

# Teaching as a professional option among final year students of vocational music education

## A multi-method study in Andalusian music conservatories

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### 1. Introduction

Teacher training is a recurring subject in research into music education in Spain (Oriol, 2012). There is little doubt of its importance, as students who take courses that lead to them obtaining necessary teaching qualifications, have in their hands the responsibility to impart music education classes for the ten years that compulsory education lasts in our country.

Moreover, in recent years, it has become commonplace for prospective teachers in our country to simultaneously study degrees that lead to the training of teachers specialising in the music education and short-cycle degrees at music conservatories. This link is contrasted in studies such as Mateos (2013), which shows that 66% of students studying Teacher Training In Music Education in Andalusia are conservatory trained (at some time in their lives have studied music at a music conservatory) and a total of 44% had reached the professional grade. This data, which is provided by Oriol (2006), states that the number of students who combine both studies reaches 63,41%.

It is, therefore, worth analysing the characteristics of the relationship between subject-specific teacher training at university and Vocational Music Education (in music conservatories). Do students at music conservatories, for example, count on some form of basic training in their syllabuses which awakens or promotes interest in music education? Do those students who reach professional grade at music conservatories consider

teaching music in compulsory education (primary and secondary) as a possible profession? Could they access these kinds of teaching degrees if they so wished?

Music education in the Spanish education system was slowly gaining ground in compulsory education until 1990 when it established itself as a compulsory subject both in primary and secondary education (Oriol, 2005). The specialisation of Teacher Training in Music Education is also introduced in this law. Notwithstanding, the situation in Spain at present is alarming; the specialisation of Music Education has been eliminated and the subject has been relegated to optional within the education system.

Meanwhile, in the rest of Europe, the restructuring of curricula, driven by the Bologna Declaration, has had other results in regards to music education. If Portugal, Germany, Austria, Finland, Sweden, Estonia and Lithuania are taken into consideration (geographic variety being the criteria for the choice of these countries) the situation could not be more different: compulsory music education in primary and part of secondary education, specific training for music teachers, availability of both Bachelor and Master degrees in music (which as in the case of Portugal, Germany, Austria and Finland are obligatory if one wants to teach) and access to further education teaching posts regulated by specific exams. These are the main characteristics found when studying the education systems of the aforementioned countries (Díaz, 2010; Fernandes, 2008; Heiling, 2010; Rodríguez-Quiles, 2010; VV. AA., 2009).

## 2. Objectives

The main objective of this paper is to study the opinions and perceptions of students in their final year of Vocational Music Education with regards to their professional aspirations, especially those related to music education. This objective is broken down into three specifics:

- a. Describe the profile of the music education graduate in the Andalusian community according to their grade, gender, speciality, instrument group and province.
- b. Analyse and compare the syllabus contents of the Music Pedagogy subject in Andalusian music conservatories, given its importance

as the only subject in the professional grade syllabus that deals with music education, focusing especially on the aspects relating to teaching at the compulsory stages.

- c. Learn the opinions of the final year students of vocational music education at the Ángel Barrios Music Conservatory of Granada with regards to their professional prospects, especially those linked to music education in compulsory education.

### 3. Methodology

In order to carry out this study, mixed methods or “multimethod” has been used, the main characteristic of which is the combination of viewpoints, perspectives and positions both of the qualitative and quantitative research, although from its own ontological and epistemological basis (Burke, Onwuegbuzie, and Turner, 2007).

The main component of the mixed designs is the phase, an element which covers the basic processes necessary for the execution of qualitative/quantitative research: propose a question, gather and analyse the data and interpret the results (Creswell and Plano-Clark, 2011). In a multimethod research study there should be at least one phase of qualitative characteristics and another of quantitative characteristics. The different possibilities of relation, combination and integration between the phases are those which shape the mixed research design types.

The design of this study can be observed in figure 1. It is a sequential explanatory study (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011), which is comprised of an initial concurrent multiphase (quantitative and qualitative) where the first objectives of the study will be covered; and a second qualitative one relative to the third objective.

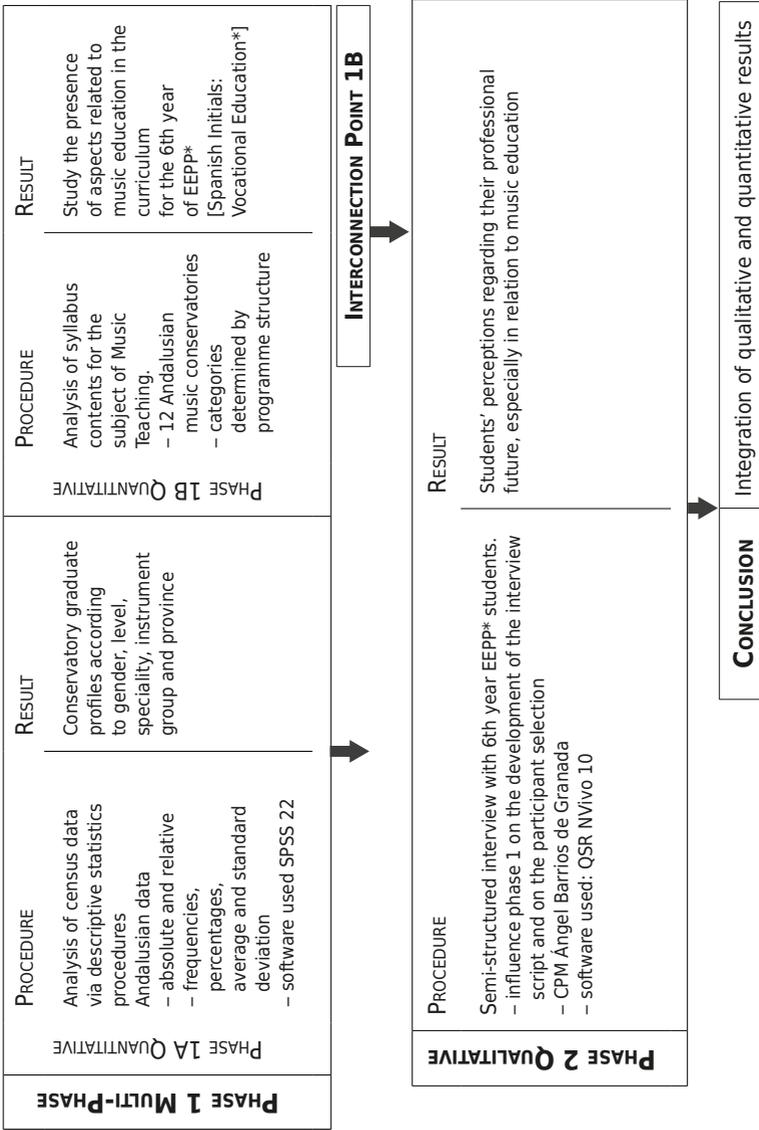


Fig. 1 Visual model of procedure and results for the design of sequential explanatory research with multiphase (summary of relevant aspects).

Adapted from Creswell and Plano-Clark, 2011 and Ivankova, Creswell and Stick, 2006.

As can be seen, the three phases progressively narrow their focus from the global to the specific and local. In the first phase, the profile of music education degrees in the autonomous community of Andalusia is described. In the second, the role of music education in the 6<sup>th</sup> year of the vocational education curriculum is analysed. Finally, interviews are carried out with 9 students from the Professional Music Conservatory Ángel Barrios of Granada.

In this design, the data corresponding to the two phases that comprise the multiphase, both qualitative and quantitative, are collected and analysed first. The qualitative data collected and analysed in the second phase help explain and understand with a greater degree of detail some of the aspects of the quantitative and qualitative results obtained in the first phase. The second phase is built on the first, both being connected at intermediate points (or Points of Interconnection) of the study. The data from the first phase, of multiple characteristics, provide a general comprehension of the research problem. The qualitative data of the second phase establish and explain the initial results, exploring the opinions of the participants (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2010; Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009).

*Phase 1a: Andalusian music conservatory students' profile*

Music education in Andalusia is structured around three levels: elemental, professional and superior. In the first two, instrument specialisations are available and in the third level specialisations are available which are not instrument or performance based (table 1).

ELEMENTAL AND PROFESSIONAL			SUPERIOR
-Bassoon	-Harpsicord	-Recorder	-Composition
-Chelo	-Horn	-Saxophone	-Conducting
-Clarinet	-Oboe	-Singing (P)	-Flamenco
-Double Bass	-Organ (P)	-Trombone	-Musicology
-Flamenco Guitar	-Percussion	-Trumpet	-Pedagogy
-Flamenco Singing (P)	-Piano	-Tuba	-Performing
-Flute	-Plucked stringed instruments from the Renaissance and Baroque (ICPRB)	-Violin	-Production and Management
-Guitar		-Viola	-Sonology
-Harp		-Viola da Gamba	
		-Vocal Education (E)	

Note. Those specialisations which are only imparted in Elemental are marked with an E and those only imparted in Professional with a P. In: Superior, the itinerary for "Performance" includes all the instrument specialisations listed in Elemental/Professional (Decree 260/2011; Order 17/2009; Order 25<sup>th</sup> of October 2007).

*Tab. 1 Specialisations imparted at music conservatories*

In order to outline the profile of Andalusian music conservatory graduates, the objective of the first phase, census data will be used, made available by the Andalusian Regional Government (Junta de Andalucía, Consejería de Educación, 2014) and thereby providing information on 100% of the population to be studied. This data refers to gender (male or female), level (elemental, intermediate or superior), specialisation (from all those available), instrument group and Andalusian province. The data covers the periods 2002/2003 to 2012/2013. Via procedures of descriptive statistics, a graduate profile will be drawn up based on these variables.

The analysis process has followed two different paths: firstly, analysis of the variables was carried out individually and secondly, the information was completed analysing the variables in pairs. All the data was analysed using the IBM SPSS Statistics 22 statistics package.

### *Phase 1 b: the presence of music education in music conservatory studies*

The second phase, linked to objective b), has a qualitative characteristic. It consists of an analysis of the presence of aspects related to music education in the curriculum of final-year vocational music education students, by means of studying the texts in the syllabus for the Music Pedagogy subject at a total of 12 Andalusian centres.

The syllabus contents have been analysed individually, focusing on the sections that comprise them and paying special attention to the aspects that show a greater wealth of development with regards to the guidelines set out by legislation (Decree 241/2007 and Order 25/10/2007) for the Music Pedagogy subject. A global analysis has subsequently been carried out, in which the following have been underlined; the common characteristics and some of the most evident differences of the following sections of the syllabuses: objectives, contents, methodology, evaluation and other sections.

### *Phase 2: 6<sup>th</sup>-year EEPP students' perceptions with regards to music education as a professional option*

The third phase, linked to objective c), has a qualitative characteristic. This phase analyses, through the use of interviews, the perceptions regarding professional prospects (particularly, those linked to music education in compulsory education), of final-year students of vocational music edu-

cation at the CPM [Professional Music Conservatory] Ángel Barrios in Granada. The gathering of data by means of semi-structured interviews (Given, 2008; Kvale, 2011) and the choice of interview participants is based on the information collected and analysed in the first two phases of the study.

At the CPM Ángel Barrios in Granada, elemental and professional courses can be taken. With regards to student numbers, 122 students graduated in the academic year 2013/14 in the province of Granada, 90 of which did so at the CPM Ángel Barrios.

In the 6<sup>th</sup> year of EEPP, students should choose modality A or B, and itinerary 1 or 2: generating the options of Analysis (A2), Composition (A1 and B1) and Music Theory (B2), each of these with their specific subjects. Furthermore, the curriculum is comprised of a series of compulsory subjects which vary according to instrument or instrument group, as well as the choice of an optional subject (such as Music Pedagogy).

With regards to methodology, the semi-structured interview is a qualitative method of data collection whereby the researcher asks the participants a series of questions, albeit open questions or from a guide containing the issues to be covered, with the aim of producing scientific knowledge. The semi-structured interview, precisely because of its flexibility, is the ideal instrument for collating the opinions of the students in this study, given that, although being organised around a script, it allows the interviewer sufficient liberty to adapt to the development of each interview and interviewee (Given, 2008; Kvale, 2011).

The interview script is structured around four subjects: Choice of modality and itinerary, Music Pedagogy, Future prospects and Initial teacher training for music education. In the section of questions relating to Choice of modality and itinerary, the motives that have led the interviewed students to choose between the modalities Analysis, Composition and Music Theory are ascertained. There is no academic information that advises on this choice, there are therefore aspects of a different nature that lead to this choice; professional aspirations, teachers' or friends' advice, personal preference, etc. The second section of questions is dedicated to the Music Pedagogy subject and its questions are drawn up by taking into account the analysis carried out in phase 1b. This way, the study intends to discover to what extent the reality in the classroom is linked with that which is described in the syllabus contents, as well as the development of the aspects related to music education and teaching. The section ded-

icated to future prospects aims to understand the motives which explain the high dropout rate between the intermediate and superior levels described in phase 1a. These, perhaps, are due to students' dissatisfaction at the options available in the superior cycle, which are almost exclusively performance orientated (although at this superior level, one can take specialisations which are non-instrument related, these options are a minority). Lastly, the Initial teacher training for music education section of questions aims to discover the level of interest on behalf of the interviewees in music education as a professional option. The questions are centred around understanding that possible interest, as well as aspects related to their opinions on the regulations governing access to studies that lead to specialising in music teaching in compulsory education (primary and secondary), minimum musical knowledge requirements, etc.

All of the participants (or their legal guardians, if minors) voluntarily signed a document in which the general characteristics of the study were detailed and their anonymity and confidentiality of the information provided by them were guaranteed. Furthermore, the participants had to comply with an essential requisite; to be final-year students in vocational music education. The selection of participants was carried out by means of purposive or deliberate sampling, guided by part of the results obtained in phase 1a, which will be explained in the following section. This type of sampling, typical of qualitative research, allows a sample, appropriate for the specific criteria of the research, to be configured (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011; Teddlie and Yu, 2007).

In this phase, 9 final-year students from the CPM Ángel Barrios centre of Granada have participated, 5 females and 4 males. They are Aurelia, Beatriz, Carla, Daniela, Esther, Álvaro, Beltrán, Carlos and David (fictitious names have been used to preserve their privacy).

## 4. Results

The profile that the obtained data presents in regards to music conservatory graduates paints a spectrum in which there is a slight female majority (table 2). Notwithstanding, it must be highlighted that the percentage is inverted when considering the ratio of genders by levels, in such a way that this majority is only maintained in the elemental level. In the pro-

fessional level, the number of males increases slightly until it reaches the females and finally, in superior levels, the global percentages are reversed and the number of females is lesser (table 3).

GENDER	A (%)	SV
Female	53,92	0,9
Male	46,08	0,9

Tab. 2 Average percentage of graduates according to gender

LEVEL	MALES		FEMALES	
	A (%)	SV	A (%)	SV
ELEMENTAL	32,63	1,20	41,10	0,93
PROFESSIONAL	9,02	2,10	9,11	1,91
SUPERIOR	4,43	2,24	3,70	1,28

Tab. 3 Graduates according to level and gender

The decrease in the number of graduates as the levels advance is another characteristic which was observed. The dropout rate between the elemental and professional level increases to 75,4%, the rate between professional and superior to 55,18%: these dropout rates are high table 4).

LEVEL	A (%)	SV
ELEMENTAL	73,73	1,49
PROFESSIONAL	18,14	3,92
SUPERIOR	8,13	3,39

Tab. 4 Average percentage of graduates according to level

The specialisation which most students choose is Piano with 30,04% of the total number of graduates, duplicating considerably the following specialisation in regards to numbers of graduates (Guitar with 14,26%). Of the 29 specialisations studied, the 14 most prevalent are in decreasing order: Piano, Guitar, Violin, Clarinet, Flute, Chelo, Viola, Saxophone, Trumpet,

Oboe, Percussion, Trombone and Double Bass. The rest, amongst which non-instrument specialisations are found, have a yearly average number of graduates below 1% (table 5).

SPECIALISATION	A (%)	SV
Piano	30,04	6,94
Guitar	14,26	2,01
Violin	13,02	2,31
Clarinet	8,53	0,97
Flute	6,17	1,16
Chelo	4,49	1,53
Viola	4,29	1,70
Saxophone	4,10	0,67
Trumpet	3,35	0,60
Oboe	2,05	0,68
Percussion	1,38	0,29
Trombone	1,30	0,52
Horn	1,16	0,46
Double bass	1,00	0,48
Bassoon	0,88	0,45
Flamenco Guitar	0,78	0,11
Composition	0,68	0,44
ICPRB	0,60	0,04
Singing	0,60	0,19
Tuba	0,47	0,27
Recorder	0,21	0,13
Organ	0,19	0,29
Harp	0,17	0,96
Orchestra direction	0,14	0,09
Musicology	0,14	0,11
Choir direction	0,14	0,13
Viola da Gamba	0,09	0,03
Flamencology	0,07	0,05
Harpsichord	0,06	0,02

*Tab. 5 Average percentage of graduates according to specialisation*

The distribution of students among Andalusian provinces is slightly unequal: Malaga and Seville have a greater number of centres and students, exactly the opposite of what can be seen in Huelva and Almería (table 6).

PROVINCE	A (%)	SV
Seville	18,39	1,94
Malaga	16,46	1,08
Córdoba	15,71	1,56
Jaén	13,06	1,71
Granada	12,85	1,56
Cádiz	10,32	1,31
Almería	8,30	1,13
Huelva	5,33	0,44

*Tab. 6 Average Percentage of graduates according to provinces*

In regards to teacher training for students, which is covered in the Music Pedagogy subject and imparted in the 6<sup>th</sup> year of vocational education, analysis of the syllabus contents lead to three main conclusions. The first is that the classic methods of music teaching are the pillars of the revised syllabuses, mainly Orff, Kodaly, Willems, Dalcroze, Martenot and Suzuki. It seems striking that an important part of the Music Pedagogy subject is still based on music teaching methods that, although having been sufficiently proven as valid, were developed in the first half of the twentieth century (Rodríguez-Quiles, 2006). It would be interesting to include contemporary approaches such as those related to modern technologies in the music classroom or a performance-based approach to music education as proposed by Rodríguez-Quiles (2014, 2015, 2016a,b,c,d). The second conclusion reflects the other pillar on which study texts are based: the basic handling of aspects relating to curricular design, principally the production and presentation of didactic units. Finally, many of the centres offer small practical approaches to music education, overseen by their teachers or tutors, as extracurricular and complementary activities. They are, in their majority: didactic concerts to introduce new students to the centre to the instruments available at elemental level (students from 2<sup>nd</sup>–4<sup>th</sup> of primary) and practical sessions for colleagues of elemental level education guided by their teachers (as a kind of work experience prototype).

In short, the Music Pedagogy courses imparted at music conservatories offer their students an insight into music teaching, or more specifically, a music initiation for children and ignores adults (Rodríguez-Quiles, 2012). Notwithstanding, one should not forget that we are dealing with one subject of one hour per week which is only imparted in the 6<sup>th</sup> year

and is not compulsory for all students (although most students choose it). The subject has an introductory nature and serves as a first point of contact with pedagogic-musical contents. It must not be forgotten that the ages of students that the system anticipates are 17–18 and therefore it is considered that the student will have no prior knowledge of the subject.

In regards to the information obtained in the interviews, some interesting conclusions have been drawn. The interviewees agree that continuing their studies at superior level of music education only makes sense if they intend to later work in a band or orchestra where they can develop all of the performance capacities acquired during their many years of study. Given the exceptional characteristics of this option (devoting oneself professionally to performing), Beatriz thinks that, apart from rare exceptions, all musicians will, at some stage partake in teaching, and therefore it is fundamental that they have a minimum of training. She, in fact, proposes increasing the class time for pedagogic subjects (as optative subjects, for example) aimed at those who clearly see their future in specialised teaching. Therefore, a future that at some stage will include teaching can be discerned for vocational education students (Vicente and Aróstegui (2003) already suggested this although with students at superior level). Aurelio and Alvaro, whose parents are active music teachers, directly consider this a desirable professional prospect.

In regards to syllabuses for degrees focused on specialised teacher training, Carla makes a highly relevant contribution when she underlines the need for balance between technical and pedagogic knowledge when it comes to teaching any subject. In fact, she believes that the mere act of taking a teacher training degree (even one specialising in Music Education) does not enable a student to become a teacher (as is the case for one who only has musical knowledge). That said, she and the rest of her fellow students agree on the need for a specific access exam that takes into account musical aspects prior to acceptance on these university degree courses.

Another theme that has appeared recurrently is the *negative impression and terrible memories* of music as a subject in secondary school that the interviewees have, as they directly associate it with music history. If, albeit, it is true that under certain educational legislatures, music education has been reduced to classes of western music history, it is time to rise above this approach and start to actively make music. In the case of the interviewees, none of them wanted to go into music teaching at secondary school as their first professional option. In regards to this, it is worth

noting that a great part of secondary school music teachers are graduates from two main branches: Superior Grade music conservatory graduates or graduates of Musicology or Music History and Science degrees. The training for both of these teacher profiles is centred on characteristic aspects of both degrees, neither of which include the necessary pedagogic training to be able to carry out a profession which, in the case of Music History and Science graduates, will be taken up in the future by the majority of its graduates (Various authors, 2005). Attempts to mitigate this lack of teacher training have so far been shelved. Take, for example, the Q-Proposal by Rodríguez-Quiles (2010b) for the inclusion of a *Mention in Music Pedagogy and Music Didactics* within the Music History and Science degree, where the creation of a special itinerary for future secondary school teachers was proposed and which never came to fruition.

Those interviewed enthusiastically welcomed the idea of coordinating secondary school studies with those of music conservatories, given that the duplication which occurs as their studies advance greatly conditions their decisions (such as Aurelia, who chose the Analysis itinerary in order to be able to dedicate more time to her secondary school studies). Some, such as Alvaro, would have liked to enrol on a similar coordination program, even more so in his case as he was very clear on wanting to go into music teaching in primary schools. In regards to the “secondary school music specialisation” which would occur in practice if a coordination program between secondary schools and vocational music education were put in place, the interviewees agree that the degrees to which they should have preferential access are those related, amongst other, to music education.

## 5. Discussion

On the evidence of the above, the following proposals have been set out to improve both the current teacher training system and professional options for final year students of vocational education.

Firstly, and in accordance to that which is suggested by Ponce de León and Lago (2009), it would be interesting to see the creation of educational guidance services to guide students in vocational education. These students embark on a lengthy study process (the complete cycle lasts 14 years) and, as previously mentioned, legislation does not specify which profiles are the best suited to each of the four proposed itineraries in the last two years of vocational education. This causes students who do not choose the superior cycle, but who have in the same way studied for a minimum of ten years, to leave the music conservatory and their music studies. A loss of approximately half of all graduates each year.

There should be a greater spectrum of options than mere performance-based subjects for this type of learning to be effective. Although superior cycle music education offers theoretical specialisations, in other words, different from the performance based ones (such as Composition, Flamencology or Musicology), they attract a very low number of students (0,89%) and definitely do nothing to stem the high dropout rate between the professional and superior cycles.

It would be interesting to promote similar initiatives to those carried out at the Cordoba music conservatory and, in accordance with that which is stipulated in the LOE [Organic Law on Education *Spanish initials*] (2/2006), equivalence between the levels of secondary school studies and vocational education put into practice, as well as realistically organising their compatibility. The efforts made by music conservatory students are considerable, above all when taking into account that these students tend to also be studying at secondary school. The conciliation of both studies can be facilitated by proposals such as can be seen in Cordoba; creating groups of secondary school students who simultaneously study at secondary school and at music conservatories and adapting their timetable and workload to their special circumstances.

A motivational measure in this respect could be the creation of Secondary School Syllabus Specialising in Music, created specifically for these aforementioned students who combine vocational and official studies

and wish to study said syllabus. Furthermore, in the same way as other modalities, these students would have access to university degrees on completion of this specialised secondary school syllabus, listing degree courses to which they would have preferential access, amongst which could be a possible Degree in Music Education to be offered at current Faculties of Sciences and Education. In this case, Music Education could be a compulsory subject at high school, given its finality as introductory subject in this field.

As in many other aspects, we are interconnected with neighbouring countries as regards questions of to further and university education. However, in order to place ourselves at the same level as the rest of the European Union and carry out the concept of European convergence as proposed by the *Bologna Declaration*, improvements in current teaching degrees are necessary along with the recuperation of the specialisation in music education. This is no longer a specific degree course and has been reduced to the following: a group of optional subjects, organised differently by each university, and above all with a reduced number of designated credits, between 30 and 60 ECTS. The current situation leaves us at a clear disadvantage in comparison to neighbouring countries, where an undergraduate and postgraduate degree (Bachelor and Master) are necessary requisites for music teaching, where syllabuses generally have an equal number of technical-musical and teaching subjects, where registering for such courses is regulated by access exams and where artistic-musical education is firmly established in the educational systems, at infant, primary and secondary level (Díaz, 2010; Fernandes, 2008; Heiling, 2010; Rodríguez-Quiles, 2010; VV. AA., 2009). It is difficult, in any case, to talk of European convergence with such different educational syllabuses, which disadvantage our country. It is absurd to put in to practice proposals for European cooperation, mobility or similar degree courses from this position of inequality (Rodríguez-Quiles, 2010b and 2012).

Below we will mention some future lines of research that this study suggests. Although the quantitative data collected in phase 1b was sufficiently solid and abundant as it refers to the total population studied, it was limited to the factors that the Andalusian regional government included; gender, specialisation, level and province. In order to describe in a more complete manner the profiles of students graduated in music education, it would be of interest to develop a tool for data collection which allowed access to more precise data and adapted specifically to

the objectives of the research, such as a questionnaire for example. This way, although 100% of the information would no longer be available, one could choose to compile more diverse data (age, professional preferences, choice of itinerary, etc.).

In the same way, the unequal female to male ratio in music teaching is one of the most striking aspects which has arisen during the analysis of the data. They are in the majority global, but in the minority at superior level. It would be worthwhile questioning the causes of this ratio, beyond the statistical analysis.

Moreover, the approach taken in pedagogic-music training for students has been based both on analysis of Andalusian music conservatory syllabuses and the interviews carried out on a group of students from the Ángel Barrios conservatory in Granada. Although this has allowed us to obtain a dual viewpoint of the pedagogic aspects that 6<sup>th</sup> year vocational education students study, both its contents and how they are perceived, it would be interesting to complete this view with the opinions of the teachers who impart these classes.

One of the most interesting aspects considered in this study, at least for the professional fulfilment of vocational education students, has not only been the recognition of the existing compatibility between secondary and vocational music education covered by legislation, but also the practical fulfilment of the legislative provisions which in Andalusia has occurred between the music conservatory in Cordoba and the neighbouring López Neyra secondary school. Its pioneering nature could be inspirational for other music conservatories and secondary schools who wish to do the same, due to the large number of Andalusian students who could take advantage of this conciliatory measure, students who often tend to be on the borderline of both centres. It would therefore be of great use to approach this coordination programme with greater interest, familiarise oneself with it in detail, be able to describe and understand the ins and outs of its workings, its advantages and disadvantages, the opinions of its registered students and its teachers.

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