



Advancing Music Education in

1st Edition

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Routledge

304 pages

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Book title: Advancing Music Education in Northern Europe

Chapter title: An Icelandic perspective on the Nordic Music Education

Community

Publisher: Routledge

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Introduction

In this chapter the aim is to recount my experiences as a member of the Nordic Network for Music Education (NNME) for the past 15 years. The title suggests that my perspective is an Icelandic one, which is justified by the fact that I am Icelandic and have been the Icelandic representative in the network continuously since 2002. However, my perspective and experiences are also influenced by the fact that I lived in Norway as a child and learned Norwegian concurrently with my mother tongue Icelandic. I am also shaped by my education, first becoming a music teacher in Iceland and then completing my graduate studies in music education in Canada and the United States (where I conducted the research for my doctoral dissertation).

The story begins with a brief introduction of the NNME network and its functions, followed by accounts of the increased participation of Iceland in the network and its later expansions to include the Baltic region. Then, I discuss the intensive courses organized by the network, which arguably comprise the most important function of the network. I support these contentions with recounts of student experiences and explain why these intensive courses have been valuable not only for participants but also for the larger community.

The network has faced challenges and undergone significant transitions. The resilience and cooperative spirit of all members in this network have contributed to its long successful life. I provide an example of one major challenge the network faced with the recount of the dilemma that arose early in the new millennium regarding which language should primarily be used in the network.

The field of music education is the main subject of the NNME network and it is the improvement and promotion of music education that all network activity is ultimately aimed towards. In this light, I provide some background information on music education in Iceland and the Nordic region and try to draw some comparisons based on my own personal observations and perspective. Similarly, I discuss the research in music education in the Nordic countries with a focus on my perception of the predominant research culture in our region. Finally, I have made some suggestions that I believe could enrich music education and help move research in the field forward.

The NNME network

The Nordic Network for Music Education has for several years provided a unique platform for the teachers and students in the field of music education to stay in touch and keep informed about similar programs in other Nordic academic institutions. The network facilitates and helps fund teacher and student exchanges (through Nordplus) between participating institutions. Several teachers have visited the University of Iceland in this capacity, from Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Estonia and Lithuania. Likewise, I have made several visits through the same means to institutions in the network, giving talks and hosting seminars with master and doctoral students in music education.

The impact of the NNME network on the academic careers of the participating professors or teachers should not be underestimated. There is little doubt that regularly meeting up with colleagues in neighboring countries has several benefits to the professional lives of those involved. For example, in small communities like Iceland (with its population of roughly 330.000, and approximately 150-200 school music teachers), there is only one academic position in music education, which makes it difficult to create and sustain a professionally stimulating environment around teaching and research in that particular field. In lieu of a local professional community the NNME network provides the much needed professional feedback, encouragement and point of reference for isolated professors and academics, not only in remote locations as Iceland but also for smaller universities and academic programs across the Nordic countries.

Arrival of Iceland in the NNME collaboration

My first contact with the NNME network occurred through a network supported teacher exchange from Bergen University College to the Iceland University of Education in Reykjavik, the fall of 2001. I had only the year before returned from my studies abroad to take the position of Assistant Professor in music education. The visiting teacher was prof. Stein Bakke from Bergen University College, who advocated strongly for Iceland's increased participation in the NNME network. The following year, as the ISME 2002 world conference was held in Bergen, there was an NNME meeting of representatives held at the Bergen University College. I attended that meeting, where I met the network coordinator, Torunn Bakken Hauge for the first time. I immediately understood that her role in the network was important but it was only later that I realized how imperative her initiative and leadership was to the network's operation and success. Without Torunn's vision and persistence, the NNME network would never have had the successes we have enjoyed during those two decades. The inclusion of the Baltic countries in the network is a great example of the impact Torunn has had for the development of this network. The incentive to expand the network came from the Nordplus grant guidelines. Torunn realized that adding members would better our chances of successful applications in an increasingly competitive grant environment. Subsequently, Torunn was the one who single handedly reached out, sending emails to people she had no idea who were. Not knowing whether anyone would respond. This was an example of her vision and persistence. And here we are some years later with a larger and stronger network and wonderful colleagues whom we otherwise never would have been acquainted with.

One could say that Iceland was a passive member of the NNME network before that network meeting in 2002. However, the network's mandate mostly applied to Master students and there was no particular Master program in music education in place at my institution. Therefore, there was not an imminent reason to become highly involved at the time. The Iceland University of Education had accepted teacher exchanges to Iceland instigated by other members of the network and was not actively seeking exchanges for teachers or students from Iceland. Before 2002 Iceland had not participated in activities such as network meetings or organizing intensive courses within the network. From 2003 onwards there was an increased presence of Icelandic participants in the network. Then, in 2008 two things occurred: 1) the Iceland University of Education became the School of Education within the University of

Iceland; and 2) it became mandatory for teachers in Iceland to hold a Master degree. This created more Master students specializing in music education at the University of Iceland, resulting in increased involvement of Iceland in the NNME course planning, execution and participation.

The NNME intensive courses

The weeklong intensive courses of the Nordic Network for Music Education are the hallmark and the pillars of the network. These courses create the core culture of the network and have a great impact on all participants whether teachers or students. One of my fellow NNME colleagues once stated that these intensive master courses are what makes doctoral students. Indeed, it is possible to trace the personal history of several current professional academics in Scandinavia who began their careers as student participants in the NNME intensive courses or had their careers boosted by NNME related activities. Research projects and international collaborations have been instigated through the NNME connections, not just between professors but also involving students.

The first NNME intensive course I attended was held in 2003 in Stockholm and it was intense indeed. The course was engaging, ambitious and densely organized with many lectures and only a few brief breaks between. I did not know any of the other participants and I had not been assigned any role at the course. I just attended as a teacher and network representative from Iceland. Nevertheless, the course proved to be highly engaging and my brain seemed to overspin, taking in a myriad of languages. Danish, Norwegian, Swedish and forms of English with a peculiar Scandinavian-influenced vocabulary and a multitude of quaint accents were all served in one linguistic stew that was challenging to digest. If I would not understand all the Scandinavian languages (except for Finnish, which is different) this may not have been as challenging. The experience was both multicultural and culture-specific at the same time, which I quite enjoyed while I tried to figure out how I would fit into this community. My identity as an Icelandic scholar, educated in North America in quantitative research traditions, was somewhat different from the identities and traditions I encountered there.

One of the first impressions I had concerned the modes of behavior and conduct that is tempting to attribute to stereotypical Scandinavian characteristics. I will try to explain this with a short story from that first course I attended in Stockholm, in 2003. As I recall, we were on the third day of the course and the program had been quite demanding with numerous back-to-back lectures. At one point late in the afternoon, between two lectures, a Norwegian student promptly stood up proclaiming loudly “Jammen nå må jeg ha pause altså!” [English transl.: “Well, now I really need to take a break”] Then he calmly proceeded to walk out of the room. The other attendants looked confused at each other, as the rest of the Norwegian students followed behind him, the room was quickly emptied and the nearby cafeteria instantly filled with chatting students and teachers who all had desperately needed a break.

For me this episode was highly comical to observe, although it is quite possible that others present would recall the incident in a different manner, if they remember it at all. To me it reinforced the stereotype of Norwegians who tend to speak their mind and have only a moderate respect for authority. The Swedes had created an ambitious plan that they decided to uphold regardless of how realistic it turned out, while the Danes and Finns were happy that someone took the initiative to break up a difficult situation and swiftly followed suit.

From this incident we most importantly learned that it was imperative to carefully plan breaks in future NNME courses, and over time I think we realized more and more how essential those social interactions are between students, between teachers, and between students and teachers. The lunch breaks needed to be long enough to encourage inspiring conversations, and constructive coffee breaks could be used for building social and professional networks across academic ranks and cultures.

Languages in the network

Currently, the default language used within the NNME network is English. We correspond in English and the intensive courses are conducted in the English language. However, this was not always the case. In the early days of the network the center of the network activities was in the traditional Scandinavian countries and those speaking Danish, Norwegian and Swedish comprised the majority. Because these languages are so similar it is possible for people speaking these languages to communicate in their mother tongue and understand each other, especially with good

will, patience and practice. In Finland there is a minority that speaks Swedish, and in Iceland the Danish language is a mandatory subject in school, so in some cases the Finns and Icelanders are able to keep up with one of the Scandinavian languages but often they are at a disadvantage when faced with Scandinavian languages they have not learned.

The switch to English as the default language of the NNME network took place during the first decade of the new millennium, even before the Baltic countries joined the network. This transition was met with some opposition by members of the network who were reluctant to give up the Scandinavian languages as the primary mode of communication. Network meetings had often been in Scandinavian languages rather than English, and it was accepted that students from Denmark, Norway and Sweden could give presentations in their own language. Even keynotes were delivered in these languages despite it being known that some participants would not be able to understand them. I vividly remember the frustration expressed by Finnish students after a long keynote speech and discussions in the Norwegian language that they could not follow at all.

For this reason it became important to press for changes in the language protocols. If all participants were to be welcomed to the table we needed to ensure that all could have equal access to the flow of communication. Early in the first decade of the millennia the pressure for change became strong from the representatives of Iceland and Finland, who insisted that there could be no equality or justice in a situation where Icelandic and Finnish students would invariably be forced to use a foreign language (English or a Scandinavian language) while the other students could use their mother tongue for presentations.

The reluctance to make English the main language of communication is quite understandable from the viewpoint of Danes, Norwegians and Swedes who could all speak their mother tongue and still understand each other. A confounding factor was that the Nordic grants we were seeking seemed at that time to encourage and promote the use of Scandinavian languages and the perception was that giving in to English language would constitute a kind of defeat. In fact, the preservation of Nordic languages was one of the principal incentives in the creation of the Nordplus funding operation (Nordic Council of Ministers, 1992). In a report on the Nordplus grant program the language issue was discussed and the suggestion was to give crash courses in the Nordic languages to Finnish and Icelandic members to make it easier

for them to participate actively in networks. The report was written in English and the authors apologized for that fact by explaining that it was for the purpose of external evaluation outside the Nordic region (Nordic Council of Ministers, 1992). Therefore, abandoning the ideology of the common Nordic/Scandinavian language culture and heritage for English as the lingua franca was a large step to take at the time.

Although Scandinavian languages are embraced and cherished in the NNME network, English language has been strengthened as the official mode of communication, which is important for the inclusion of nations that do not speak any Scandinavian languages. The first intensive course where all students and presenters were required to use English in presentations was the course in 2005 in Oslo, Norway. The decision to use English as the default language of correspondence and communication in the network as well as in the intensive courses became even more relevant later on with the inclusion of the Baltic nations, in the decade that followed. Although English is often the third or fourth foreign language learned in the Nordic countries it has been accepted as the most practical language of communication in this network, as seems to be the case in much of global communication (Crystal, 2012). Another important consideration in this matter is that English is the predominant language of scholarly publications and major international conferences in the current international academic landscape. In a network where the purpose is to increase the participants' competencies for academic endeavors the building of English communication skills in a professional context is definitely valuable.

Iceland and the NNME intensive courses

An intensive network course was held in Iceland for the first time in 2014. Until then, the number of Icelandic Master students who had taken part in the intensive courses was only ten in total, but thereof eight participated after 2008 as the Icelandic Master program began to emerge. When the course was held in Iceland, the number of students participating increased and we had a larger number of Icelandic master students than in the previous years for obvious reasons. The high cost of travelling limits the number of students that can attend these courses. However, host institutions can include more of their students because there is no cost of travel for them. Therefore, it is common for students from the host institution outnumber other participants in the NNME courses.

The NNME courses do acknowledge two levels of student participation, where the basic level is for students who participate in all course activities and the more advanced level is for students who also present their own projects. Because the Master program for music educators in Iceland is small, we have organized our program such that student participation in NNME courses counts as assignments in the course they have to take on music education research. Our students could choose between those levels and be compensated with course credits accordingly. Some of the Icelandic master students have taken part in more than one intensive course. They participated on a basic level the first time and present their project the second time they participated. After returning to Iceland we usually had the Icelandic students give presentations for their fellow students back home about their experiences at the NNME course. This way the students were encouraged to reflect on what they learned during the intensive week and the students back home would be exposed to some of these new perspectives.

Students' experiences with NNME intensive courses

Students who participate in the intensive courses benefit enormously from meeting other students at the same level, with similar backgrounds and interests. Music education research is a unique field with particular historical perspectives and its own research culture and traditions. As with any academic field it is important to foster a research culture that reaches out to other similar communities seeking to open up, develop and broaden the scope of scholarly inquiry. Most graduate programs in music education in the Nordic countries are small and in danger of being isolated from similar programs in other institutions.

Through the intensive courses teachers and students become aware of the current issues in research, methodology and practice within the field of music education in communities other than their own. This promotes awareness of new approaches and expands the vision of both teachers and students. Such awareness can lead to changes in programs and practices both at the university level and also in music education practices in schools and in the community. Many of the students who graduate with master degrees in music education become leading figures in their field in schools at all levels and in the community, for example as band-, orchestra- or choral leaders.

Interestingly, even students who have not pursued an academic career testify that the intensive courses became a turning point in their pursuit of the degree. They felt more confident and motivated to complete an ambitious project for their Master degree after taking such a course. The motivation inspired by these courses has had an impact beyond the academic world and into various communities. As one of the Icelandic Master students who participated in 2009 explained:

“My participation in NNME caused me to take my master thesis project more seriously than before. I was debating at the time what I should write about and realized that this project was not just about getting it over and done with. I became motivated to choose a subject that really mattered to me and I wanted it to be relevant and helpful for other music educators. The participation in the course also immensely increased my interest in pedagogical issues, which affected my future efforts to make a difference in my workplace (school) and even in the community.”

Through these courses friendships have formed that have led to further exchanges beyond the academic world. Here is a quote from a student who participated in 2014:

“We created a Facebook group in which the participants could form their own connections and even work together after the course. One of the students [from another institution] came back to Iceland this year and gave a workshop.”

Thus it can be concluded that the format of the intensive courses encourages and fosters personal and professional relationships in and out of academia. Such relationships would not necessarily be formed through a different venue of inter-institutional exchange. The benefits are both in terms of the academic context as well as the professional field of music education.

Music Education in the Nordic region

The strengths of music education research in the Scandinavian region are closely linked with the strengths of music education practices in these countries. That is, the inclusion of popular culture in music education and emphasis on learning methods that are informal and learner centered. Popular music culture has gained

considerable space in Scandinavian music classrooms (), which is unlike what we have seen in most other Western cultures such as the Anglophone British and North American nations we commonly compare to our own. This is to a large extent driven by democratic philosophies in music education (Väkevä, 2006; Väkevä and Westerlund, 2007) or at least coincides with these democratic ideologies in music education. Another strength in music education programs in the Scandinavian region is the inclusion of non-Western methods of music learning such as rote learning, imitation and improvisation based on musical genres and traditions from West-African and other foreign cultures (Christoffersen and Bakken-Hauge, 2000; Hauge, 2012; Hedegaard, 1995; Sæther, 1993). Furthermore, Scandinavian researchers in music education have been leading in terms of their attention to cultural issues that arise with increasing immigrant populations and the resulting implications for music education (Hofvander Trulsson, 2010; Karlsen, 2012; Karlsen and Westerlund, 2010; Sæther, 2008; Ruud, 2006).

In the aforementioned Anglophone cultures, such as Britain, Australia and the USA, it seems that music education has remained more conservative in terms of the predominance of Western music, placing more emphasis on music reading skills and traditional ensemble playing (Hebert, 2011; Mark and Gary, 2007; Mills, 2005; Smith, Moir, Brennan, Rambarran and Kirkman, 2017). Also, the more traditional ways of teaching music through methods such as the Kodály approach seem more prevalent in the Anglo-Saxon cultures than in Scandinavia. However, music education in the Baltic region does not seem to have followed the same path as in Scandinavia. There, the influence of Western art music is more apparent and the emphasis on the preservation of local folk music seems much stronger in the Baltic region than in Scandinavia. The Western art music influence in the Baltic is apparently rooted in the historic ties with Eastern-Europe and the former Soviet Union while the strong sense of preservation of local folk music traditions can be explained by imminent threats to their sovereignty and urgent need for strong national identities.

It is not obvious where to place Iceland in the picture I have just painted of music education in the Nordic countries. To some extent, the popular music revolution has reached the Icelandic music classrooms, but certainly to a lesser degree or at a slower pace than it has in the rest of Scandinavia. For some reason, the typical music education program in Iceland has been strongly influenced by Western choral music traditions and the most common methods in the music classroom draw from the

approaches of Kodály and Orff. Interestingly, choir singing is the only extra curricular musical activity for children, that is offered free of charge. The Icelandic association for school music educators is an active member of the Nordic choral association *Norbusang*, which was established in 1987 and organizes yearly choral singing festivals (Helldén and Johansson, 2007). According to the web site of the Icelandic school music educators association the *Norbusang* is the only major international activity they take part in, which demonstrates the importance of choral music in the official activities of the Icelandic association. Therefore, it is possible to conclude that traditional music education in Iceland has had more in common with the programs we have been introduced to in the Baltic than with music education in Scandinavia. However, such speculations call for further studies in order to be confirmed or refuted.

Music Education in Iceland

The history of formal music education in Iceland is not very long. The first formal music school in Iceland was established in 1930 as the Reykjavik music conservatory (a.k.a. Tónlistarskólinn í Reykjavík) (Sveinbjörnsson, 1997). This was in close collaboration with the Icelandic state radio and the aim was to educate music performers for an Icelandic symphony orchestra. The Icelandic Symphonic orchestra was established two decades later (Bjarnason, 2000). A law on music education was passed in 1963, which created the foundation for state supported music schools for children. As a result, public music schools were established in most school districts around the country. Similar systems are not in place for any other arts than music, which seems to have a particularly strong position in the Icelandic education system (Bamford, 2009). A national curriculum for music schools was created and published in 2000, which details the graded standards for every instrument (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2000). This curriculum has not been revised since and no revisions have been planned to this date. However, no other art subjects have a separate national curriculum outside the compulsory school system as music does. Currently there are approximately 90 public music schools operating around Iceland, with roughly 15.000 students, providing access to music education in all communities and the financial support to the music schools is conditioned and framed by the national curriculum (Grendal and Sigurbjarnarson, 2009). In smaller towns and communities the music schools are run directly by the municipality, often in

conjunction or close collaboration with the compulsory public school system. This is apparent through shared use of facilities and the integration of private music lessons into the students' school day. That is, music students are commonly allowed to leave during regular lessons at their school to attend their private music lessons with the music teacher during the school day. This has been found to provide good results as these students do not suffer academically from this arrangement but rather tend to do well on average in academic subjects (Thorisson and Skulason, 2002). The municipal music schools usually provide music pre-school with basic recorder lessons and private lessons on the most common instruments such as piano, guitar and voice. Opportunities for learning orchestral instruments i.e. strings and wind instruments as well as other instruments, such as accordion and percussion, depend on the available teachers and facilities. Wind bands are more common than string orchestras in rural areas with 37 active school wind bands all over the country. The national school wind band association has been an active member of the Nordic school wind band organization NOMU (Nordisk Orkestermusik Union) since 1999 and organizes yearly nationwide conventions (The Icelandic school band association /Samtök íslenskra skólalúðrasveita, 2014). Private music schools are also in operation in some of the larger rural communities and these schools offer less conventional music studies emphasizing alternative musical genres such as popular music. The city of Reykjavik differs from most of the smaller municipalities in that it does not run music schools itself but rather outsources these services to private institutions. The result is a semi-private, semi-public system that encompasses approximately 18 music schools in Reykjavik although there are at least as many all-private music schools in operation. The cost of music schools for pupils in Reykjavik is considerably higher than in rural areas with a few exceptions such as the wind-band programs in selected school districts where the operation is similar to the close collaboration between compulsory school and the music program in rural areas detailed above.

Iceland differs from most of the neighboring countries in that music education within the compulsory schools is traditionally strong in early childhood education and in the lower grades. However, at the high school and college level music is usually not offered as a subject. Some compulsory schools offer music as an elective subject in grades 8-10 (13-15-year-olds) and a few junior-colleges offer choir as an elective subject. Therefore, music studies are almost entirely confined to the public and private music schools at the high-school level and above.

In Iceland, teachers become certified through completing a Master degree in education. Those who want to teach music can elect music as a teaching subject at B.Ed. and M.Ed. level or they can complete a B.A. in music and then add a M.Ed. degree to become a certified teacher for compulsory school (Grades 1-10). Teachers with this qualification are also employable within the public or private music school system as well as for conducting choirs and bands and as music specialists in early childhood settings i.e. preschools and day-care centers. However, there are no requirements specifically to become a certified music teacher in Iceland. Teachers in music schools have a large range of music studies behind them and many are professional performers e.g. in the Icelandic symphony orchestra. Since 2009, The Iceland University of the Arts offers a master program in arts education, which provides general teacher certificates (for compulsory schools) to individuals with a Bachelor degree in an arts subject. At the University of Iceland, the teacher education program offers a specialization in music education for those who intend to teach classroom music in compulsory schools.

Music education in the compulsory schools

The compulsory system focuses primarily on group lessons in music in grades 1 through 7 and as an elective subject in grades 8 through 10. Traditionally, the school music in Iceland was based on singing and the Icelandic national curriculum from 1965 mentioned singing lessons and singing teachers but not music teachers (Gudmundsdottir, 2008). There are very few textbooks in music from this era but the material that exists contains folk songs and children's songs supplemented with basic lessons in music theory and sight-reading exercises. The early 70's were a growth period for music in the Icelandic compulsory school system. This is reflected in a large section devoted to music education in the 1976 national curriculum and considerable effort in the making of new textbooks for the subject music in grades 1-5. The textbooks and songbooks that followed were strongly influenced by the Kodály approach which is obvious e.g. from the use of movable do and Curwen hand signs. The musical material was a mixture of Icelandic and Nordic folk music. In addition there were introductions of composers of Western classical music and instruments supplemented with audio examples. Although there is some mention of Orff instruments in this material they do not seem to have a large role there. It was not until later that Orff instruments became more common in Icelandic music classrooms.

The Orff approach gained momentum in the 90's when a couple of Icelandic music teachers came back from Austria as certified Orff teachers and gave inspiring courses for practicing music teachers. The Orff instruments continue to be standard equipment in Icelandic music classrooms although singing is the most common and highest valued activity by Icelandic school music teachers (Gudmundsdottir, 2013). In recent years popular music and technology have become increasingly common in the music classrooms. A text book on the history of popular music for grades 5-7 came out in 2007 and in 2013 music teachers were encouraged to use ipads in the classroom e.g. through the Biophilia project instigated by the musician Björk. However, most music teachers seem to be taking baby steps in the use of technology in the music classroom (Gudnason, 2015; Schram, 2016).

Research methods in music education in the Nordic countries

As a researcher with a stronger background in quantitative methods than qualitative methods I have sometimes felt at odds with the overwhelming majority of my Nordic colleagues who mostly employ qualitative methods or philosophical inquiry in their scholarship. This is not to suggest that I recall any real conflicts, for there has always been the utmost mutual respect between all the Nordic scholars no matter their methodology of choice. Working with teachers and students at the NNME courses I have had the opportunity to learn to think in new and challenging ways within novel frameworks. Through the NNME course participation I have sought further knowledge about concepts, such as phenomenology and the German philosophical term “bildung”, which I did not encounter much during my North American graduate studies.

However, as the quantitative scholar in the Nordic group I have also considered it a responsibility to share my perspective on methodology. Although my colleagues and their students hold respect for my choice of research methods I have found it necessary to enlighten and even correct some misconceptions of the purpose and intent of qualitative inquiry. An example of this would be when I presented a study on infants' ability to participate in musical activities. Because I used the word “measure” in the context of observing infants, some in the audience who were used to more qualitative approaches were under the impression that my intention was to rank and rate infants in order to evaluate their individual differences in musicality. I would of course have disagreed with any researcher with such an intention and would not deem

it an ethical endeavor myself. It was challenging to defend my approach and explain that quantitative inquiry does not necessarily lead to hierarchical comparisons of individuals. The purpose of that particular study was to demonstrate infants' advanced musical communication abilities that exceed what the research literature has given them credit for. I had employed quantitative methods, simply in order to demonstrate the predominant abilities of infants at a certain age. For some reason, I have found that in the Nordic context, the motives of researchers are more readily questioned if they choose quantitative methods. To the extent that quantitative findings almost seem to be considered less real than findings achieved through qualitative inquiry. Furthermore, a common misconception that I hear from colleagues unfamiliar with quantitative methods is that researchers who apply statistical measure have an unrealistic presumption about the generalizability of their results. While the underlying basis for many statistical tests is that a properly constructed sample can represent a given population, most researchers applying such tests are well aware that no one study can explain complicated traits and tendencies of a population. In fact, quantitatively inclined researchers are, in my experience, usually most reluctant to jump to simple conclusions based on their results.

Matters of concern

Scholarship in music education research is strong in the Nordic countries and has already gained esteemed recognition within the international research community as elaborated in this book. This can also be seen in the increasing numbers of publications in international music education forums from Nordic authors, as well as citation counts.

However, music education research in the Nordic countries has overwhelmingly been in the realm of qualitative research and philosophical studies. In my opinion there is a cause for concern that very little quantitative research in music education is practiced in the Nordic countries. In comparison to the international venue of music education research, there seems to be an obvious imbalance in the magnitude of qualitative research and the scant quantitative research.

This is a tradition or perhaps a cycle that seems difficult to break because the overwhelming majority of the leading experts in music education in the Nordic countries conduct research using qualitative methods or philosophical inquiry. Therefore, the emerging generation of music education scholars in the Nordic

academic institutions will rarely receive their mentoring from experts in alternative methods of inquiry such as quantitative or other types of research methods.

While it can be claimed that the NNME courses and other network activities have elevated scholarship in music education research in the Nordic countries, more could be done to increase the diversity of methodological inquiry and forms of scholarship. Although this could have already been achieved through inviting more varied scholars from other countries and traditions, its implementation would have been complicated to fund because Nordic funding does not support mobility for scholars from outside the Nordic region. Perhaps in the future, the NNME network should consider reaching further beyond Nordic funding in order to promote and encourage more varied scholarship within the Nordic region.

The Nordplus funded NNME network has been a valuable resource for the music education community in the Nordic countries. It has benefitted programs that create the music educators for the future. The participating institutions, the academics, the students and the local music education communities have been enriched through the exchanges and collaborations facilitated through this network.

Research in music education has grown in the same period of time this network has been operating. This growth would almost certainly have occurred without this network although probably not to the same extent as it has with the help of this network. It is though certain that this network has affected and encouraged Nordic research in music education and will continue to have an impact on the future directions of Nordic music education in research and practice.

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