

The Universality of Music- Pushing the Borders of Music Education

Nordic-Baltic perspectives

1. Relevance, objectives and innovation

Rationale

The 3-year project The Universality of music. Pushing the borders of music education: Nordic-Baltic perspectives aims to:

- › Critically revisit existing approaches to N-B music education, policy and research - thereby pushing boundaries
- › Explore new perspectives and venues for music education in N-B countries - thereby broaden students' perspectives and creating new possibilities for future music educators and researchers

Background

According to research, music is universal, and has been part of all cultures all times. It is known to contribute to individual learning, identity and well-being, and to a sense of community and (inter)cultural understanding; recent brain research even suggests that we are born musical. Implications of the idea of universality are 1) all humans, not just gifted, could benefit from music and music education, 2) music education could happen anywhere, not only in educational institutions.

The course "Music, language and communication: Building bridges and intercultural connections in a lifespan perspective" (Reykjavik 2015) will focus the multimodal role of language and music during the lifespan.

The next courses: "Music education: Identity, citizenship and community" (Bergen 2016), and "Pushing borders: Beyond traditional venues of music education" (Helsinki 2017). "Music, language and communication" (2015) will address these topics:

- › music and multimodality
- › language and singing-acquisition in infancy and second language learning
- › remedial effects of music for language impairments later in life
- › remedial effects of music for Aphasia and Alzheimer patients' well-being
- › Keynotes/panelists from Iceland, Sweden, Norway, Helsinki and Estonia.
- › We adhere to Bologna standards for higher education and learning outcomes. After completed course, students can
- › discuss and respond to theories of music and multimodality, music and language and communication in the lifespan
- › connect course themes to existing fields of Nordic-Baltic music education
- › take part in and report from group discussions
- › present own scholarly work and receive critique from peers and specialists

All institutions recognize ECTS course credits, but implement them differently in study programs and curricula. The course ties to different curricula in the way that course content touches upon relevant

international/N/B topics. The course contributes to a joint meta-curricular aim: Master programs in network institutions are research-based and aim at producing future researchers. The course contributes to the goal as it creates a frontier in music education research for master students and future PhD students.

Innovative approaches

The conference-like course model prepares students for future scholarly careers. Students can interact professionally/personally with prominent researchers/teachers. N-B collegial networks are created, also between teachers and students. Joint forces make scholarly levels higher than possible within each institution. The course ventures into unconventional fields of music education, using insights from music therapy, music and well-being, music and brain research. Also unconventional approaches to research and research communication are deployed through arts based research and practical workshops.

2. Organisation and implementation

The main pedagogical and didactical approaches

The course is partly designed in the form of a professional conference in the field of music education. The purpose is to give students the opportunity to develop their skills as researchers presenting and participating in a professional arena. However, students receive much more structure and guidance throughout the course than would be provided in a regular conference. Keynote lectures by researchers will be followed by thought provoking activities in groups intended to deepen understanding of the topics at hand. The methods used include: Group discussions, group reporting, walk-and-talk in pairs, report-back with posters and post-it reports. Student presentations are followed by a discussion lead by a teacher “commentator” coming from a different institution than the student. Other pedagogical approaches include master classes (in music), workshops, student panels and teacher panels on particular topics. Live music presentations and multi-media presentations.

Assessment

Assessment will be both formative and summative. Informal concurrent assessment practices will be applied as well.

Students will make:

- › Oral report/presentation to other students at home (after the course).
- › Written report to the local contact person/coordinator who evaluates it before awarding credits for the course.

Students will receive:

- › On-site assessment and feedback of participation during the course for presentations, student reporting and group discussions.

100% participation is required from the students. Students will complete a course-evaluation on-site at the end of the course.

- › 3 ECTS for 100% active participation and approved reports.
- › 6 ECTS for 100% active participation, approved paper presentation and reports.

As explained above, ECTS credits earned are recognized by all institutions and embedded in the programs in different ways.

Program for 5 consecutive days Monday-Friday

All days include at least one keynote followed by various types of discussions and dissemination in groups. Student presentations will be scheduled each day followed by a section with a teacher or student commentator. At least one international student panel and one teacher panel are included. Musical activities, workshops and multi-media sessions will be integrated evenly throughout the program.

Also on the program: Course summary and participant evaluations (students and teachers)

Specific tasks assigned to each partner institution involved and the complementarities of the competences of the different HEIs involved in the course

Creating a professional community of music education researchers is the paramount purpose of this course, because the community of researchers in music education is very small in each individual institution or country. Within this professional community, each teacher expert is responsible for contributing to the education of all the students through formal and informal communication throughout the course.

The hosting of courses rotates between institutions but the coordination and leadership is executed from Bergen University College by Torunn Bakken Hauge. Each institution has a particular strength within the field of music education creating a professional community par excellence. Thus, the majority of the key-note presentations are given by experts at the participating institutions. The planning and outline of the course is created by a project committee formed by representatives from different partner institutions (HEI's).

The roles of participating institutions (teacher experts) for the course include:

- › Selecting students
- › Selecting teachers
- › Help students prepare abstracts, papers and presentations for the course
- › Delegate the reading material prior to the course to the participating students
- › Keynotes are prepared and given by teachers and experts at participating institutions

The host institution is responsible for taking attendance and monitoring individual participation at each activity throughout the course. After the course, the course administrator gathers all student reports and writes a summary. The project committee write the course report which is published on the homepage.

3. Dissemination of results

The project committee disseminates student and teacher evaluations. Issues from the evaluations are summarized in the course report. The course evaluations are discussed in network meetings and serves as a tool for improvement for future courses. There will be published links to each NNME-project on the [NNME website](#); one link to the overall description of the project, and other links to each intensive course. Each course will have a report with links to the course description, the course program, the abstracts with keynotes and workshops by teachers, the abstracts by students and finally a summary of the course evaluation. The website is edited by the coordinator of the network.

Articles based on the teachers' keynote presentations at the course are usually published in peer-reviewed international music education research journals and they become articles in the curricula of the NNME students. The power points from the keynotes are distributed to the network. The students' presentations are part of their master thesis projects, and it is only their abstracts that are published for the courses.

An official blog site or Facebook site for students and teachers will be constructed for each course. Here students are invited to reflect upon their experiences and communicate with each other. Students are also expected to report more formally to their own schools. Each institution will select the best student reports from the course for publication in the prominent national magazines for music teachers in each country as for example Finnish journal of Music Education. Selected student projects will be further developed for publication in professional, international journals in music education.

Each institution will be encouraged to develop a model for dissemination of course results within the local music education community particularly through holding seminars for music teachers in the field.

The NNME network has held multiple intensive courses at the masters level since 1997. These courses have developed research competencies in music education within the participating Nordic institutions and encouraged inter- institutional cooperation within the Nordic and Baltic states. The courses have created researchers, doctoral students and competent music educators. At this point in this successful network it is timely to share the models and methods of the network with a larger community. For this purpose a dissemination committee will be formed to portray effective methods for sharing resources between HEIs, and between academic fields. The plan is to publish this as a scholarly report in a recognized venue.

The participating students are future teachers, Ph.D. students and researchers who will continue to develop the field. The network may therefore also contribute to the strengthening of the international competitiveness of Nordic and Baltic music education.