shown, valuing the significance of different educational programs, practices, and assessment procedures, and to the right the pupils’ subject interests, local executive practices and youth culture regarding music. These sociocultural embedded factors, developed through interaction and mediation, imply that the teachers have to balance between the macro and micro level – between theory-based, dialogic, interactional and performance-based teaching (Bakhtin, 1986; Säljö, 2004). The contextual understanding of the subject points at several methodological perspectives and possibilities, or even collaboration, beyond the teacher – pupil interaction in the classroom.

On the epistemological level, a contextual understanding of music education points at the relevance of empirical research, through which the distinctive features of such contexts, may appear. Accordingly, the model situates reflection on teaching and learning music in practice, although not exclusively. The epistemological approach suggests that knowledge and theory concerning music education must include the challenges and possibilities embedded in these practices: “*In erster Linie sind dazu diejenigen zu befragen, die mit Musikunterricht unmittelbar zu tun haben: Lehrer und Schüler.*” (Niessen, 2006, p. 33).

The model underlines the complexity of educational contexts, making case study research a promising strategy to explore the understanding of the involved core co-participants (c.f. Figure 1). Finally, the model emphasizes the significance of local curricula, in which central didactic choices are made, in Norwegian schools concerning content, teaching methods, and assessment strategies due to the objectives outlined in the national curriculum.

4. Methodological considerations – rationale and design

In accordance with the previous model, we intend to explore the relations between teaching, assessment and learning in general music through the following three empirical foci: a) *the teachers’ understanding of the curriculum*, b) *the classroom practice* (i.e. lessons), and c) *the pupils’ experiences with the subject and the assessment procedures*, and the interaction between the included elements. Further, the *teaching of music and assessment procedures* are seen in accordance with the educational categories: *performing*, *composing* and *listening* as they are manifested in the curriculum. The categories are regarded as *primary traits* for teaching and assessment, and accordingly the content and the didactical approaches are assessed in the light of these primary traits. Subsequently, the different classroom events are put in the foreground, and constitute the basis for the study (i.e. aim–activity–purpose).

The case study design is chosen for specific reasons, which relate to both empirical and theoretical aspects. Yin (2009) defines a case study as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (2009, p. 18). Yin continues by including other significant, technical characteristics, such as many more variables than data points, the reliance of multiple sources of evidence (triangulation), and the benefits from prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis (ibid.).

Teachers and pupils in lower secondary music classrooms (13 to 16-year-olds) are the key informants of the study. Amongst different rationales for a single case study, the *representative* or *typical case* (Yin, 2009, p. 48) is chosen as arguments for selecting a *single case design*. The previous theoretical considerations can be regarded as construction materials that are to be merged with contextual empirical evidence to crystallize more general structures and knowledge. In order to select the school arena in which to explore the given educational setting, the following criteria are identified:

- The existence of an implemented local curriculum.
- Having locally defined assessment criteria in music.
- Teachers that do not express an explicit reluctance towards the national guide lines (i.e. curriculum recommendations).

A grade 9 lower secondary music class (14 to 15-year-olds) and their two specialist music teachers are chosen on the basis of these criteria. The teachers have shown interest in the phenomenon “assessment for learning”, and have introduced thematic teaching and assessment criteria as the basis for the school’s local curricula. In the following, some of the local criteria referring to high *level of proficiency* (grade five and six) are shown:

- The pupil displays very good singing and performing skills.
- The pupil displays a highly developed sense of rhythm and timing.
- The pupil displays a highly developed ability of ensemble playing and of taking instructions.
- The pupil displays good understanding of notation and genres.

The design also includes a longitudinal aspect, emanating from the desire to embrace the processual characteristics of teaching and assessment, supported, in particular, by the theories of formative assessment (Black et al., 2003; Black & Wiliam, 1998/ 2001). Multiple sources of evidence are chosen to collect information about the particular case, including interviews and direct observations as the main approaches. To obtain information regarding developmental aspects, data is collected repeatedly as illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2: *The triangulation and timeline of data collection: Documents, Teacher Interviews (TI), Classroom Observation (CO) and Pupil Interviews (PI)*

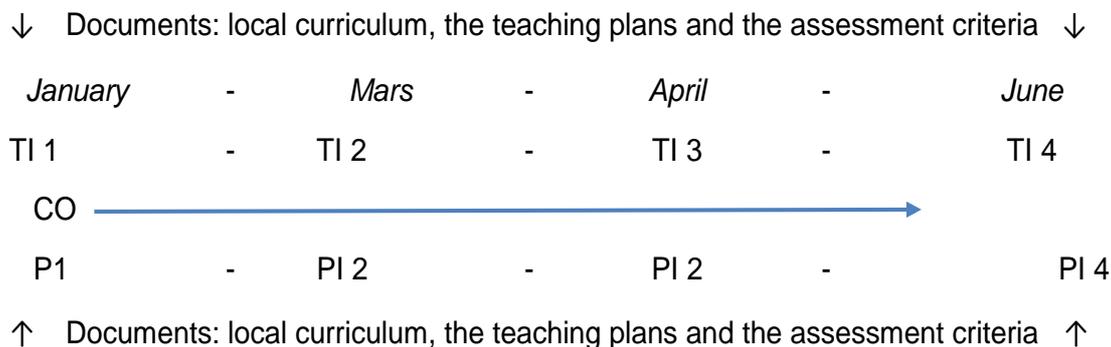


Figure 2 shows the timeline and the elements of the design. To grasp the educational setting, we use the *local curriculum*, *the current teaching plan* and *the assessment criteria* as the foundation of our baseline. These sources of information are shown by arrows pointing towards the main design elements. The grade 9 music lessons start in January and ends in June. The timeline covers the spring semester when data is to be obtained; the *initial interviews* (TI 1, PI 1 in January), the *intermediate interviews*, and the *final interviews* (TI 4, PI 4 in June). In the *initial* and the *final* interviews, the *teacher interview* takes place before the *pupil interview* at different points in time. The *intermediate interviews* are all carried out the same day, first by interviewing the pupils; then the teachers. Throughout the semester, the *classroom observation* (CO) is obtained in the music lessons. The sources of evidence used are elaborated in the following.

4.1 Documents

To understand the relationship between teaching, learning, and assessment, documents depositing the school’s local expectations and guidelines regarding music as a school subject are analysed. The information is used as lenses in the classroom observations and interviews.

4.2 Classroom observations

The scope of classroom observations is contextual and explorative, aiming at obtaining information regarding the classroom events, understanding the variety of teaching situations and assessed elements in the light of the educational categories of the curriculum; *performing*, *composing* and *listening* (i.e. primary traits). The classroom observations are driven by two assumptions: First, we assume that teaching and assessment are profoundly connected to the educational categories listed above. Secondly, we predict that the teachers’ assessment includes different purposes and aims carried out to reap the fruits of both summative and formative procedures, closely connected to the educational context, for example the use of

assignments, pupils' vocal, instrumental and/or scenic presentations and performances. The observations are used to understand the influence of the quantitative expressions and summative procedures as sources of assessment to facilitate the pupils learning. Based on these principles, an observation form is proposed as an additional aid to understand the information obtained through the field notes (see appendix). The "in-context" observation has two corresponding foci: *the teacher actions* (i.e. what are the teachers doing during class?) and *the pupils' actions* (i.e. how are the pupils responding during class?). In addition comments on empirical, theoretical, and methodological issues are included as contextual and theoretical references. The classroom observations aim at identifying the cohesion between the *teachers' actions* and the *assessment procedures* in contextual setting, and at identifying the subject matter these actions and procedures are associated with. In addition, it is important to validate the information obtained through the interviews through multiple sources of evidence and method triangulation.

4.3 Interviews

The interviews are to be carried out as a series of group or focus interviews (c.f. Green & Hart, 1999). Collaborating music teachers sharing the responsibility for the selected music class are interviewed together (i.e. teacher interviews, TI). A group of four to six pupils representing both genders and different musical abilities and interests is selected for pupil focus interviews (i.e. pupil interviews, PI).

The *teacher interviews* focus on the teachers' (and school culture's) *understanding of the curriculum and the classroom events*. The *pupil interviews* focus on pupils' experiences and perception of the teaching sessions, including their understanding and use of teacher feedback, understood as both 'assessment *for* learning' and 'assessment *of* learning'. John Goodlad's 1979 theory of curricula is chosen as a theoretical baseline for the initial teacher – and pupil – interviews, both taking place before the music lessons commence. In accordance with Goodlad's five conceptual levels, the perspectives of the *formal* and the *instructional curriculum* are chosen to constitute the initial focus of the teachers' expectations and planning, while the perspectives of the *operational curriculum*, and the *experiential curriculum* are added to constitute what goes on in the classroom and what the pupils report they actually learn and do. The following sections will present some examples from the interview guides.

4.3.1 Initial teacher interview

The initial teacher interview seeks to provide information about the *formal curriculum*, that is, expectations of what should be done in the class as seen in syllabi, guidelines, and textbooks:

Objectives, local curriculum, educational basis:

What forms the basis of the teaching plans at your school?

How does the teaching plan of your class relate to the national curriculum?

- Do you use particular textbooks?*
- How do you implement the local curriculum?*
- What about cultural events and local traditions?*

Is the teaching plan in your class in any way related to your own preferences (interests, competencies)?

Moreover, the interview includes questions about *the instructional* curriculum, that is, what teachers report they do or plan to do, both regarding planned learning tasks, learning activities and assessment means, strategies, and situations:

Which aspects of the curriculum do you intend to teach at this particular grade?

Are any of the aspects / primary traits especially emphasized through assessment?

How do you plan to assess the included aspects / curriculum primary traits?

How do you understand formative assessment, and how do plan to carry this out?

What do you 'look for' when assessing in music, and what sources of data do you use?

4.3.2 Initial pupil interview

The initial pupil group interview follows the same structural logic as the teacher interview. The interview focuses on the operational curriculum (i.e. what pupils experience in the classroom). As a point of departure previous experiences with music and music education, and the pupils' expectations regarding music in lower secondary school are presented. Some examples:

Is music important to you [i.e. musical activities outside school]?

What have you learned in the previous music class?

What do you find enjoyable / not enjoyable in music class?

Is there anything you are particularly looking forward to in music class this year?

The second theme of interest includes questions about the pupils' understanding of assessment in music class, both the pupils' prior experiences and future expectations.

Can you remember being given feedback in music class?

Are you familiar with the learning objectives in music?

Are you familiar with specific criteria in music?

Do you have an idea of what is required to get a good grade in music?

What do you think is important to the teacher, when setting grades?

As shown by these examples, the initial part of the design aims to capture the teachers' *intentions* and the pupils' *expectations* at the start of the term; the teacher interview is anchored in the school's culture and the teachers' subject and curriculum understanding, and the pupil group interview in youth culture and their prior music experiences.

4.3.3 Follow-up interviews of teachers and pupils

The following phases of the research design are in some respects significantly different from the initial phase, as the research will focus on classroom practices and primary traits. The shift can be described as a transition from a focus on intentions to a focus on practice, and the interplay between these perspectives. Information from the lessons (observations) is included to account for what actually goes on in the classroom (*the operational curriculum*). In the follow-up *teacher interviews*, the information leads to explore questions like "What would you say are the main learning objectives in themes X and Y, and how are you going to assess the pupils according to these objectives, subsequently give feedback to the pupils?". The follow-up *pupil interviews* intend to explore what the pupils report to learn, how they understand the assessment procedures and the teachers' feedback (the experiential curriculum).

The final interviews, TI 4 and PI 4 (c.f. Figure 2), intend to focus on summative assessment in particular. Both interviews will take place after the grades are given, and will include questions regarding the summative assessment process in general. The final teacher interview (TI 4) focuses the link between teaching and summative assessment:

Are any kind of pupils more 'easy' to assess; and why?

Are any kind of pupils more 'difficult' to assess, and why?

What grades are given, and on what basis are they given (criterion referenced and/or norm referenced)?

Can you describe the weighting among the different subject matter areas?

The final pupil interview (PI 4) takes place after the pupils' outcomes are graded and will focus on the pupils' reactions to and comprehension of the grades.

Do you feel that you were given the opportunity to show your knowledge and competencies?

Have you received any information on how to improve your grade the following term?

Does the grade correspond with your expectations?

What do you think the teacher emphasised, what subject matter areas, when giving you this grade?

As the examples indicate, the aim is to bridge our theoretical driven pre-understanding and information about the local curriculum with the on-going initiatives and assessment proce-

dures as outlined in the introductory guitar–band class lesson. Through the included sources of information, we hope to capture the intertwined complexity in teaching and assessing music as a school subject.

5. Conclusion and further writing

The aim of this article has been to discuss theoretical and methodological aspects of the relationship between teaching and assessment in secondary general music. The discussions suggests that both the phenomenon of assessment and the teaching and learning contexts are highly complex, and we argue that empirical, contextual and triangulating research designs are required to account for this complexity. In particular, the relations between *teachers' intentions, classroom practice, and pupils' experiences and perceptions* are important aspects that must be investigated in order to understand the significance, perils and possibilities of assessment in music. As such a holistic approach is undertaken, the design also provides opportunities to analyse education in a larger social context, since classrooms are arenas where teachers and pupils act with respect to subject matters, school programs, society and cultural expectations. To explore the fruitfulness of the design, a case study with repeated data collection points is proposed to focus learning and assessment in a lower secondary music class. Our aim is to look at the given aspects from the perspectives of teachers and pupils through the following research questions:

- What are the relationships between teaching and assessment?
- How do teachers obtain information about pupils' learning?
- How do the pupils understand the teachers' formative and summative assessment practice, and how do they make use of the assessment "actions"?

We hope the forthcoming study can be an analytic source of information, and provide valid information to improve the understanding of the relationship between teaching and assessment in music in lower secondary school settings.

References

- Bakhtin, M. M. (1986). *Speech genres and other late essays*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.
- Biesta, G. (2008). Good education in an age of measurement: On the need to reconnect with the question of purpose in education. *Educational Assessment, Evaluation and Accountability*, 21, 33-46.
- Black, P., Harrison, C., Lee, C., Marshall, B., & Wiliam, D. (2003). *Assessment for learning: Putting it in to practice*. Berkshire, UK: Open University Press.

- Black, P., & Wiliam, D. (1998/ 2001). *Inside the black box: Raising standards through classroom assessment*. London, UK: King's College London School of Education.
- Earl, L. M. (2003). *Assessment as learning. Using Classroom Assessment to Maximte Student Learning*. (Experts in Assessment). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.
- Eisner, E. (1985). *The art of educational evaluation: A personal view*. London, Philadelphia: Falmer Press.
- Elliott, D. J. (1995). *Music matters: A new philosophy of music education*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Fautley, M. (2010). *Assessment in music education*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Gebauer, H. (2011). "Es sind Kamera-Themen." Potenziale und Herausforderungen videobasierter Lehr-Lernforschung in der Musikpädagogik. *Beiträge Empirischer Musikpädagogik / bulletin of empirical music education research*, 2 (2). Retrieved Jan 20.2012 from <http://www.b-em.info/index.php?journal=ojs&page=article&op=view&path%5B%5D=57&path%5B%5D=147>
- Green, J., & Hart, L. (1999). The impact of context on data. In R. S. Barbour & J. Kitzinger (Eds.), *Developing focus group research*. London, UK: Sage.
- Hattie, J., & Timperley, H. (2007). The power of feedback. *Review of Educational Research*, 77 (1), 81-112.
- Jank, W. (Ed.). (2005). *Musik-Didaktik. Praxishandbuch für die Sekundarstufe I und II*. Berlin, Germany: Cornelsen Scriptor.
- Jank, W., & Meyer, H. (2009). *Didaktische Modelle* (9th ed.). Berlin, Germany: Cornelsen Scriptor.
- Künzli, R. (1998). The common frame and the places of didaktik. In B. B. Gudem & S. Hopman (Eds.), *Didaktik and/or curriculum. An international dialogue* (pp. 29-46). New York, NY: Peter Lan.
- Messick, S. (1989). Validity. In R. L. Linn (Ed.), *Educational measurement*. (pp. 12–103). London: Collier Macmillan.
- Ministry of Church and Education. (1987). *Curriculum: M-87*. (82-03-13148-4). Oslo, Norway: Aschehoug.
- Ministry of Education and Research. (2006). *Knowledge promotion*. Retrieved Jan 20.2012 form http://www.regjeringen.no/upload/kilde/kd/bro/2006/0002/ddd/pdfv/292311-kunnskapsloftet2006_engelsk_ii.pdf
- Ministry of Education and Research. (2007). *Education in Norway 2007: From kindergarten to life long learning*. Retrieved Jan 20.2012 from

http://www.regjeringen.no/upload/KD/Vedlegg/Veiledninger_brosjyrer/Education_in_Norway_f-4133e.pdf og

- Ministry of Education Research and Church affairs (1996). *Curriculum for the 10-year compulsory school. [Læreplanverket for den 10-årige grunnskolen]*. Oslo: Nasjonalt læremiddelsenter.
- Nielsen, F. V. (1994). *Almen Musikdidaktik*. Copenhagen, Denmark: Christian Ejlers' Forlag.
- Niessen, A. (2006). *Individualkonzepte von Musiklehrern*. Berlin, Germany: LIT.
- OECD-PISA. (2001). Knowledge and skills for life: First results from the OECD programme for international student assessment 2000 (pp. 322 s.). Paris, France: Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development: Programme for International Student Assessment.
- Sadler, D. R. (1989). Formative assessment and the design of instructional systems. *Instructional Science*, 18, 119-144.
- Standley, J. M. (1996). A meta-analysis on the effects of music as reinforcement for education/therapy objectives. *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 44 (2), 105-133
- Stenhouse, L. (1975). *An introduction to curriculum research and development*. Oxford, UK: Heinemann.
- Säljö, R. (2004). Notes on classroom practices, dialogicality and the transformation of learning. In J. v. d. Linden & P. Renshaw (Eds.), *Dialogic learning* (pp. 251-260). Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Kluwer.
- Sætre, J. H., & Vinge, J. (2010). Musikk og vurdering. In S. Dobson & R. Engh (Eds.), *Vurdering for læring i fag* (pp. 166-177). Kristiansand: Høyskoleforlaget. Norwegian Academic Press.
- Timperley, H., & Parr, J. (2010). *Weaving evidence, inquiry and standards to build better schools*. Wellington, New Zealand: NZCER press.
- Tyler, R. W. (1949). *Basic principles of curriculum and instruction*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.
- Venus, D. (1969/1984). *Unterweisung im Musikhören*. Wilhelmshaven, Germany: Heinrichshofen.
- Vinge, J. (forthcoming). Analytiske og holistiske tilganger til vurdering. En teoretisk drøfting av vurderingsstrategier og vurderingshandlinger i musikkfaget. *Nordic research in music education yearbook*.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind and society. The development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

- Westbury:, I. (1998). Didaktik and curriculum studies. In B. B. Gundem & S. Hopman (Eds.), *Didaktik and/or Curriculum. An International Dialogue* (pp. 47-78). New York, NY: Peter Lan.
- Wied, V. (2010). Beobachtung individuellen Nachdenkens - eine Unmöglichkeit? Eine systemtheoretische Herangehensweise für die Auswertung von Interviews in empirischer musikpädagogischer Forschung. *Beiträge Empirischer Musikpädagogik / bulletin of empirical music education research*, 1(2). Retrieved Jan 20.2012 from <http://www.b-em.info/index.php?journal=ojs&page=article&op=view&path%5B%5D=40&path%5B%5D=89>
- Winner, E., & Cooper, M. (2000). Mute those claims: No evidence (yet) for a causal link between arts study and academic achievement. *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, 34 (3-4), 11-75.
- Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case Study Research* (4th ed.). London, UK: Sage.

Appendix

Classroom observation form

Main research focus: Assessment in and of music.

Date and lesson number: _____

Subject matter theme(s): _____

Main observation questions:

A) What are the teachers doing during class (teacher actions)?

B) What are the pupils doing during class (pupil actions)?

Lesson observations:

<i>Time</i>	<i>Teacher actions</i>	<i>Pupil actions</i>	<i>Comments (empirical, theoretical and methodological)</i>

Authors:

Rolf Fasting

Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences

Faculty of education

Box 4, St. Olavs plass

NO-0130 Oslo, Norway

E-Mail: rolf.fasting@hioa.no

John Helge Sætre

Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences

Faculty of education

Box 4, St. Olavs plass

NO-0130 Oslo, Norway

E-Mail: jonhelge.saetre@hioa.no