



# New Trends and Issues Proceedings on Humanities and Social Sciences

Volume 4, Issue 8, (2017) 225-233



ISSN:2547-8818

[www.prosoc.eu](http://www.prosoc.eu)

Selected paper of 8th World Conference on Learning, Teaching and Educational Leadership, (WCLTA 2017) 26-28 October 2017, Universidade Aberta, Lisbon, Portugal

## Developing and renewing music teacher competences: prospects and challenges

**Jolanta Lasauskiene**<sup>a\*</sup>, Faculty of Education, Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences, Studentu St. 39, 08106 Vilnius, Lithuania

**Yuqing Yang**<sup>b</sup>, Faculty of Education, Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences, Studentu St. 39, 08106 Vilnius, Lithuania

### Suggested Citation:

Lasauskiene, J. & Yang, Y. (2017). Developing and renewing music teacher competences: prospects and challenges. *New Trends and Issues Proceedings on Humanities and Social Sciences*. 4(8), 225–233. Available from: [www.prosoc.eu](http://www.prosoc.eu)

Selection and peer review under responsibility of Prof. Dr. Jesus Garcia Laborda, University of Alcala, Spain.

©2017 SciencePark Research, Organization & Counseling. All rights reserved.

### Abstract

The topic of music teacher education and training raises many issues for discussion. The purpose of the present study was to analyse the approach of pre-service music education teachers towards their professional activity and to discuss their expectations within the context of the competence-based education. Thirty four students (international and national), all pre-service music teachers studying in Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences, were included. The results indicated that generally the expectations of students were (more or less) in line with the principles of the competence-based initial music teacher education. Prospective music teachers describe their professional activity as broad and multidimensional but they also emphasise the importance of personal and ethnic values, implementation of general, subject-specific and professional competences and continuous improvement. It has been revealed that in music education it is particularly important to combine orientation towards pedagogical activities with orientation towards the spread of the learner's personality.

Keywords: Competence-based education, music teacher education, competences, student's expectations, Lithuania.

---

\* ADDRESS FOR CORRESPONDENCE: **Jolanta Lasauskiene**, Faculty of Education, Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences, Studentu St. 39, LT-08106 Vilnius, Lithuania.

E-mail address: [jolanta.lasauskiene@leu.lt](mailto:jolanta.lasauskiene@leu.lt) / Tel.: +370 684 25700

## 1. Introduction

At present learning is not directly linked with the process of teaching or education (Burdena, Aubussonb, Brindleyc & Schuckb, 2016). Discussing learning the emphasis is laid on provision of the learner with efficient learning aids that comply with his/her learning styles and needs (Darling-Hammond, 2017). Many of the present students need flexibility that the traditional classroom model does not offer. Competence-based education (CBE) gives them more control of their own experience and better chance to succeed (Serdenciuc, 2013). Thus, there is a transfer from the teaching to the learning paradigm, from knowledge based approach to competence-based approach in education, from subject-centred to student-centred assessment.

In higher educational institutions, the traditional teaching/learning approach, when the importance of knowledge acquisition and transfer is emphasised, is being replaced by the contemporary constructivist learning paradigm, which describes learning as a process that embraces qualitative changes in the student's thinking, feelings, perception and behaviour. Contemporary competence-based curriculum provides not only the definition for the structure of competences on the basis of the socio-constructive approach but also embraces a new strategy and techniques of competence education and assessment. It can be stated that the competence-based assessment concentrates on the outcomes, individual evaluation, whereas the statement that a student is competent or incompetent can be seen as a result of evaluation.

Karmazina (2009) offers a competence-oriented model, where the personal professional performance indicators of a music teacher, without being specified, are divided into the following groups:

- (1) Psychological and pedagogical groups are associated with knowledge and skills to use different forms and methods of work, considering the age of children, as well as adequate behaviour demonstrated in the conditions of pedagogical interaction.
- (2) Methodological and technological groups consist of skills in planning individual and group work, using innovative technologies in the classroom.
- (3) Motivation and research comprise skills in self-education and research work, as well as skills in self-assessment.
- (4) Professional musicianship combines special (musical) and general pedagogical skills, personal qualities that are the basis for a teacher's professional competence.
- (5) Artistic and creative groups include, according to Karmazina (2009), the cognitive, transformative, value-oriented and communication skills

However, the pace of reorganization of the education system of music teachers and competences is not very rapid. The main problem faced in implementing the change in curriculum has been the education of teachers till date (Lietuvos Respublikos Svietimo ir mokslo ministro isakymas, 2017). The significance of teachers' role has lately been related to the new requirements for teacher competences. However, the education of teachers, just like the whole education, is more conservative rather than innovative. The current paradigm of education of music teachers has a focus on academic and subject-oriented education (Lasauskiene, 2010). Such a situation is not only for the music teachers in Lithuania but also in other places (Georgii-Hemming & Westvall, 2010; Gusewell, Joliat & Terrien, 2016; Thorgersen, Johansen & Juntunen, 2015). Therefore, the change in the paradigm of the education of teachers is of particular significance. Thus, the attitude of the student music teachers to their profession as well as competences and views of teaching music are highly important.

### 1.1. Research questions

The research questions are as follows:

- What are the most important priorities in competence-based music teacher education?
- What factors cause the development and renewal of music teacher competences?
- How the importance of competences in educational practice is assessed by students and prospective music teachers?

### **1.2. Purpose of the study**

The aim of the study is to investigate the expectations of student music teachers regarding their future professional activity and competence-based teacher education.

## **2. Methodology**

### **2.1. Participants**

In total, 34 students (14 men and 20 women), all are prospective music teachers studying in Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences, took part in this research. It should be noted that since 2014 more than 70 students from China studied or have been studying in the Department of Music. The sample of qualitative research embraced 17 Lithuanian and 17 Chinese bachelor's and master's degree students. The subsample of bachelor's degree students consisted of 16 students (11 Lithuanian and 5 Chinese) and the subsample of master's degree students consisted of 18 students (6 Lithuanian and 12 Chinese).

### **2.2. Data collection and data analysis**

A qualitative approach using semi-structured written reflections seemed much more suitable to capture the full range of perceptions of student music teachers of their future profession and education that would best prepare them for it (Silverman, 2016). Students wrote individual written reflections in accordance with the provided open questions: *How do you understand the activity of a music teacher? What specific competences and personal features are required for a music teacher to work at school? Are your expectations in line with the principles of competence-based teacher education? What content do you expect in view of your future professional activity and competences? Are the changes needed in music teacher's activity and music education studies?* The data were transcribed and analysed qualitatively by using content analysis (Mayring, 2014).

### **2.3. The research ethics**

The general principles of research ethics were observed (Miller, Mauthner, Birch & Jessop, 2012). Seeking to ensure confidentiality and de-identification, the research participants were encoded: the students of Lithuania are marked L1, L2, L3,..., L17 and the students from China are marked Ch1, Ch2, Ch3,..., Ch17. The surveys were carried out in the period of 2016–2017. The research was conducted by the authors of the article (as scientific supervisors and doctoral students), the master programme students of Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences (Fang, 2017; Gao, 2017).

## **3. Results**

Although every student (pre-service teacher of music) is a unique personality with his/her individual and subjective attitude and way thinking, the analysis revealed several similar aspects in the activities of the music teachers and the expression of competences. However, some remarkable differences were identified as well. The same inclination could be observed when comparing the results of Lithuanian and foreign (Chinese) students.

### **3.1. The approach of Student music teachers towards their professional activities and competences**

The research results showed that Lithuanian and foreign students expressed diverse evaluations of the activities and competences of music teachers: some are seen in a more favourable light and others are given less favourable assessment. However, all the students in the research describe the educational activities of a music teacher as broad and multidimensional and emphasise the importance of curriculum planning and improvement, management of teaching/learning processes, learner's cognition and his/her recognition, application of computer music technologies and creation of educational environments and artistic musical activities.

Lithuanian students related the expression of professional competences of the music teacher more to management of the teaching and learning processes. The competences of application of computer music technologies, creation of educational environments and professional development are also regarded as important ones by Lithuanian students. The students think that a music teacher has to learn and improve lifelong, to seek higher educational quality and professional mastery and to change the attitudes and style of education:

---

*'It is important to prepare for lessons well – to set a purpose and know what to pursue, to apply modern educational technologies and music teaching and learning method, concepts, models, theories concepts in the field of related disciplines such as psychology, pedagogy in a targeted way.'* [L7]

*'<...> to apply various educational strategies that foster learners' creativity, to organise independent students' learning.'* [L2]

*'<...> to notice and seek to reveal learner musical abilities, to control the process of learning ensuring active participation of all the learners.'* [L12]

*'A music teacher has to master computer software that is relevant to music education, to develop learners' information culture.'* [L8]

*'It is important to create teaching/learning environment that promotes tolerance and collaboration, where a learner has opportunities to show initiative and to act independently. It is important to systematically improve own professional activities.'* [L17]

---

Chinese students related the expression of professional competences of the music teachers more to music subject–content planning, and improvement and teaching relationship (classroom management and management of one-to-one tuition), communication and collaboration, the learner's cognition and his/her recognition:

---

*'A music teacher has to be able to prepare teaching/learning materials, which are interesting and attractive to learners, to adapt a teaching programme to learners' needs, to integrate the study subject of music into curriculum through interdisciplinary links.'* [Ch16]

*'<...> to select teaching methods that are adequate to attainment of learning goals. New educational theories and methods should be applied.'* [Ch12]

*'<...> only communicating and collaborating with learners we can achieve goals and learning outcomes, to properly organise music education.'* [Ch1]

*'It is very important to know learners, to develop an individual programme. Good knowledge of learners would help to appropriately organise musical activities at school. And you need to play as much music as possible together!'* [Ch 7]

---

Lithuanian and foreign students emphasised that musical and artistic activities of a music learner are very important because:

---

*'<...> music teacher is the spirit of cultural life at school.'* [Ch15]

*'Music teacher at school is a person who is active not only musically but also socially. It's a person without whom there wouldn't be any concerts or celebrations at school and in the town.'* [Ch3]

*'I think that competencies should be related to concrete music teacher activity area: work with the choir or orchestra, band, folklore or jazz group. It would be best if music teacher could be oriented to one*

area.’ [L10]

*‘It is important to take up non-formal education (choirs, ensembles). In Lithuania school choir singing, Schoolchildren’s Song Celebrations is extremely popular.’ [L6]*

---

Referring to the role of music teacher in a contemporary school, the research participants (student music teachers) mainly emphasised the teacher’s personality, i.e., his/her values, internal motivation and professional vocation:

*‘A success in the process of music education is predetermined by the teachers’ values and personal qualities. They are the foundation for the whole education process.’ [Ch2]*

*‘<...> nowadays it’s not very easy to be a music teacher. a music teacher has to have motivation, vocation for teacher’s work <...> to assume responsibility for learners’ education.’ [L3]*

*‘Vocational calling is a wish to become and work as a teacher, collegial relations, self-expression, perception of own activity as a personal value.’ [Ch14]*

*‘A music teacher has to be a strong personality, to love own work very much, to have extensive musical and pedagogical experience, to be innovative and creative.’ [L5]*

*‘Musical competences (instrumental or vocal technique, repertoire, improvisation, arrangement, composition) are very important. But I think a successful process of music education is predetermined by the personality of a music teacher as well as his/her responsibility, independence, creativity, joy of music making.’ [L9]*

---

It is possible to state that student music teachers assign priority to the teacher-creator, approve of collegial relationship between the teacher and the learner and acknowledge that the processes of teaching and learning are related processes that create conditions for improvement. This is particularly important in training music teachers.

### **3.2. The expectations of student music teachers within the context of the competence-based teacher education**

Music teacher possess specific personal and professional qualities and the majority of them are built up during studies. Seeking to clarify the possibilities and needs for the development of prospective music teachers’ competences, student music teachers were asked five open questions targeted at identifying if their expectations are in line with the principles of competence-based teacher educational system. The answers to the questions would help to better understand the possibilities of optimising the quality of contemporary music teacher education in higher education institutions. The research results show that the student music teachers relate implementation of changes in studies to a stronger focus of studies on practice (the students mentioned the insufficient time for music studies) and on availability of specialisations (choir, band and ensembles):

*‘More practical activity, individual classes, music courses, musical activities! I think it is important that music lessons, first of all, were interesting and attractive.’ [L5]*

*‘<...> it is very important to include fundamentals of pedagogy, psychology and music education methodology into the study programmes of music teacher education. But I also think that a music teacher has to acquire skills of harmony, piano and singing classes.’ [L4]*

*‘The practical part of music studies is the most important. And everything that would give real use during the teaching practice.’ [Ch5]*

*‘More psychological training, practice, communication psychology, knowledge about the national curricula and music syllabi. Not all theoretical knowledge can be applied in practice...It is important to communicate with school learners as with equals, to manage class emotional atmosphere.’ [L11]*

*‘Perhaps music teachers of certain spheres should be trained (a teacher of instrument playing, a teacher of piano playing, a manager of musical groups, a teacher of popular and jazz music)? This would be related to a specific activity area at school – leading a choir or an orchestra, band, folk or jazz ensemble and specific competencies in the area.’ [L14]*

---

It is worth mentioning that ‘specialised training’ for music teachers are available in majority of the countries. In this way, a flawed opinion that ‘a good musician is a good music teacher’ is consolidated (Lasauskiene, 2010). The latter tradition has a big influence on the professional thinking and teaching abilities of future music teachers. Another extreme is observed in other countries, when the content of music teacher training is restricted on utilitarian basis (a teacher has to know as much as it is necessary for teaching of learners). Both extremes are not productive under contemporary conditions.

It is clear that foreign (Chinese) students, who study in Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences, encounter new kinds of academic activity organisation, new learning methods and roles of students and university teachers:

---

*‘Study programme, content of education and methods in Chinese and Lithuanian universities differ. Lots of theoretical lectures, written works.’ [Ch17]*

*‘I think that musical activities (singing, playing an instrument, improvisation and composing as well as participating in concerts, performances) are the most important. Participation in concerts improves musical competences.’ [Ch13]*

*‘In our country (China) the culture of teaching is more oriented towards implementation of certain requirements. It is important for teachers to test what students have memorised rather than to see what they have understood. In Lithuania university teachers are able to make students interested in the study subject and promote their ‘deeper’ learning.’ [Ch4]*

*‘<...> in our country (China) the whole attention is dedicated to improvement of technical skills of a performer.’ [Ch8]*

---

The opinions of foreign (Chinese) students highlighted their positive evaluations of the implemented study programme and the academic environment in Lithuania University of Educational Sciences (Fang, 2017; Gao, 2017). Comparing new academic experience obtained in Lithuania with acquired in their home country, Chinese students state that in the study programme of music education, attractiveness of the taught study subject is emphasised, the content of studies is focused on identification of the learner’s need, experience and attitudes, parity-based interaction between the educator and the learner and introduction of innovation (Lasauskiene, 2017). However, more attention should be paid to the development and application of practical abilities and competences of musical and concert activities.

#### **4. Concluding Discussion**

The topic of music teacher education and competences raises many issues for discussion (Abramo & Reynolds, 2015; Arostegui & Ibarretxe, 2016; Burnard & Georgii-Hemming, 2016; Gerich & Schmitz, 2016; Hakan, 2016; Lasauskiene, 2017). There is no single answer to questions such as: what does it mean to be a music teacher in the 21st century? How do we educate the next generation of music teachers? What should be the qualities and abilities of a music teacher? What kind of competences teachers need? What should a university education in music look like?

The results indicated that, overall, the expectations of student music teachers were (more or less) in line with the principles of the competence-based initial music teacher education:

- Prospective music teachers describe their professional activity as broad and multidimensional ones but they also emphasise the importance of personal values, implementation of general, subject-specific, professional competences and continuous improvement. The students link the competences of a music teacher and their implementation during lessons and extracurricular activities with the teacher as a person. Such a personal contact is the foundation of all his/her competences.
- The Lithuanian students related the expression of professional competences of the music teacher more to management of teaching and learning processes, application of computer music

technologies and creation of educational environments and competences of professional improvement.

- The Chinese students placed high value on the following competences of the music teacher: subject content planning and improvement and teaching relationship, communication and collaboration, conditions of the learner and his/her recognition. Overall, in our study the expectations of students did not indicate clearly the differences between the expectations of Lithuanian and Chinese students.
- Moreover, the student music teachers think that participation in musical and artistic activities plays a specific role in the spread of professional identities of a music teacher. These findings highlight the importance of development of musical and artistic competences of prospective teachers.

Research on pre-service music teacher occupational identity often highlights two competing identities: performer and teacher (Girdzijauskiene, 2013; Gusewell, Joliat & Terrien, 2016; Pellegrino, 2009). However, a musician can be a perfect performer (a singer, a piano player and a conductor) but not a good music teacher. The activity of a teacher-musician is successful, when his/her qualifications for music and educational activities are closely interrelated. Competence of music educator acquires specific features due to both specifics of artistic expressions and their links with educational activities. They pre-determine the peculiarities of (self-)development of professional competences (Tavoras, 2011).

However, deep knowledge of a subject and pedagogical psychological theories does not provide a reliable guarantee that the concepts and procedures necessary for the student music teachers will be efficiently introduced (Holgersen & Burnard, 2016; Zuhlsdorf, 2016). So 'pedagogisation' of music teacher education is one of the main conditions for successful teacher education reform. For this reason, it is important not only to train specialists in education but also to actualise the process of becoming a teacher as well as to highlight the relevance of teacher's personal features, which have impact on the quality of his or her professional activities.

Moreover, teacher education should embrace not only the subject, subject didactics and general education knowledge but also an aim to conduct research at school (Finney, Laurence & Brindley, 2013). A teacher-researcher is a necessity today because it is important to reflect on own practical activities and their results, to record and evaluate the progress of implementation of educational innovations, results and consequences of the renewed educational activity. It is necessary to analytically and openly approach one's own work, make conclusions about development of music education, use various sources for evidence and base activity on the latest research, consider critical and professional observations and share experience. It is also important to ensure that all the teachers and all the graduates, who are ready to become teachers after pedagogical studies, have acquired the professional competence based on the learning paradigm.

## References

- Abramo, J. M. & Reynolds, A. (2015). 'Pedagogical creativity' as a framework for music teacher education. *Journal of Music Teacher Education*, 25(1), 37–51.
- Arostegui, J. L. & Ibarretxe, G. (2016). *Intercultural education and music teacher education*. London, UK: Routledge.
- Burdena, K., Aubussonb, P., Brindleyc, S. & Schuckb, S. (2016). Changing knowledge, changing technology: implications for teacher education futures. *Journal of Education for Teaching: International research and pedagogy*, 42(1), 4–16.
- Burnard, P. & Georgii-Hemming, I. (Eds.). (2016). *Professional knowledge in music teacher education*. London, UK: Routledge.

- Darling-Hammond, L. (2017). Teacher education around the world: what can we learn from international practice? *European Journal of Teacher Education: Practice, Theory and Research in Initial Teacher Education; International Perspectives*, 40(3), 291–309.
- Fang, Y. (2017). *Expression of subject competence of future music teachers at Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences* (Master's thesis, Social Sciences, Arts Pedagogy). Vilnius: Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences.
- Finney, J., Laurence, F. & Brindley, S. (2013). *Master class in music education*. London, UK: Bloomsbury.
- Gao, J. (2017). *Expression of general and professional competencies of pre-service teachers of music at university* (Master's thesis, Social Sciences, Arts Pedagogy). Vilnius: Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences.
- Georgii-Hemming, E. & Westvall, M. (2010). Teaching music in our time. Student music teachers' reflections on music education, teacher education and becoming a teacher. *Music Education Research*, 12, 353–367.
- Girdzijauskienė, R. (2013). Professional competence of a music teacher: pedagogue versus musician. In *European perspective on music education* (pp. 209–223). Innsbruck, Austria: Helblink.
- Gusewell, A., Joliat, F. & Terrien, P. (2016). Professionalized music teacher education: Swiss and French students' expectations. *International Journal of Music Education*, 1–15.
- Hakan, O. (2016). Evaluation of metacognitive competence of pre-service music teachers in terms of some variables. *Educational Research and Reviews*, 11, 713–720.
- Holgersen, S. E. & Burnard, P. (2016). Different types of knowledges forming professionalism: a vision of post-millennial music teacher education. In *Professional knowledge in music teacher education* (Vol. 1, p. 189).
- Karmazina, Z. B. (2009). *Hudozhestvennoe samoobrazovanie uchitelja muzyki kak uslovie razvitija ego professional'noj kompetentnosti: Avtoref. dis. ... kand. ped.* Moskva, Russia: Nauk. (In Russian).
- Lasauskiene, J. (2010). *Muzikos mokytojo veikla ir kompetencijos* [Activity and competencies of a music teacher]. Vilnius, Lithuania: Edukologija. (In Lithuanian)
- Lasauskiene, J. (2017). A study of foreign students' intercultural experiences at Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences. *New Trends and Issues Proceedings on Humanities and Social Sciences*, 4, 691–699. doi:10.18844/prosoc.v4i1.2454
- Legette, R. M. & McCord, D. H. (2015). Pre-service music teachers perceptions of teaching and teacher training. *Contributions to Music Education*, 40(1), 163–176.
- Lietuvos Respublikos Svetimo ir mokslo ministro isakymas. (2017, rugsejo 14 d). Del pedagogo rengimo modelio apraso patvirtinimo [On the approval of the description of teacher education model] (Nr. V-683). Vilnius, Lithuania. Retrieved from <https://www.e-tar.lt/portal/lt/legalActPrint?documentId=685f3fe0992211e78871f4322bb82f27> (in Lithuanian)
- Mayring, P. (2014). *Qualitative content analysis: theoretical foundation, basic procedures and software solution* [Monograph]. Retrieved from <http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0168-ss0ar-395173>
- Miller, T., Mauthner, M., Birch, M. & Jessop, J. (2012). *Ethics in qualitative research*. Sage Publications.
- Pellegrino, K. (2009). Connections between performer and teacher identities in music teachers: setting an agenda for research. *Journal of Music Teacher Education*, 19(1), 39–55. Retrieved from <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1057083709343908>
- Serdenciuc, N. L. (2013). Competency-based education: implications on teachers' training. *Procedia: Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 76, 754–758.
- Silverman, D. (2016). *Qualitative research* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.



Lasauskiene, J. & Yang, Y. (2017). Developing and renewing music teacher competences: prospects and challenges. *New Trends and Issues Proceedings on Humanities and Social Sciences*. 4(8), 225–233. Available from: [www.prosoc.eu](http://www.prosoc.eu)

Tavoras, V. (2011). *Busimu muzikos mokytoju menines individualybes raiska* [Expression of artistic individuality of future music teachers]. Vilnius, Lithuania: Edukologija.

Thorgersen, C. F., Johansen, G. & Juntunen, M. L. (2015). Music teacher educators' visions of music teacher preparation in Finland, Norway and Sweden. *International Journal of Music Education*, 34(1), 49–63.

Zuhlsdorf, F. (2016). Teacher education at university: how to teach content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge in an integrated way. In *Bringing teacher education forward: national and international perspectives. Programme and abstracts*. Oslo, Norway: University of Oslo.