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Inter-professional partnerships within two socially-oriented collective music education projects, Orchestre à l'école and Démos

Introduction

I am glad to share the very first results of a new research project called MusiPim (Musique et Partenariat Inter-Métiers), launched in spring 2024. It is supported by the LabEx Structurations des Mondes Sociaux, which extends two older projects: that of the EMIS (Education Musicale et Intégration Sociale, 2017-2022) collaborative research group around a school orchestra project in Toulouse, and that of the research-action on the Démos orchestra (Dispositif d'Education Musicale et Orchestrale à vocation Sociale) in Clermont-Ferrand (2019-2021). These first two projects correspond to two bodies of data that have given rise to a number of publications but have only been partially exploited due to a lack of time and resources. The MusiPim project was born of the desire to give a second life to this wealth of data by making it part of Open Science. Beyond this first aspect of the project, a second aspect was quickly added, which is of particular interest to us today. This is a new interview survey designed to supplement the data collected by the EMIS group in Toulouse, with the aim of looking more closely at the issue of inter-professionality¹ in socially-oriented collective music education projects, and more specifically Orchestre à l'école.

The ultimate aim is to **compare the new data** with that collected by the EMIS group from 2017 to 2022 and the action-research on the Clermont-Ferrand Démos orchestra.

Issues

Inter-professional partnerships are a feature of socially-oriented collective musical education projects such as Orchestre à l'école and Démos. Research in 1) education and training sciences and 2) work psychology has shown that asymmetries are inherent in the partnership situation (Dhume 2010 ; Libois and Loser, 2010 ; Thomazet and Mérini, 2014, 2018 ; Allenbach, 2021, 2022), and indeed in any interaction situation (Falaix and Récopé, 2018). These **asymmetries** can be of different types: in terms of status, qualifications, membership (communities, institutions, missions), expertise (professions), etc. (Thomazet and Mérini, 2018, p. 29) but also cognitive (knowledge, skills)... But **what are these asymmetries, factual and felt, causes or consequences (Thomazet and Rix-Lièvre, 2018, p.19) within the two projects studied? Can they be categorised? Do we find the same categories as those theorised?**

Professionals who work together have to deal with these asymmetries, which is in itself a task (not very visible or not considered as such). This work of managing asymmetries is therefore

¹ In French *inter-métiers*, a notion that, at that stage, I could not find a fully satisfactory translation. The notions of *métier* and *profession* are distinct in French (Joubert, 1988), the first one being difficult to translate in English, or by *job*, which is derogatorily connotated in French.

inseparable from partnership situations, and even more so from inter-professional situations. In these projects, which require multiple skills from different professional fields for their implementation, the players have to build operating methods, commitments and practices together, in the service of a common project, sometimes with little knowledge of each other's professions outside the project (Roubertie Soliman *et al.* 2021, p. 22-23). In addition, as is the case in most inter-professional situations, the teams managing these projects are marked by numerous asymmetries relating to professional status, relative expertise and the social positions held (Rix-Lièvre and Thomazet, 2018). These asymmetries are all the more marked in that everyone has prerogatives and often different conceptions of the project. Like Mérini writes about another context, "physical and sports education", musicians who are teachers, as well as school and music education teachers from the French Ministry of Education, as well as all the players from different professional fields (socio-cultural facilitators, volunteers, civic services, dancer-choreographers, etc.) find themselves "in action with and against the other (...) [in a paradoxical and] extremely complex situation well known (...) for the opposition/cooperation relationship" linked to the partnership context (Mérini 2001, p. 2). The collective dimension of the work to be carried out, not only at the level of the pupils but also at the level of the adults supervising them, leads to a disruption of missions that is sometimes experienced as difficult (Bourg 2012, p. 73; Roubertie Soliman *et al.*, 2019), but also as 'an enrichment of practice and posture' (Le Tirant, 2017, p. 40). These difficulties, the means of resolving them, the benefits and any other form of transformation of teaching and educational postures and practices, linked to the joint action of musicians-teachers with partners from different professional cultures, however, remain to be characterised in more detail.

The notion of inter-professionality makes it possible 1) 'to describe activities common to subjects who do not exercise the same profession, whether they belong to distinct institutions or to the same institution'; 2) 'to understand, through genres (what is shared between people in the same profession), style (my personal way of doing my job), norm (what is considered to be true within a profession), the way in which they see the objects of work, in a concordant or discordant way' (Ifé, Centre Alain Savary, 2016). Inter-professionality also covers a worker's activities on the periphery of their original profession, the one for which they were trained. This concept provides a detailed description of the partnership arrangements in question in the two projects studied.

The first stage of the study was to identify and categorise (nature and function) the asymmetries linked to the inter-professional partnership within the two projects.

Thomazet and Mérini specify: 'The construction of agreements [*necessary for partnership work*] is fraught with conflicts, some of which (...) are revealed (as a result of inference) by the collaboration: **conflicts** of codes, language and expertise, but also regulatory conflicts (for example, professional secrecy) and others generated by the collaboration' (2018, p. 25). These conflicts or divergences are also inherent in collective work situations. Like Thomazet and Mérini, and following the interactionist trend in sociology, we believe that conflict is not necessarily synonymous with threat and destruction, but that it is on the contrary a form of interaction which, as Simmel wrote, 're-establishes the unity of what has been broken' (1995), creates links and socialises. Another phase of the study consisted in identifying and categorising these conflicts or differences declared in the interviews.

The study also looks at **dilemmas** in the sense of Matteï-Mieusset, Brau-Antony (2016), i.e.: 'the expression of a competition between two possible actions, each often based on relatively opposing motives or positions and requiring the subject to make an often difficult decision.

This decision may be unnatural for the subject or give him the feeling of not responding to the request of certain influential people in the situation, whether they are present or not.' The dilemmas, which 'are intrinsically linked to the work situation' (Thomazet and Mérini, 2014, s.p.), reinforce a form of resistance to collective work. Identifying and categorising these dilemmas is a third phase of the study.

Can these conflicts, divergences and dilemmas revealed by the partnership situation be identified and categorised in the two projects studied? Do they reinforce each other? If so, how and when?

A first discussion will consist of verifying whether it is relevant to maintain a distinction between conflicts and dilemmas. A little later in our study, we will check whether there are reciprocal links between asymmetries, conflicts and dilemmas.

In observing the two projects, did the interviewees observe any transformations or changes 1) in their relationship to these asymmetries, dilemmas and conflicts? 2) in their teaching practices compared to their initial situation?

We formulate the hypothesis that the inter-professional partnership in socially-oriented collective instrumental education projects, during the necessary **collaborations** between adults (e.g. meetings, tutti (for OAE and Démos), workshops (for Démos)), contains and reveals **factual and felt asymmetries** (of status, of institutional belonging, of missions, cognitive in relation to knowledge (Thomazet, Rix-Lièvre, 2018), will, involvement...), **conflicts** or divergences and **dilemmas**, of varying levels of intensity.

Aims of the study: on the basis of semi-structured interviews with teachers involved in the Orchestre à l'école project in Toulouse, to describe, characterise and compare asymmetries, conflicts and dilemmas (were certain actions placed in competition, were certain choices divergent?). Identify the links (perhaps reciprocal), the potential combinations between these concepts and their effects (if observable). Among these effects, are there any observable changes (transformations?) in the relationship of these actors to these asymmetries, conflicts and dilemmas?

Methodology

Data collection methodology: on the basis of the list of interviews already carried out by the EMIS group and the exhaustive list of all those involved in the Orchestre à l'école project in Toulouse, we decided to carry out a new series of interviews. These new semi-structured interviews were carried out between May and November 2024 in Toulouse (survey in progress). They lasted about an hour and a half.

The interview questionnaire is structured around two 'typical moments' of collaboration:

I- During the organisation of the team work: point on the missions and objectives (prescribed vs. experienced), and on the distribution of tasks - and conception of teamwork.

II- When teaching and learning music in relation to the social dimension.

The questionnaire consists of 55 questions, 34 of which are open-ended and 21 closed-ended.

Part of the questionnaire was designed and put online on the Lime Survey application (<https://enquetes.univ->

tlse2.fr/index.php/surveyAdministration/view?surveyid=724894) so that data retrieval and statistical processing could be carried out more easily.

The open-ended questions are subject to content analysis (Bardin, 2018).

The aim of these interviews is to encourage the interviewees to speak freely in the presence of the researcher, who is not involved in the project. To date, seven interviews have been carried out (out of nine planned), and the verbatims have been transcribed. The interviews were conducted with four instrument teachers, a school teacher, a school principal and a music education and choral singing teacher at the *collège*.

The results we are presenting today correspond to the phase of testing the analysis grid on an initial interview with an instrument teacher. At this stage, the main aim was to check the **quality of the concept categories** used.

Required qualities of the categories (Bardin):

- Exhaustiveness (all units of meaning without exception are used),
- Exclusivity (the categories must be distinguishable from each other),
- Objectivity (to avoid the risk of interpretation),
- Relevance (in relation to objectives and content),
- Defined (clearly and rigorously defined).

Testing the analysis grid on an interview

With regard to 1) the organisation of teamwork (first part of the questionnaire), it appears that in interview 1, **three intrapersonal or internal conflicts or differences of opinion** are mentioned, for example, about the lack of paid time dedicated to collective work after the session (debriefing). **Five interpersonal conflicts or differences** (explicitly between people) appear in this interview, such as when the person complains about the lack of attention paid by the coordinator and the other teachers to a pedagogical proposal that he had made during a 'toolbox' type meeting.) According to this person, **three interpersonal conflicts were avoided**, concerning, for example, the way in which the pupils were brought into the session. Still on the subject of organising teamwork, **only one dilemma** (intrapersonal level) was mentioned; it concerned the hesitation of whether or not to intervene with pupils for whom one was not the referent ("sometimes there is hesitation about helping a pupil who is not, who is not part of my group of pupils, a flautist, by giving him advice: do this. But I'm not his referee. If I do that, the teacher will think I'm encroaching on..."). **No asymmetry** was explicitly stated in this interview about the organisation of teamwork.

2) On the subject of teaching and learning music (second part of the questionnaire), **three asymmetries** are mentioned by the interviewee, one of which is an asymmetry linked to expertise and which is stated to be a difference in vision and way of teaching between a teacher (like himself) who regularly performs on stage and teachers who 'don't do the job' (who are therefore not teaching experts). **Three intrapersonal conflicts** are mentioned in this interview, such as the difficulty of 'getting [the pupils] to perform at home (...) [the only] way to make progress'. The interviewee expressed **three interpersonal differences**, one of which concerned his relationship with the score. He also mentioned **three dilemmas**, one of which concerned the choice of repertoire: a piece that was too simple would produce better results, but the pupils might get bored, whereas a piece that was more complex, for example rhythmically, would avoid boredom, but the risk was that 'there wouldn't be a rhythm that fitted together'. The interviewee said that he had **avoided a conflict** over the choice of

repertoire, which he felt was ‘very poor’. Finally, **an explicit interpersonal conflict** was mentioned, concerning ‘the way the percussion teacher expresses himself to the children’, which he considered too abrupt.

Discussion

In this first interview analysed, it appears that the asymmetries expressed are much more numerous on the subject of musical learning (3 occurrences vs. zero). On the other hand, there were more interpersonal conflicts or differences of opinion regarding the organisation of teamwork (5 vs. 3). If we add the conflicts avoided, the number rises to 8 interpersonal conflicts concerning the organisation of teamwork, compared with 4 concerning musical learning, plus one explicit conflict. At the intrapersonal level, there were three times as many dilemmas concerning musical learning (3 vs. 1), and intrapersonal conflicts numbered the same 3 in both cases.

	Organisation of teamwork	Teaching and learning music
Asymmetries expressed	0	3
Intrapersonal conflicts	3	3
Interpersonal conflicts	5	3
Dilemmas (intrapersonal)	1	3
Conflicts avoided	3	1
Explicit conflicts	0	1

At this stage, the asymmetries have not yet been finely categorised (cause vs. consequence, cognitive asymmetries, asymmetries of will, of involvement, etc.). In terms of the quality of the analysis categories used, we note a certain porosity between expressed asymmetries and interpersonal conflicts, and even with the category of intrapersonal conflicts. In fact, we find, for example, the question of the difference in profiles and approaches of the teachers involved (relationship to the stage, ‘to the job’ vs. some are very ‘academic’, the ‘dinosaurs’ of the conservatoire) in the three categories. Nevertheless, the question arises as to whether the asymmetries do not cover up the conflicts or whether they are the cause of these conflicts or their consequence, dragging the teacher into a spiral in which self-esteem, but also gender, style and the rules of the profession are turned upside down? Shouldn't we limit ourselves to ‘factual’ asymmetries, of status or age for example, and group the asymmetries stated concerning expertise, for example, on the conflict side, and categorise the conflicts more precisely?

A similar question arises in relation to conflicts and dilemmas: is it relevant to distinguish between them? At this stage, we continue to think that it is, because the definition of a dilemma concerns hesitation between two possible actions accompanied by a ‘difficult decision’ to be made (which brings us back to the inner conflict). This dimension of hesitation is not present in the notion of conflict or in the conflicts expressed.

This reflection on how to categorise, for the purposes of analysis, the asymmetries, conflicts and dilemmas facing teachers logically leads us to turn our attention to the gender, style and rules or norms of the profession, in other words to its four dimensions as defined by Yves Clot: personal, interpersonal, transpersonal and impersonal. Within the INSPé (Institut National Supérieur du Professorat et de l'éducation), this is not a new reflection. At the INSPé in

Toulouse, for example, it goes back to the 2000s, with the work of Sébastien Chaliès in particular, around training in gender, style and the rules of the profession for educational advisers, sometimes referred to as tutors.

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