The *Learning Communities* project as a strategy to promote critical music education in schools

O projeto *Comunidades de Aprendizagem* como uma estratégia para promover a educação musical crítica nas escolas

Antonio Fernández-Jiménez

University of Granada, Granada, Spain

antoniferjim@ugr.es

https://sites.google.com/view/antoniferjim/inicio

Abstract: The Learning Communities project pursues social transformation of context through education. Research has shown its success in improving educational output and school coexistence. However, there is barely any scientific research that provides evidence of the development of the subject of Music according to the focus of this project. This article presents two case studies, one in Primary Education and the other in Compulsory Secondary Education, which show what kind of learning dynamics are carried out in the music classroom. The development of this subject through Learning Communities presents a model according to a critical music education approach, in which curricular content of music is combined with skills for the promotion of the citizen sphere to train critical citizens committed to context. It is essential in this task that the music teacher plays the role of a critical educator who guides the learning toward a greater connection with the community.

Keywords: Citizen training. Critical music education. Dialogic learning. Learning Communities. Music education for the community.

Resumo: O projeto Comunidades de Aprendizagem busca a transformação social do contexto por meio da educação. As pesquisas têm demonstrado seu sucesso, melhorando a produção educacional e a convivência escolar. No entanto, quase não há pesquisas científicas que comprovem o desenvolvimento da disciplina de Música de acordo com o foco desse projeto. Este artigo apresenta dois estudos de caso, um na Educação Básica e outro na Educação Secundária Obrigatória, que mostram que tipo de dinâmica de aprendizagem é realizada na sala de aula de música. O desenvolvimento dessa disciplina por meio de Comunidades de Aprendizagem apresenta um modelo de acordo com uma abordagem de educação musical crítica, na qual o conteúdo curricular de música é combinado com habilidades para a promoção da esfera cidadã, a fim de formar cidadãos críticos comprometidos com o contexto. Nessa tarefa, é essencial que o professor de música desempenhe o papel de um educador crítico que orienta o aprendizado para uma maior conexão com a comunidade.

Palavras-chave: Treinamento de cidadãos. Educação musical crítica. Aprendizagem dialógica. Comunidades de aprendizagem. Educação musical para a comunidade.

1. Introduction

The neoliberal paradigm has much influence on education, which is forging an increasingly individualistic and market-based society that rejects the importance of social context (Kincheloe, 2008). This model of society is more concerned with consuming goods from material products to services such as education or health (Horsley, 2015) due to neoliberalism has transformed public goods such as schooling into consumer goods. This has also transformed the approach to how schools develop an education system more centralized with less power of decision by local levels (Horsley, 2009) and more concerned with tests and audits "to feed the system in the name of the improvement" (Ball, 2016, p. 1046). This position facilitates education is become just another product offered by private companies to achieve economic benefit through its management and development (Horsley, 2015), which causes these private initiatives to promote those subjects that they consider to have an impact on that economic benefit. This is the case of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) subjects, whose influence on the curricula comes, to a large extent, from the recommendations made by various economic institutions (OECD, World Bank, International Monetary Fund) and transnational policies (European Union) regarding the essential knowledge that a person has to acquire to be able to face the challenges presented by the Knowledge-based Economy (Aróstegui et al., 2015; Rusinek & Aróstegui, 2015). These scholars highlight a decline in the presence of Arts Education and Music Education in compulsory school curricula which means a constant defense of subjects related to the humanities and citizenship for their permanence as part of the compulsory school curriculum.

Evaluation reports with a quantitative assessment perspective such as PISA have contributed to this devaluation of these subjects as a necessary part of the training for people in the Economy and Knowledge-based society (Aróstegui, 2016). The nature of the arts differs from this approach, so they are not evaluated. Therefore, the possible contribution that the subject of Music could have

to training citizens to face the challenges of this kind of current society is not included. This whole approach is gradually taking hold in the education sphere, which translates into an educational approach focused on a skills-based business model. The result is an education that relegates the sphere of humanities and citizen field to a second level (Aróstegui et al., 2015) because neoliberalism has contributed to redefining what it means to be a citizen as a person who participates in society when he/she forms part of the market-consuming goods (Apple, 2006). For this reason, it is necessary to make a change that promotes an educational approach that could bring together both perspectives, the economic and the civic or the humanistic one (Apple, 1995; Rusinek & Aróstegui, 2015). Educational reform legislation in Spain has followed a similar route because it is a country that forms part of the European Union and OECD. The best example of an education legislation strongly marked by neoliberalism was LOMCE (2013) whose policymakers were from a conservative political party. Some remarkable aspects were an evaluation based on a quantitative approach and the reduction of hours for Music subjects in schools to achieve an education focus just to form productive students for a business and economic model. Given this situation, some authors claimed an opposite paradigm to return to a critical approach for giving more importance to the citizen field in education (Díez, 2018).

To promote this area of citizenship, a training model based on critical pedagogy (Carbonell, 2015; Giroux, 2010; Giroux et al., 2020; Kincheloe, 2008) tries to break the strings of the neoliberal policies so that citizens can recover their voices and improve society with the horizontal participation of all those involved. In other words, an educational model that trains citizens committed to the community context who participate in improving it. This educational perspective to face the neo-liberal paradigm on education focuses on critical pedagogy so that education is a strategy to transform social context, using reflection and dialogue as tools that allow students to become critical citizens who act to improve the society to which they belong (Freire, 1970).

A citizen could only be a critical person within a democratic space where he or she could participate in experiences to improve his or her daily process. Dewey (2022) understood democracy as a lifestyle that impregnates all the experiences of a person so that humans can be free in every aspect of life. Not just being free as a consumer of goods but also a person who participates in making decisions with the community for the improvement of the social context (Narayan, 2016). Practicing democracy could only be done with skills such as the use of criticism and reflection to form a more responsible society with problems and issues from the community. Reflection is an excellent strategy to encourage critical and responsible people to act to transform the community context. Authors such as Haste (2017) and Westheimer and Kahne (2007) consider that using reflection to be a critical person is the key to forming a society with democratic citizens who search for justice. Freire (1970) understood reflection as a strategy to think about what aspects are the cause of generating a problem and what solutions exist. This pre-task encourages people to be concerned about the challenges to affect the context and how they could help to solve them. Nevertheless, this strategy should be used with dialogue among every person from the community. This action contributes to forming students who will become critical agents to participate in the improvement of the social context (Giroux, 2010). This kind of citizen should be promoted from education so that every person can acquire the skills to practice democracy and be a committed citizen to improve the context. Thus, it highlighted the importance of promoting the citizen sphere in the school curricula to create an educational project that trains in skills and abilities for democracy and citizenship (Díez, 2018).

In this sense, could art contribute to this training of critical citizens? Art could be a key for this purpose if art is considered a field connected to the community context and its participants. Thus, the school training should include a vision of art related to the context so that art could be a strategy to face problems and challenges that current society presents. The goal would be to

achieve an artistic citizenship in which art is a tool to form critical citizens committed to improving society. Authors such as Elliott et al. (2016) present a model of art through which it is intended to train a socially responsible and constructive citizen to help make the world better, fairer, and more equitable, and oriented towards making people work for the functioning of the community. Music should not be an exception, so it should deal with issues from context to think of a solution through musical experience. How could this paradigm be developed from music education? A strategy could be to include a social and critical perspective of the school curriculum about Music. This approach plans to shape a critical music education perspective which Woodford (2005, 2019) theorized as a mixed approach that focuses not only on musical aesthetics and practice but also on fostering critical musical thinking about the issues from context. In other words, music education, as part of the compulsory school curriculum, cannot be disconnected from school and community (Allsup, 2016; Elliott & Silverman, 2015; Woodford, 2005), as it should also contribute to the training of these citizens who participate on shaping a more critical and fairer society.

On a general scale, an example of an educational approach that gives more importance to the citizenship aspect is the Learning Communities Project (LC). This initiative develops a series of educational practices known as Successful Educational Actions to achieve simultaneous improvements in both educational performance and school coexistence (Included project, 2012). All its principles stem from the critical pedagogy approach theorized by authors such as Freire (1970, 1997). LC uses the educational participation of the community and dialogical learning. This kind of learning is the result of dialoguing among people regardless of whether they a teachers, students, or volunteers in the community. This learning seeks validity from people's arguments instead of the hierarchical position at school (Aubert et al., 2004). Dialogue is formed among people from the community although they have different ages or knowledge levels. Dialogue is the paramount

element developed in the community for the construction of students' learning (Botton, 2015). An LC school does not work if dialogue is not the main aspect that influences every action of the school; thence it is the basic principle for the development of an LC school (García et al., 2013).

Despite all the research carried out around this educational project, I did not find enough references about the work of school music education from the perspective of LC as a whole, beyond one of the Successful Educational Actions known such as Dialogical Music Talks (e.g., Chaib, 2006; Mariño, 2022; Olvera-Fernández et al., 2023). Thus, the following research questions guided this study: (1) How did music teachers carry out their subject based on the LC project?; (2) How could music education based on the LC project contribute to training in the area of citizenship; (3) What role do music teachers have as critical educators for the development of music education connected to the community when they teach in a school recognized as LC center?

2. Method

This research is based on a qualitative perspective to under-stand the connections and interactions between the different factors that act in each specific case (Stake, 1995). I used the case study research methodology because I found that the characteristics from the context of the case added much information hence, I needed to take into consideration elements from the context of every case. Thus, I conducted two case studies, one in Primary Education and the other in Compulsory Secondary Education during the academic year 2018/2019. The primary school was in a mountain town in southern Spain with 5,000 inhabitants and a middle-class community. The secondary school was in a town in southern Spain with 17,000 inhabitants and a middle-class community but a high unemployment rate. The Education Administration regional office qualified both schools as LC centers. I chose these two schools because they reported

the availability to participate in the research as well as they were in a region near the city where I worked as a university lecturer. Each case study is of an instrumental type (Stake, 1995) because it helps to describe and understand the reality of a school that works under the LC project approach. However, it is also a collective or multiple case study (Stake, 2006), as I examined both cases to make a collective interpretation of the same research questions, making a naturalistic generalization (Stake, 1995), because every case shows some specific aspects, although both schools worked under the LC project approach.

The tools for the data collection were the documentary analysis of the LC project for each school, non-participating observation sessions, and semi-structured interviews with students, the music teacher, and family members of the students from each school. The documentary analysis studied the documents with information related to the LC project for each school. Furthermore, I carried out 33 hours of observation sessions in each school between January and April, about two hours per week. The observation sessions focused on Music for each group in every school. Besides, I observed other activities held in every school for its contextualization such as special events for the whole school where every student could participate in different workshops about culture and social aspects. The participants as students for observation sessions were chosen according to parents' authorization. On the other hand, I interviewed the students whom the music teacher indicated to me had better speaking skills.

The documentary analysis and the notes I took from the observation sessions formed a list of different aspects to be dealt with in the interviews such as music in an LC school, including educational participation from community members, dialogical learning, coexistence at school among students, and people from community and the future of the LC project for the school. I conducted semi-structured interviews with different groups of people from every school. I conducted three group interviews with four students in each school, one interview with the music

teacher, and one group interview with two family members who are volunteers for the project. I conducted five interviews in every school to know the perspective of each collective about aspects studied during the observation sessions. I carried out one interview with two teachers opposed to the LC project in the Secondary school.

I carried out an analysis by categorical summation of content analysis (Stemler, 2015) to form a direct interpretation. Also, I used the direct interpretation of some of the data because of the relevant information it contained (Stake, 1995), such as reflecting cultural, social, and personal aspects of the researcher (Simons, 2009). The trustworthiness of the data came from the triangulation of tools for the data collection and participants (Martínez, 2007) comparing the information extracted from documentary analysis, non-participating observation sessions, and semi-structured interviews.

The analysis of the data allowed the results to be classified into two categories. The first category consisted of the teaching and learning of knowledge and skills for training in the citizen field through the subject of Music. The second category consisted of the role of the music teacher as a critical educator in the training of citizens committed to the transformation of the community context.

3. Results

Learning for training in the citizen field through the subject of Music

The Music subject under the LC project approach

These two schools did not follow a specific methodology for being an LC center. Neither was there a model of pre-established activities (except for the Successful Educational Actions such as the Dialogical Music Talks and the Interactive Groups). In general, the participation of the educational community, the use of resources

from the environment, and the use of dialogical learning made a difference in the music classes from other music classes. In this aspect, the Primary Education music teacher spoke about the general orientation of the subject of Music and learning towards training for the citizen sphere:

> At an LC school, you have to focus on competencies, the awareness of the improvement of the environment, of the use of resources that you have around you. It is more oriented towards improving as a citizen rather than acquiring certain curricular contents. It helps you remember that the school is within an environment, so you open the door so that the school could be a key element to improve the community context.

During a 3rd year of Primary Education class, students used dialogue between the members of each group as a learning resource for instrumental practice of a song on the recorder from reading and rehearsing the score to the final performance by groups.

> Lucía: How could we play these bars?
>
> Marcos: I think every note measures one beat and this one is a rest. To me, it is difficult to play the low C note.
>
> Sonia: I feel the same, but the teacher said that it is normal. My sister gave me a tip: close this hole with your finger very well and think about the note when you are playing it. (Primary Education Students).

The students worked in groups and helped each other. The music teacher acted as a guide and advisor to the student. This teaching approach clarifies the subject of Music plans according to the LC project. The primary music teacher commented: "We are not teaching a subject that is called 'musical language', but we are making an excuse for a subject that is 'artistic education' for the sake

of developing certain skills such as expressing opinions, dialogue with people, working in groups or reflecting on social issues".

In the case of Compulsory Secondary Education school, the music teacher commented:

> In general, I work on the democratization of the classroom. For instance, my students decide what kind of activities and the amount of these they will do. Also, every student evaluates himself/herself according to the activities they did. I think it is positive for students to learn to organize themselves, to be autonomous, to make decisions, but also to know how to express themselves or to seek information for themselves.

These two ways of developing the subject of Music are working under the LC project approach which facilitates training students as citizens who can collaborate and make their own decisions through musical experience.

Didactic strategies for the learning of Music

The main resource used in this educational approach was dialogical learning. This is the strategy that guided each of the performances that took place in the music classroom and in the rest of the subjects, which impregnated the whole school, being a way of developing and relating between the people of the educational community. I could observe this in the general dynamic for every activity among groups or whole groups of students as a tool for learning. Also, I observed how community volunteers promoted dialogue skills among students when they collaborated on activities in classrooms. Every volunteer for each activity group encouraged students to use the dialogue among other classmates from the activity group. They reminded students to talk among themselves and collaborate to do these activities. Volunteers made questions to students such as "Does anybody in the group think that is not the correct solution?" or "Do you agree with your classmate's

argument?". The Primary Education students commented that it was a resource that helped them to learn and also to get to know other students and improve the coexistence in the school. This was an omnipresent strategy at both schools as a resource for learning, but also as a dynamic for connections at school. A volunteer at the Secondary school commented: "Dialogue is something fundamental because it helps students to be good collaborators, and to work as a team". I observed the presence of dialogue at the two schools and found that it was a key strategy that influenced every activity.

Moving on to the music classroom, one of the Successful Educational Actions was the Interactive Groups. Students, in groups of four people with a volunteer from the community for each group, carried out the musical activities related to language and music theory, using dialogue as a tool to resolve them. Volunteers' actions consisted of facilitating and encouraging dialogue between all group members. The teacher was the guide and adviser in the dynamics of performing the activity. The students dialogued, reflected, debated, and reached agreements with other classmates, but also with the volunteers. I could observe this in Interactive group activities in the Primary school or when students shared their opinions about music listening in the Dialogical Music Talks (DMT) at both schools. There was a dynamic of exchanges with people who were very different from them, such as the volunteers. Students could talk to volunteers about several issues despite having different interests. In response, the Primary Education students commented that they liked learning in this way because it was fun and because it allowed them to talk to each other. In addition, they stressed that they not only learned things related to music but also how to work in a group and participate with other people like the volunteers from the community context.

At the Secondary school, there were no Interactive Groups in the subject of Music, but there were in other subjects such as Spanish Language and Literature. However, the primary music teacher conducted a DMT in which the students also used the

dialogue to give their impressions of listening to music. Students from both schools valued this dynamic learning positively:

> Paula: The topics we deal with are not common, so when you work on them you get very important things out of them. We learn curiosities, but also values, which are very important. (Compulsory Secondary Education student).
>
> Toni: We work in groups, we dialogue, we help each other, and we understand things better. We express ourselves and share our opinions with the rest of our classmates. (Primary Education Student).
>
> Mireia: Both my classmate and I study Music (as an extracurricular activity), but it is different because here we learn a lot about composers and new things. (Primary Education Student).

A kind of learning to train citizens

This learning approach offers a way to develop citizen skills through music that could be useful to participate in a society with different points of view and opinions. If they want to improve their social context, they would have to reflect on what problems exist and how they could solve them. To this end, they would have to dialogue with other people from the community and start a collaborative process for action. In other words, students have the chance to be trained as citizens who reflect on the social context and participate actively in building the society they want. The music teacher told me how this dynamic has produced a continuing interest in students to know more about different issues. Sometimes students asked questions about why they always study the same music composers or why they did not study female music composers. Concerning the secondary school, the music teacher commented on how this approach to

learning generates greater participation in students, even with students who have disruptive attitudes as I could see during the observation sessions. He highlighted the value of this strategy to offer students to reach knowledge, enjoy it, and understand it by sharing the meaning of a piece of Western music, such as Baroque, Romanticism, or experimental music from the 20th century. In addition, two students who were in the 4th year of Compulsory Secondary Education provided a retrospective view of this form of learning under the educational principles of the LC project, highlighting that it allowed them to listen to their classmates, the ideas they had to the point of knowing them more and better.

In general, both music teachers based their actions for learning music on the educational principles of the LC project, although they also developed other learning dynamics of their own, always following the LC principles. One example is the use of the various resources of the environment so that they form part of the music teaching-learning process, either in the music classroom or in music activities in events for the whole school such as the Values Market (at the primary school) or the Cultural Week (at the secondary school). The most used dynamic was establishing connections between school and community, in particular with local associations and volunteers that used their knowledge and practice to share with students. It was paramount how the Secondary school organized a Cultural Week with different activities (percussion workshop, literature talks, crafts workshop, etc.) which were conducted by people from the community. Furthermore, I saw the promotion of autonomous work on the curricular contents for students and the democratic organization of the classroom at the secondary school as a learning dynamic that the Secondary music teacher used by own when every student decided what activities would do, what kind of activity and how many activities his/her would do to get a mark for every evaluation period.

Critical positions to the LC project approach

On the other hand, the LC project did not have the unanimous support of all the teachers in either of the two schools. I was not able to collect any testimonies from any of the teachers, from the primary school because they refused to talk to me to due their opposing perspectives on the project. The primary head teacher informed me about this reason. The rejection was so great that the renewal of the project could not be possible for the following years in the primary school. The school would not have the official certification as an LCcentere for the next academic year. However, both the music teacher and other teachers who support the LC project and the head teacher told me that, in general, the educational process in the school would continue under the LC project principles although the school would not have the certification. They insisted that these principles were part of the way this school understands education. On the other hand, from the secondary school, I interviewed two teachers and they gave me their reasons for their position towards the project. They commented that the quality of education in general at the school was declining because learning levels lowered due to the implementation of Successful Educational Actions and other learning dynamics. This kind of evaluation could be connected with a neoliberal vision of assessment more focused on a quantitative paradigm. However, the music teachers at this school indicated the improvement in terms of results and the exchange between family members and students due to interactions with people from the community influenced learning.

I could observe that both schools showed that teaching and learning based on this approach were not focused on curricular contents exclusively, otherwise training people who could think, reflect, and dialogue in groups, but also pay attention to issues from the context. Both music teachers understood the subject of Music as a way to educate citizens' skills through musical experience.

The role of the music teacher as a critical educator in the training of citizens committed to creating a democratic and transformative society

The music teacher as a leader for a school based on the citizen sphere

At both schools, the music teacher was the coordinator for the LC project in the school. They were different music teachers but they both coordinated the development of the project in their schools, not only regarding the implementation of the Successful Educational Actions and other learning dynamics, but also in the interaction of every person who is part of the context. At primary school, the music teacher talked about his experience in this aspect:

> The fact that there is only one music teacher per school and that he is involved in this project, because you stand out more, so you know every student and I have contact with every student's family. Also, I participate in the organization of every activity at the school, I make the most of it so that there are many workshops related to music.

The observations showed how the music teacher was the person who connected the music classroom with everything related to LC. The families from primary school associated the music teacher as the factor that allowed the development of the project for educational success for students and the school.

> Researcher: What actions do you think make this project successful?
>
> Lucía: The music teacher. He also encourages you to come. He motivates you to come.
>
> Susana: The teacher is the most important part but above all in music because he motivates them a lot to like the subject.
>
> (Family members of Primary Education students).

Besides, at the secondary school, a mother who was the coordinator of the volunteers from the community highlighted the role of the music teacher in the development of the project and commented: "We are very happy with Ricardo, who brought the LC project to this school because it allows us to enter the classroom and help our children, which is the main thing for us". In both schools, I observed centers that allowed people from the community to participate in educational activities, and in two cases family members from both schools told me that this action had changed the vision from community to school. Now they considered the school a place from context where they could participate to create the school they want for their children. On the other hand, music teachers from both schools told me how coexistence at the center had changed positively both among students and people from the community. Now community perceives teachers as co-workers to improve education for their children so they get involved strongly in the educational process for citizens of the future. Thus, this collaboration process transforms the context into a place where teachers, students, and the community participate actively in its improvement.

Teaching actions to promote autonomous students

On the other hand, students valued the role of the music teacher in introducing the subject in a motivating way and encouraging autonomous work by them:

> Alejandro: The teacher organizes many activities in groups so that we have fun making music that we start to like. (Primary Education student).

> Pili: I learn a lot more this way because we choose a topic that the teacher passes on to us and we must prepare ourselves to explain it to the whole class. (Compulsory Secondary Education student).

> Saray: The teacher has left us free to be creative. He does

a lot of things; he has a lot of initiatives to contribute to making the school better and to motivate students. He organizes the Cultural Week, conducts the choir, the radio workshop... The music teacher should be the most valued of all. (Compulsory Secondary Education student).

This positive evaluation by the students towards the music teacher at the Secondary school is due to some dynamics of learning based on principles of autonomous work and consensual evaluation. During the observation sessions, I could observe three moments in Secondary music classes. During the first one, the music teacher guided students about several kinds of activities or short projects that students would have to do over the academic term. Students decided how many activities they would do. The evaluation session happened on the third one. Every student presented the result of the activities and evaluated himself/herself according to having achieved the agreement of activities to do during the academic term. Thus, the music teacher followed a process in which students evaluated their results in terms of his/her previous agreement. Apart from that, other teachers from this school also gave a good evaluation of the music teacher because he fostered a proactive climate towards pedagogical innovation.

A way to understand education with the participation of the community

On the other hand, at the secondary school, two of the teachers who opposed participating in the LC project argued that they had been refused by people from the community to enter the classroom. These teachers considered them to be interfering because they perceived the classroom as a space only for teachers with specific training for this purpose. They added that this situation generates a crisis of the teacher as an intellectual authority which fostered some of the teachers in both schools to have a negative position to people from the community. The rest of the teaching staff and families perceived this opposite position from some teachers as a risk for the project to continue developing in the

coming years. Teachers and families mentioned the music teacher, as the coordinator of the project, as the key to continuing to use this approach to learning based on the educational principles of the LC. There was a coincidence as both music teachers were the coordinators for the LC project in their centers. In both cases, they were interested in creating a school that could transform the social context and create citizens for the society. The families showed their willingness to continue to participate educationally in the school whenever the teachers needed it, even though the Educational Administration did not recognize the school as an LC center for the following academic years.

4. Discussion and conclusion

The results show that these two schools are carrying out some Successful Educational Actions specific to the LC project (Included project, 2012) and other learning dynamics that appear as good practices for the teaching and learning of music. These allow teachers to teach music not only from an aesthetic point of view and/or musical practice but also to think and reflect critically on music to connect it with the issues that concern the community context of students. One of the examples is related to gender issues since primary students wanted to know female music composers because they identified that they always studied the same male music composers every year. This perspective comes from the critical music education approach (Abrahams, 2005; Allsup, 2016; Elliott et al., 2016; Woodford, 2005). Thus, the subject of Music deals with specifically curricular musical contents, but also encourages knowledge and skills that seek to form autonomous people who can search and select information and be critical in their participation in society. Thereby, music education could contribute to training citizens who have skills to reflect on issues from the community to participate actively in the improvement of the context. Music education could be a strategy to think about how social context could improve thanks to citizens' participation. This dynamic of action is because a democratic space exists where

a person can make decisions about the future which implies the power of participation in every aspect of life as a strategy to train citizens for a democratic society (Dewey, 2022). In the Secondary case, students searched for information to do every activity about a music group or how to build a musical instrument. On the other hand, in the Primary case, every student had to search for information about the music composer who composed the music play that they would listen to in the DMT. In a general way, it contributes to promoting training for citizenship within the current formal education system because students are learning the necessary skills to participate in a society where the citizen field should recover importance (Rusinek & Aróstegui, 2015).

One of those strategies that allow educational practice to connect to context is the DMT, which is an opportunity for students to talk about and reflect on issues that affect society, as well as providing them with an opportunity to research these issues. In this sense, Chaib (2006) adds that with the DMT every student may share what he or she listened to using dialogue as a tool to acquire new learning. This promotes students' dynamic to inquire more about the subject being dealt with, to ask themselves about questions gender for some contents and even to show more interest in the theoretical musical aspects. The students expressed a positive perception towards this approach to the subject of Music, as they considered that their learning was greater and faster, both in musical matters and in skills for coexistence in society. Always with dialogical learning is a key tool, which facilitates an approach based on argumentation and critical thinking from students (Aubert et al., 2009; Flecha, 1997; Freire, 1997) but also on practicing democratic participation in schools (Dewey, 2022) from students and people from the community. Thus, this approach allows teaching music in schools under a perspective in which the paramount element is the connection between school and community context. In this way, an education approach based on the inclusion of the citizen sphere as well as the economic one is possible (Rusinek & Aróstegui, 2015). Thinking

about education in such a manner contributes to highlighting that teachers should plan an education process to train citizens who could transform the context and not only teach to get the highest marks on an evaluation test such as the PISA.

Dialogical learning proves as a methodological strategy that guides educational processes at school and in music classrooms, improving educational output in the music classes. Especially in terms of being an artistic subject that could develop skills and abilities oriented towards the training of a critical citizen who actively participates in transforming the community context, since dialogue is the instrument of essential value for the existence of a democratic society (Freire, 1997). On the other hand, dialogue also appears as a tool for communication between school and context, which facilitates the educational participation of community volunteers although it requires a daily dynamic to use dialogue to perceive it as a strategy to communicate and participate in a democratic society. Both students and families showed their satisfaction that this participation is taking place for the sake of educational output and coexistence. This occurs when the school establishes what it understands from the educational community and what the collaboration of the agents from the community context will consist of for the educational process of students (Traver et al., 2010). This way, the interaction between the school and its context becomes more solid, having a common objective such as creating a transforming educational space that forms part of the context to respond to the needs and problems that affect the community (Beane & Apple, 2007).

These two music classrooms have a music teacher who acts as a pedagogical leader who develops educational practices committed to community context and social justice. Both teachers included participation from community people to connect the school with community context and they used a teaching dynamic that facilitated students to reflect on issues from their context. These two music teachers are leaders who guide students' conversations to develop a music education that could deal with issues from

context so that music education could be more connected to challenges from society (Allsup, 2016) and whose pedagogical action is based on dialogue and reflection for the construction of knowledge (Abrahams, 2005). A teacher who organizes his classroom democratically understands democracy as a way of life that permeates all people's experiences (Dewey, 2022). Also, the teacher interacts with people from the community constantly so that they become a learning resource within the classroom. Thus, music teachers not only faced the task of the educational process but also counted on the participation and involvement of people from a community context. Families from both schools and other teachers collaborating on the LC project perceived these relations and this climate. It contributes to a greater appreciation of the role of the music teacher because they play a connecting role between the school and all the community members (Benedict, 2012). In addition, the music teacher leaves aside his or her image as a responsible person to organize the musical events of the school to be considered the key factor in communication and participation between the school and the community.

However, some teachers criticize the very close connection between school and context, in particular people from the community entering the classrooms for educational participation. This is the first threat these teachers feel about this learning dynamic. These teachers opposed and criticized constantly of what the project does, in particular this aspect because they considered that only teachers could offer curricular knowledge. Therefore, other people like volunteers from the community were not qualified to participate in the classroom. Their rejection of the project went as far as not to express their opinion to anyone who was not part of the teaching staff, as happened in the Primary school case. Thus, the main reason against the development of an LC school clashes with one of its key elements such as the opening of the school to the community and one of the Successful Educational Actions like the educational participation of the community, which Botton (2015) says is the key to improving educational output and social opportunities.

The results showed that in both schools the music teacher has been the promoter of this approach to learning that is open to the community and aimed at contributing to the training of critical citizens. His role as the project coordinator is perceived as the core of all the work and the resulting improvements on the students, both in terms of educational output and in terms of coexistence in the school. In addition, at secondary school, the music teacher is considered by the rest of the teachers who support the project at school as a pedagogical leader who motivates the teachers to participate in innovations that contribute to the transformation of community context through education. It is this leadership that Martín (2009) comments on as one of the keys to introducing teaching innovation into schools as it generates a climate of change towards improving the school and the community context.

This leadership also influences the future of the school as an LC so that it can continue to function according to the principles of the project, such as dialogical learning and educational participation of the community. Given the opposition of some teachers at both schools and the non-renewal of the project for the next academic year in the case of the primary school, the students, their families, and other community volunteers reflected on the importance of the LC project. They consider that the project improves the educational output of students and develops training oriented towards the citizen sphere. This way, the LC project is working towards a social and cultural transformation of both schools to achieve an inclusive education with equal opportunities for everyone (Flecha et al., 2003). This approach could contribute to a vision of an education that highlights the value of the citizen field, which could be a strategy to face the paradigm of neoliberal education. Nevertheless, breaking with the neoliberal system in a Western society seems to be a hard task nowadays although authors such as Rusinek and Aróstegui (2015) express a mid-term position with an idea of an education based not only on economic issues but also on social justice ones. However, institutions such as the European Union or OECD are more focused on education for

the workforce so it is necessary to paramount a critical approach to education that seeks to train students who could work in a collaborative way to transform society (Giroux et al., 2020) .

In conclusion, the subject of Music following the LC project involves several learning dynamics which, through dialogical learning, motivate students to learn music but also contribute to the training of students who are concerned about issues from a community context. This educational-musical approach helps to create a school connected to the context, as well as to form critical citizens committed to the transformation of social space. Therefore, a music teacher is needed to act as a critical educator who connects music with the context, recognizes problems from context, and thinks solutions through musical experience as well as using dialogue as a resource for learning. This whole approach could balance towards an educational perspective oriented not only towards the economic sphere but also towards the citizen one. Thus, this educational-musical approach could be constituted as a new argument in defense of music education within the compulsory school curriculum in Spain. Music education could have a relevant role in training people with a sense of active and democratic citizenship to actively participate in the transformation and improvement of the community context.

References

ABRAHAMS, Frank. Transforming Classroom Music Instruction with Ideas from Critical Pedagogy. **Music Educators Journal**, USA, v. 92, n. 1, p. 62–67, 2005. https://doi.org/10.2307/3400229

ALLSUP, Randall E. **Remixing the Classroom**: Toward an Open Philosophy of Music Education. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2016. 198p.

APPLE, Michael W. **Education and Power**. 2nd ed. Great Britain: Routledge, 1995. 236p.

APPLE, Michael W. **Educating the "Right Way"**: Markets, Standards, God and Inequality. 2nd ed. Great Britain: Routledge, 2006. 372p.

ARÓSTEGUI, José L. Exploring the Global Decline of Music Education. **Arts Education Policy Review**, United Kingdom, v. 117, n. 2, p. 96–103, 2016. https://doi.org/10.1080/10632913.2015.1007406

ARÓSTEGUI, José L.; LOURO, Ana Lúcia; DE OLIVEIRA, Ziliane Lima. Las políticas educativas de reforma y su impacto en la Educación Musical Escolar: De dónde venimos y hacia dónde podemos ir. **Revista da ABEM**, *Brasil, v. 23, n.* 35, p. 24–34, 2015. https://bit.ly/3pWdehP

AUBERT, Adriana; DUQUE, Elena; FISAS, Montserrat; VALLS, Rosa. **Dialogar y transformar**: Pedagogía crítica del siglo XXI. Barcelona: Graó, 2004. 144p.

AUBERT, Adriana; GARCÍA, Carmen; RACIONERO, Sandra. (2009). El aprendizaje dialógico. **Cultura y Educación**, Spain, v. 21, n. 2, p. 129–139, 2009. https://doi.org/10.1174/113564009788345826

BALL, Stephen. J. Neoliberal education? Confronting the slouching beast. **Policy Futures in Education**, United Kingdom, v. 14, n. 8, p. 1046-1059, 2016. https://doi.org/10.1177/1478210316664259

BEANE, James A., & APPLE, Michael W. The Case for Democratic Schools. In Apple, Michael W., & Beane, James A. (Eds.). **Democratic Schools**. 2nd ed. Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2007. p. 1–29.

BENEDICT, Cathy. Utopian Visions: Emancipatory Possibilities. In Benedict, Cathy, & Schmidt, Patrick (Eds.). **The Place of Music Education in the 21st Century**: A Global View. New York: Teacher College, Columbia University, 2012. p. 64-77.

BOTTON, L. La dimensión instrumental en las comunidades de aprendizaje. **Intangible Capital**, Spain, v. 11, n. 3, p. 350–371, 2015. http://dx.doi.org/10.3926/ic.659

CARBONELL, Jaume. **Pedagogías del siglo XXI**: Alternativas para la innovación educativa. Barcelona: Octaedro, 2015. 296p.

CHAIB, Danilo. M. El Aprendizaje dialógico y una nueva dimensión instrumental: La tertulia musical. **Idea Sostenible**, Spain, v. 3, n. 13, p. 3–6, 2006. https://bit.ly/394LKzp

DEWEY, John. **Democracia y educación**: Una introducción a la filosofía de la educación. 8th ed. Madrid: Ediciones Morata, 2022. 320p.

DÍEZ, Enrique. J. **Neoliberalismo educativo**: Educando al nuevo sujeto neoliberal. Barcelona; Octaedro, 2018. 112p.

ELLIOTT, David. J., & SILVERMAN, Marissa. (2015). **Music Matters**: A Philosophy of Music Education. 2nd ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2015. 568p.

ELLIOTT, David J.; SILVERMAN, Marissa; BOWMAN, Wayne D. **Artistic Citizenship**: Artistry, Social Responsibility, and Ethical Praxis. New York: Oxford University Press, 2016. 612p. https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199393749.001.0001

FLECHA, Ramón. **Compartiendo palabras**: El aprendizaje de las personas adultas a través del diálogo. Barcelona: Paidós, 1997. 160p.

FLECHA, Ramón; PADRÓS, María; PUIGDELLÍVOL, Ignasi. Comunidades de aprendizaje: Transformar la organización escolar al servicio de la comunidad. **Organización y Gestión Educativa: Revista del Fórum Europeo de Administradores de la Educación**, Spain, v. 11, n. 5, p. 4–8, 2003.

FREIRE, Paulo. **Pedagogía del Oprimido**. Madrid: Siglo XXI, 1970. 256p.

FREIRE, Paulo. **A la sombra de este árbol**. Barcelona: El Roure, 1997. 170p.

GARCÍA, Carmen; LASTIKKA, Anna L.; PETREÑAS, Cristina. Comunidades de aprendizaje. **Scripta Nova. Revista Electrónica de Geografía y**

Ciencias Sociales, Spain, v. 17, n. 427,7, p. 1– 12, 2013. http://www.ub.edu/geocrit/sn/sn-427/sn-427-7.htm

GIROUX, Henry. Rethinking education as the practice of freedom: Paulo Freire and the promise of critical pedagogy. **Policy Futures in Education**, United Kingdom, v. 8, n. 6, p. 715–721, 2010. https://doi.org/10.2304/pfie.2010.8.6.715

GIROUX, Henry; RIVERA-VARGAS, Pablo; PASSERON, Ezequiel. Pedagogía Pandémica. Reproducción Funcional o Educación Antihegemónica. **Revista Internacional de Educación Para La Justicia Social**, Spain, v. 9, n. 3e, p. 1–7, 2020. https://revistas.uam.es/riejs/article/view/12199

HASTE, Helen. **Nueva ciudadanía y educación:** Identidad, cultura y participación. Buenos Aires: Paidós., 2017. 293p.

HORSLEY, Stephanie. The Politics of Public Accountability: Implications for Centralized Music Education Policy Development and Implementation. **Arts Education Policy Review**, United Kingdom, v. 110, n. 4, p. 6–12, 2009. https://doi.org/10.3200/AEPR.110.4.6-13

HORSLEY, Stephanie. Facing the Music: Pursuing Social Justice Through Music Education in a Neoliberal World. In Benedict, Cathy; Schmidt, Patrick; Spruce, Gary; Woodford, Paul (Eds.). **The Oxford Handbook of Social Justice in Music Education**. New York: Oxford University Press, 2015. p. 62–77.

INCLUD-ED PROJECT. **Final Include-ed Report:** Strategies for Inclusion and Social Cohesion in Europe from Education. Barcelona: Universidad de Barcelona, 2012. 7p.

KINCHELOE, Joe L. La pedagogía crítica en el siglo XXI. In McLaren, Peter, & Kincheloe, Joe L. (Coords.). **Pedagogía crítica:** De qué hablamos, dónde estamos. Barcelona: Graó, 2008. p. 25-69.

MARIÑO, Aida. **El aprendizaje dialógico en el aula de Música**: Tertulias musicales dialógicas en 2º de la ESO. Trabajo Fin de Máster,

Universidad de Oviedo, 2022. Oviedo: Repositorio Institucional de la Universidad de Oviedo, 2022. 102p.

MARTÍN, Elena. Profesorado competente para formar alumnado competente: El reto del cambio docente. In Pozo, Juan I., & Pérez, María P. (Coords.). **Psicología del aprendizaje universitario**: La formación en competencias. Madrid: Ediciones Morata, 2009. p. 199-216.

MARTÍNEZ, Raquel A. **La investigación en la práctica educativa**: Guía metodológica de investigación para el diagnóstico y evaluación en los centros docentes. Madrid: Centro de Investigación y Documentación Educativa (CIDE), 2007. 132p.

NARAYAN, John. (2016). **John Dewey**: The global public and its problems. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016. 192p.

OLVERA-FERNÁNDEZ, Javier; OCAÑA-FERNÁNDEZ, Almudena; MONTES-RODRÍGUEZ, Ramón. Escuchando al estudiantado a través de sus preferencias musicales: Tertulias dialógicas, una oportunidad para una educación musical crítica. **Revista Electrónica de LEEME**, Spain, n. 52, p. 178-195, 2023. 10.7203/LEEME.52.27382

RUSINEK, Gabriel, & ARÓSTEGUI, José L. Educational Policy Reforms and the Politics of Music Teacher Education. In Benedict, Cathy; Schmidt, Patrick; Spruce, Gary; Woodford, Paul (Eds.). **The Oxford Handbook of Social Justice in Music Education**. New York**:** Oxford University Press, 2015. p. 78–90.

SIMONS, Helen. **Case Study Research in Practice**. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2009. 200p.

STAKE, Robert E. **The Art of Case Study Research**. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 1995. 192p.

STAKE, Robert E. **Multiple Case Study Analysis**. New York: The Guilford Press, 2006. 342p.

STEMLER, Steven E. Content Analysis. In Scott, Robert, & Kosslyn, Stephan (Eds.). **Emerging Trends in the Social and Behavioral Sciences**. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc, 2015. p. 1-14.

TRAVER, Joan A.; SALES, Auxiliadora; MOLINER, Odet. Ampliando el territorio: Algunas claves sobre la participación de la comunidad educativa. **Revista Iberoamericana sobre Calidad, Eficacia y Cambio en Educación**, Spain, v. 8, n. 3, p. 97–119, 2010. https://bit.ly/3ogrRMn

WESTHEIMER, Joel, & KAHNE, Joseph. (2007). What Kind of Citizen? The Politics of Educating for Democracy. **American Educational Research Journal**, USA, v. 41, n. 2, 237–269, 2007. https://doi.org/10.3102/00028312041002237

WOODFORD, Paul G. **Democracy and Music Education**: Liberalism, Ethics, and the Politics of Practice. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005. 176p.

WOODFORD, Paul G. (2019). **Music Education in an Age of Virtuality and Post-Truth**. London: Routledge, 2019. 156p.

Acknowledgments

Publisher

The ideas expressed in this article are the responsibility of their authors and do not necessarily represent the opinion of the editors or the university.