

Educating music teachers in the new millennium: Current models and new developments

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Abstract

The main aim of every teacher education programme is to educate competent teachers and to develop necessary professional qualities to ensure lifelong teaching careers for teachers. In various countries different traditions of educating teachers of music have been established following the traditions and needs of each country. The aim of this study is to present and generalise an overview of the most common models of music teacher education in Lithuania (with a focus on Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences) and other countries, so as to highlight the main features that might initiate discussion of critical issues in the context of music teacher education nationally and internationally. The article focuses on pedagogical study programmes of Music Education as well as on similarities and differences in their curricular. The research on models for teacher education in the best foreign higher education institutions creates conditions for adoption of the most successful international teacher education practices.

Keywords: Initial music teacher education, teacher education curriculum, teacher education models, study programmes.

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1. Introduction

Changing socio-cultural and economic context and its indetermination in future have influence on teacher education, which is required to meet the increasing need to solve issues of education of the society (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Universities and colleges are more frequently invited to relate the content of higher education studies with future professional activity and to create study programmes based on competences. In various countries different traditions of training teachers have been established following the traditions and needs of every country (Flores, 2016; Rasmussen & Bayer, 2014). Many of the countries share similar statements of aims set for their education systems. According to Creese, Gonzalez and Isaacs (2016), most of the countries strive to combine both the development of personal qualities in students with overarching economic goals for the country.

Leveraging high-quality teacher preparation has been the main focus of educational reform in many countries (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). The main aim of every teacher education programme is to educate competent teachers and to develop necessary professional qualities to ensure lifelong teaching careers for teachers. Challenges facing teacher education in many countries should be examined in terms of various political and cultural contexts of their individual situation (Craig, 2016). Initial teacher education has been discussed from a wide range of perspectives, focusing on its structure and curriculum, on field experiences and coursework and the interplay between them, as well as on the learning experiences of student-teachers, argued that the structure of education is not only shaped by history, culture and economics, but also increasingly dictated by politics. The music teacher education system has been analysed by a number of researchers (Groulx, 2016; Li, 2016; Menezes, 2015).

1.1. Problem statement

The main research questions are as follows: what are the most important priorities and models in education of music teachers in Lithuania and other countries? What are further trends of this development and possible problem-solution techniques?

1.2. Purpose of study

The aim of the study is to highlight the specific features of the development of music teacher education, delineating the situation in Lithuania, other countries and discussing perspective directions of this development.

2. Method

A big number of authors emphasise the significance of socio-cultural context implementing teacher education (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Taking such a socio-cultural perspective into account, this paper presents a critical review of the current state of the music teacher education in Lithuania (with a focus on Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences) and other countries (in Europe, China), so as to highlight the main features that might initiate discussion of critical issues in the context of music teacher education nationally and internationally. Following the data obtained from the analysis of legal and political educational documents, scientific sources, general curriculum of comprehensive schools and study programmes, the article explores most common models of teacher education and discusses the content of pedagogical study programmes of Music Education as well as on similarities and differences in their curricular.

3. Results and discussion

3.1. Models of initial teacher education

The aim of teacher education in Lithuania is to train qualified teachers, who are able to respond to current urgent needs of personal, social and state's development, to educate an independent individual for predictable future, who is flexible, open, responsible, creating and able to solve problem and to adapt to constantly changing environmental conditions (Del pedagogu rengimo reglamento patvirtinimo pakeitimo, 2017). Teacher training has to create conditions for prospective teachers to acquire competencies necessary for performance of constantly changing roles of an educator.

Two models of initial teacher training are applied in Lithuania: the concurrent (when subject-specific and professional education of a teacher are conducted simultaneously) and the consecutive (when teacher's professional education is organised after subject-specific education) ones. Both teacher training models are provided for in 'On Approval of the Regulation of Teacher Training Replacement' (Del pedagogu rengimo reglamento patvirtinimo pakeitimo, 2012) and they have certain advantages and disadvantages.

The concurrent model is the main one, when students get an individual subject training as well as pedagogical subjects and a certain number of practical activity credits at school. According to Sedereviciute-Paciauskiene and Vainoryte (2015), the concurrent teacher training model ensures the opportunity to integrate the pedagogical field placement into studies when pedagogical experience, alternately with theory, develops into pedagogical competencies through student's reflections, which leads to maturation of the student's personality. It can be agreed that only concurrent studies can address current needs.

The consecutive model of teacher training is relevant for those graduates who have a subject degree but have no teaching qualification. The qualification is acquired in one year (60 ECTS), after studying 30 credits of pedagogy, subject didactics, psychology and completing 30 credits of teacher training practice. It is thought that consecutive studies are good for people, who perceive their pedagogical vocation later. The model is also used seeking to faster educate teachers in case of their shortage. However, two-year pedagogical studies are too short for the teacher's socialisation, revelation of his/her identity and integration of subject-specific knowledge into subject didactics (Saliene, 2016).

In Europe pedagogues are trained in accordance with both the consecutive and concurrent model, though there is a noticeable trend to extend pedagogical studies and raise the standards of teacher training (Eurydice, 2015). Subject(s) teachers, special education and social pedagogues have to obtain the Master's degree learning according to both the concurrent and the consecutive models. At present 17 European countries (Czech Republic, Germany, Estonia, Spain, France, Croatia, Italy, Luxemburg, Hungary, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Slovakia, Finland, Sweden, Iceland and Serbia) require the academic degree of the Master for teachers. As it can be concluded from the international research studies, longer duration of teacher education is linked to better quality of teaching and higher learner achievements. International experience of Finland, the UK and the USA shows that teacher education is more and more directed towards education of teachers of several study subjects emphasising their interdisciplinary education.

In many other countries, the duration of teacher training differs depending on the fact whether the goal is to become a primary school teacher or a secondary school teacher. For example, in China three types of institutions educate students to be teachers (Ingersoll, 2007). The first type is known as the secondary teacher school, which is actually a specialised secondary school that prepares students to be teachers in primary and pre-school education. The second type is the normal college, which prepares teachers for junior-secondary schools. The third type is the normal university, which is a

four-year undergraduate university that confers bachelor's degrees and prepares teachers for senior-secondary schools. All these institutions are public schools.

3.2. Music teacher education curriculum

The main problem faced implementing the change in curriculum up to now has been teacher education. Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences is the most important teacher education institution in Lithuania. The study programme of Music Education differs from the other study programmes in its focus on deeper psychological pedagogical training, conditioned by the educational profile of University. The deep background in methodological and practical experience, creativity in educational process and a wide range of learned instruments are the strong aspects of this programme.

The goal of the study programme is to train a music teacher with higher university education, who possesses a theoretical scientific research-based understanding of music education, is able to creatively organise and to communicate and collaborate implementing high-quality music education considering the diversity of learners and their individual needs, who has obtained fundamentals of continuous personal and professional development as well as strong determination and motivation to work in music education (Lietuvos edukologijos universiteto, 2013).

Table 1 shows the regulation for credits needed to obtain teaching certificate. Courses in the teaching profession are the same no matter which type of teaching certificate is to be obtained. The scope of the bachelor's degree curriculum is 240 ECTS credits (it includes a module of pedagogical studies of 60 ECTS credits). Full-time studies take 4 years whereas part-time studies last 5 years. The qualification acquired is the bachelor's degree in certain subject and the teacher's professional qualification.

Table 1. Credit hours of curricular domains of Lithuanian university of educational sciences

Curricular domains	ECTS credits
Module of study subject (or a group of modules)	90
Study subjects established by the faculty and selected by a student	From 45 to 66
Study subjects established by the university and selected by a student	9
Module of general university study subjects	15
Module of pedagogical studies	60
12 credits for Final bachelor thesis	
Total (Bachelor's degree)	240

The study programme consists of five study modules (or module groups): module of study subject (90 credits), study subjects established by the faculty and selected by a student (45–66 credits), study subjects established by the university and selected by a student (9 credits), module of general university study subjects (15 credits) and module of pedagogical studies (60 credits). The curricular structures of other teacher education institutions in Lithuania are similar to meet the regulation for obtaining teaching certificates (Lietuvos edukologijos universiteto, 2013).

Comparing the study programme 'Music Education' with other countries ones, it is necessary to note that university programmes of music teacher education are characterised by a wide variety of forms and content (Otacioglu, 2016; Zhang, 2013). Taking into account foreign programmes of music teacher education, differences in their curricular structure, the content of taught study subjects (courses), volumes and forms, credit hours and course durations are observed. However, all curricula now include educational sciences, didactics and practical training along with musical and instrumental content knowledge.

For example, in China all the curriculums can be divided into three parts: general education (49–64 credits), subject knowledge (79–106 credits), pedagogy and teaching training (52 credits). Subject

knowledge is emphasised more than pedagogical knowledge according to the curricula framework (Zhang, 2013). Table 2 shows the structure of the curriculum in the Capital Normal University (China).

Table 2. Credit hours of curricular domains of capital normal university (China)

Curricular domains	Credits
General education	43 (compulsory), 8 (selective)
Discipline basic curriculum	18 (compulsory), 4 (elective)
Subject core curriculum	30
Subject oriented and development curriculum	35 (compulsory), 15 (selective)
Teaching practice	25 (compulsory)
Teacher education	12 (compulsory), 15 (elective)
Total (Bachelor's degree)	208

Emphasising subject knowledge more than pedagogy and education practice may have two sides: on one hand, it may offer prospective school teachers with adequate academic training and knowledge background; on the other hand, it may make teachers lack the skill to know children well and to understand their learning. Teacher education, differing from other higher education, should satisfy the needs of current school teaching (Kayange & Msiska, 2016).

3.3. Pedagogical studies of a subject teacher

The pedagogical studies in Lithuanian initial teacher training consist of 30 ECTS credits for theoretical studies: Pedagogy, General and Social Psychology, Systems of Education and Special Pedagogy, General and Social Psychology, Developmental and Educational Psychology, Health Education, Subject Didactics and 30 ECTS credits for Teaching Practice. The studies provide for the Final Work of Pedagogical Studies that integrates theory and practice and completes the pedagogical studies in the study programme (see Table 3).

Table 3. Module of pedagogical studies at Lithuanian university of educational sciences

Pedagogical studies	ECTS credits
Pedagogy	5
Systems of education and special pedagogy	3
General and social psychology	3
Developmental and educational psychology	5
Health education	3
Subject didactics	8
Teaching practice	30
Practice of teacher assistant (10 ECTS)	
Teaching practice under supervision of mentor (10 ECTS)	
Independent teaching practice (10 ECTS)	3
Final Work of pedagogical studies	
Total (Pedagogical studies)	60

Teaching practice is considered to be the most important part of pedagogical studies (Dėl pedagogų rengimo reglamento patvirtinimo pakeitimo, 2012). Pre-service teachers should be practitioners who continuously analyse and contemplate, i.e., reflect on their activities. The analysis of real educational problems and reflecting on personal experiences allow pre-service teachers to seek for fresh knowledge and competencies, which are needed for the improvement of teaching practice as well as

for the increase of professional motivation, and, thus, 60 ECTS credits are not enough. The tendency to increase the block of pedagogy-related study subject is observed in EU countries. In Denmark and Turkey the volume of professional pedagogical studies has been increased up to 90 credits. Ireland, France and Iceland have moved from 60 to 120 ECTS credits (Eurydice, 2015).

Though at present students in Lithuania are spending much more time of their studies completing their teaching practice than earlier, not all the trainee students are sent to the best teachers, most frequently this teaching practice is not properly financed to enable mentors and university teaching practice tutors to properly monitor and guide the growth of trainee students. Sheridan (2016) states that development of pedagogical beliefs of students in the study field of education is the main component seeking improvement of teaching practice.

4. Discussion

The problems of education have been intensively discussed in Lithuania recently. There is an abundance of recommendations for how to change the system of education and how to prepare teachers to meet all the expectations. However, having been through several educational reforms in Lithuania, we face the situation, when the teacher's profession is absolutely depreciated: due to low turnover of teaching staff the professional community has become rather closed, young and full of new ideas teachers do not go to schools and school learners' achievements tend to gradually deteriorate (Saliene, 2016). The analysis of OECD (2017) provides obvious reasons why the situation in education is as it is. The main reason for it is that Lithuania dramatically reduced financing of education in Lithuania in the period of 2008–2014, whereas other countries (Slovakia, Czech Republic and even Russia) increased or reduced it to a smaller extent (Latvia and Estonia).

The analysis of scientific literature has shown that in Lithuania the teachers' training is oriented towards theoretical knowledge; moreover, there is no system of licensing, a very weak relationship between higher education institutions and schools of general education; the system of teachers' training is not practically applicable for lifelong learning; the content of study is very little oriented towards the fostering of new skills and competencies; the process of teachers' training is not sufficiently improved and etc. Therefore, many experts in the sphere of education seek to establish the need to change the paradigm of educators' training (Abramo, 2011; Sheridan, 2016). The present-day training of teachers has to be focused on the personality development as well as on a future specialist's preparation for life.

The creation of the teacher's identity employing significant, practice-related, targeted experience and reflection confirm what it means to be a teacher. Reforming teacher education in Lithuania, it is important to reflect on how the chosen model can influence the creation (or not) of the professional identity of the teacher and, in its turn, what influence it can have on a learner. Following the new teacher education model in Lithuania, the selection of entrants to pedagogical studies will be improved seeking to attract not only most motivated but also the most gifted students.

The reform of teacher education system has been promoted by a number of factors such as significant changes in our life, new generations and a need to address current challenges: necessity to communicate in foreign languages, openness to the world and mobility, individualised education and accessibility to quality education. Intercultural competence of a teacher is of utmost significance considering current changes in educational environment (Lasauskiene, 2017). Contemporary and future school needs a teacher, who is of broad and non-standard thinking, is educated not only in the narrow field of a study subject but is also able to integrate knowledge of other sciences. It is important to emphasise that vocation and ability to communicate with learners are exceptional features of a teacher. Moreover, certain idealism, a wish to constantly improve and a sincere desire to involve a learner into the process of education are also essential.

5. Conclusions

Teacher education has acquired utmost significance and has to address the diverse and constantly changing needs of learners and society. Naturally, the functions of teachers and preparation to perform these functions have remained the object of discussions in the 21st century. In Lithuania as well as in other countries the need for improvement of the quality of teacher education is underlined. Assuring quality and improvement of teacher education in a higher education institution gain significance as well.

The experience of educating music teachers at Lithuanian universities has long traditions and is quite original. However, a combination of intercultural, foreign language, subject and pedagogical knowledge and skills are not enough for studies training prospective music teachers. Therefore, it is necessary to increase a block of pedagogical studies, to seek for a dialogue between subject teachers and subject didactics teachers building up the teacher's identity. It is obvious that systematic and versatile research on the issues of music teacher education is necessary.

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