

## 8. POSSIBLE APPROACHES TO THE CONCEPT OF COLLABORATIVE TEACHING IN THE “MUSIC ANALYSIS” COURSE. BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES

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**Abstract:** *The concept of Collaborative Teaching is one of the innovative approaches to learning, which has changed the view of traditional teaching methods by involving two or more teachers in training a single group. The process involves a variety of flexible teaching methods that meet the learning needs of all students, while developing their communication, collaboration, critical thinking and creativity skills. Artistic education in the university environment contains two main biases, theoretical and practical (performance), which are divergent in the way of manifestation and collaboration between teachers. The applicability of the concept of Co-Teaching in performance is relatively intuitive, with a sporadic concretisation and no visible results in students' evolution. As regards the theoretical part of the musicians, the collaboration in the teaching process could be an important tool for correlating the information obtained at different disciplines in different fields (harmony, counterpoint, music history, folklore, aesthetics, stylistics, music theory, music analysis, etc.), but also to actively acknowledge the importance of a complex vision on the formation of a complete musician.*

**Keywords:** *Co-Teaching, music analysis, collaboration, methods*

### 1. Introduction

The central learning outcome of the *Music Analysis* discipline is to educate the skills necessary for the discovery and deep understanding of the main musical structures used in instrumental and vocal repertoire. But the ultimate goal of the course is not only the acquisition of theoretical knowledge, but essentially the acquisition of techniques to approach and perceive music from the point of view of the compositional thinking, of constructive details as a preliminary stage of the formation of a complete picture of the opuses approaches by the instrumentalists.

Considering the preference of music students for practical subjects and less for the theoretical or analytical ones, the use of innovative methods for teaching the *Music Analysis* course becomes necessary as a way to diversify course dynamics, stimulating both interest and creativity of the students and the inventiveness and motivation of teachers. In this context, the concept of *Co-Teaching* is an option to the traditional teaching method by abandoning the status of sovereignty of the instructor and including him in a forming cell composed of two or more teachers with equal responsibilities and participation in the teaching process.

Literature on this subject are very much concerned about the use of the team teaching method in special and specially integrated education, but many

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studies have demonstrated the benefits that collaborative teaching brings to the pre-university and university school environment (Thousand, Villa & Nevin., 2006; Bouck, E., 2007; Anderson, R. S. & Speck B. W., 1998; Ennis, R., 1986 etc.).

The definitions of the *Co-Teaching* syntagm have been formulated more simply or more complexly, generally or with more or less significant details, thus providing ideas for an extremely varied constitution of the teaching team. Buckley (2000) states that there is no universal approach to the concept of *team teaching* and proposes the following definition: “Team teaching involves a group of instructors working purposefully, regularly and cooperatively to help a group of students learn”. This approach is closely linked to many factors such as teaching methods, learning philosophies, interpersonal skills, and the level of education. Other definitions focus on the different components of learning or teaching, including the participants in the process:

A method of instruction that brings together two teachers of equal status to create a learning community with shared planning, instruction and student assessment. (Bouck, 2007; Crow & Smith, 2005). Two or more professionals delivering substantive instruction to a diverse, or blended, group of students in a single physical space. (Cook & Friend, 1995) Anderson & Speck (1998) emphasise the multitude of definitions given to the phrase *team teaching*, some of them contradictory due to the attempt to define the phenomenon through the methods and means of organising the teaching team: “an approach in which two or more persons are assigned to the same students at one time for instructional purposes” (Gurman, 1989, p. 275); “two or more instructors collaborating over the design and/or implementation and evaluation of the same course or courses.” (Hatcher, Hinton & Swartz, 1996, p. 367); “two or more teachers accepting responsibility for the same group of students.” (Ennis, 1986)

Within the *Music Analysis* course, the application of team teaching can be tackled in two main directions: the unidisciplinary one with the involvement of two professors with the same specialty, but providing different views upon the topic of the lesson, and the multidisciplinary one with two or more teachers of different specialties, but related to the analytical field: performing theory, musical stylistics, harmony. A possible interdisciplinary association that goes beyond the musical sphere, but which can provide practical solutions to future instrument teachers, is the association with the didactic field, the results focusing on the ways in which the musical score, once understood in all its details, can be explained to a student.

## **2. Advantages and challenges in approaching the Co-teaching method (literature review)**

Although definitions are multiple, suggesting a variety of styles for approaching team teaching, there is a general consensus on its benefits and strengths. In this respect, Andersen (1991) gives an important conclusion on the impact of collaboration on the teaching process: “in well-controlled studies both teachers and pupils have been shown to prosper”. (p. 47)

**Advantages of using the *Co-teaching* method for students:** maintains interest and enthusiasm (Hinton & Downing, 1998, Letterman & Dugan, 2004), emphasises cognitive strategies (Walther-Thomas, 1997), simultaneously improves academic performances and interpersonal skills (Benjamin, Johnson, (Harris & Watson, 1997), develops teamwork skills (Kapp, 2009), promotes interdisciplinary learning (Davis, 1995; Letterman, 1997) (Wilson & Martin, 1998), optimises the teacher-student relationship (Wilson & Martin, 1998), the student enjoys more attention from the teacher (Walther-Thomas, 1997) by means of progress monitoring, provides individual assistance, uses practical activities for deepening the notions, contributes to strengthening the cohesion of the student body (Walther-Thomas, 1997).

Anderson & Speck (1998) list the advantages of a team teaching approach to student learning efficiency: it offers multiple perspectives on the same concept; increasing the effective participation in the learning process by encouraging dialogue with students and the model of dialogue between trainers; correct feedback and assessment. A study by Dugan & Letterman (2008), focusing on the students' assessment of three models of collaborative teaching versus the traditional one, demonstrates that there is a certain preference for the courses supported by a team of teachers. On top of the preferences, there is a lesson in which two teachers are involved simultaneously and equally, and the last place, where an extensive team of teachers takes part. In the study, this latter pattern appears to present the most obstacles due to the possible lack of communication between team members, which may give the feeling of the course being disorganised, causing frustration among students.

The benefits are also relevant to the professional development of doctoral students who are preparing for a university career. The method can be both encouraging and challenging for them, developing their self-awareness and the desire for self-improvement. At the same time, by involving doctoral students with experience in different fields, the educational offer of the institution is thus extended. (Chanmungam & Gerlach, 2013)

**Advantages of using the *Co-teaching* method for teachers:** provides the opportunity to participate in more complex discussions and learn from the experiences and teaching methods of (Davis, 1995, Letterman & Dugan, 2004, Robinson & Schaible, 1995, Lin & Xie, 2009), integrated curriculum<sup>60</sup>, increases professional satisfaction, offers opportunities for development and professional collaboration (Walther-Thomas, 1997), provides additional flexibility and variety of course (Lin & Xie, 2009).

**Difficulties in applying the method** (Lin & Xie, 2009): space and equipment, lack of necessary skills in related fields, correlation of team members' schedules, additional tasks, lack of support from the administration, coordination and settling of conflicts between teachers, longer course

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<sup>60</sup> The integrated curriculum aims at a certain manner of organising and planning learning, which leads to an interrelation of disciplines and study objects, making connections between what students learn and their life experiences. (<https://blog.eintegral.ro/abordarea-integrata-a-curriculum-ului-scolar/>) accessed on 05.02.2018

preparation time than in the case of the traditional method, requires a longer adaptation period.

### **3. Types of team teaching that can be applied within the *Music Analysis* course**

The literature (Thousand, J., Villa, R.A., & Nevin, A.I.) offers four basic types of teaching a team course, according to the role that each teacher can have in the actual teaching process. Each of the four models can be applied in the *Music Analysis* course.

1. *Supportive teaching or the participant-observer model* (Helms, Alvis and Willis, 2005) involves both teachers at the same time, but with different roles: one teaches and the other observes and interacts only when questions are asked.

Within the *Music Analysis* course, the observer role can be held by a teacher of the same specialty or by a teacher with solid competences in this direction, but specialised in a related discipline (stylistics, aesthetics, harmony, counterpoint, composition, etc.). The main advantage of this method is the ability to observe students, how they work in a team, but especially to provide personal support in the event of lack of clarity, difficulty in communication, understanding tasks or even realising the connection between the student and the main teacher. The main challenge of the method is the risk of blocking communication between students while attempting to ensure the continuity of the teaching act.

2. *Parallel Teaching* – class is divided into groups and each teacher teaches learning content to a single group. The method has a variety of variants (eight of them detailed by Thousand, J., Villa, R. A., & Nevin, A. I. ), however due to the specificity of the *Music Analysis* discipline, involving the study of the musical score while repeatedly listening to it, only some of them can be applied, and only partially or with adaptations. Of these, the easiest to use are:

- *co-teachers rotate* - can be introduced in the practice-oriented courses of musical score analysis, and the lead role can be alternated between the two teachers in the pre-teaching section of the applications;

- *each teacher is in charge with a different component of the lesson*. For instance, in the course regarding the sonata form, the exposition can be taught by the first teacher, while the development and the recapitulation are taught by the second teacher;

- *learning style focus* – each teacher works with a group of students, mainly using a certain teaching strategy – auditory or visual. The method can be used by adapting to the specifics of the discipline *Music analysis*, especially in the case of multidisciplinary courses (the combination between *music analysis / musical aesthetics*), where the same information can be presented by the two teachers in a different way. For example, for the *Tragic and dramatic in classical musical discourse* theme, *Symphony no. 40* by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart can be used as a practical application, being analysed from the perspective of the determination between structure and meanings. The two groups of students in which the class is organised can work in a different way: starting from the audition of the work and then specifying the elements of

language that represent a reflection of the *tragic* and *dramatic* concepts – harmony, melody, rhythm, orchestration, timbrality etc., or, starting from the analysis of the score, to suggest the way that structure and form elements may represent starting points in creating meanings. The novelty of the course can be achieved through the final confrontation of the results of the two groups of students, followed by a synthesis of the conclusions regarding thematic.

Possible challenges that the *parallel teaching* method can bring are related to creating a routine in student grouping and assigning the same teacher to a particular group. Keeping the heterogeneous character of the group and the rotation of the instructors gives students the opportunity to interact with as many individuals as possible, while also benefiting from the approach and experience of each teacher. Also, it is recommended to avoid bringing teachers who are not familiar with the group of students, an aspect that can minimise their communication with the instructor assigned to the group to which they belong.

3. *Complementary teaching* is a complex version of the *supportive teaching* method, in which a teacher is assigned to provide the information content through the lecture method, and the second instructor paraphrases his statements through notes, schemas, diagrams and on-screen projections. Within the *Music Analysis* course, the method can be applied ideally due to the permanent need for audio examples (audio/video), exemplifying based on the printed scores, as well as graphic rendering of the formal structures taught by specific schemes. The method offers the advantage of involving a professor specialised in a discipline other than *Music analysis* but with solid knowledge in this field. Also, students from Masters and PhD programs can be involved, being offered the opportunity to plan and teach with an experienced teacher and thus learn from his didactic experience.

4. *Team Teaching* or *the interactive model* (Helms, Alvis and Willis, 2005) – team members participate together at the actual lecture or the planned activities, with a maximum degree of involvement and in a permanent dialogue with the students. The variant of this type of teaching team is *tag-team teaching* or *the rotational model* (Helms, Alvis and Willis, 2005), in which only one of the teachers, each one in turn, meets with the whole class to cover a certain segment of the course, specific to his specialty. The method lacks the benefit of dialogue and engagement in a real team.

The *team teaching* method is the most dynamic variation of co-teaching, and can be applied both in regular and multidisciplinary *Music analysis* courses. In the case of the unidisciplinary team, a subject may be chosen as *Structural exceptions of the recapitulation in the sonata form*, where each of the two teachers can explain different types of the section with practical analytical examples. For multidisciplinary courses, the process can generate a much more dynamic course than the previous one. Thus, in a combination of disciplines such as *Music Analysis / Performing Theory*, a musical work can be presented by following the sequence of its constituent sections, alternately highlighting the structural and interpretative aspects and the relationship of inter-determination between them. In this way, many details of the musical score can be highlighted

with important expressive meanings, which require a carefully planned interpretation, details which, in a usual analysis, lose their significance without correlation with the practical side, the execution of the music.

To the above methods, a particular typology of courses can also be added, namely *Cluster courses*<sup>61</sup> (Dugan&Letterman, 2008) where several courses are based on a common theme or a course serves as a basis for another course. This typology is adopted in prestigious universities such as Stanford or Berkley (California), which have wide-ranging education programs, very diverse as an educational offer, being especially centred on the multilateral development of the students, organised for a significant period of time (several successive semesters): *Knowledge, Theory and Skills*<sup>62</sup>.

The adaptation of the method to a narrower specialised academic environment can be achieved by creating joint courses based on a common theme. Moreover, within faculties with an instrumental interpretation profile, the disciplines included in the curriculum are designed according to the *cluster courses* principle, so that the concrete application of the method is easy to achieve. The thematic association of the *Music Analysis* course can include disciplines from the theoretical area: music history, musical stylistics, harmony, polyphony, performing theory, artistic didactics, and also from the practical sphere: chamber music, opera class, theatre direction. The students involved in a cluster can meet as they finalise a broader theme debated in parallel in the individual classes in order to draw conclusions about the importance of the connection of the information acquired within them and how they influence the subsequent student experience.

The main challenges that such a program may entail are related to the planning of the thematic correlation between the content of each discipline as well as to the difficulty of organising cluster courses on a regular basis, both in terms of program and course space. However, the advantages of the method are particularly valuable in developing a global vision of the musical phenomenon. This way, the student understands a musical score not only from the point of view of its musical content, but also from the historical perspective of its appearance, the subjective and objective conditions that have determined it, the relationship with the other works composed during the same period, the corresponding style or the composer's creative period, establishing the elements of structural conception, writing, tonal content that determines the general aesthetic expression and the details of expression and atmosphere that will influence the interpretation of the work. An exhaustive vision of a composition enriches the musical experience of the individual, and also creates a mechanism

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<sup>61</sup> Cluster courses provide opportunities to study special themes or historical periods from the perspective of two or more different disciplines at once. Each course is developed to integrate with one or more courses in other fields to show how different disciplines complement each other to form a more comprehensive understanding of a given topic. All courses within a given cluster meet at the same time, so the students can all meet together periodically to explore the cluster theme. In some clusters, the classes meet together all the time so that the different disciplines are integrated throughout the course. (<https://www.umkc.edu/catalog/default/Topic111255.html>, accessed on 12.02.2018)

<sup>62</sup> The three branches of *Cluster courses* at *Stanford Graduate School of Education*.

of perception of the musical phenomenon, which can have a decisive impact on the instrumental and didactic career of the student, perpetuating a complex model of perception with an impact on the future generations of musicians.

A study by Baeten & Simons (2016) analyses the impact of collaborative teaching through the exclusive participation of students (*student team teaching*), undergraduates who already hold a teacher's degree for secondary school (master or doctoral students). Despite the disadvantages due to the lack of experience of the instructors, the experiment also revealed the existence of remarkable advantages such as diversity, the different ways of explaining the subject, the original nature and the engaging character of the course. The method can be used within the musical analysis course in various versions: by the association between the main teacher and the student; by associating two students under the direct guidance of the teacher (on a relatively simple topic or practical application); by involving students in the teaching process by choosing general subjects, whose preliminary documentation does not raise accessibility issues, or has only practical tasks (previously prepared by the team).

The advantages of implementing the *Co-Teaching* method are evident not only for the partners involved in the teaching process, the student/teacher pair, but also for the institution where these types of courses take place. Thus, encouraging teacher collaboration by including them in teaching teams helps create a dynamic and interactive learning environment, provides instructors with a modern, contemporary vision of interdisciplinary thinking, and inspires new research lines and professional partnerships among team members (Leavitt, 2006).

#### **4. Conclusions**

Zhou, Kim & Kerekes (2011) state that “most teachers (...) had no opportunity to think of the connectedness between disciplines. Particularly, the methods courses they took from teacher education programs were often arranged by subjects. They received little training to teach subjects in an integrated way.”

A study by John Goodland on the educational phenomenon, published in 1983 (in the *Phi Delta Kappan* journal), and reiterated in countless other studies so far, warned about the reluctance manifested by teachers in learning to collaborate in the teaching process. “Teachers work in isolation from one another. They view their classrooms as their personal domains, have little access to the ideas or strategies of their colleagues, and prefer to be left alone rather than engage with their colleagues or principals. Their professional practice is shrouded in a veil of privacy and personal autonomy and is not a subject for collective discussion or analysis.

Their schools offer no infrastructure to support collaboration or continuous improvement, and, in fact, the very structure of their schools serves as a powerful force for preserving the status quo. This situation will not change by merely encouraging teachers to collaborate, but will instead require embedding professional collaboration in the routine practice of the school.” (DuFour, 2011). Friend (2000) states that collaboration skills do not occur

naturally, but must be cultivated and refined. Furthermore, “schools should encourage teachers to adopt collaborative learning in a single subject to build a collaborative environment” (Lin & Xie, 2009).

The need for teacher autonomy, cultivated over time by traditional education, seems to be opposed to the principle of *Co-Teaching* in all its aspects, which has led and certainly continues to lead to the emergence of two sides, each with its well-founded arguments. Without undoing the multiple challenges involved in planning and materialising a course organised with a team of teachers, leaving the classroom's comfort zone characteristic to the classical teacher is proven to be beneficial for both the trainer and the student.

In musical education, the correlation of the *Music Analysis* discipline with those referring to musical stylistics, performing theory or musical stylistics and aesthetics in a collaborative course opens up multiple perspectives of approaching a musical score, resulting in a profound understanding of the composition, of the constructive and expressive intentions of the creator, bringing about the opportunity to discover the multiple ways of interpreting it. The simultaneous participation of teachers with different specialisations or even of several teachers with the same specialisation in a collaborative course of *Music Analysis* provides students with an important foundation in creating a new vision of the educational process in which collaboration, respect, professionalism, mutual support and diversity of human beings' personalities are not options but primordial elements.

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