

# Research project

## “Assessment of the quality of relationship in inclusive music lessons”

### *Application of the AQR-Assessment Tool in music and dance education*



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Adaptation of an observation and research instrument to assess the quality of relationship (AQR-Assessment Tool) and the empirical evaluation of specific artistic-pedagogical interventions in music teaching (or elemental music and dance lessons) in inclusive settings

*Research project at the Orff Institute for Elemental Music and Dance Pedagogy, Department of music pedagogy at the University Mozarteum Salzburg*

The teaching of music offers through its ability to address cognitive, emotional, social and creative areas of the human being, an ideal basis for a holistic approach in pedagogy. By combining these factors, each child can be addressed at the appropriate level and thus will have an increased level of motivation to participate in the classroom. A central factor for positive attribution of school is the existence of adequate relationships. This applies both to teacher-pupil relations, as well as to the relationship between the pupils, but also to the relationship of the children to themselves and their own abilities.

The artistic and pedagogical approach of elemental music and dance pedagogy has always aimed at linking these areas together, and has been provided for many years by the Orff Institute of the University Mozarteum, for example, through appropriate groups and training courses. Specific educational interventions within (elemental) music lessons could provide an artistic-educational contribution to the participation, integration and inclusion of children with special needs.

#### **Initial hypothesis**

Elemental music and dance pedagogy (EMDP) makes an important contribution to inclusion through specific artistic-pedagogic interventions in music education with heterogeneous groups.

In the context of the conceptual and historical background of elemental music and dance pedagogy (as well as corresponding scientific evidence from pedagogical psychology), the fundamental effectiveness of specific pedagogical interventions in music and dance on the ability to relate and to provide children with special needs has emerged (Salmon 2016). This idea could also be useful for school music enriched by elements of the EMDP, especially in situations where the content and methods offered do not reach the pupils, where learning

blocks or "disturbing behavior" affects teaching. This requires an adaptation of the teaching methodology to the present needs and capacities of the pupils.

In order to assess such factors and to react flexibly to them, the observation and evaluation instrument AQR (assessment of the quality of relationship) was developed (in the field of music therapy), which records the currently perceived relationship quality and identifies the appropriate methodology of the therapist or pedagogue.

Due to the clear structure, the good applicability and the high significance for the music therapy process, the question arises as to whether and how this instrument can be equally helpful in the field of music pedagogy (especially in the inclusive setting).

### **Objective of the research project**

The aim of the research project is an adaptation of the AQR-Assessment Tool for pedagogical use as well as an investigation of the empirical impact of specific artistic-pedagogical interventions in (elemental) music teaching.

Since the AQR-Assessment Tool has been designed and elaborated for music therapy, fundamental changes and / or extensions are necessary for the application in the field of music education.

This concerns, on the one hand, the assessment of the developmental level and the child's ability to relate, as well as the educational interventions. The content and methodical decisions of teachers in (elemental) music teaching should be subjected to a critical, empirical consideration with regard to their influence and their effect on the quality of the relationship of children in heterogeneous learning groups. To gain insight into successful methodological measures in artistic-educational and inclusive contexts, it is important to assess the development and performance level of the children as precise as possible and to keep an eye on their possibilities to relate.

The following **research questions** should be answered through the project:

- A) What adaptations of the AQR Tool are necessary to make it useful in music pedagogy?
- B) What specific educational interventions are involved in (elemental) music teaching? Analysis and description of the (effective) artistic-educational interventions found.
- C) Which of these interventions show effect on the quality of relationship and on the behavior of children with special needs?
- D) Which of the described interventions have a positive effect on the quality of relationship and the behavior of these children and lead to an increase in the capacity and disposition to relate?
- E) What specific procedures and educational interventions are beneficial?
- F) Which educational and artistic approach of the teacher helps to integrate or child's behavior?

The results of the studies provide a substantial and novel contribution to qualitative teaching research in the field of artistic-pedagogical and inclusive contexts. They are intended to provide information about the possibilities to react to different levels of interaction (in the sense of interaction abilities and possibilities) and which of the applied artistic-educational interventions may prove to be beneficial.

## Structure of the project

The study is designed as a long-term study, which is to be carried out over several semesters in different groups of different institutions in order to ensure comparability.

### The project is divided into two phases:

#### *1. Adaptation of the AQR-Assessment Tool for educational use*

In a first step, a theory-oriented and empirically supported adaptation or extension of the scales and modi of the AQR, both on the background of the developmental psychology of Stern (the starting point of the AQR), the neurobiological and neurophysiological approaches (see Hühner 2012, 2009, Spitzer, 2002) and music pedagogical concepts (for example Ribke 1995, Wickel 1998, Vogel 2011).

The empirical data should be collected in various pedagogical settings, such as elemental music and dance groups of the Orff Institute, music teaching in inclusive / integrative school classes of primary and secondary level, musical early childhood groups in kindergartens. After satisfactory and coherent results or after the first adaptation phase, a broader basic application of the developed adaptation should follow for further data acquisition.

#### *2. Application of the adapted AQR-Assessment Tool in various pedagogical settings for impact assessment or as a process-diagnostic and intervention-critical instrument*

The main focus of the AQR-Assessment Tool in inclusive music lessons are not the motivated, enthusiastic and well-manageable pupils, but those who are less easily accessible, motivated in the classroom, so that suitable interventions can also be found for these children, to enable them (and others) to participate positively in the lessons.

Finally, the application of the AQR-Tool should be able to provide recommendations in critical situations. Based on this, together with the educators involved, the question of appropriate educational interventions (in the sense of improving the quality of relationship) should be pursued in specific situations.

In this way the AQR could be used as a guide to the pedagogical practice to show which interventions produce which effects, how the quality of relationship can be strengthened and / or changed and which interventions are most suited to the development level of the children.

## Samples

1. Inclusive groups of elemental music and dance lessons at the Orff Institute: age 6-10 years, each N = 5-10
2. Two classes of primary school: age 6-10 years, each N = 20-25
3. Two classes of upper secondary education: age: 10-14 years, each N = 20-25
4. Two classes of general special school / CIS: age 6-14 years, each N = 5-10
5. Two groups of musical early childhood education: age 4-6 years, each N = 5-10

## **Schedule**

Phase 1: School year 2016/2017 (Phase 1B: school year 2017/2018, with extended adjustment requirements of the AQR)

Phase 2: School years 2017/2018 and 2018/2019 respectively

## **Notes on method selection**

The research design is to be located in the area of qualitative teaching research and aims at comparative studies of individual cases in different heterogeneous learning groups. By means of video analysis of micro-situations of music (and dance) lessons with the AQR-instrument used, a description of the developmental level and the possibilities and abilities of the individual children as well as the content and methods offered by the teachers for their effectiveness and relevance will be produced.

In adaptation of the AQR-Assessment Tool for pedagogical use, the reliability of the observation and assessment instrument is validated by means of interrater reliability.

## **Data collection**

For each survey phase, video recordings of 10-15 lessons per sample are planned.

## ***The AQR-Assessment Tool (assessment of the quality of relationship)***

The AQR-Assessment Tool developed by Karin Schumacher and Claudine Calvet since 1990 is a qualitative and quantitative research method and serves to assess the quality of relationship in the context of music therapy.

It focusses on the method how relationship to oneself (body and voice), to objects (musical instruments) and to the other (teacher, other participants) is going to be established. The AQR-Tool aims at a precise assessment of the way how the ability for interpersonal relations becomes evident, and thus to make it as comprehensible as possible.

This observation and assessment tool is based on developmental psychology, especially the regulation of emotional processes and the development of the "self" (self-development concept of Daniel Stern) as well as neurophysiology.

The AQR has been developed in the field of music therapy and has been used in various music therapy settings in recent years. With regard to the application of the AQR in (music) pedagogical contexts, especially with children in an inclusive setting, no publications exist until now (except the research of Salmon & Kallos, 2010). Thus the planned research project represents a novelty.

## Description of the AQR-Assessment Tool

This research tool consists of four scales, which focus on different expression phenomena: the instrumental expression, the vocal-pre-speech expression, the physical-emotional expression, the therapist and his interventions.

Each scale focuses on certain points of observation and is subdivided into seven relationship qualities, so-called "modes". Each mode is distinguished by certain characteristics, which are qualitative and quantitative. The duration of the disposition to contact and relate increases progressively from mode 0 - 6.

The assessment of the ability to relate with the help of the 7 modes points to the respective abilities and the current condition of the individual participants and thus provides important indications for the methodical approach of the therapist or teachers.

Das EBQ-Instrument fokussiert die Art und Weise, wie Beziehung zu sich (Körper und Stimme), zu Objekten (Musikinstrumente) und zum Anderen (Musiktherapeut) aufgenommen wird. Mit Hilfe bestimmter Merkmale wird die Qualität dieser Beziehungsfähigkeit eingeschätzt und damit möglichst nachvollziehbar bestimmt. Die vier Merkmallisten zur TBQ-, KEBQ- VBQ- und IBQ-Skala wurden bereits als Methode zur Mikroanalyse in Kurzform veröffentlicht (Schumacher u. Calvet 2007). Im folgenden Kapitel sind sie überarbeitet und in voller Länge dargestellt. Wie Abbildung 4 veranschaulicht, beinhaltet jede Skala zunächst die Beschreibung spezifischer Beobachtungsschwerpunkte. In den vier Merkmallisten wird zu jedem Modus zunächst das Hauptmerkmal hervorgehoben. Es folgen die Beschreibungen zu den jeweiligen Beobachtungsschwerpunkten. Am Ende jeder Skala findet sich eine Übersichtstabelle. Es empfiehlt sich jedoch, für eine Einschätzung zunächst immer die ausführlicheren Merkmallisten vorzunehmen.

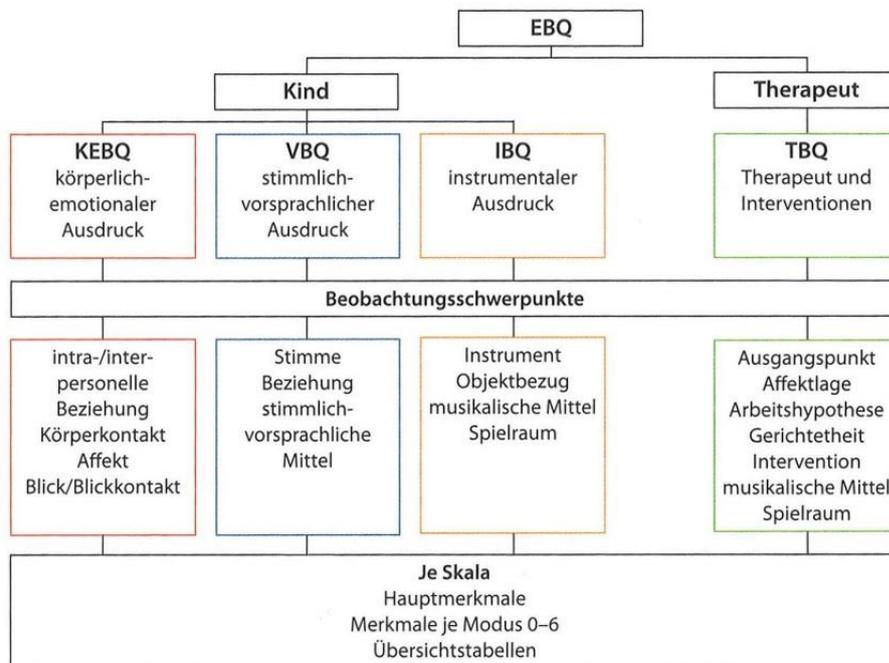


Abbildung 4: Das EBQ-Instrument

in: Schumacher, Calvet & Reimer (2013): Das EBQ-Instrument und seine entwicklungspsychologischen Grundlagen. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, S. 36.

## Privacy and Security

The collected data (video recordings, video analysis, reliability calculations, etc.) are stored on a dislocated hard disk and are protected by passwords. Access to the data can be obtained only by persons involved in the research project. By means of a revocable declaration of consent, parents or legal guardians can determine the further use of the data (only research, research and training, further education). If children have not given consent to the use of the data are filmed in groups, they will be made unrecognizable by software. Since the research project is carried out within the framework of a habilitation procedure (possibly also doctoral theses) and the publication of the results is intended, a separate consent of the parents about the use of the material is obtained before the publication of the project.

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