

Organ Teaching for Children in Norway: An Educational Field in Development

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Abstract: Teaching children how to play the pipe organ represents a radical revision of a well-established instrumental education field. This article provides an overview of organised teaching praxis in teaching children to play the organ, established in Norway in the early 2000s. Commentary on the limited previous research in organ teaching for children is provided, and based upon the findings in these studies and on praxis experience, areas which necessitate further research are identified. The practical teaching experience of the author provides a frame of reference throughout. Selected instrumental teaching studies related to teaching philosophies, motivation and organisational frameworks, as well as teaching materials (textbooks) are also included in the discussion. These aid in identifying areas in which potential and existing tensions in perceptions and methodologies call for study, evaluation and revision. The primary aim of this article is thus to identify and map the educational field's structural parameters (organ schools) and praxis in Norway, and identify areas where further research is required, in order to understand how childhood introduction to organ playing may inform organ education and the organist profession in general.

Keywords: organ education, children, motivation, collaborative learning, learning strategies, organ school, *orgelklubb*, Norway

Pipe organ pedagogy and its related research traditionally have been directed towards adolescents and young adults (Graabræk Nielsen, 1998; Hurford, 1990; Thistlethwaite & Webber, 1998; Steyn, 2009). Formalised

Citation of this chapter: Hamnes, D. S. (2021). Organ Teaching for Children in Norway: An Educational Field in Development. In E. Angelo, J. Knigge, M. Sæther & W. Waagen (Eds.), *Higher Education as Context for Music Pedagogy Research* (pp. 137–166). Cappelen Damm Akademisk. <https://doi.org/10.23865/noasp.119.ch6>

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organ education for children aged 6–14 years requires a radical revision of both learning content and learning design. In that regard, this chapter contributes to explicating the development of organ education for children in Norway, and identifying and mapping formal framework factors and praxis in this field. This chapter presents an overview of instrumental organ education, in which existing tensions amongst structural factors, educational methodologies and requirements call for evaluation, and identifies areas that call for further research. It also identifies how aspects of organ teaching for children may be placed within a sociocultural context. Commentary on the limited body of relevant previous research in organ education for children is provided. An examination of this educational field may facilitate a better understanding of the processes related to instrument choice and the influence of teaching environments. Declining student recruitment to church music education programs appears to be latent in the field (Bjerke, 2020), although empirical data on student recruitment remains to be studied. In relation to this, a deeper understanding of the role of childhood introduction to organ playing could inform both educational and employment outcomes as both higher education institutions and the church (as primary employer) hold vested interests in understanding paths to the organist profession.

This chapter has a descriptive design; it seeks to describe perceived reality and the characteristics of the phenomenon studied (Niiniluoto, 2001). It has four parts. In the first part, I present the main textbooks/learning materials that are currently used in organ education for children in Norway. In the second part, I describe the phenomenon *orgelklubber* (localised communities or schools for organ teaching) as an organisational model in Norway. The third part is an elaboration of textbook studies within the field of instrumental music education as an evolving field of research. In the fourth part, I dwell on “early organ pedagogy” as a separate field of research and conclude with some prospective remarks concerning challenges and possibilities within this field. As an introduction to these four parts, I present the broader field of research to which this chapter contributes.

I have a vested interest in the dissemination and development of knowledge in this educational field, not least in order to inform my own

praxis as an organ educator. I have taught organ to 75 children since 1993, first in Australia and then in Norway from 1994. In 2010, I established an organ school in Trondheim (*Orgelklubben Ludwig*) associated with the Trondheim municipal culture school, based upon models already established in Bodø, Bergen and Re in Østfold. In a broader perspective, I have also taught at organ festival seminars for children in Stavanger, Bodø and Trondheim, and have interviewed and observed pioneering pedagogues in Norway (Bjørn Vidar Ulvedalen), England (Anne Marsden Thomas), The Netherlands (Christiaan Ingelese) and Australia (Jennifer Chou). I also contributed to the establishment of a national network of organ pedagogues in 2019 (KIN, 2020). This experience base provides a frame of reference throughout this chapter.

The teaching materials and practices discussed in this chapter have been collected and utilised in my own teaching practice, and reflect Norwegian organ pedagogy for children. Important informal sources also include innumerable personal communications with pioneering textbook authors on method usage and differing pedagogical approaches, and communication with a network of organ teaching colleagues throughout Norway. While a substantial amount of teaching material has been published in Scandinavia, a larger proportion of teaching material exists only as unpublished, locally adapted arrangements, created to fill a particular teaching need.

A variety of means have been used to find previous published research in this field. Multi-language searches (Scandinavian, German, French and Dutch languages) were carried out in online databases, including Oria and ERIC. The search terms included combinations of keywords “organ” and “pipe organ” as denominators, with the addition of variations, such as “music”, “pedagogy”, “method”, “teaching” and all known textbook author names. Google Scholar was used as a supplementary source. The few relevant results found were related to historical or performance practice-related studies, teaching philosophies, motivation and structural parameters in instrumental teaching, learning strategies and self-regulation of practice and performance (Nielsen, 1998; Steyn; 2009; Kvislen, 2011; Steyl, 2018) as well as on teaching materials in organ education (Kvislen, 2011; Steyl, 2018; Steyn; 2009). A few studies focusing

on organ tuition practices for children were also found; one examining the Suzuki teaching method in organ teaching for children (Steyn, 2009), another considering how teaching content and teaching organisation influence young pupils' interest and motivation (Kvislen, 2011) and a third examining the challenges imposed by prerequisite piano skills on established educational methods for organ (Steyl, 2018). These studies were then examined with reference to relevancy to organ education for children, and factors related to how teaching materials, philosophies and practices influence motivation to play the organ, including choice of instrument, and how socio-religious and socio-cultural factors may influence and challenge the existing framework for organ schools.

As teaching materials are an important parameter in disseminating teaching practices, textbook studies within instrumental education in general are highly relevant. Examples include Blix' study about textbook content for beginner instrumental students (Blix, 2018) and Rostvall and West's (2001) study of interaction and learning in instrumental teaching in Sweden. Furthermore, considerable research has been conducted on one-to-one instrumental teaching as such (e.g. Burwell, 2013; Calvert, 2014; Johansson, 2013; Watson, 2010) and not at least concerning piano teaching (Chmurzynska, 2012; Leikvoll, 2017; Siebenaler, 1997; Speer, 1994; Thomas-Lee, 2003). Nevertheless, basic parameters such as questions related to keyboard proficiency as a prerequisite to organ education, remain unaddressed in peer-reviewed studies.

To the best of my knowledge, which is based upon published studies and personal experience, organ education for children (6–14 years of age) is not yet established as an explicit research area within the field of music education research. Organ education has specific and unique parameters, and studies in instrumental teaching practices are typically instrument-focused. The few studies pertaining to teaching organ to children (Kvislen, 2011; Steyl, 2018; Steyn, 2009) broadly relate to teaching philosophies, motivation and framework factors, as well as to organ methods and other teaching materials included in the present discussion. Framework parameters (including physical and psychosocial issues, as well as learning environments) point to an area which requires further evaluation, and structural factors, such as how organ teaching for children is

organised and contextualised, remains unexplored. Some are obvious: for example, there is a dearth of didactic organ teaching materials for teachers, and the availability of organ tuition and, thus, practice access is not regulated in Norway. The importance of supportive teaching environments is well-documented (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2014, p. 222); little is known about the teaching environments in early organ education. Whilst formal competencies vary amongst organ teachers in Norway, high levels of practical experience and motivation indicate a vital and active educational field. This chapter does not evaluate current teaching practices or structural challenges in the field, as empirical data on a wide range of parameters in this educational field is lacking. These parameters also include information on student ages, gender, previous musical knowledge, geographical location, cohort size and motivational factors associated with instrument choice. Likewise, little is known about formal and informal teacher competencies, experiences, teaching facilities and teachers' use of textbooks and methods. This comprehensive outlook is necessary in order to contextualise this educational field within instrumental music teaching and to enable the identification of areas in which tensions in framework factors call for further evaluation and revision.

Part 1 – Organ Educational Materials in use in Norway

The traditional gateway to learning the organ, which is also reinforced through available teaching materials for adolescent and young adult students, requires the student to first gain experience and proficiency on another keyboard instrument (usually the piano). When at an appropriate technical level and physical height as a teenager, the student might commence at the organ (Sanger, 1990). The first textbook that challenged these assumptions was published in 1990 (Sanger, 1990). These assumptions, which incorporate a number of preconceptions about the accessibility of the instrument (reaching the pedalboard and playing aids requires a certain minimum physical height), student maturity and compatibility, have been challenged (Steyn, 2009), and a change in international practice in organ pedagogy is in progress (Rönnberg, 2020).

A substantial body of organ educational materials directed towards adolescents and young adults has been published internationally. A comprehensive overview and evaluation of this material has not been completed and is outside the scope of this article, although some of these educational materials have been examined in academic studies (Steyl, 2018; Steyn, 2009). Organ educational materials for children without previous keyboard experience have a more recent development history. Practical resources to overcome physical hindrances are widely available in Norway (Ulvedalen, 2020a) and have been in use since the early 2000s, allowing children to play the organ (with pedals) from the age of around 4 years. These tools include fitted pedal blocks, which may be placed over the relevant pedal keys in use (a two-fold advantage ensues, as only selected keys are made available), adjustable benches (both lower and higher than standard) and adjustable pedalboards, which may be raised or lowered. Suzuki organ teachers in Sweden have also pioneered the use of auxiliary pedalboards, which may be placed atop standard-sized organ pedalboards (Rönnerberg, 2020). To date, three comprehensive teaching textbooks for children have been published internationally, all from Scandinavia. These publications are based upon perceived practical teaching needs, informed by feedback from a network of pedagogues in direct contact with one another. Collaboration between pedagogues may also inform future publications, including a proposed database of organ compositions for children.¹

Whilst textbook development work is also ongoing in several European countries (Ingelse, 2006–2018; Kumpe, 2020; Wegele, 2019) and the USA (Leupold, 2013), Scandinavia appears to have a central position measured by the number of published teaching materials (Rönnerberg, 2020; Ulvedalen, 2020a). A systematic review of the publication history of these teaching materials has been undertaken by the author. The first educational publication (Rönnerberg & Hagström, 2006) for teaching children to play the organ is based on the internationally recognised Suzuki method. Its development may be traced back to 1998, and since then, the

¹ A collaborative database of facilitated teaching works for children is scheduled for online access in the first half of 2021. This project is a cooperation between instigator and composer Bjørn Vidar Ulvedalen and publisher *Norsk musikkforlag*. The author is the editor of this database.

series has been expanded to eight volumes (Rönnerberg & Hagström, 2018). Whilst focusing primarily on cognitive teaching strategies, the Suzuki method has also influenced Anne Lise Lindberg Sjödin's (2009–2010e) series *Orgelpuls* in Sweden, numbering six volumes. Lastly, Bjørn Vidar Ulvedalen's pioneering work in establishing organ teaching for children in Norway in Holmestrand has resulted in a substantial publication list since the first three volumes of the *Preludium* series were published in 2009 (Ulvedalen, 2009a–2020b). Furthermore, repertoire collections and commissioned works for children have also been published in Norway, Sweden, Denmark (Bryndorf et al., 2019; Kristiansen, 2015) and Finland.

Several textbooks that require previous keyboard knowledge, including Mats Åberg's (1997) *Orgelskola*, have been published by Scandinavian pedagogues. Aimed at the inexperienced student, previous piano studies are considered prerequisite. However, as a beginner's book, it provides comprehensive instructions on methods of tone production, articulation, accentuation, phrasing, ornamentation, dissonance treatments, cadences and figured bass treatments, fingerings and footings and the coordination of hands and feet. Tomas Willstedt's (1996) *Orgel improvisation* provides a philosophical and aesthetic approach to improvisation, leading the student through phonetic, kinematic, dynamic, quantitative and qualitative approaches to creating music at the organ. A more recent textbook in teaching improvisation is found in Ulsrud (2018). Although these materials provide insights into several understandings of organ pedagogy, they remain unexplored in textbook studies. Moreover, their influence on textbooks for children is unknown.

The publication history of organ teaching materials in Scandinavia indicates that the development of this educational field in the region has been person-oriented, led by a small number of pedagogues at the turn of the millennium (Rönnerberg, 2020; Ulvedalen, 2009a). Teaching centres in Norway were initiated not by municipal Community schools of music and art (CMSA), churches or other public institutions. Rather, teaching organ to children started as a localised, unofficial activity led by a handful of pedagogues who identified a need to secure the organist profession for the future whilst simultaneously disseminating their own enthusiasm for the organ to children. (Rönnerberg, 2020; Ulvedalen, 2020a). Today, it

remains a grass-roots movement, relying on local interest and sporadic, decentralised support mechanisms. Thus, organ educational materials are primarily private initiatives and are not linked to educational institutions. Some CMSAs in Norway have offered organ tuition for children since the 1990s, including Bodø (1995) and Trondheim (2006).

Part 2: Organ Schools as Teaching Frameworks and Motivational Environments

The efforts of pioneer pedagogues have collectively contributed to building the foundations of a flourishing educational field with a strong recruitment base throughout the country. An increase in the number of students, active teachers and organ schools (or *orgelklubber*) has occurred yearly since 2004. Bjørn Vidar Ulvedalen has suggested that at least 500 children under the age of 15 years are involved in organ teaching programmes in the Nordic region (Ulvedalen, 2020a). Interest in music education amongst graduate students has also increased. Eleven students have completed the practical-pedagogical education (PPU) course at NTNU since 2013, adding to their bachelor education in church music an education programme in organ pedagogy for children. A similar programme exists in Oslo at the Norwegian Music Academy. Currently, over 200 children (aged 17 and under) are involved in organised teaching programs in Norway (Bjerke, 2020). More than 40 organ pedagogues with at least one student are currently active and 16 organ schools (*orgelklubber*) have been established since 2004, when the first *orgelklubb* was established in Bergen (*Orgelklubben Ferdinand*, n.d.). A wide variety of teaching materials are in use, both published and informal. Three organisation models are currently found: the municipal CSMA (*kulturskolen*), parish councils (*menighetsråd*) or corporate parish councils (*fellesråd*) and privately organised teaching. A study of the professional understandings of the teacher in municipal CSMAs has been undertaken (Angelo, 2015). CSMA, which constitute local centres in music and arts education, relate to both community and professional music and arts. Links between schools and kindergartens exist, although CSMA are primarily extra-curricular. CSMA are required by Norwegian law (*Musikk- og*

kulturskoletilbod, 2011) to serve as local resource centres, and are regulated by set framework parameters (Norsk kulturskoleråd, 2016). As noted by Angelo (2015), few formal guidelines exist to regulate CSMA teacher competencies, curricula and teaching subjects. The CSMA model is utilised in the organ school *Orgelklubben Ludvig* in Trondheim, which is led by the author.

Orgelklubben Ludvig

International research shows that the teacher–student relationship is of vital importance for student motivation and is relevant both in practical pedagogy as well as a research study area (Federici & Skaalvik, 2013, p. 62). This relationship is of particular importance in assessing the impact of the organisation models used in organ teaching and should be a parameter in future research. The organ school in Trondheim, *Orgelklubben Ludvig* (OKL), was founded by the author in 2010.² It typifies larger organ schools for children in Norway and thus provides an example of Norwegian organ school structures, practices and intentions. The OKL was formed six years after the first formalised organ teaching school for children in Norway. Its formal articles of association state that it is a non-profit association for the promotion of good teaching and fellowship for young organists in Trøndelag based on an open and ecumenical system. Largely funded by the Trondheim CSMA (*Trondheim kommunale kulturskole*), the OKL is associated with the Corporate Ecclesiastical Council (*Kirkelig fellesråd i Trondheim*, KFiT, Church of Norway) in Trondheim, the Diocese of Nidaros and the *Ung kirkesang*, the national umbrella choir and organ support society for children.

2 *Orgelklubben Ludvig* is named after two significant musicians from Trondheim. Ludvig Mathias Lindeman (1812–1887) was the most prominent member of a musician family, which made their mark on the Norwegian music scene for over 200 years. Born in Trondheim, L. M. Lindeman worked as an organist, composer, educator and folksong collector. Lindeman founded the first organ school in Christiania in 1883. Ludvig Nielsen (1906–2001) was born in Oslo. He was a composer, choirmaster and cathedral organist at Nidaros Cathedral in Trondheim from 1935–1976. Nielsen is considered the initiator of the St. Olav Festival in 1963 and was a teacher at the Trondheim Music School and the Norwegian College of Education. Both Ludvig Lindeman and Ludvig Nielsen had a significant influence on church music in Norway. They are thus considered well-suited as role models for *Orgelklubben Ludvig*.

The primary articulated aim of the OKL is to provide a church music environment for young people aged 7–20, in a setting which supports, inspires and encourages young organists. Such an aim includes teaching young people how to utilise and enjoy the possibilities latent in organ music and organ playing. A secondary aim is to foster interest in the church musician profession. Individual half-hour lessons are given weekly, which are organised through Trondheim municipal culture school. The students meet as a group six times a year. A variety of activities, such as teaching seminars, masterclasses, organ safaris, concerts and social events, are included in these meetings. Churches provide a regular and important venue for concerts, along with valuable participatory roles in services and other activities. All students are actively encouraged to participate often in church services, which provide regular experience in real performance situations, including congregational accompanying roles. The active role of the congregation also provides a motivational factor wherein progress is followed and support given. Therefore, the core elements in teaching include improvisation as well as hymn playing and hymn introductions for church services. No repertoire restrictions are made; if no appropriate repertoire is known, works are chosen from the interests of the individual student and then appropriately arranged for their technical and musical strengths and weaknesses. A total of 18 students are currently enrolled (2020). A waiting list (25 students) indicates robust demand. Assessing the role and impact of the organ school network, organ festivals, commissioned works and structural support models (financial and immaterial) must also be accounted for in future research. Foundations for research have already been laid, through the national Network for organ teachers (NFO), founded in 2019.

Nettverk for oralpedagoger/ Network for organ pedagogues

Network-building for organ teachers in Norway through interactions among organ schools, organised seminars and other meetings occurs regularly throughout the country. This interaction is coordinated through the recently formed national *Network for organ pedagogues* (NFO), a network association for everyone who teaches organ in Norway. Its aim is to

strengthen and consolidate long-term efforts to increase interest in playing the organ amongst children and adolescents. The NFO aims to help teachers by providing a common base for the exchange of ideas through seminars and the development of educational methods and tools, thus strengthening cohesion in work as an organ teacher (KIN, 2020). The network provides an ideal basis for structuring future research projects through seminars, conferences and questionnaires, which may be structured to provide empirical data on current instrumental teaching practices for children.

Part 3: The Evolving Field of Instrumental Music Pedagogy

Instrumental music pedagogy is a complex research field; hence, it is necessary to place teaching within different theories and practices alongside a wide spectrum of individual, objective and contextual relationships. Studies that have been carried out highlight educational issues related to textbooks and learning views as well as motivation and structural frameworks. These studies also reflect a lack of research on general organ teaching, which is related primarily to a paucity of empirical and qualitative data. Such data can provide the basis for studies on the use of textbooks, teaching content and efficiency and organisational models. The following paragraphs describe and categorise relevant studies, which are essential to build upon.

Educational material research is evolving (Blix, 2018); it is a field whose findings have important transfer value to organ education. In this context, I discuss the knowledge and learning views, aesthetic relevance and the role of textbooks in music education. Important works have been done in this area by (amongst others) Hilde Blix. Blix's research concentrates on the position of the textbook in the Norwegian school system and on the state of instrumental music teaching, where the textbook itself often has great defining power. Her research article (2018) reviews textbooks for instrumental students at the beginner level in terms of concepts of dialogue, authority and critical awareness. Blix' study is motivated by findings indicating that teaching in the Nordic countries, including in music, tends to be teacher-controlled. As Blix points out, this implies

that teachers should have good knowledge of what characterises good textbooks, and that the traditional focus on cognitive learning should be challenged (Blix, 2018) and balanced through dialogue-based teaching materials and practices. In the context of the organ teaching materials, this challenge can be met especially through the master–student approach or apprenticeship teaching, where activities are informed by teacher demonstration, imitation and common practices, all built upon the dialectic dissemination of handcraft traditions. Anders Rønningen’s study (2010) and doctoral dissertation (Rønningen, 2015) provide justifications for why music education cannot be placed independently of cultural, structural and philosophical issues, thus having particular relevance for the field of organ education, which primarily takes place in buildings and situations with an overt ecclesial context.

Learning Strategies in Organ Education

A seminal Norwegian doctoral dissertation (Nielsen, 1998) discusses learning strategies in the context of instrumental music education. This work examines how two advanced music academy organ students successfully self-regulate their use of learning strategies within practice sessions. This dissertation provides insights into how advanced students plan, regulate and adjust their organ practice according to set goals, i.e. performance. Such a system is based on verbal reports and video-taping practice sessions. A finding indicates that the students gain extensive self-regulatory skills, which enable them to optimise their learning and performances, involving interpersonal, contextual and intrapersonal conditions. Through specific goal-setting, the students are able to plan strategically using self-instruction and task strategies whilst simultaneously monitoring and evaluating their learning processes in detail. An implication shown in this dissertation is that advanced students demonstrated skilful, complex and cyclic self-regulatory learning. The specific demands of organ education and its implications in practice strategies is of particular interest for future studies on the learning strategies of children, given that learning strategies of children and adults differ significantly, and especially so when children themselves take teaching tasks (Ellis & Rogoff, 1982). The learning model explicated in this dissertation,

together with an overview of earlier research into practice theory and task management, makes this dissertation relevant to this discussion.

Instrumental Teaching Textbooks Past and Present

Although Nordic studies on instrumental teaching practices have been undertaken, these are of older date and mainly emphasise pedagogy related to cognitive skills, such as note-reading, in addition to technical skills (Blix, 2018). A doctoral dissertation (Rostvall & West, 2001) used critical discourse analysis of Swedish instrumental music textbooks for beginners to demonstrate the need to discuss student–teacher interactions. Furthermore, it finds that critical awareness, creativity, aural awareness and musicality must be essential elements of the pedagogy of today. These factors have been found to be absent in the analysed textbooks. The above-mentioned studies show that textbooks have an important position in teacher and student consciousness and that language use (including gender equality, inclusion and multicultural awareness), presentation, illustrations, progression, music vision and philosophy and repertoire choices, to name just a few parameters, are relevant assessment topics. Blix (2018, p. 52) notes that, in her experience, young students are rarely critical of the content of the textbook, and they tend towards perceiving textbooks as indisputable sources of knowledge. In addition, teachers who use this type of cognitive teaching tool, wherein goals, activities, concretisations and progression are all incorporated into the same tool, may be assumed to accept the content of the textbook. Thus, it may reinforce the students' perception of the textbook's position, in that it can shape teaching and homework and provides a hermeneutic transfer to the students that is considered normative. My own instrumental teaching experience over the past 25 years reinforces the validity of these points, and I know no organ teacher who relies on one single teaching material source without supplementing it with their own materials.

The Dialogue-based Textbook

Blix suggests a follow-up study in order to map out how textbooks are used in CSMA's and private education at the beginner level. Such a study could provide insights into how the student–teacher dialogue may be used to build

an interaction rapport between the teacher and student. The students' own interests would then provide the basis for a dialogue-based, contextualised and conscious pedagogy, which reduces reliance upon set cognitive tasks (Blix, 2018, p. 59). Blix also remarks that score arrangement, score flexibility and improvisation, which are all highly relevant for organ teaching and indeed for all instrumental teaching practices, are absent in the textbooks that have been examined. Music works in the textbooks studied may thus be interpreted to have been reduced to fixed, comprehensible quantities, wherein room for interpretation, flexibility and ambiguity is limited. This finding also reflects my own experiences using the three Scandinavian organ textbooks available. Although some textbook authors do actively encourage the teacher and the user to use the contents flexibly based on the capacity of the student, this flexibility is rarely fully explicated.

These studies demonstrate that the textbook – as a research object – provides valuable insights into how an instrumental method is interpreted by the various authors. Such parameters as varied learning methods as well as cultural and social issues, together with the provision for the student's own interests in collaborative learning and free expression, can enhance the value of the textbook, whilst simultaneously reducing the student's notion that the textbook itself holds a position of authority. In providing several content forms, including dialogue-based teaching, cognitive tasks as well as flexibility and improvisation tools, a teaching textbook can expand both student development and increase the range of teacher tools. These factors may assist the accessibility of the textbook for children who do not enjoy solely cognitive tasks, but are more oriented towards collaborative learning and constructionism or free expression, both of which are highly relevant to organ performance traditions.

Part 4 - Early Organ Pedagogy as a Field of Research

Hanne Solveig Kvislen's Motivation Study

A master's thesis by Hanne Solveig Kvislen (2011) considers ways in which teaching content and teaching organisation may increase interest, and thus motivation, amongst children and adolescents learning the organ in

Norway. Her study uses qualitative analysis of interviews with two teachers and 11 students at two organ schools. Kvislen reflects on student motivation based on framework factors and teacher and student assumptions and qualities. She also focuses on how instrumental support mechanisms may be used to promote a didactic viewpoint. Kvislen's study is securely placed within the established Norwegian didactic relationship model (Bjørndal & Lieberg, 1978), which is commonly used (Hanken & Johansen, 1998, p. 198) as a basis for assessing what may lead to good teaching practices and results. In this model, in which all the factors are linked together because they are interdependent, dynamic didactic improvisation is assumed as an integral part of the teaching practice, precisely because not all parameters can be predicted in advance of a teaching lesson. Kvislen's own reflections are focussed upon external material and are not related to personal teaching experience.

The two organ schools referred to in Kvislen's study use similar models to support social interaction. This important parameter influences motivation and is especially evident where organ students belonging to *orgelklubber* or organ schools form a social community when they meet and get to know one another through a common teacher as well as common teaching areas, goals and performance situations (Federici & Skaalvik, 2013, p. 62). For Kvislen, Bjørn Vidar Ulvedalen's Organ school in Re, Holmestrand and *Orgelklubben Ferdinand* in Bergen are two important informant groups. As Kvislen's thesis is based around these two environments, the two textbooks associated with Re and Bergen, Bjørn Vidar Ulvedalen's *Preludium* Volumes 1–5 (2009a–2010b) and Amund Dahlen and Bjørn Sortland's *Ferdinands orgelbok* (2008), are also discussed.

Key facets of the Norwegian organ school model in Kvislen's study include teaching environments, social and musical interactivity and performance arenas. All of these collectively create a unique model for teaching practices associated with Lev Vygotsky's principles (Bråten, 2005). Kvislen also recommends teaching based on an extended form of the Scandinavian MAKVIS principles for a good learning environment, arguing that the application of Vygotsky's learning theory based on the student's own intentions and interests is an important factor in effective and motivated progression. Her conversations with students reveal that

choosing one's repertoire had a bearing on how much work they put into practice (Kvislen, 2011, p. 86). These findings are also demonstrated in my own teaching praxis, although these factors require testing through quantitative empirical data.

Furthermore, Kvislen draws on the personal praxis of Bjørn Vidar Ulvedalen, who asserts that communities around music making can strengthen and affirm both the child and the teaching practices (Kvislen, 2011, p. 72). This is confirmed by international research, which is described *inter alia* in Roger Andre Federici and Einar M. Skaalvik's study, which lists many international studies, involving Hattie's controversial meta-analysis (Hattie, 2009) showing how social support (i.e. the processes that contribute to the student's academic and social development) works from the student's own standpoint. Nevertheless, research shows that the teacher is the single most important factor behind a student's motivation (Federici & Skaalvik, 2013, p. 58). In Kvislen's study, dedication, competence and humour are found to be good motivational qualities in the teacher.

Various forms of social support have been identified in the axis between emotional (encouragement, acceptance and appreciation) and instrumental (advice and guidance) support and the correlation between them (Federici & Skaalvik, 2013, p. 58; Sprikut, 2017). Less obvious, but perhaps as challenging, are findings showing that the student may achieve a strengthening of solidarity and personal relationships with his/her peers precisely due to common teaching practices. In this context, a study assessing how affiliation and social support in the *orgelklubber* may affect student motivation, repertoire selection and practice would provide valuable information on how this type of composite pedagogy works, especially as most *orgelklubber* include students within a wide age range. In so doing, such a study could also examine how group teaching functions concurrently at differing levels, ages and competencies. Research also shows that the need for emotional support and belonging is as great in secondary school age as it is in the past (Federici & Skaalvik, 2013, p. 62). Retaining the same teacher through a 10-year career in an *orgelklubb* may also provide room for strengthening possible learning outcomes over time, precisely because one can maintain correspondence

between the teacher's time and the student's learning outcomes (Federici & Skaalvik, 2013, p. 62).

The Church as a Motivational and Structural Parameter

Organs are predominantly found in religious spaces. For some students, this factor may cause distancing and non-engagement with the instrument. None of the Scandinavian organ education textbooks consider the basis for this type of distancing. Kvislen argues that such disadvantages may be offset by other teaching-related motivational factors (2011, p. 85). This is debateable, as the location of teaching can create distancing. For Kvislen, and in my own praxis experience, the placement of the instrument in church is advantageous, as it provides good opportunities for practice and performance in both religious services and in other contexts (Kvislen, 2011, p. 93). The learning environment within the church itself, with the Norwegian church's own religious education reform (*tro-sopplæringsreform*) as a backdrop, is not discussed by Kvislen, but would be a stimulating and useful way of linking the field to a religious teaching context, as has been done in Germany in relation to the teaching of singing to children in church (Tenbergen, 2020). Here, one might discuss influences from the church's physical, theological and psychological frameworks. Central to teaching in an ecclesial context are preparations for the liturgical action. Presence and active participation are regarded as primary goals. In addition, the silent dissemination of various religious parameters can affect understandings of piety, moral foundation, liturgical awareness and social support. It is reasonable to believe that these can inform and influence contextual musical communication (Tenbergen, 2020).

All organ textbooks published for the purpose of teaching children to play the organ include hymn tunes and other liturgical accompaniment tasks. Thus, the possibility of wholly secularised organ teaching has not been addressed in educational materials or in research literature. Organ teaching in a secular context must relate primarily to social participation and preparation for concert performances as well as the dissemination

of public culture. This shows a multi-dimensional didactic starting point in both secular and religious contexts. Music has features and functions that exceed performance goals; what is communicated is always richer in content than the constituent parts might indicate. Music education will always have elements of the subjective and objective in its inputs; these could be supplemented by a religious dimension. However, it is the context that will determine how one might proceed. The liturgy does not exist for organ students to participate in it. Rather, the organ student places him/herself in context. The liturgy provides the basis for how to determine the repertoire, how to learn it and how to convey it. Questions that relate to how ecclesial and secular environments impact the students' motivation and their identification with the instrument need to be addressed in further research.

The Instrument as a Motivational Factor

Studies that investigate student motivation in choosing which instrument they identify with and why students commence and continue with instrumental teaching have been conducted (Chmurzynska, 2012; Crowther & Durkin, 1982). Harrison and O'Neill (2003) investigated some of the parameters of choice related to gender and gender stereotyping in the choice of preferred musical instrument amongst children who did not learn an instrument. They reveal important findings that children's judgements may vary according to the domain examined and that familiarity and experiences play a vital role in such a process (Harrison & O'Neill, 2003, p. 399). These motivational factors are relevant to learning any instrument.

No studies are known to have investigated why students choose to play organ as an instrument, although hearsay and experience-based praxis provide some useful indications. Motivations derived from the nature of the organ, such as its monumentality, volume, technical controls, design, sound (that swaddling, magnificent and transcendent sound that attracts all children), flexibility, repertoire, "otherness" and location (and therefore ecclesial nature) have not been evaluated either. Nevertheless, Kvislen believes that the sonic characteristics of the pipe organ are of great

importance for student motivation (Kvislen, 2011, p. 94). She speculates that this may be related to a need to satisfy musical power, thus highlighting the need for further research.

Motivation derived from organ music itself (known and unknown) is also an important area that remains unexamined. In my own experience, the concept of what is considered organ music repertoire is unclear for many students. How organ repertoire is formed, its performance history and the teacher's role as a performing musician all play a part in consolidating students' motivation. Listening and choosing the repertoire together with the teacher is a form of collaborative learning, wherein social support is combined by mutual discoveries from different fields of view.

Kvislen's thesis provides an introductory guide to how students and teachers interact in different contexts to motivate organ playing. There is a need to test her findings as well as those of others in a larger empirical study. In relation to this, the Network for organ teachers in Norway can potentially provide a valuable comparative context and forum for such a study. A quantitative study of all current students in Norway could provide valuable materials with which to inform and develop both educational practices and recruitment efforts within employment fields.

Research Into Early Organ Pedagogy

Current research provides little information on the teaching materials used and on how organ teaching for children and adolescents works in practice. Some works have been conducted on the transfer of teaching methods for adults to children and on how piano teaching pedagogy has been transferred to beginners at the organ. Marian Steyl's comprehensive master's thesis (Steyl, 2018) discusses problems related to established instrumental methods for the organ, which place piano skills as a prerequisite, and compares these with methods for beginners without keyboard experience. Steyl's hypothesis, which is informed by a South African context, tests and challenges the accepted notion that organ playing should be based on established piano playing skills and

that organ tuition should only commence on the attainment of a specified bodily height. Her basis of comparison are four organ methods for students with keyboard experience: Peeters (1953), Gleason (1996), Ritchie and Stauffer (2000) and Thomas (1997). She draws a basic comparative analysis of four organ methods for beginners: Sanger (1990), Deis (2003), Ingelse (2006) and Rønneberg and Hagström (2006a). Steyl's research question is broad: "Are there effective beginner courses for organ learners designed specifically for the needs of those with no previously acquired keyboard skills, and are these courses comprehensive in their approaches to the development of a sound keyboard and organ technique, as well as other skills required by instrumental music?" (Steyl, 2018, p. 2). This question is tested through a comprehensive overview of what constitutes basic keyboard skills and how best they might be acquired. In answering her question, Steyl also queries whether it is rational to start organ teaching at the organ or at the piano in order to establish good keyboarding skills. Steyl is unable to state conclusively that organ technique is best gained without previously attained keyboard techniques. Subsequent questions posed by Steyl relate to defining good organ techniques, establishing organ techniques in students with piano skills, how piano methods establish good technique and how available organ textbook resources for beginners relate to the needs of beginner students.

Technical Demands in Organ Playing

In order to draw conclusions on current practices in the field of education internationally, Steyl lists specific organ playing needs through a brief description of the technical demands involved in playing the organ. These not only include body height, instrument characteristics and key weight, but also various opinions on performance practices, including habitus, touch, articulation, fingering and footing (pedalboard use) as well as registration and console techniques. She makes a clear distinction between piano playing and organ playing skills. Transfer value is also found in her description of different teaching strategies for piano educators (p. 99); here, she focuses on associationism and cognitive learning, on

various established methods for communicating concepts to the student and on descriptions of four organ textbooks, based partly on the teaching strategy descriptions for piano methods. Rønning's (2006a) approach is described by Steyl (pp. 158–160) as a rigid, teacher-dependent method. This criticism concerns an absence of student autonomy and independent conceptualisation as the learning takes place through imitation and in a set order, thus reducing the possibilities for student-led dialogue into learning strategies.

Steyl's thesis unsurprisingly confirms that the organ textbooks of Sanger, Deus, Ingelse and Rønning contain valuable contributions to the field. She further believes that each will suit different student types and that each method requires careful instruction by a trained teacher. Ingelse and Rønning's textbooks are considered better suited to the younger child, although serious progression, autonomy and repertoire challenges are identified. Steyl (p. 164) points out that such major shortcomings may not be apparent to pedagogues. She concludes her work by stating that organ pedagogy can benefit from recognising the possibility of beginning keyboard study at the organ. Furthermore, she recommends that planning and designing the learning process should be clarified through the use of selected psychological and pedagogical principles and through a broad overview of the development of musicality and technique.

Steyl's thesis is partly reliant on an earlier doctoral dissertation (2009) by Adriaan Hermanus Steyn, who also addresses the use of the Suzuki teaching method in organ teaching for children. Steyn evaluates the methods found in several published textbooks aimed at students who start without previous keyboard instrument experience. He then examines the Suzuki organ method as an approach which both eschews previous keyboard experience, and requires no reading skills. He concludes that through this method, the organ is made more accessible for younger organists. An important finding in his dissertation is related to physical coordination, which seems to be significantly enhanced in younger students who start organ teaching early (Steyn, 2009, p. 168). Peter Hurford (1990, p. 40) describes the need for coordination practice in his book *Making music at the organ*:

The mastery of any musical instrument requires a high degree of mental and physical co-ordination. For a keyboard player, the understanding and subsequent projection simultaneously of several lines of music, each with its own articulation and phrasing, adds to co-ordinative problems a dimension unknown to other performers. For the organist, who must often share several contrapuntal lines not only between ten fingers but with his feet as well, the degree of co-ordination required is greater than for any other musical performer (or indeed for any other occupation known to me).

By reviewing how cognitive, physical and emotional development affects younger children during organ teaching, Steyn investigates what methods may be used to make the organ more accessible to the younger child. These findings are chiefly related to research previously done on the Suzuki method and are not qualified through empirical data related to organ education. There are no empirical data in Steyn's thesis that support the Suzuki method's practical application in organ teaching. Neither has Steyn tested the effectiveness of the Suzuki method or its relevance to learning skills and motivation amongst organ students in South Africa. Nevertheless, Steyn's study provides valuable insights on how organ methods adapted to different developmental stages of the child may play a significant role in teaching outcomes (Steyn, 2009, p. 168).

Leaping Forward: Development, Possibilities and Challenges

This article has established that organ teaching for children in Norway is a vital and continuously developing educational field – one that is linked to parallel developments in the Nordic region and further afield. The broad mapping of the field's framework factors and praxis in this article, along with the establishment of critical links to tangential and parallel research studies, is intended to inspire further development in this important field. Beginner organ education for children and young adolescents has been tested internationally over the past 15 years, and Scandinavian pedagogues are considered to have had a pioneering role in this area. The studies investigated in this article and the personal teaching praxis in

Norway indicate that keyboard skills are not prerequisites for organ education. The ready availability of physical aids, which enable children to play on adult-sized instruments, also indicates such a paradigm change. Organ schools have been established in the Nordic countries during the past two decades, and a steady increase in the number of pupils from year to year indicates a thriving field, wherein many challenges have been encountered and resolved. The existing studies discussed above indicate that there is a significant need to further elucidate the field through targeted research. I identify five central areas hereunder:

1. A general field study of today's teaching practices in Norway is needed to map central didactic implications of childhood organ education

Continuing empirical and qualitative research on teaching procedures and the influence of external framework factors (such as organisational models, teaching goals and ecclesial involvement) affecting the teaching situation is necessary in understanding the process of developing guidelines for facilitating teaching techniques and methods for teaching children to learn the organ. Such studies must include framework factors, learning views and educational practices; an understanding of how textbooks are used; and whether there are shortcomings or needs that are not yet covered. This will assist in informing how teaching takes place and how it is influenced by socio-cultural factors (ecclesial, secular and societal) and their latent interacting relationships.

2. Investigations into the motivational factors that influence children to commence and continue playing the organ

Little is known about why children are motivated to learn the organ. Hence, responses related to motivation and music teaching philosophy can also inform how organ teaching might be placed along an axis between the domains of secular and religious performance. The church's many roles, which include facilitating organ teaching positions, practice and teaching access as well as serving as an employer of organists also require further consideration.

3. Coordination and motor development studies on how beginners tackle physiological challenges

The physical (and mental) challenges associated with the organ technique requirements of coordination, touch and motor skills in children have yet to be investigated, although awareness of these requirements has already been articulated amongst some researchers. The assessed methods that have been researched are all based primarily on cognitive learning, wherein the emphasis is on exercise and control tasks. Coordination studies are called for by Steyn, who found that young students who start organ education early on gain stronger coordination skills than their peers who start later.

4. Investigations into identifying how the organ educator influences the student as a role model and through performance practice and how these factors influence and develop pedagogical practices

Studies have shown that the role of the master–student relationship, relevant as a traditional organ pedagogical tool, is undervalued in many instrumental teaching textbooks. As an addition to improvisation and interactive accompaniment in a liturgical context, imitative performance practice is a form of dialectic knowledge impartment that requires critical and creative thinking. Through my own experience, I have found that students who are encouraged to experience immersion in these practices (live or online) rapidly gain insights and flexibility skills.

5. Investigations into organ teaching textbooks and their development

Factors that can enable the teacher to provide efficient, flexible, collaborative and interpretative guidance to the student require further research. The hermeneutical position and mandate of textbooks, which usually primarily promote note reading knowledge and structure and presupposes a master–teacher tradition, should be challenged and developed. Although not dealt with in the foregoing discussion, examining how digital learning tools might be used in organ teaching is a timely research endeavour.

Instrumental teaching is never a fixed, comprehensible quantity. In fact, research recommends greater scope for flexible interpretation and less focus on cognitive knowledge impartment in teaching materials. I identify a need to know more about how textbooks might be developed for use in collaborative learning (*samskapt læring*), thereby raising awareness in the possibilities of pursuing dialogic pedagogy and enhanced student interaction with the teacher. Thus, a primary goal in further research work is to assess experiences related to the flexible use of learning materials. Collaborative learning connects the student and teacher equally in the use of creativity resources. Together with free and planned improvisation, and in combination with cognitive learning strategies, these factors can provide valuable insights that can have general educational transfer value.

Thus, this article calls for quantitative, empirically based research into the implications of organ education as a first instrument of study. Such research would bring further knowledge to the field (including knowledge on processes related to instrument choice, motivation and teaching frameworks and environments) and would assist in identifying factors influencing the international decline in recruitment to church music education programmes. Finally, a greater understanding of the role of childhood introduction to organ playing would inform both education and employment outcomes.

Ongoing research by the author using empirical data gathered through a targeted questionnaire and reflective analysis from active pedagogues registered in the Network for Organ Pedagogues in Norway aims to provide a basis for further articles on teaching practices and conditions in the country. Furthermore, educational materials (including textbooks and organ works for children) published in Sweden, Norway and Denmark provide insights into disseminated teaching philosophies, into how teaching philosophies are presented and established as well as into learning goals, repertoire and theoretical dissemination. In addition, a qualitative research project by the author is in progress which investigates why these educational materials have been published and how method use, structure and content weighting define each publication.

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