

REFLECTIONS ON RESEARCH INTO INTRA-MUSICAL LEARNING PROCESSES

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Background

In music education research, theoretical perspectives and methods are “borrowed” from other scientific disciplines. Especially in studies on intra-musical learning processes (learning while making music) the complex character of music itself in combination with individual experience requires special theoretical and methodological considerations.

Aims

In this paper, an attempt is made to map out conditions for intra-musical learning processes in order to adapt and develop theory and method for this area.

Main contribution

In intra-musical learning processes, aurally based instrumental craftsmanship is combined with intellectual understanding of written documents, from which music is to be individually recreated. On an individual level, aural (listening), visual (viewing and reading), motor (playing) and emotional (image of the music) aspects are represented. Notation requires an immediate coordination of intellect and emotion in order to achieve musical expression. On a socio-cultural level, musical practice and conventions of expression, as well as traditions of instrumental training are combined.

Implications

This means that an historical, socio-cultural perspective of collective and individual aspects of practice in music and music education are important. So is the prerequisite of individuals. Most important of all, though, is the emotional aspect of music that unfortunately is so difficult to conceptualise. These aspects concern not only the music and the participants in a study but also the researchers, who need to identify their own pre-understanding.

The emotional aspect requires thorough ethical considerations concerning the data collection as well. Interviews and observations might need to be complemented with performed music and gestures used in order to explain emotional aspects that cannot be described in words.