HOW CAN THEORIES OF MODERNITY EXPLAIN CHANGED TEACHING CONDITIONS AT SWEDISH MUSIC AND CULTURE SCHOOLS?

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Introduction  
This article is part of a larger project that investigates how teachers in the Swedish Music and Culture school are positioning themselves, how they construct their students and the teaching conditions. Here I will use the analysis of teacher conversations and then, discuss possible causes related to the teachers accounts concerning changed attitudes among pupils. Theories of modernity are then used in an attempt to explain this change. The aim is to find out if theories of modernity can be helpful in the discussion of changed teaching conditions in Swedish music- and culture schools.

Methodology and Methods  
The study has a discourse psychological approach (Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Potter, 1996; Wooffitt, 2005), a perspective founded in social constructionism and post-structuralistic theory. Discourse psychology also provides tools for analysing the empirical material of the study, which is talk transcribed into text. Data consists of group conversations with teachers from six schools, all together 27 teachers in music (instrumental teaching), drama, media (photo and film), dance and art were participating.

Empirical results  
The results express a discursive fracture concerning the performance of teachers’ profession all related to the changed behaviour of the students. Those changes can be described in two fields, *Then* and *Now*.

*Then* – It was more common with traditional instruments like, flute, clarinet, trombone or bassoon and the teachers are convinced that the pupils then were more familiar with those instruments. The teachers used different instruction books in the lessons, which were adjusted to the specific instruments. Hereby the pupils’ agency was limited and they had to adapt to what was considered as the best instrumental focused progress. The kids showed more patience in the work of learning to play an instrument.

*Now* – Pupils have no persistence any longer when it comes to the activity of learning an instrument, and they are not familiar with traditional instruments. The change among pupils has led the teachers to work more with “have a go at” –activities and popular music. Instead of following instrumental instruction books the teachers tend to pay more attention to pupils music taste and desired progression tempo. The children’s taste of music is to a large extent determined by media. To take part of the activities in the music- and culture schools pupils today don’t need great ambitions, it’s enough with a discoverers attitude.

Theory  
If an overall change among children and youth has taken place, the answer might be found in sociological literature. Theories of modernity elucidate several interesting tendencies in our society.
Ziehe (1989; 2000) uses the concept *detraditionalization* to describe how the influence of traditions and conventions on people’s social reality has eroded. For individuals the consequences of the detraditionalization have a great impact because without support from the traditions, the pressure lies on each person to choose for herself. Other effects of the detraditionalization are what Ziehe names an aura lost in schools and a lack of authority among teachers and adults in relation to students. In this perspective teachers can no longer rely their teaching intentions on normative values grounded in tradition. Instead an effort to motivate the students in every single lesson has become a part of teachers’ everyday work. At the same time they have to work up their authority as teachers and adults. Nothing in the teaching situation can, according to Ziehe, be taken for granted in our age.

Simultaneously western society is caught up in a culture expansion (Jameson, 1989), where art no longer could be understood as self-creating and autonomous, but instead is to be found everywhere in everyday life and in mass culture (Featherstone, 1994). In the time of *mass consumption* the market is in charge for the arts produced, and the expanding of cultural products is not controllable for the intellectuals or the authorities from the modern epoch. The offering of products for sale has increased at the same time as the distance between high and low in art has decreased considerable.

The individual in consumption culture speaks through his cloths, his style, his music, and his choice of activities and things. This demands people to create themselves since self-improvement is constructed as a possibility for everyone, irrespective of age and class (Featherstone, 1994). Art has become more democratised. It is also possible to talk about symbolic consumption (Baudrillard, 1989), where we consume signs in a Saussurian meaning. Our time is recognised by its increasing flow of pictures, mediating a positive attitude to consumption, beauty and youthfulness. Those things together contribute to the *esthetization of everyday life*.

**Discussion**

In relation to the results of teachers’ conversation, theories of modernity have several possible implications.

*Detraditionalization* - The teacher’s authority is not taken for granted by the pupils. Instead he has to fight to create confidence. Even as an adult the teacher has lost the kind of security that earlier was offered by the traditions. If he’s not doing a good job, the pupils lack of respect punish him and his teacher work is questioned.

*Mass consumption* - At the same time teachers and pupils are in the middle of an extreme flow of music and pictures in every day life. The question is if the content of the lessons can compete with the Internet and TV? School has got a rival and the pupil’s references have changed. Today young people can learn playing an instrument with help of professionals on the Internet. Media also offers music that the pupils’ can’t resist, and this is putting pressure on the teachers to adopt the same music.

*Esthetization of everyday life* - For pupils, music is part of a larger context, which is tightly bound up with style and attitudes. They create themselves with the choice of the “right” music and the “right” instrument. For teachers this connection might not be so clear, instead music can stand on it’s own feet. Hereby the question of repertoire becomes delicate. Teachers and pupils have different approaches to music. The pupils don’t want to be associated with something they can’t stand for; it could influence their image!