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‘What’s in it for a multiple intelligent citizen?’ Music as a creative learning strategy

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Without music life would be a mistake (Friedrich Nietzsche)

The learning theories of constructivism and multiple intelligence have inspired me, with Anja Sinnige, to design the CD-ROM *Unpredictable past*. It is a tool for students to construct a personal ‘field of view’ of the past, the present and the future. Text, images and music are offered to experience ‘the historical sensation’ (Johan Huizinga) by ‘blended learning’, a mix of digital and non-digital materials.

What will young people need to know and be able to do as citizens in the future?

First they need a structure, which is why a didactic route is designed, with seven steps. Each step is a phase in the learning process and also a step towards citizenship. With guidance and personal luggage consisting of knowledge, images and music they will feel safe in following the route in a boundless ‘liquid society’. Post-modern life is fragmentary, episodic and inconsequential (Bauman, 1995, p 282) and the steps are anchors to redefine the self in a structured, flexible, active and creative way. Howard Gardner’s brain-based theory of multiple intelligences is an appropriate learning strategy in Ulrich Beck’s ‘Risk society’. These intelligences are about the whole person, a holistic, natural profile of human potential. This potential may be improved during the learning process, especially when favourite intelligences are activated. ‘We are so different largely because we all have different combinations of intelligences. If we recognise this, I think we will have at least a chance of dealing appropriately with the many problems we face in our world’ (Howard Gardner).

In this paper I try to integrate constructivism, multiple intelligence, flexible didactics, ‘blended learning’, democracy and citizenship. Musical-rhythmic intelligence will be emphasised as a means to improve the learning and life-style of the multiple intelligent citizen.

‘Music makes sense’

Music is a medium between the brain and the natural things.

It’s spiritual without rhythm. It’s materialistic without space.

Heinrich Heine

The starting point of the route on the CD-ROM is the learner’s choice between multiple intelligences. I would like to suggest not using all the intelligences at once, but starting with the verbal-linguistic, musical-rhythmic and visual-spatial intelligence. In Step 3 all the intelligences may be activated. I would also like to suggest concentrating on the musical-rhythmic intelligence, memorising the philosophy of music of Adorno. As a

concrete example my CD *The musical history tour, a journey from prehistory to the future in eleven songs*, played by the Dutch rock group The Gathering will be used.

What is the sense of music? Music is a seismographic and metaphorical reflection (*mimésis*) of historical reality. 'It presents the world as a collection of fragments and episodes' (Bauman, 1995, p 267). The composer is a transmitter and the learner is a receiver. Composers like Monteverdi (*Il combattimento di Tancredo et Clorinda*), Beethoven, Mozart, Mahler (*The Fourth Symphony*), Schönberg, Hendrix, Waters, Curbain and Yorke (*OK Computer*) were genius transmitters (Campenhout, 1999, p 147). It is essential to realise that they were not making music by order of the church, the court, the party or the government. They freely internalised the energy or the spirit of time and transferred it into music. According to Mahler this was possible because reality was full of sound. The composer transforms 'the collective unconsciousness', universal codes of human behaviour in a historical period. 'It's in the air and it shines like rain' (from *Anachrone circles*). The song *Anachrone circles* is about chaos theory and the listener is invited to decode it. 'Anachrone circles in the sky. You may catch them if you try' (from *Anachrone circles*).

Table 1: The route to a multiple intelligent citizen

| Skills and information | Subjective concept | Practice and reality |
|---|--|--|
| | STEP 1 'The sense opened citizen' | |
| STEP 2 'The knowledge-based citizen' | -choose a subject -starting-point and orientation -use a multiple intelligence | STEP 3 'The active citizen' |
| -gather knowledge with language, sound (music) or image | | -a test, an activity or a report -an outdoor-activity -an overview |
| | STEP 4 'The communicative citizen' | |
| STEP 5 'The productive citizen' | -communication and feedback with others -reflect on practice | |
| -prepare practice -construct the route | | STEP 6 'The cooperative citizen' |
| | STEP 7 'The reflective citizen' | -realise practice |
| | -reflect and integrate -competences | |

Step 1: The sense-opened citizen

In Step 1 the learner orientates her/himself: 'What do you want to do or make?' A choice has to be made between the preparation of a test, a report, an activity, a lesson or a theme.

A subject has to be chosen from a list of fifty subjects. History is divided into ten periods and each period consists of five subjects. As a global context information, images and music are presented from an economical, cultural and political perspective. After that the subjective concept is visualised through a drawing, a short story, three questions or a colour in an organiser - 'the sense opener'. In this way the learner gives meaning to her/his own reality.

Contextual learning is essential and complex. That is why three images, three words and three sounds (music) are offered about the previous, the present and the next period as an orientation for the learner.

At this point the learner has to make an important decision: 'How do you want to learn?' From image, sound or language? Music is a sense opener, because it is a metamorphosis of the historical or actual field of force and of the conflict between the collective and the individual (Baumeister, 1999, p 418). For example the song *Thunder without frequencies* expresses the dehumanisation of mankind during the world wars. According to Theodor Adorno dehumanisation is an essential element in history. In the song the individual is personified by the nurse Gertrud who was killed in the trench by the collective, fascism. Anneke van Giersbergen of The Gathering expresses the fear of evil: 'the dynamite in my head, shot right through my soul'. The music is metaphoric: 'Copying thunder is not art, but that it makes me feel thunder'(Goethe).

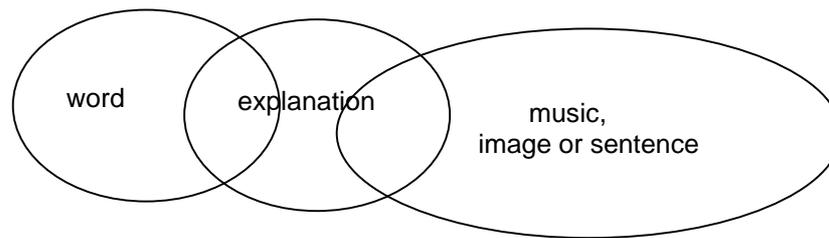
So in Step 1 music is used as a medium to open the senses (Baumeister, 1999, p. 412).

Step 2: 'The knowledge based citizen'

'The bigger the island of knowledge, the longer the shore of wondering'

On the CD-ROM the learner is invited to read the history-book *Unpredictable past* and to structure her/his knowledge in the matrix: 'What's in it for you? What do you hear? Why was it made? What is the meaning? What would you like to ask?'

Furthermore an image, music or a sentence have to be related to a word. In the Venn-daigram organiser a word is in the left circle, music in the right circle and the explanation in the middle. For each subject three or seven words are offered as anchors.

Figure 1: The Venn-diagram

After the matrix, the student fills in a mind map from an economic, political and cultural perspective, using the other two intelligences and collecting information from the book *Unpredictable past* or the internet. This is her/his personal construction of history with words, images and music.

To Adorno it is great to enjoy music, but it is even greater to search for its truthfulness.

A lot of information is hidden in music as a metaphor. 'If you listen closely you might hear the sound' (from *Anachrone circles*) and discover that Beethoven created the emancipation of the civilian, Wagner the violence of imperialism, Mahler the military and collective violence of the world wars and Schönberg the closeness of modern society (Baumeister, 1999, p 422).

Adorno experienced that music often creates '*Der Weltschmerz*' or '*das Unbehagen der Kultur*' (Freud). Musical expression of sorrow, hope, memory, deliverance, rescue or just '*cherches le temps perdu*'. It also revitalises the relation between culture and repression (Baumeister, 1999, p 396). It is hard to decode music because it is enigmatic in essence and visualises what is not 'really' there. '*Kunst muss nicht schmücken, sondern wahr sein*' (Baumeister, 1999, p 398). It is a medium between reality and the brain. The painting *The Scream* by Edvard Munch was the inspiration for *Lost in Munch's Scream*, a clash between social catastrophe and metaphysical hope. It is like Emile Zola's metaphor of the train moving very fast through the night without a conductor and the destination is the First World War. Munch's chaotic and threatening sky is finally transferred into a dark and heavy Russian choir.

In the song *Golden age* the power and harmony of baroque and absolutism is visualised on the harpsichord by Frank Boeijen of The Gathering. Three hundred years ago the composer Jean-Baptiste Lully transferred absolutism into music by order of Louis XIV. Louis liked to listen to himself as a peaceful and heroic king.

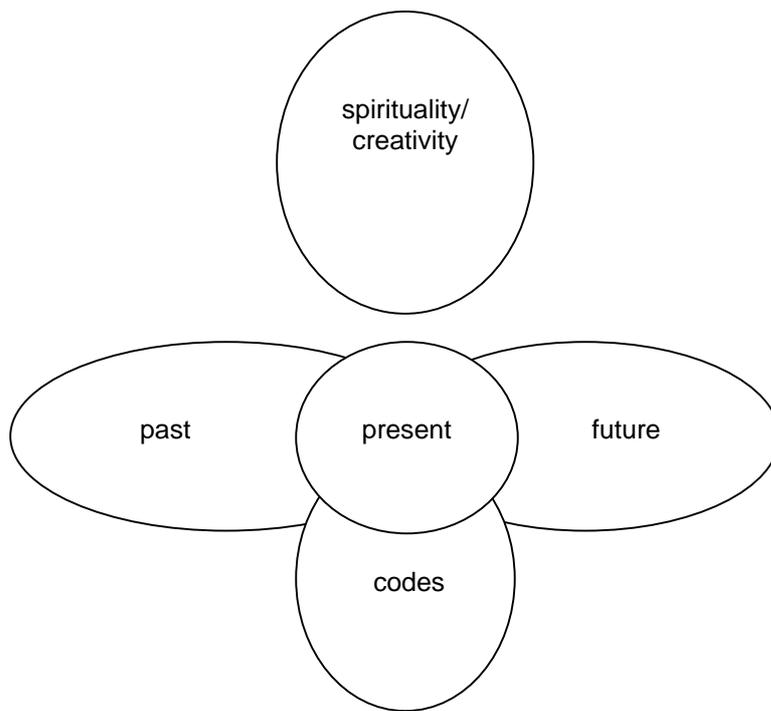
A perfect sign of the mediaeval times is Gregorian music because it is static, monotone and slow. It continually turns in on itself, like a shell (Goodall, 2001, p 2). In the song *Every day is like a thousand years*, the mystical God, aggressive Christianity, the charismatic Charlemagne, and the story of 'the two swords' (the pope and the king) are

‘visualised’ in the rhythm of a procession. Carl Jung’s collective unconsciousness is preserved for a thousand years, like collective codes internalised in all people.

Step 3: ‘The active citizen’

The organiser ‘The field of view’ helps the student to get an overview of his subject, consisting of four fields and a circle in the centre. It is a kind of recycling of the creative process of the composer.

Figure 2: The field of view



In the centre of the field of view is the present, the subject. From left to right is the time-axis, the past and the future. In the upper field ‘creativity’ or ‘spirituality’ is situated - like ideology, religion, culture, the supernatural and human creation. In the lower field human codes, persons and events are situated - down to earth. The learner is free now to choose other intelligences such as the natural-ecological (an outdoor activity), the interpersonal (speech or chat with fellow-students) or bodily-kinaesthetic (making an object or doing an activity).

When we look at history as a field of force, then the field of view is a personal reflection, a satellite view. It is a creative play, a metaphysical adventure (Adorno, 1970, p 130).

‘In jenem Kunstwerk erscheint etwas, was es nicht gibt’ (Adorno, 1970, p 127). It is about the new, *‘das Unbetretene’* and a composer may take us there. After listening to *‘Le mariage de Figaro’* of Mozart, Napoleon said: ‘I heard already the revolution in

action'. '*Le sacre du printemps*' by Igor Stravinski prefigures the First World War, with the female dancer dancing herself to death.

To Adorno it was very important that the composer made 'new' music that would change things like a 'big bang' (Goodall, 2000, p 6) - music as a new horizon or even a warning. Claudio Monteverdi, Mozart and Schönberg were the Darwins or Einsteins of music. Monteverdi created secular and humanistic music and set in motion waves of creativity in the years that followed. The opera *Orfeo* was a humanistic manifesto linked with the real world issues and debates. Dvorak wrote about America in the symphony '*From the new world*'. On *The musical history tour* Anneke van Giersbergen and Frank Boeijen composed the song *New Horizon* about discoveries.

Step 4: 'The communicative citizen'

'The story of shattered life can be told only in bits and pieces' (Rilke)

Through interpersonal intelligence the students share knowledge and skills with others, in circle-talk or a chat. This is the last step of learning on the student's own level by doing the test, making the report or doing the activity. It is also the start of designing a route for children.

Communication is a very important feature of music, like *Coldwar Kid* sounding like a computer. In *Talking about the revolution* a French woman talks to an American visitor (President Jefferson?) who fought in the American War of Liberation. Music may influence history. In the year 1791 two hundred revolutionary songs were written to stimulate the revolution. To inspire the soldiers of La Grande Armée, Claude-Joseph de Lisle composed *The Marseillaise* overnight. The march rhythm expresses comradeship in *temps marche animé*. Joseph Haydn's *Missa tempore belli* was written during the French march to Austria, a plea for peace with trumpets and kettledrums. Beethoven's revolutionary *Eroica* was originally dedicated to Napoleon.

World War I was a musical war. Soldiers were cheered by home songs like the soldier Gurney's songs *Even such a time*, and *In Flanders*. Arthur Bliss's song *Morning heroes* is about the victims of the Battle of the Somme. During the war 27 songs about war topped the hit parade, such as *Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition*. Music became a weapon when British soldiers played the German national hymn out of tune, because German soldiers couldn't sleep. André Caplet played new music on the piano in a trench close to the Germans.

During the Second World War music was everywhere. In Theresienstadt music was misused to let the people of the Red Cross believe that everything was OK. The prisoners played *Le Marriage de Figaro* and for a moment they believed that things were changing for good. Finally they were all sent to Auschwitz. For the Nazis music was a very essential expression of fascism (*Das Gesamtkunstwerk* of Richard Wagner). Jazz music, Jewish and modern music was *entartet* and forbidden. Despite that,

German pilots listened to jazz on their headphones while bombing English cities. In the fascinating movie *The Piano* music is about hope and *Erlösung* (Nietzsche). After three centuries the piano of Bartolomeo Cristofori can still be all things towards all people (Goodall, 2000, p 135). A symbol was *Lili Marlene*, written during the First World War and also popular in the Second World War on both sides: '*Vor der Kaserne, vor dem grossen Tor/ stand eine Laterne, und steht sie noch davor/so woll'n wir uns da wiedersehen/ bei der Laterne woll'n wir steh'n/ wie einst Lili Marleen*'. This is music as comfort.

Step 5: 'The productive citizen'

'Democracy is a way' and the citizen has to construct it by her/himself. The student may construct a route for children. In a lesson or a theme s/he stimulates their multiple intelligences. First s/he has to answer questions: What do children have to know? What knowledge and skills do they gather? How do you check the result? Then s/he has to fill in the steps of the route.

Step 6: 'The creative citizen'

The creative citizen creates her/his reality in a multiple intelligent way and the student presents her/his personal construction to other students or helps the children during their presentations. It is cooperative learning, because learners learn from learners. During the presentation it is essential to balance information, creativity and interactivity.

Step 7: 'The reflective citizen'

Step 7 is a reflection on the whole learning process, filling in the didactical 'Field of view' with words, images and sound (music). There is a time-axis from the left field, 'knowledge and skills' to the right field, the transfer into practice or reality. In the lower field didactics are situated and related to the learning theory in the upper field. Finally competences are written down step-by-step in a matrix and hopefully integrated in the personal life-style.

Table 2: The route to a 'multiple intelligent child'

| Skills and information | Subjective concept | Practice and reality |
|---|--|---|
| | STEP 1 'The sense opened child' | |
| STEP 2 'The knowledge-based child' | -look at a clip (music/image) -listen to a story -do a circle talk | STEP 3 'The active child' |
| -gather basic-information with language, sound (music) and images -search in the encyclopaedia | STEP 4 'The communicative child' | -group-information -group-task -play on the CD-ROM |
| STEP 5 'The creative child' | -communication and feedback with others -'outdoor activity' and home-task | |
| -create and construct | | STEP 6 'The productive child' |
| | | -make a role-play, an object, a collage, a presentation or a web-page |
| | | STEP 7 'The cooperative child' |
| | STEP 8 'The reflective child' | -present and share |
| | -reflect and integrate -context and competences -What's next? | |

This is my reflection on music making sense:

Music is a connection between the learning and the life style of a citizen.

Music is a metamorphosis of reality in the past, the present and the future.

Music is a protection against the rationalisation and collectivisation of the individual.

Music is a sense opener to live interactively with present threats and chances.

It tells us what cannot be said in words and sometimes we have to keep silent (Wittgenstein).

Music is a constructivistic and multiple intelligent way to democracy.

Music is a sign to show the way to a borderless future as a new horizon. Music makes a difference.

Music is more than you think.

‘To respect the many differences between people’
(Howard Gardner)

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