



Wisdom of a different kind.

A case study of experienced and novice music teachers
learning from each other.

Karolien Dons

*“The research group Lifelong Learning in Music aims to contribute to the **development of musicians** by helping them become **learning, inquisitive and entrepreneurial musicians in society**. The research group does this by exploring the different roles that musicians can fulfil and by examining the development of their leadership in relation to their lifelong personal, artistic and professional development. The central question is what it means for musicians to **develop innovative practices, whilst engaging with new audiences**, based on a fundamental understanding of the various cultural and social contexts to which they have to respond.”* www.lifelonglearninginmusic.org



Centre of Applied Research and
Innovation Art & Society

Instrumental lessons with elderly people



*“**Communities of Practice** are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly.”*

(Lave & Wenger, 1991)

Instrumental lessons with elderly people - building a Community of Practice:

8 recently graduated music teachers (novices)

7 experienced music teachers from the work field

4 conservatoire teacher-researchers



Lessons novice – older learner

Plenary meetings

Focus group meetings (structured)

Reflective diary



1. Reflection with a mixed-age group
2. Contact with younger generation in particular

1. Reflection with a mixed-age group

“Intervision [or reflection] is and remains enormously important when you teach. Exchange of experience is inspiring, fun and you learn a lot, it keeps you focused.” (ET-JK, r. 158-161)

“I believe we as teachers would need to share knowledge more often and would need to visit each other’s lessons. This seems to be a bridge too far for teachers; you are of course exposing yourself and become vulnerable as soon as a colleague is seeing you at work.” (NT-ST, r. 67-70)

“From experience I know, that such an intervision meeting can get your thoughts going and can help you with things that aren’t going smoothly. Of course such a first intervision meeting is awkward, so I guess everyone was a little waiting.” (NT-ST, r. 303-305)

“Through taking part in the intervision, working with older learners, I have developed a wider view on music and the society. [...] because the intervision worked really well. I got good advices and motivation.” (NT-NW, r. 497-499)

2. Contact with younger generation in particular

“Nowadays other ways of working count: the relation between experienced and inexperienced teachers is more equal: we are all qualified teachers. Back in the days [it was] more dominant, instructive. Now it’s more coaching, reflecting, feedback. [...] The new teachers are more skilled in giving feedback. They learn much more from each other, they are used to it.” (ET-IL, r.17-22)

“The diversity of the group generated new insights, additions.” (ET-JK, r. 198)

“Community of Practice. Nice to work in this way with different, composed teams and also feed back the outcomes plenary. Lots of common and collected knowledge offers a lot of interesting stuff! My scope is widened, and an enormous process of becoming self-conscious is taking place.” (ET-IL, r. 496-499)

“Mixing beginning and experienced teachers and also disciplines just adds up, makes it broader.” (ET-WF, r. 210-211)

Take-away message

- Reflection is central to one's inspiration and one's motivation
- Learning from and with each other in group is an added value to the learning
- Professional development can take place on the job (in-practice), but is not always self-evident. Providing a separate environment for reflection (on-practice) can enhance the learning.
- Contact between younger and older generations adds up, motivates, offers alternatives

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Stolte, T. (forthcoming) *Hoe muziekdocenten leren in een community of practice*
(working title).

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