

Helmut Schaumberger
Univerza Mozarteum, Salzburg

HOW TO SING PROFESSIONALLY WITH CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS. CORE COMPETENCES OF CHILDREN'S AND YOUTH CHOIR DIRECTORS

Izvirni znanstveni članek / Original Research Paper

Abstract

Since the beginning of the 21st century, a series of new singing initiatives was registered throughout German speaking countries. This development caused an increase of special training programs as well as master programs for children's and youth choir directors. In relation to that, the question arose which competences children's and youth choir directors need for their work with children and adolescents. This article outlines a competence model with the aim of dealing with this question. The model is based on two foundations: first, the competences listed in recent handbooks for singing with children and adolescents, and, second, the competences found in the literature on teacher education and music pedagogy.

Keywords: children's and youth choir director, professionalisation, competences

Izvleček

Ključne kompetence zborovodij za strokovno vodenje otroških in mladinskih pevskih zborov

Od začetka 21. stoletja po nemško govorečih deželah opazamo vse več zanimanja za petje. Posledično se pojavlja vse več izobraževalnih programov, med njimi tudi magistrski program za zborovodjo otroških in mladinskih pevskih zborov. V povezavi s tem se postavlja vprašanje, katere kompetence so pomembne za vodenje otroških in mladinskih pevskih zborov. V članku bomo predstavili kompetenčni model, ki ponuja odgovor. Osnovan je na dveh temeljih: obsega kompetence, ki so navedene v aktualnih učbenikih za otroško in mladinsko petje, ter kompetence iz literature o izobraževanju učiteljev in glasbeni pedagogiki.

Ključne besede: vodenje otroških in mladinskih pevskih zborov, profesionalizacija, kompetence

Preliminary note

This article is based on the results obtained as part of the dissertation study on the professionalisation of children's and youth choir directors (Schaumberger 2018), which primarily refers to German-language basic texts and models. Since the terms used in these texts and models are mostly written in German, they have been translated into English by the author. This should enable the possibility of a cross-national and language-wide discussion on central competences of children's and youth choir directors.

Introduction

The popularity of singing, especially singing with children and adolescents, is characterized by constant ups and downs through the centuries both in terms of the amount

of singing and of the quality of singing. Since the beginning of the 21st century, a renaissance of singing (Göstl 2011) can be observed in the German-speaking countries. A number of indicators identify this renaissance: more and more choir courses are being offered in public and private schools throughout Austria and Germany and many institutions as well as committed people have developed a series of attractive choir initiatives; the number of competitions for children's and youth choirs has increased as has the establishment of children's and youth choirs at theaters and opera houses. These activities can be seen as a result of a new understanding of the value of singing in society and are based on the work of a certain group of people: children's and youth choir directors at all levels, music teachers, educators and committed people who sing with children and adolescents. The aim of this article is to explore the set of competences, abilities and characteristics these persons need for their work. It is based on the dissertation project by Helmut Schaumberger (2018), who studied the professionalisation of children's and youth choir directors. The first pillar of this research project, –the literature analysis–is aimed at the competences of children's and youth choir directors. For this purpose, a series of German-language practical handbooks for singing with children and adolescents was taken into consideration. In addition, a number of existing competence models in the fields of music pedagogy and teacher training were examined for their applicability to the field of children's and youth choirs. On the basis of these, a competence model for children's and youth choir directors was developed. This competence model subsequently served as the basis for the contrastive curricula analysis of existing special training programs in Austria and Germany and, finally, for the development of quality criteria.

Competences in Practical Handbooks for Children's and Youth Choirs

Since the 1990s, a series of practical handbooks for working with children's and youth choirs as well as handbooks for children's and youth voice pedagogy have been published in Austria and Germany. Their authors summed up the basic knowledge of children's and youth choir directors based on their own practical experience and their own research. These practical handbooks were written by Manfred Ernst (2008), Christiane Wieblitz (2007), Karl Peter Chilla (2003), Rainer Pachner and Volker Barth (2001), Robert Göstl (1996) and Gerd-Peter Münden (1993). The fundamental works in the field of children's voice pedagogy were written by Paul Nitsche (2001) and Andreas Mohr (1997). In addition to, selected essays were reviewed (Holland-Moritz 2010, Göstl 2008, Deutsche Chorjugend 2007 and 2008) that contain recommendations for the training of children's and youth choir directors. In analyzing the handbooks and essays via comparative content analysis, 15 competence fields could be identified (see).

Table 1: Competences in Practical Handbooks for Children's and Youth Choirs

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The directors singing voice 2. Children's voice pedagogy 3. Role model and personal skills 4. Pedagogical and psychological skills 5. Methodological and didactical skills 6. (Choral) Conducting 7. Literature and repertoire 8. Instrumental skills 9. Ear training and music theory 10. Movement and dance 11. Scenic work 12. Management and organization 13. Science 14. Improvisation and elemental composition 15. Technology and media

Each of these competence fields contains a set of competences that together cover the knowledge and skill sets required of a children's and youth choir director. Competences in this context are understood as professional competences that Ewald Terhart (2007, p. 45) describes as a bundle of physical and mental abilities that someone needs to be able to solve professional tasks or problems. These professional skills are in further consequence important to evaluate solutions and develop their own repertoire of behavior patterns. (Ibid.) Similar to Terhart, Franz Emanuel Weinert also differentiates between the "cognitive abilities and skills [...] that are available or can be learned [...] as well as the associated motivational, volitional and social readiness and abilities [...]." (Weinert quoted from Blömeke 2007, p. 193) For Robert Göstl (1996, p. 59) the development of one's singing under the guidance of an expert is the most important element in regard to the training of the director of a children's choir. The second most important skill he describes is the aural skill. In addition, he mentions other areas that must be solidly grounded if a children's or youth choir director wants to work with children: This includes composition, sight-reading, singing methodology and conducting. Manfred Ernst (2008, p. 5) attaches great importance to the ability to accompany songs with the piano and guitar. In addition to basic skills on a chordal instrument, he considers music theory and the basic vocal training to be essential. Christiane Wieblitz (2007) counts the personal qualities, such as fantasy, spontaneity, enthusiasm, humour, patience and tolerance, as important to the basic set of tools of children's and youth choir directors. She goes on saying: "The ability to perceive each child lovingly and without prejudice is essential to the prosperity of a children's choir." (Ibid., p. 19) Thomas Holland-Moritz (2010) also emphasizes that success in working with children's choirs can only be achieved if the conductors have qualities such as empathy, spontaneity, responsiveness, repartee, patience and imagination as well as mastery of different levels of the language.

Competence Models in Music Pedagogy

Competence models in this work are defined as bundles of competence fields tailored to a specific profession. They include general and personal competences as well as subject-specific competences. In the course of the research project on the professionalisation of children's and youth choir directors, a total of five competence models from the field of music pedagogy were used. Three of them (Losert 2015, Henning 2014 and Kraemer 2004) are, in the broadest sense, competence models of music teachers, the other two (Hammerschmidt 2009 and Bastian & Fischer 2006) are competence models for choir directors and conductors. In 2015, Martin Losert presented a competence model for instrumental and vocal pedagogues with four main competence areas. The model starts with "pedagogical conviction", followed by the "artistic competence", the "teacher-pupil communication" and the "teaching and practicing competence". Heike Henning's model was developed in the context of a research project on the quality of vocal pedagogy with children at primary school age. She defines a total of five competences: "professional competence", "didactical competence", "educational-psychological competence", "personal competence" and "ethical competence". Especially the fifth competence, the "ethical competence", stands out in comparison with the other competence models. Henning sees ethical-humane principles as important because vocal pedagogical practice with children also includes ethical dimensions. (Henning 2014, p. 140 and p. 206) The third teacher-competence model comes from Rudolf-Dieter Kraemer and is a classical music teacher competence model. He identifies six fields of competence: "professional and music-practical competence", "pedagogical-didactic competence", "media didactic competence", "personal competence", "diagnostic, psychological and social competence" as well as "academic, administrative and organisational competence". The salient element of this model is the "media didactic competence". Especially in the 21st century, when digitization has affected almost all areas of our society, this competence has to be recognized as essential for pedagogical work. Among the two competence models for conductors and choir directors is the competence model presented by Wilke Peter Hammerschmidt in 2009. It comprises four competence fields for orchestra conductors. This model explicitly mentions the "artistic competence" and the "conducting competence" in addition to the "pedagogical-psychological competence". As in the model of Rudolf-Dieter Kraemer, the model of Hammerschmidt contains the field "administrative competence". Closely related to this competence field is the "knowledge in cultural management" presented by Hans Günther Bastian & Wilfried Fischer (2006). The model of these authors as well as that of Henning (2014) contains the "musical-artistic competence" and the "pedagogic abilities". It is completed by the competences "ability to motivate", the "function as a role model" and the "ability to initiate identification processes".

Table 2: Competence Models in Music Pedagogy

<p>Losert (2015):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Pedagogical conviction 2) Artistic competence 3) Teacher-pupil communication 4) Teaching and practicing competence 	<p>Henning (2014):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Professional competence (expertise and artistic-practical competence) 2) Didactical competence 3) Educational-psychological competence 4) Personal competence 5) Ethical competence
<p>Kraemer (2004):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Professional and music-practical competence 2) Pedagogical-didactic competence 3) Media didactic competence 4) Personal competence 5) Diagnostic, psychological and social competence 6) Academic, administrative and organisational competence 	
<p>Hammerschmidt (2009):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Artistic competences 2) Conducting competences 3) Pedagogical-psychological competences 4) Administrative competences 	<p>Bastian & Fischer (2006):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Musical and artistic competence 2) Pedagogic abilities 3) The ability to motivate 4) Role-model function 5) Ability to initiate identification processes 6) Knowledge in cultural management

When comparing these five competence models in music pedagogy, it is noticeable that several fields of competence have slightly different names, but ultimately describe the same competence. In each model, for example, a “pedagogical-psychological competence” is included, as is an “artistic-practical competence”. Three models emphasize “personal competence”, “didactic competence” and “administrative, organisational management skills” as essential. The remainder of the existing competences designate special (partial) competences. Against the background of the competences of children’s and youth choir directors, the following one-time mentioned competences particularly stand out: “teacher-pupil communication”, “ethical competence”, “media didactic competence”, “ability to initiate identification processes”.

Teacher Competence Models

Successful and mutually satisfying singing in children’s and youth choirs requires, in addition to professional and artistic competences, a number of skills that could be summarized under the term “pedagogical competence”. Like teachers, children’s and youth choir directors work intensively with children and youth groups. Despite some

differences in their fields of activity, it makes sense looking at competence models for teachers in order to discover new competences suitable for the training of children's and youth choir directors.

Among the first significant models in the field of teacher training (Hopmann 2013, p. 38) are those by the German pedagogue Heinrich Roth (1950) and the American educational psychologist Lee Shulman (1986). Stefan T. Hopmann (2013, p. 39) points out that both models are almost identical, but adds that a difference in the understanding of at least two competences is evident. Both competence models consist of seven fields of expertise, the first of which is the "content knowledge" (Shulman) or "mastery of subject matters" (Roth). This is followed by the competence of "pedagogical reflection" (Roth) or "pedagogical content knowledge" and "psychological reflection". Roth's "teaching situation" corresponds to Shulman's "knowledge of learners and their characteristics". For both authors, the teaching goals are formulated as competence or knowledge. Roth's "methodological reflection competence" could be seen on a level with Shulman's "pedagogical knowledge". Interestingly, in Roth's model, the "method competence" (see "methodological reflection and method") occurs two times, while Shulman emphasizes the word pedagogy (see "pedagogical content knowledge", "pedagogical knowledge", "knowledge of pedagogical ends", "context knowledge and pedagogy"). About 15 years after Shulman's competence model Fritz Oser and Jürgen Oelkers (2001 cit. after Abs et al. 2005) presented their 12 competence fields in a comprehensive study on the effectiveness of teacher education and the different teacher education systems in German-speaking Switzerland. These 12 fields contain 88 so-called standards, which are used to interview newly qualified teachers after completing their training. It is striking that in those standards the fields knowledge and competence are not included, because these fields, according to Fritz Oser cannot be professional standards (Schnücke 2013). The first four competences focus on classroom management and the interaction between teachers and students ("teacher-student relationship and feedback", "diagnosis and student supportive action", "coping with discipline issues and student risks", "building and promoting social behaviour"). The three subsequent competences relate to the learning process and the assessment ("teaching learning strategies" and "accompanying learning processes", "design and methods of teaching", "assessment"). This is followed by the competence field "media", which from today's perspective can be described as a cross-sectional competence that is part of almost every area of teaching activity. Two other competences relate to cooperation within the school and beyond ("collaboration at school", "school and public"). The penultimate competence in Oser's and Oelker's model is a personality-related competence ("self-organisational competence"). The general didactic and professional skills are included only in the last competence field. A shorter competence model with only four competence fields was presented by German Ministries of Education in 2004 (cit. after Schratz 2011). In addition to the competence fields of teaching, educating and assessment, innovation is particularly noteworthy in these "Standards for Teacher Education". Five competence fields or domains, including the so-called "sixth discipline" (this stands for the professional embedding in the content context), were defined by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education working group EPIK (= development of professionalism in an international context) in 2008. This model

also contains some interesting new additions in the competence discussion. In particular, these include the competence fields of “professional awareness”, “personal mastery” and the “ability to differentiate”. The sixth discipline surely deserves special attention: it has a great unifying character and emphasizes that teachers must be able to embed the individual areas of competence in the content context of the work.

Table 3: Teacher Competence Models

<p>Roth (1950):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Mastery of subject matters 2) Pedagogical reflection 3) Psychological reflection 4) Teaching situation 5) Methodological reflection 6) Objective 7) Method 	<p>Shulman (1986):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Content knowledge 2) Pedagogical content knowledge 3) Knowledge of learners and their characteristics 4) Pedagogical knowledge (classroom) 5) Curriculum knowledge (tools of trade) 6) Knowledge of pedagogical ends, purposes etc. 7) Context knowledge and “pedagogy”
<p>Oser (2001):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Teacher-student relationships and feedback 2) Diagnosis and student supportive action 3) Coping with discipline issues and student risks 4) Building and promoting social behaviour 5) Teaching learning strategies and accompanying learning processes 6) Design and methods of teaching 7) Assessment 8) Media 9) Collaboration at school 10) School and public 11) Self-organisational competence of the teacher 12) General didactic and professional skills 	
<p>EPIK (2008):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Reflection and discourse skills (sharing of knowledge and skills) 2) Professional awareness (self-perception as an expert) 3) Personal mastery (the power of individual competence) 4) Cooperation and collegiality (the productivity of cooperation) 5) Differentiation ability (dealing with big and small differences) 6) Sixth discipline’ (meaning the professional embedding in the content context of the teacher’s work) 	<p>Standards for Teacher Education (2004):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Teaching competence: Teachers are experts in teaching and learning 2) Educational competence: Teachers carry out their educational task 3) Assessment area: Teachers conduct their assessment task fairly and responsibly 4) Competence area innovation: Teachers are constantly developing their competences

Core Competences of Children's and Youth Choir Directors

Through a contrastive analysis of the above-described sources, a total of ten competence fields could be identified. In the course of this contrastive analysis, equal or similarly named competence fields were filtered out and summarized into a generic term. Following this, the competences described in the practical handbooks were assigned to the new competence fields. In the course of this process, it became necessary to set up a new competence field. This is the "professional-theoretical competence" that does not appear in any of the aforementioned competence models. Although general musical-artistic and professional-theoretical competences are closely interwoven in training programs for children's and youth choir directors, the emphasis on this competence field has an important significance: it makes the field visible in which important professional contents such as music theory, ear training or literature can be classified. The contrastive analysis has also shown that three competence fields from the teacher competence models barely appear in the relevant literature on children's and youth choir work. These are the fields "innovation competence", "professional awareness" and "willingness to reflect and discourse". They have been included in the competence model for children's and youth choir directors because they are of central importance for the sustainable anchoring of the profession of children's and youth choir directors and for their further development.

Table 4: Core Competences of Children's and Youth Choir Directors

SCHAUMBERGER (2018):

- 1) Musical-artistic competence
- 2) Professional-theoretical competence
- 3) Methodological-didactical competence
- 4) Pedagogical-psychological competence
- 5) Personal competence
- 6) Organisational competence
- 7) Media literacy
- 8) Innovation competence
- 9) Professional awareness
- 10) Willingness to reflect and discourse

Summary and Conclusion

The aim of this article was to identify core competences of children's and youth choir directors necessary to facilitate singing with children and adolescents. In order to identify these, numerous German-language practical handbooks for singing with children and adolescents were examined. Furthermore, existing competence models from teacher education and music pedagogy were used to compile the core competences presented in . It is a contribution to the professionalisation of children's and youth choir directors in German-speaking countries, where since the beginning of the 21st century, the profession of children's and youth choir directors has established itself alongside that of the general music teacher. In this article, no information was given on what the contents of a special training program could look like in detail, which formats are suited to train the described

competences of children's and youth choir directors and not least how much time would ideally be spent on such a project. Some best practice models on how to train children's and youth choir directors in German-speaking countries are included in the dissertation by Helmut Schaumberger (2018). In order to obtain further data on the necessary competences of children's and youth choir directors, a survey of graduates of relevant training programs could be conducted. Likewise, a survey of children and adolescents in the choirs would make sense. These could provide data on the effect size of the different training contents and possibly help define new categories. Last but not least, a look at best practice models from other countries (such as the choir teacher model in the US) could provide important information.

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Povzetek in zaključek

Cilj pričujočega članka je prepoznati kompetence, ki zborovodji otroških in mladinskih pevskih zborov pomagajo pri delu. V pomoč so nam bili nemški učbeniki za petje z otroki in mladostniki. Obstoječi kompetenčni modeli s področij izobraževanja učiteljev in glasbene pedagogike so bili temelj za oblikovanje ključnih kompetenc, ki so navedene v tabeli 4. Ključne kompetence bodo pripomogle k profesionalizaciji zborovodij otroških in mladinskih pevskih zborov v nemško govorečih deželah, kjer se je od začetka 21. stoletja uveljavil poklic zborovodje otroških in mladinskih pevskih zborov ob boku poklica glasbenega učitelja. Članek sicer ne poda informacij o vsebini izobraževalnih programov, učnih metodah, ki so primerne za pridobitev kompetenc za vodenje otroških in mladinskih pevskih zborov, in prav tako ne o časovnem okviru. Primeri dobre prakse v izobraževanju zborovodij otroških in mladinskih pevskih zborov v nemško govorečih deželah so navedeni v disertaciji Helmuta Schaumbergerja (2018). Kompetenčni model bi lahko dopolnili s pomočjo anketiranja diplomantov relevantnih programov. Poleg tega bi lahko izvedli anketo na otrocih in mladostnikih, ki pojejo v zborih. Izsledki bi lahko zagotovili podatke o učinkovitosti različnih izobraževalnih vsebin in po možnosti pomagali oblikovati nove kategorije. Pomembne podatke pa bi lahko prinesel tudi pregled primerov dobrih praks iz tujine (npr. model izobraževanja učiteljev v ZDA).