

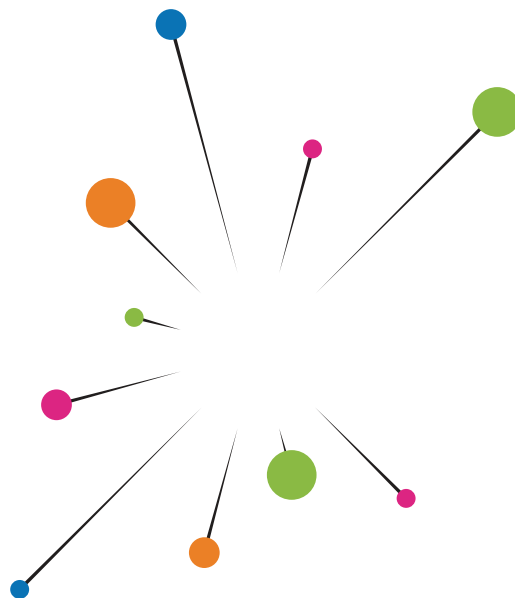


**THE DIDACTIC STYLE OF SCHOOLS
SPECIAL EDITION**

ATRIL

**RESEARCH NOTEBOOK
VOLUME I**

NRO. 8



EL SISTEMA

MÚSICA PARA TODOS

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THE DIDACTIC STYLE OF SCHOOLS

"Although people do not (always) behave in congruence with the theories they embrace (what they say), they do behave in congruence with their theories-in-use (mental models)."

Chris Argyris

THE SCHOOLS OF EL SISTEMA

In the span of 49 years, El Sistema has undergone exponential growth, expanding, broadening, and deepening its educational model through diverse musical initiatives and formats. Illustrative of this expansion are the Special Education Program and its professional ensembles, including Lara Somos and the Alma Llanera Program, as well as the Henry Rubio Chamber Orchestra, the Big Band Jazz, and the Symphonic Rock Orchestra, among numerous others. Additionally, the extensive array of programs and groups within the Núcleos merits attention. Within the Núcleos, musical training encompasses the learning of a diverse repertoire, systematically organized by levels of difficulty. In accordance with the various academic programs, students cultivate a repertoire of musical competencies and abilities, encompassing instrumental performance and vocal training.

Concurrently, they discern their vocation as educators, grappling with learning challenges and technical intricacies, both collectively and individually. It is noteworthy that the majority of integral academic music educators (FIAM) do not hold positions within the university system. However, these educators have identified, since early childhood, a proclivity for assisting their peers in mastering complex musical passages, whether through the practice of vocalization in a choral setting or the adept execution of a musical score on an instrument.

To update the musical and social development of El Sistema, the trainers play a highly responsible role at every level and route of training, addressing not only musical proficiency but also fostering the social and musical environment.

The socio-affective development through the guidance and support of the young person alongside their family members.

Currently, the teaching staff of El Sistema consists of 5,021 instructors, all belonging to the schools and distributed nationwide across the various Núcleos, Modules, Regional Academic Centers, Simón Bolívar Music Conservatory, and the National Center for Social Action through Music. Most of these instructors have developed their teaching competencies within El Sistema itself, in a cycle that includes *learning to learn and learning to teach*, thereby contextualizing and strengthening roles in the collective practice of music as part of the educational model's strategy.

This body of instructors is complemented by the founding musician teachers of El Sistema, who furthered their training in international conservatories and universities such as The Juilliard School, Royal College of Music in London, Peabody Conservatory of Johns Hopkins University, Columbia University in New York, Royal Conservatory of Brussels in Belgium, New York Conservatory, Paris Conservatory of Music, Brooklyn College Conservatory in New York City, Robert Schumann Institute in Germany, among others, forming this vast teaching body of the Schools.



The Schools, as an academic and organizational entity, have a transversal character, with the aim of training children and adolescents in the various symphonic, academic, popular, traditional and vocal instruments. This training is carried out by means of academic plans that are drawn up during the school year by the Management together with the Academic Committees and the Directors of each of the Schools throughout the country. The schools privilege the attention of the individual student, guiding the development of technical and interpretive skills according to age, individual and orchestral level: children, youth, professional.

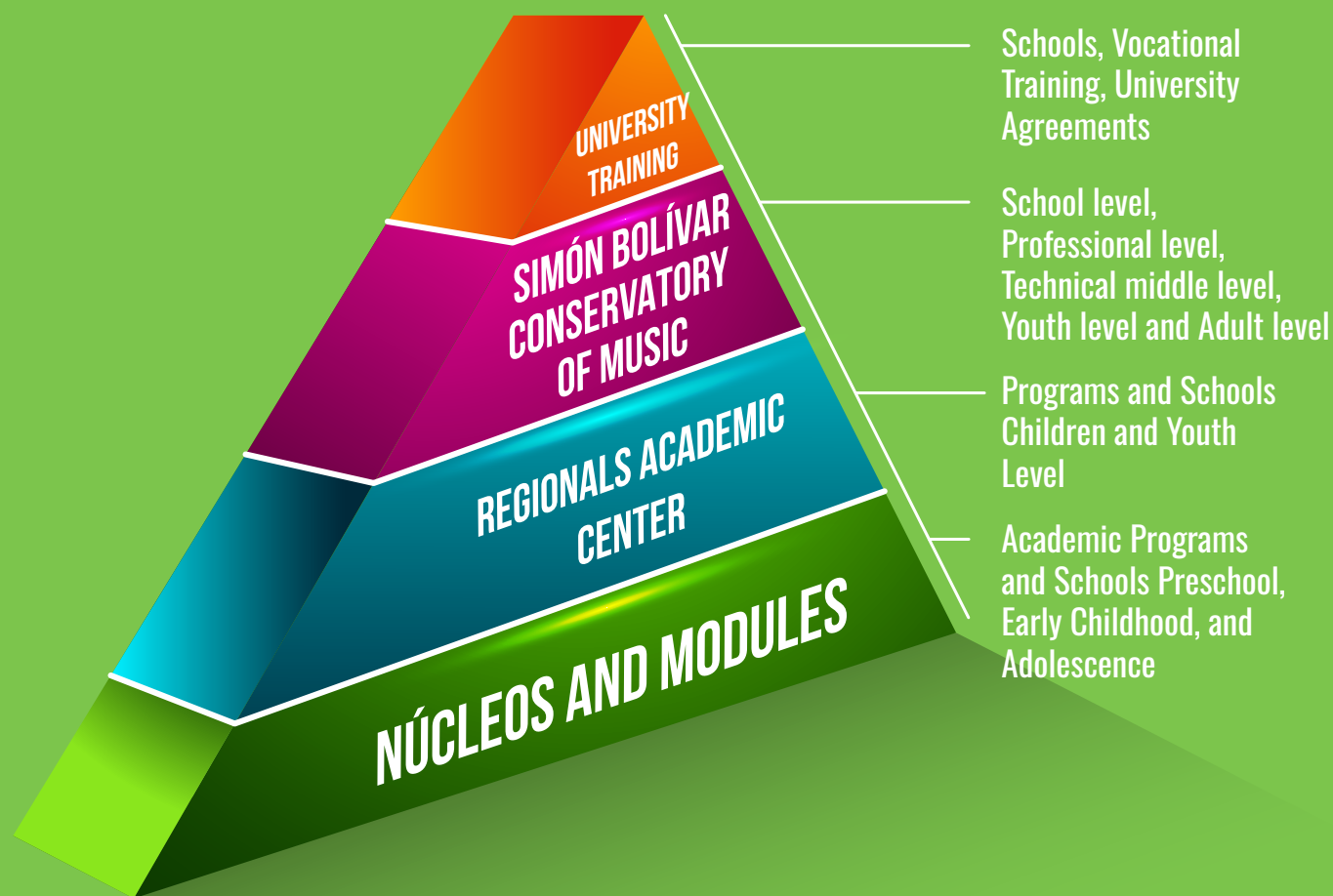


Figure N° 1. Academic route according to levels, training areas, programs and schools. León and Palavecino 2024.

The Schools constitute a recently created organizational structure responsible for individual and collective instrumental training, which has been carried out since the inception of El Sistema through the Núcleos, and continues at the Simón Bolívar Conservatory of Music or through university agreements.

This represents a new form of organization aimed at building the curricular framework of El Sistema, promoting common training criteria while specializing techniques across different instrumental, orchestral, musical, ensemble, and group levels.

The creation of the Schools addresses the need to incorporate initial and intermediate levels into instrumental training. This is where they differ from the previous Academies, which focused on advanced levels for each instrument. Each School incorporates the Academy into its curricular structure but also integrates initial and intermediate levels, currently taught in the Núcleos, as this is their physical space.

The Schools take on the task of individual instrumental training across all levels of El Sistema's academic pathway. Unlike the orchestral academic program or other initiatives that focus on collective musical practice, the Schools prioritize individual development and artistic technical training for each student, always with an emphasis on collective practice, which remains the institution's educational focus. However, this requires a solid foundation in individual training.



About the structure

The structure of the Schools is conceived as a large network formed by *the Academic Committees* of each School as the highest academic authority. In turn, *the School Management* is the administrative body that hosts these committees and guides the institutional policy in terms of instrumental technical training. The school management is also supported by coordinators and operational staff.

In turn, each school has an *academic coordinator* who liaises with both the instrumental committee and the management. At the administrative level, the management communicates with the state managers. There are also state managers who are administratively linked to their state management, to which they are attached, but who are academically linked to their committee and the school management.

School Management

The Management is an organism that seeks to make practical and effective the academic policies that emanate from the committees of each school, formed by specialists of each instrument. Its function is to promote the implementation of the academic guidelines. In turn, the Management provides the Committees with feedback on the realities that can shape the implementation of these guidelines.

Academic Committees

Each school is governed by an *Academic Committee*, a collegial body of senior teachers and trainers appointed by the Sectoral Directorate of Academic Music Training, which is attached to the Executive Directorate of El Sistema.

The Academic Committee of each school is a collegial body that makes decisions by consensus. The Extended Committee is an occasional body that takes place when the Academic Committee meets with the entire body of National Leaders.

The Academic Committee

The Academic Committee of each school is a collegiate body and takes decisions by consensus. The Extended Committee is an occasional body that takes place when the Academic Committee meets with the full body of National Leaders.

State Leaders

The role of the State Leaders is to communicate and promote the implementation of the Committee's directives, taking into account the contextual differences in each State. State Leaders are administratively linked to their State Management, to which they are attached, but academically linked to their Committee and School Management.

The School Trainers

This is a group made up of teachers, professors, trainers and supervisors. According to Vásquez (2023), the teacher is the member of the teaching staff who plans, develops and evaluates the contents of the academic programmes of each school, according to the level of training of each student. The trainer is the one who carries out this process of individual technical-instrumental teaching. They are usually very young people who have yet to complete their learning process. The monitor is the young person who, although still studying and often a minor, has to support and collaborate with his peers because he is the young person who has reached a higher level (interview Francys Vásquez 2023).



Contextualizing the Pedagogical Practice of the Schools.

Referring to the didactic style of trainers and teachers in El Sistema schools means recognizing specific teaching knowledge in a specific learning culture, which in this case is El Sistema. In turn, didactics is related to pedagogy because it requires principles, techniques, and formative models, that is, learning foundations, which makes didactics the guarantor of those conditions, techniques, methods, and strategies that favor the development of students' competencies. In the diatribe on whether a didactic method is conditioned by the pedagogical model, approaches emerge on the coherence of the techniques with respect to the teacher's style, which will undoubtedly be adapted to his or her conception of learning. Although didactics implies the action of teaching as a function of learning, teaching does not always imply learning.

For Sacristán (1909), didactics as a scientific discipline has the purpose of guiding teaching, and it is also composed of a normative and a prescriptive dimension (...) "it is science, art and practice". For Abreu et al. (2017), the lack of mastery of the theory of didactics and errors in its practical application lead to negative results in the teaching-learning process.

The different conceptions of didactics illustrate its evolution throughout the history of pedagogy and educational science. Reflections on didactics include the relationship between teaching and learning, the relationship between theory and practice, planning, teaching strategies and techniques, evaluation, etc.



It is imperative to acknowledge the influence of diverse theoretical frameworks and models, encompassing the traditional or classical behaviorist model, the new school approach, humanist principles, constructivist thinking, meaningful learning, sociocultural learning, cognitive theory, and the collaborative model, on the array of approaches to general didactics. In alignment with specific didactics, these theoretical frameworks and models are intricately intertwined with the intricacies of the subject's knowledge or content. In this regard, the didactics of mathematics, science, and music, for instance, exhibit a degree of specificity commensurate with the disciplines involved, including singing, instrumental performance, early musical stimulation, musical language, and related domains.

To illustrate this point, consider the case of early musical initiation, which employs distinctive methods, techniques, and strategies to achieve the objectives of musical learning (Dalcroze, Orff, Martenot, Schaefer). In contrast, instrumental didactics focuses on the teaching process for developing the skills, techniques, and interpretive resources of instrumental performance.

The pedagogical approach employed by El Sistema schools is distinguished by its adaptability, encompassing the diverse methodologies employed by educators and trainers in the realm of instrumental learning. To facilitate a comprehensive investigation, a didactic research process has been undertaken within the framework of Argyris and Schön's (1978-1996) theory of action. This approach primarily aims to unveil the theories that underpin the formative practices from the perspective of action reflection. According to Argyris and Schön (1978), the theory of action encompasses two dimensions: *the theory of explicit action*, which pertains to beliefs and intellectual formation, that is, the assumptions that they articulate and utilize to explain and justify their actions; and *the theory of action in use*, which is manifested in the concrete actions observed, that is, the actions in practice that are not always congruent or noticed by people with respect to the explicit theory, but are supported by the theory that emerges when reflecting on the action.

In the context of the schools, a comprehensive analysis of the pedagogical practices of their trainers was conducted. This analysis enabled the establishment of a process of contrasting the theory of explicit action and the theory of action in practice. This constant comparative analysis enabled the visualization of various didactic characteristics and styles.

The analytical category *Pedagogical Practice* represents the formative model of the school and is oriented to the instrumental and interpretative technical development; it is configured by a dynamic and relational process between the *dimensions*: (a) instrumental technique; (b) academic program or repertoire; (c) musical ergonomics; (d) didactic style; (e) organizational climate; (f) and transversal competences.

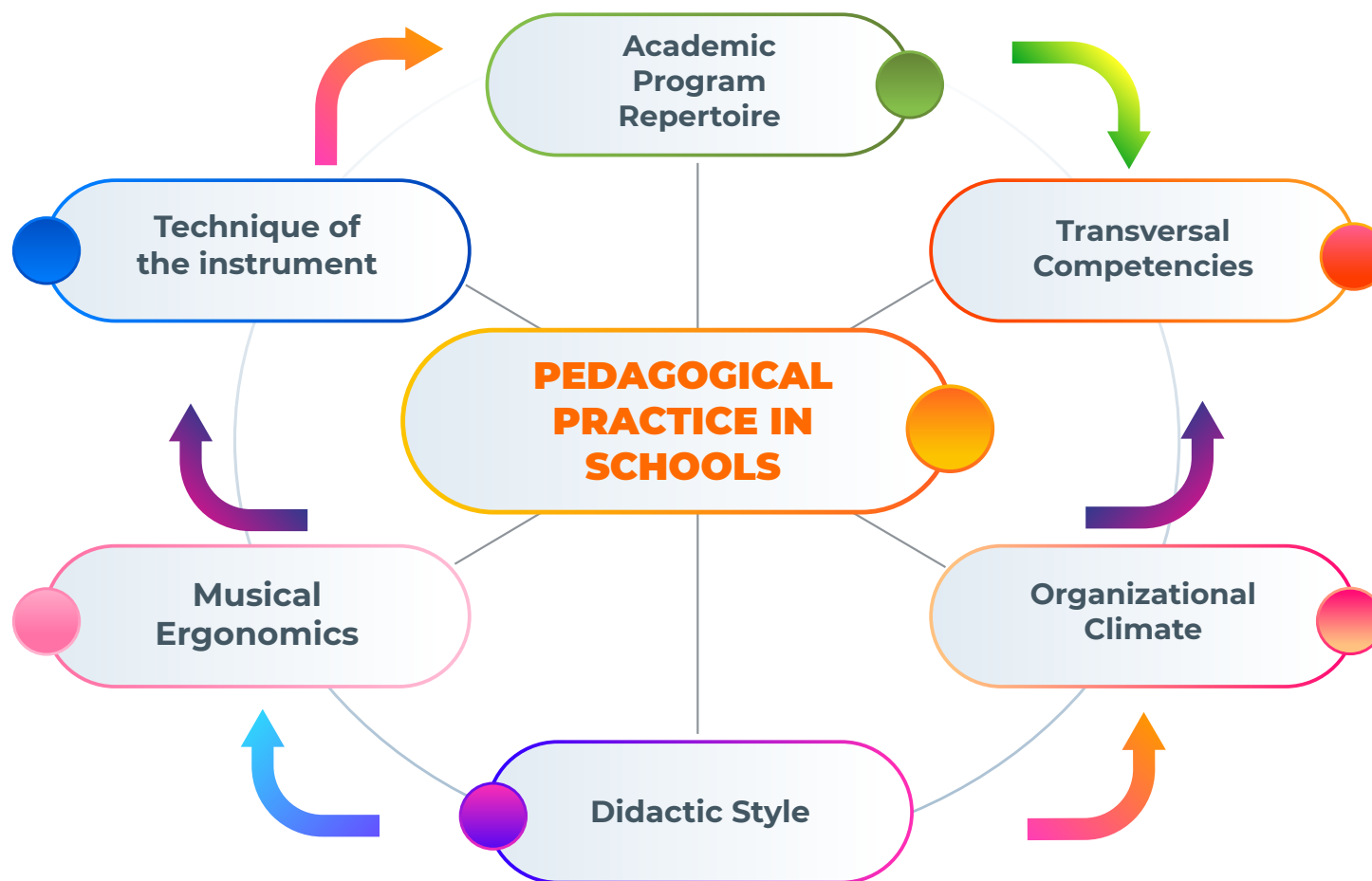


Figure N° 2. Categorization of the Theory of Action of the Pedagogical Practice of the Schools of El Sistema. León and Palavecino 2024.



The formative model underscores the significance of the technical underpinnings of the instrument in conjunction with musical ergonomics, given the inherent relationship between the two. Musical ergonomics, in turn, is contingent on the individual physical and structural characteristics of the instrument. Conversely, the repertoire, in conjunction with the technical foundation and the pedagogical approaches of each school, constitutes the academic program. Consequently, its structuring and selection are contingent on the instrumental proficiency of the student, which is not invariably aligned with the level of the orchestra or ensemble to which the student belongs. Consequently, the transversal competencies intended to be cultivated in students are conceptualized as metacognitive abilities, encompassing the capacity to comprehend their own learning process and the strategies for learning to learn. These competencies, in conjunction with techniques of independent study, facilitate the development of distinct musical criteria in instrumental performance. Consequently, these dimensions, in conjunction with the didactic style, constitute the pedagogical practice of the Schools. This practice is predicated on a perpetual quest for quality and musical eminence.

A Study of the Didactic Style of Teachers and Trainers at the School

The present study will examine the didactic style of teachers and trainers at the school. As part of the pedagogical practice, the study will illustrate the didactic style as an instance that explains the formative model of El Sistema. The study will demonstrate that the didactic style comes from a constant and recursive formative cycle. In this cycle, the student occupies the role of trainer and the trainer becomes a model in the teaching process with students who are integrated in a new cycle of musical training.

Furthermore, the didactic style is characterized by distinct properties and features, including the training of trainers, the modeling of trainers or teachers in their learning process, and the establishment of a new cycle of musical training. For some musicians, the vocation emerges from orchestral and choral practice from a very young age.



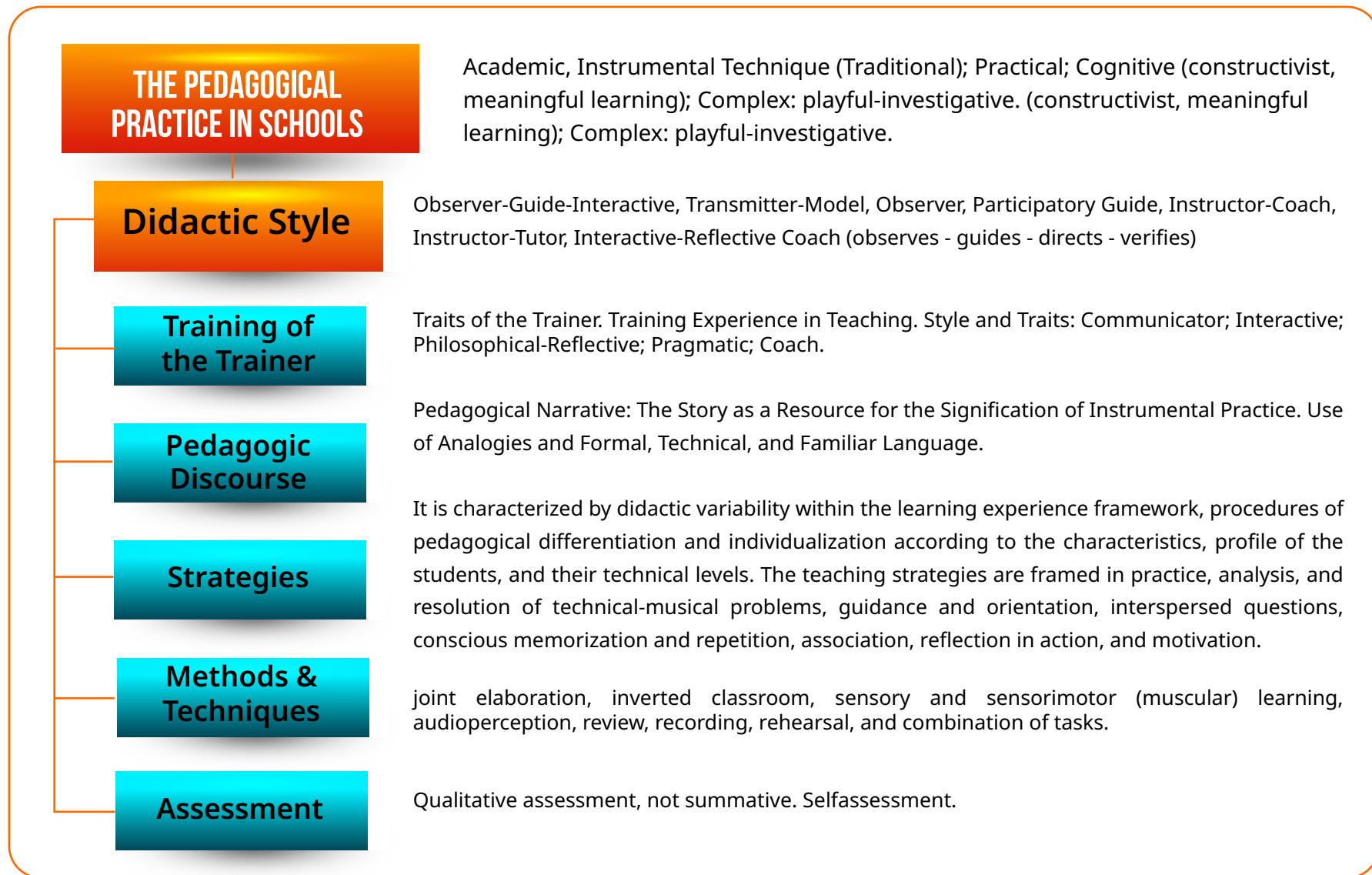


Figure N° 3. Categorization of the Subcategory: Didactic Style of School Teachers. León and Palavecino 2024.

The majority of the trainers and teachers take their own pedagogical practices as a point of reference, meticulously adapting their instructional methods to align with the contextual conditions, learning styles, and technical requirements of the students. This approach is driven by a commitment to quality and musical excellence, which are considered intrinsic values of El Sistema.

"As one teacher explained, "The strategies are the same that were applied to me, only that each student is different. They have a different level of learning, some are faster, others are slower, others learn some technical parts faster, others have a hard time, depending on their strengths and weaknesses" (Interview of Woodwind teacher: oboe).

For the majority of participants, the pedagogical experience entailed a significant degree of trial and error. While they had access to their teachers as references, the pedagogical role encompassed the management of nonstandardized strategies, communication with students, motivation and authority management, among other responsibilities.

Finally, vocation and motivation are closely linked and are determinant in the way in which the trainer exercises instrumental didactics. It can be affirmed that most of them have a high motivation for teaching.

The pedagogical discourse is inextricably linked to the forms of communication, interaction, and didactic expression. A significant proportion of trainers employ metaphorical language and analogies to elucidate the didactic sequence, while also drawing upon their personal learning histories to underscore various resources or performance scenarios.

With regard to instrumental teaching strategies, methods, and techniques such as evaluation, they are generally organized from the technical basis as the primary element of the didactic sequence. The diversity of strategies, styles, and techniques employed by trainers is influenced by their individual experiences as learners.

In the context of instrumental performance training, trainers employ a diagnostic approach to ascertain the technical aptitude of the student. This assessment forms the foundation upon which an instructional design is meticulously crafted, tailored to the specific technique or work plan, and often aligning with the academic curriculum or program of the educational institution.

"The strategies employed in the instructional context with students are manifold. Initially, a diagnostic assessment is conducted to ascertain the students' technical proficiency, identify their learning needs, and assess their strengths" (Interview Prof. Viento Metal: horn).

The variability in instruction is a crucial component of a versatile training model, which is clearly focused on the characteristics and training needs of students. Consequently, trainers are compelled to perpetually reevaluate technical training strategies. In this manner, trainers are compelled to perpetually seek diverse methodologies for comprehending and implementing performance mechanisms, while fostering independent work, self-evaluation, and instrumental excellence in their students.

For some educators, process-centered teaching takes on greater importance than partial results in class. The analysis of both the repertoire and the execution (action) is essential to learn to know oneself and identify the possible causes of technical difficulties; learning to study is to promote autonomy, constituting the quintessential exercise that prepares the student to confront different levels of self-learning and to ask questions about their own instrumental practice. On the other hand, it is important to mention the formation of a multigenerational teaching body, which allows for the observation of different formative periods in the pedagogical musical practice of El Sistema.

The following figure illustrates the integration of the style according to the didactic model, which demonstrates a dynamic relationship between the trainer's perspectives regarding the educational framework of El Sistema and his or her teaching action in the musical task. It is noteworthy that the relationship between didactic models and styles may vary in its degree of relevance, with a style potentially aligning with multiple models. For instance, the communicative style could be associated with the pragmatic model in terms of its methodological approach, yet it might also be linked to the academic model in terms of its conception of learning. Consequently, the classification of styles should not be considered static or rigid, but rather as a dynamic and interconnected system.

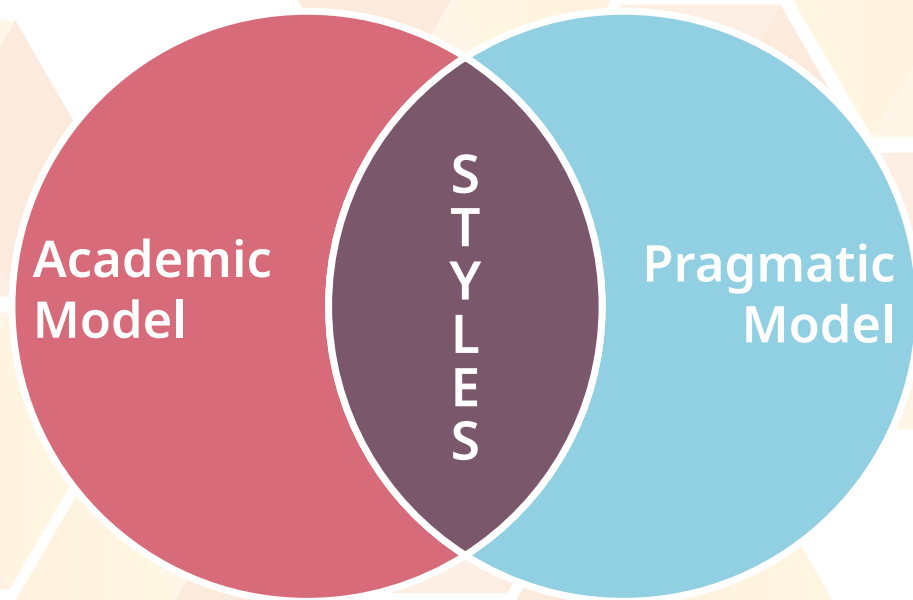


Figure N° 3. Academics Models. León y Palavecino 2024.

Academic Model

Style Tutor

The trainer has attained mastery in the disciplinary knowledge. The trainer is a professional expert in the interpretation of a repertoire of different styles, genres, and periods of the trainee's instrument. The trainer is capable of performing efficiently in a variety of formats, including: ensembles, chamber music, and symphony orchestra, as a soloist or as part of a group.

The trainer has completed his formal musical studies. In his capacity as an educator, he perceives a sense of responsibility to facilitate the "transmission" of knowledge to his students. He prioritizes the rigor of formal study, the utilization of effective methods, and the selection of studies in a systematic, gradual, and progressive manner. He meticulously plans learning experiences tailored to each student's proficiency level, with a focus on enhancing overall musical performance. He meticulously observes and provides guidance on technical learning, integrating reflection on the resolution of technical problems.

"You explain to the boy things like gravity, where the weight comes from, how it flows into the fingers, why the knuckles have to be down, all that kind of stuff, the square, the point of contact, the square, the triangle, why the point of contact is important, so that the sound is even, the string vibrates the same, all that kind of stuff, everything has an explanation and that's where you have to go. (Interview String Prof. 2: Violin)."





The Reflective Trainer

The Reflective Trainer is distinguished by its meticulous formulation of technical training plans, with the objective of enabling students to identify difficulties and their underlying causes. The Reflective Trainer engages with the student in the pursuit of potential solutions, contemplating their ramifications, and collaboratively implements these solutions until the student attains proficiency in the technical resolution.

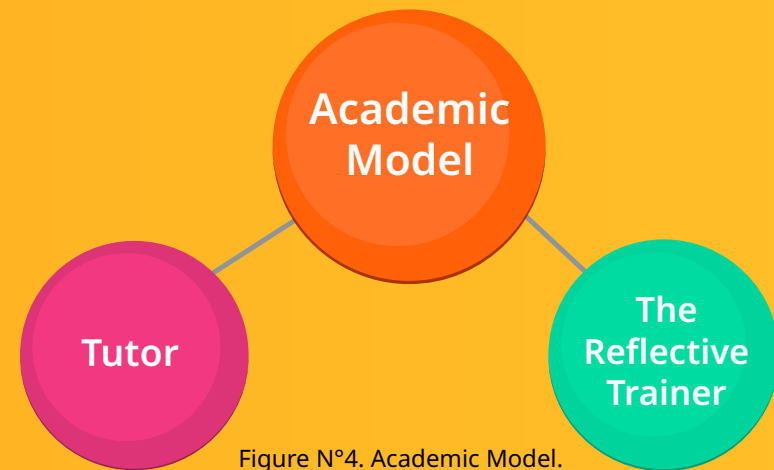


Figure N°4. Academic Model.

It is imperative to acknowledge the following observation: This study exhibits several distinctive characteristics. Firstly, it necessitates the cultivation of multiple competencies. Primarily, it cultivates the arc, defined as the continuous sound produced by a short note. Rather than generating an impulse for each short note due to the prevalence of such notes, the focus is on maintaining the sound and ensuring the stability of all notes. This is achieved by generating a single impulse rather than multiple impulses for each note. Is this understanding correct? Furthermore, the transition from one note to another is crucial. This concept is also applicable to the left hand, contributing to the stability of the block. "It is imperative to identify the problem to be solved. To illustrate this point, consider the task of fixing a leak in a room. Prior to addressing the leak, it is essential to identify its precise location. This is not necessary, as it would be, to demolish the wall of the room. This assertion is supported by the observations recorded during Non-Participant Observation of String Prof.'s class, as illustrated in cello.

Pragmatic Model

Technical-Instrumental Style

The technical-instrumental style of teaching is predicated on a pragmatic conception of learning, wherein the cultivation of technical proficiency takes precedence over the mastery of a repertoire. The trainer, based on a diagnosis of the student's profile and aptitude, formulates an individualized plan that the student must fulfill. The pedagogy emphasizes the mastery of technical indicators through imitation and mechanization, prioritizing physical execution over cognitive reflection (Learning Model I).

[The teacher interrupts, stating,] *"No, repeat. The pitch is inaccurate. There is a misstep, so please begin again. Address the technical aspects of your execution, such as your fingers, to refine your performance. "No. Breathe. "No. Did you prepare adequately?" "Repeat. It is not in tune. There is a mistake. Adjust your fingers. Breathe. Did you prepare? Repeat. The issue does not lie with the fingering. What notes are they?"* This inquiry was made during a non-participant observation of a woodwind class, specifically the clarinet section.

Modeling Style (observe-guide-test)

The modeling style is characterized by a focused learning process that emphasizes technical indicators, with a foundation in the interpretative aspects of the repertoire. It is meticulously designed to address, internalize, and master elements related to technique, including posture, embouchure, fingering, breathing, sound emission, and related aspects. Exercises are designed to strengthen the muscles surrounding the lips. In this method, the teacher and student are seated facing each other.

The teacher initiates the exercise by counting to 20 and instructing the student to adjust their muscles in response. This serves to strengthen those muscles. The teacher and student engage in a series of exercises that involve contracting and relaxing these muscles. This pedagogical approach, observed by non-participant

observers during a class led by Professor Brass Wind, specifically focused on the brass wind instrument, more specifically the horn.

[Student playing viola part of Beethoven's Symphony No. 3 Eroica for the audition].

In response to the query regarding the focal point for achieving synchronization between the right and left hands, the student articulated their understanding by stating, "What would be the fulcrum here?" In response, the student identified the use of "support on the first note of the slurs" as a crucial element in achieving synchronization.

Q: "The slurs, is that correct? These elements, when executed with precision, provide the necessary foundation for achieving the desired level of control. The teacher then plays the same passage, but controls the bow on the slurred notes. The student performs the same passage, but the teacher interrupts her. (Class observation process, String teacher: viola).

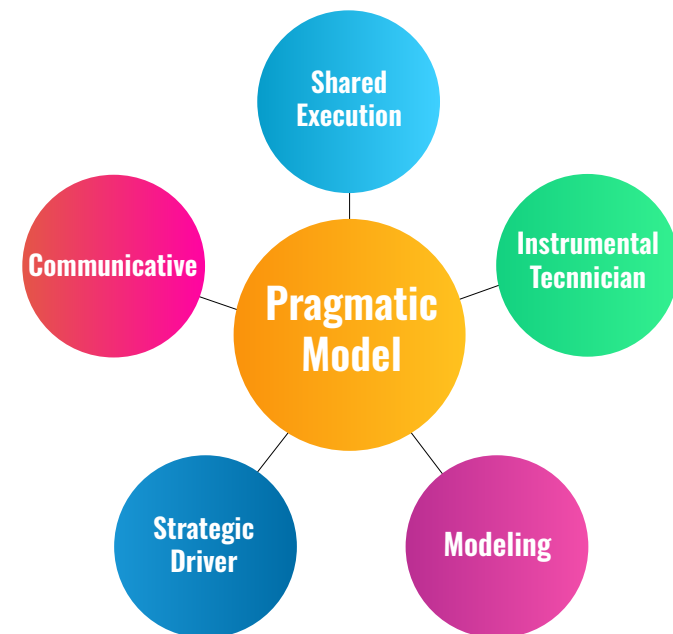


Figure N°5. Pragmatic model and technical-instrumental, shared execution, strategic driving, communicative and modeling styles.

The Communicative

The program is distinguished by the continuous dialogue between the trainer and the student, encompassing discourse on musical scenarios, individual study experiences, and technical challenges encountered during class. The trainer utilizes questions to ascertain whether the student identifies the "mistakes" in execution, as well as the potential causes. The trainer also seeks to understand the student's sentiments regarding the technical indications and to verify the student's comprehension of the indications.

The trainer conducts verbal exchanges with the student regarding musical elements during class performance, such as intonation, rhythmic reading, phrasing, sound quality, dynamics, fingerings/positions, and sound emission, among others (Non-participant observation process of the class of Prof. Woodwind: oboe).

The Strategic. Autonomous learning

Self-teaching. The acquisition of metacognitive skills

Pedagogues cultivate student autonomy by employing techniques such as:

The utilization of audiovisual recording for the purpose of subsequent revision and musical correction of parameters established by the instructor during classroom instruction. The execution of individual study, analysis, and personal inquiry into solution alternatives to performance problems that emerge during the study process, both for tasks assigned after class and those that must be completed at a later time according to the sequence of the designed program.

Trainers propose strategies to identify aspects of performance, such as recording study sessions to recognize tuning errors, rhythmic, or melodic reading. The aim of this strategy is to gradually assume an increasingly participatory and reflective role in individual training. The following is a summary of the process of non-participant observation of the brass class: horn, string: cello and woodwind: bassoon.

Shared execution

The trainer has expressed an interest in performing the passages with his students. In this manner, he functions as an auditory reference, promoting the imitation of sonority, intonation, and phrasing, among other elements. The trainer's approach is characterized by an acknowledgement of each student's inherent capabilities, with the objective of guiding them towards their zone of proximal development. This is achieved by empowering students to take ownership of the content previously introduced during the orientation phase. The trainer's active engagement in addressing technical challenges, either by performing the passages alongside the student or by providing assistance, underscores their commitment to fostering a collaborative learning environment.

Trainers perform the passages with their students, encouraging aural and technical reference for correction:

But you're not supporting yourself, I need more support on the first note, that's what's going to make you not run and make it synchronized. Do it once [teacher plays the same passage, but instead of staccato, détaché for the single notes]. [Student and teacher play in unison and the teacher takes the opportunity to highlight some out of tune notes, he does it with his own viola]" (non-participant observation process of String Prof.'s class: viola).



Didactic Styles in the Mental Models of Learning and Organizational Learning

Model I

Inhibitor

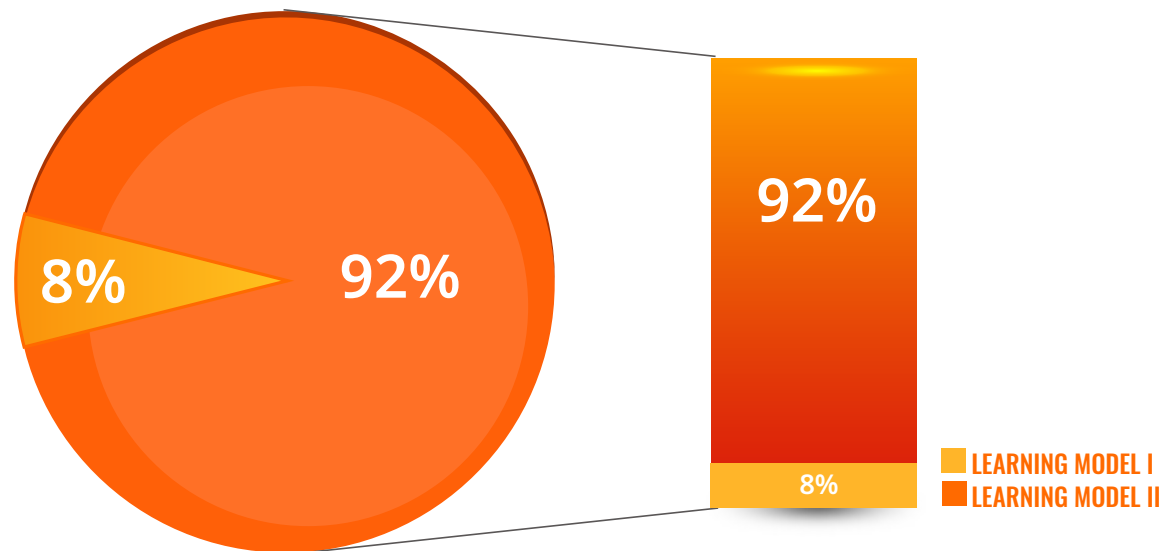
- Does not foster open discussions
- Prevent the testing of proposed solution alternatives
- Restricts creativity
-

Model II

- Promotes changes in nuclear and instrumental elements
- Share Control
- Sharing Roles
- Facilitates two-way learning

According to this graph (No. 1), we can observe that 92% of the trainers and teachers of the schools that participated in the study are in a learning model II, characterized by a dynamic formative model that consists in the constant analysis of the formative practice and the implementation of changes according to the set of values and meanings that are built in the same teaching and learning process; In such a way that the learning loop is recursive and orients the process, the different teaching styles involved in the pedagogical practice favor facing the academic challenges from different perspectives and ways of being involved in the didactic action.

While 8% of the participating trainers frame their actions in the learning model I, in which the didactic action is focused on the mechanical execution of the instrument without promoting a change in the underlying values in the students' musical learning.



Graph N° 1. Trend of the Didactic Style according to the Learning Model I and II of Argirys and Shön (1978). León and Palavecino 2024.

In Conclusion

The instrumental teaching and learning experience, in relation to the didactic model, comes from a teaching exercise contextualized by the collective practice of music, in which the pedagogical action emerges in the constant reflection of the challenge implied in teaching another musician in training.

A practice contextualized by the academic model will promote a structured environment according to a sequential and systematic training plan or program, while a pedagogical practice determined by pragmatism does not exclude an orderly, sequential and progressive academic program.

These two positions are not antagonistic, but complementary, and illustrate the didactic model of El Sistema teachers, who are characterized by the versatility of their strategies, methodologies, and techniques according to their own learning experiences.

The evaluation of the pedagogical practice of the teachers of the schools made it possible to identify didactic diversity as a characteristic of the school's training model. The central axis of the training is found in the development of instrumental skills and abilities, with emphasis on the technical difficulties that arise throughout the repertory learning process, of which aspects of a formative nature are addressed according to individual needs, student characteristics and technical level: intermediate or advanced.

Most of the trainers were consistent in terms of their explicit theory of action and the theory of action they used. Thus, it can be observed that the different subcategories that emerged in the pedagogical observation were consistent with the pedagogical discourses of the teachers and trainers.

Interview with *Maestra* Francesca Canali by Mayra León

Fedora Alemán Hall, CNASPM, May 22, 2024

Mayra León: Enthusiasm, competence, creativity and joy. Can you tell us a little about your pedagogical approach?

Francesca Canali: Enthusiasm for me is the basis of any pedagogical development, but also human. In the last 20 years there has been research on how the brain works to learn. And we always learn when we are connected with some emotion, and of course emotions can also be negative, but if you connect yourself at the moment of learning with positive emotions, you will produce in the body another kind of energy, open, confident, and all this will help the musician a lot. Because as musicians we have to work with sound, sound is vibration, and vibration has to be produced by a body and mental system that is open.

Therefore, having enthusiasm, having self-confidence is the basis for us to move forward in the study of music career. And competence, of course, when we talk about enthusiasm, which is the basis, of course there is a basic enthusiasm, but it can also be cultivated to be more appropriate to the subject that one is doing. That's why, as musicians, we have to know a lot of things on an intellectual level and also on an emotional level, and we have to express all that in an artistic way.

That's why knowledge and competence are important, because it's not just a simple enthusiasm, which has to be in the beginning, but it has to be accompanied by the depth, the depth of knowledge, of feeling, of all this. And yes, I think you always have to look at both, that it is a competent, deep and at the same time accessible teaching that adapts to the abilities and that develops as a process, and therefore you always have to adapt both.

ML: Enthusiasm, competence, creativity and joy. Can you tell us a little about your pedagogical approach?

FC: Enthusiasm for me is the basis of any pedagogical development, but also human. In the last 20 years there has been research on how the brain works to learn. And we always learn when we are connected with some emotion, and of course emotions can also be negative, but if you connect yourself at the moment of learning with positive emotions, you will produce in the body another kind of energy, open, confident, and all this will help the musician a lot. Because as musicians we have to work with sound, sound is vibration, and vibration has to be produced by a body and mental system that is open. Therefore, having enthusiasm, having self-confidence is the basis for us to advance in the study of the musical career. And competence, of course, when we talk about enthusiasm that is the basis, of course there is a basic enthusiasm, but it can also be cultivated that is more appropriate to the subject that you are doing. That's why, as musicians, we have to know a lot of things on an intellectual level and also on an emotional level, and we have to express all of that in an artistic way.

It often happens in the professional work of musicians, in Europe, that all the stress of training makes very talented people feel lost, also because talent often makes you do things very easily, but there is also a time when the inner need of every human being to find out who you are, how you feel, what you want, and I think that here, for social reasons, it started to focus first on the person, and to emphasize the results of the person, and of course the results here are fantastic, even though the musical level of the flutists I met is very high; and I think that here, also for social reasons, it started to focus on the person first and to emphasize the results of the person, and of course the results are fantastic here, although the musical level of the flutists I met is very high and also very harmonious in the way they work and how they feel the music, This is very noticeable because they are very open, with a lot of desire to improve and yet with a healthy humility, in the sense that they are still very focused on themselves, they have a good concept of themselves, but they are still very open to listen and to investigate how to improve, how to be better, and this is fantastic.

The level is really very, very high and I also think that there is a very good and effective teamwork, from the teachers, from everyone. It feels like the children are very well supported by the whole structure. This happens very little in other systems, it is difficult in Europe; because there are many and many times it is also a prejudice, that it is thought that all the people who maybe have less economic problems have everything easy, but it is not so, because for example in Europe there are also musicians who want to make a career and have many problems because everything is very expensive, for example also the instruments and everything; and there is not the perception for example that the structure has to help.

Here there is a structure that helps a lot and supports the person, in Europe they have to make a lot of their own way, and also there is always a lot of competition, and that also affects a lot. Of course there will always be, but I also think that there have to be moments where you know that if you are going to do a competition, it is clear that there will be a concorrenza (competition) with another, but you cannot always think that the teachers (can) expect that other better ones will come and leave you because there is another better one; this is a subject that I think it is very important to consider that each one has his time of development, and here it seems to me that this is very clear.

Everyone has his time, the children I have heard, some are very professional, very advanced, others have the potential to be professionals, but they are still on a path a little less advanced because they are also younger, because they had a different history and of course... I often think that the teacher is a bit like a gardener, because often there is the concept that teaching is like a machine, that he is going to put here, here and here. It is much more like a gardener who at the beginning does not know which plant will grow, and many times there are plants that need more time, but he knows that this plant will grow very, very big, we know that there are plants that grow fast and have beautiful flowers, but they are very small and there is a reason and they are very beautiful; and others that are slow at the beginning because they have the potential to grow very big. That is why, with this concept, in the years that I have developed.

Also, as a teacher, I started to look at it with the experience of knowing that each person is a world of their own and we have to help them develop without forcing them... for example, if you pull a plant just because you want it to grow faster, you're going to kill it, that doesn't help.

ML: That's a very interesting approach, because the traditional teaching practice in music is individualized, individualized teaching. You have worked with the orchestras in El Sistema, what is your opinion, do you think the collective aspect of teaching is advantageous?

FC: Yes, very much, I think the collective helps a lot, especially at the beginning, because the fact of being with another person is very strong for motivation, for musical development and also for many things, like intonation. Intonation is not just a sense of intonation, it is something much finer than thinking that it is just something technical, it is like entering into resonance with others. And empathy and all these human values can also be developed in the collective. That is something that I always try to cultivate. Also here this week I did a lot of collective courses with the children, I think this is also something very interesting for them, because in the individuality of each one of them they are still very similar, we all have the same problems or issues and every moment different things happen in some of them.

For me, for example, when I was a girl, when I started to study music, I didn't think about professionals, my desire was to play with other people. But at that time, for example, at the Conservatory of Rome, I did not find that kind of teaching, and I was very bored with music, because my desire was to be with other people, and there was only individual, very little collective. For example, I found the strength of the collective, as a young man, in the choir of Rome, practically, for many years I was more in the conservatory for the choir, which had a fantastic teacher, we made many concerts of all formations, and the flute was like a passport to be or to stay in another environment, because just when I started to look at what El Sistema does, I realized that I had found what I wanted as a young musician. Now by I really enjoyed being a musician in something like that.

ML: *Maestra*, sound and music have always been connected to people and emotions.

FC: Absolutely.

ML: Since the beginning of mankind, sound has been believed to be a means of communication, preservation and survival. Emotion as a scientific category has also been a very important conceptual category in neuroscience. How do you connect the inside with the outside, and how do you connect phenomenology or science, which seeks to objectify, with interpretation, which seeks to subjective? How to get from the mechanics of technique to the movement of expansion of consciousness from a musical and phenomenological point of view?

FC: Very good question, thank you! Yes, this is a very complex issue that I have always found in my development. I studied to become a professional, because at the beginning of the conservatory in Rome it seemed to me that music was not that interesting; for me it was a very big change when I decided to become a professional, because I listened to a week of Bernstein's master class in Rome, and that was the first experience where I realized that in my intuition I was saying that music is interesting or boring: I was often bored in classical music concerts, and in these Bernstein concerts I remember exactly that the sound had another dimension, and it was together with the emotions of the orchestra, also of the person who played in the orchestra and of us who listened to the music.

It sounds crazy, but yes, if you ask me, that's how it is. And in that sense it was also very exciting for me to see the whole orchestra crying at the end, and for me who was young, looking at these 50 year old people, it always seemed very old, very boring sometimes, and to see them so emotional (excited) and that everything was different for me was the motor to start the path of music, to think as a professional.

And actually now even more, because also when I teach, it is as if with music you can feel the soul of the person who plays, and it also

marks a moment for me, because it happens to me that I have the feeling of looking to feel the soul [...] and for a moment the problems and obstacles disappear, this is a more confident expression, more full of the potential or the meaning of this person, and I find more and more. My task as a teacher is a little bit to help the person to discover himself, how you say, levatrice (midwife), to give birth to himself, there is a word in Italian, the levatrice, when a person is pregnant and there is a person who helps the child to come out, to facilitate the birth of the person himself, his potency, his potential and this is a very very beautiful process.

For example, yesterday there was a young woman who played last week and she was very insecure, the body always reflects insecurity, for example, even if she doesn't want to, but she gets tense (shoulders) and it also affects the sound. Because it is not only mental, music is something mental, physical and spiritual, everything comes together, and last week she also had an unclear thing, we worked on it, and yesterday she played again, and it was someone else, and everyone listened enthusiastically, and I looked at her, she who was very shy, her eyes were shining and of course when she realized that she could do it so well that people recognized it, it was a beautiful process, and I love it when it happens, and also for me this dimension of making music: It's like we come together in a place that is common, that has no age, no language, no race, if you can say nationality, it's like we go to a place where it's pure sensitivity, energy, all of that. Transcendence.

I love that many times you can speak clearly about all this, because it often happens to me, in Europe, that the same search is like that, but many times you can not speak about it, for example, when I say transcendence, there are people to whom you can not say it because they feel uncomfortable, as if you were talking about something esoteric, but we always live transcendence, there are millions of moments that are observed in normal life, daily, there are moments that you can not speak about it you say, but this does not come from the mechanics of the body, it comes very much from the spiritual.

ML: Interesting, *maestra*. The last question has to do with your research, interdisciplinary research. Sound is the bridge between the mind and the body.

FC: Yes, sound!

ML: What are the relevant results that you have found where we can assess, see how the sound that we hear is the end product that you refer to? What are the most relevant results?

FC: I have really done all this and now that I am talking it seems only metaphysical, but I have been working for more than 20 years and I am still doing research, also a lot of practice, because I have dual reality, I have a lot of intuition and maybe because I also grew up in another culture that is also very scientific, I also have that mentality. So when I feel something intuitively, I also have to see if it is real. I have done and I am doing researches like for example the inner attitude of the musician, to start with how we use the breathing connected to the voice, if it really affects the sound, because I felt that there are differences, and also the singing, also the physical, and I started more than seven years ago, I really did researches to see what happens at the level of the larynx, with a video scope, and looking in a distinctive way I noticed before that they were my ideas, and then I looked to see if the idea corresponded to something that was really different, like posture at the level of the throat, vocal chords, and everything, and then I also analyzed all the sounds that were produced, what harmonics you have or what you don't have, and around all this I began to study many other things, psychology of music, neuroscience, and always connected with the sense, and the result is that yes, there are really differences, and this also comes together in the physical posture of a different type. In the last few years I also did a Masters in Mental Coaching, which was very interesting because I knew almost everything about the subject, but I had to focus more on everything.

For example, how perception works, the nervous system, and all that together with the knowledge of the body and breathing. For example, there is a paradox that we as wind players or singers work a lot with air. In this work I've seen many times that for us, as wind musicians, it's like an obstacle, because you focus so much on the air that in the end you don't breathe, because it's all very technical, very rigid and how you have to do it, the air has to work well, We have lost the idea that the air is also a means of concentration and for example all the methods of meditation and relaxation, all this, work with the air as a means to give strength and many times we musicians put it in a sense of stress, which in the end becomes problems and it has to be more of an ally, a friend, because in reality (or ideally?) working on the air is a chance (opportunity) to develop more energy and I try to do that here as well. It works very well with the kids to teach them how to feel it and how to change their attitude so that the air feels comfortable, something that gives you energy, not something that takes it away, and when you breathe it's a nice feeling that you can build on and that it doesn't have to hurt to breathe, it's a possibility that can give you more energy, more joy, more strength. So all of that, all of those subjects are very intense for me.

ML: Well, *maestra*, in the interest of time we have to close, thank you very much for nurturing us. The movement that is seen in music and in consciousness is also, as you said, expressed effectively in the body, in the instrument, and well, it's interesting to describe, because sometimes we see musicians moving in a way, it's a dance when they play, it's always struck me that different musicians have different languages in the body when they play, and many times we don't pay attention to that, we listen to the musical. But the performance is everything, right?

FC: Many years ago, also when I was in Paris, I had the opportunity to attend seminars with a great *maestro* of the musical transcendence of Chelibidache and Sergio Chelibidache was so profound that it induced a state of temporal disorientation.

I listened to Bruckner's symphony, at the beginning I thought it would take hours, and at the end it seems like five minutes, because for example the concept of tension and expansion is very connected with the body and with the sound. At this time I am making a publication and I will publish much of this study, it is very interesting to know or be aware that in the ear (ear) the center where the sounds are analyzed and the center of balance of movement are together, when the sound enters it is analyzed in two places and then decoding to the brain again joined in a nerve, And this is that practically sound and movement are always connected, that is why we instinctively look at children, babies, when they are very connected with the instinct, they listen to music and start moving to the rhythm, because physiologically these two things are also together. Sometimes it also happens that the more they develop, the more they lose this, also that sometimes, because they are so involved in problems, they are disconnected from the ability to feel the music on a physical level with movement.

This happens a lot with students, not only here, because it is a problem of learning, we have it as a capacity, as potential, and interesting is that the public in the room, practically are not familiar with the technique, but you will feel if the music vibrates in the body, if there are feelings that are also developed as emotional movement, enthusiasm, despair, and all that is physical and is also movement.

ML: Thank you very much, *maestra*, we hope to have a new contact with you and to know about your publication, we understand that you will publish it soon, we must have it! *maestra*, we are very grateful and super honored that you have given us this space, we trust to continue communicating with you in the future. We look forward to communicating with you in the future.

FC: Thank you.





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