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# **Music and the Social Science Subjects**

**An inspirational knowledge base for collaboration**

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# Abstract

**Title:** Music and the social science subjects

An inspirational knowledge base for collaboration.

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The purpose of this study is to create an inspirational knowledge base to enable future collaboration between music teachers and teachers of the social science subjects in secondary school. In this paper the following research questions will be processed: What are the possibilities of combining the social science subjects (Religion, History, Geography, and Civics) with music? What are teachers' thoughts on cross-curricular work?

The method used in this study is qualitative interviews with four social science-subjects-teachers in secondary school. The results show a big variety in ideas for cross-curricular work, but the informants mostly refer to music and artists from the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

**Keywords:** Cross-curricular, Interdisciplinary work, Music, Religion, History, Geography, Social studies.

**Titel:** Musik och SO-ämnena

En inspirerande kunskapsbas för samarbete.

**Författare:** Joakim Nygren

Syftet med studien är att skapa en inspirerande kunskapsbas för att möjliggöra framtida samarbete mellan musiklärare och SO-lärare på högstadiet. I denna uppsats kommer följande frågor att behandlas: Vilka möjligheter finns det att kombinera So-ämnena (religion, historia, geografi, samhällskunskap) med musik? Vad har lärarna för tankar om ämnesintegrerande arbete?

Metoden som används i denna uppsats är kvalitativa intervjuer med fyra stycken SO-lärare på högstadiet. Resultaten visar på en stor variation i idéer, med huvudsakligt fokus på musik och artister från 1900-talet.

**Nyckelord:** Ämnesövergripande, Tvärvetenskapligt arbete, musik, religion, historia, geografi, samhällskunskap.



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# 1. Introduction

During a semester in London I learned that all lesson plans had to include cross-curricular links. This is not a necessity in Sweden, although both teacher and principal should allow for the students to work cross curricular (Skolverket, 2011). I believe that when students are given the opportunity to work cross-curricular a more real-based learning situation is created. To facilitate future collaboration between music and the social science subjects, and also to enrich and develop my role as a teacher, I want to generate a knowledge base with ideas for cross-curricular work between these subjects. The reason to why I am writing this study in English is threefold. Firstly, I am not only studying to become a music teacher, I am also becoming a teacher of English. Therefore, I want to improve my language skills. Secondly, I want this study to be more internationally viable since I am aiming to work abroad in the future. Thirdly, by writing in English the results of this study are made available for more people. I chose to study the social science subjects because I do not believe myself to have the knowledge in these subjects to be able to come up with the cross-curricular ideas myself. It is my hopes and wishes that this study will inspire practicing as well as future teachers to work in a new collaborative way and make the content of their lessons more alive and pertinent for their students.

Previous studies and other literature I have read regarding cross-curricular work do not cover music and the social sciences subjects. Therefore, this study will fill that gap.

In the previous work section earlier research made in cross-curricular work will be presented. Additionally, by looking at the curriculum for the social science subjects, parallels to music will be drawn. In the results section I will present the ideas for cross-curricular work brought forward from the respondents, and also the thoughts and insights provided from them. In the discussion section I will discuss these results compared to earlier research and the curriculums.

To get answers to my problem statement I will use literature, curriculums, and qualitative interviews with teachers of the social science subjects.



## **2. Main purpose and problem statements**

The main purpose of this study is to provide an inspirational knowledge base for future cross-curricular collaborations between teachers of the social science subjects and the music subject in secondary school.

Here are my problem statements:

- What are the possibilities of combining the social science subjects (Religion, History, Geography, and Civics) with music?
- What are teachers' thoughts on cross-curricular work?

### **2.1 Limitations**

In this study I have chosen to only interview teachers of the social science subjects, since they have knowledge in those subjects (Religion, History, Geography, and Civics) that I as a music and English teacher do not. I have also restricted my study's aim to secondary school (year 7-9 in Swedish schools).

## 3. Previous research

In this section I will present literature regarding cross-curricular work. Furthermore, I will present the curriculum for which Swedish teachers of the social science subjects must relate. From it I will highlight parts which refer to music (without interpreting it as a musician and music teacher). Finally I will present earlier ideas on cross-curricular work between these subjects.

### 3.1 Cross-curricular work

Jederlund, (2011) writes that the last decades of research in the field of learning conditions has given us a reason to question the division of subjects into theoretical and practical-aesthetic. Furthermore, he challenges the prioritization for theoretical subjects on behalf of other subjects, since the result is not to be seen. By addressing our emotions with music we create engagement which inspires us. All permanent knowledge is forged in meaningful sensations and made experiences.

In a creative work many various brain functions are stimulated and activated [...] it is when the different parts work together we become whole, creative, and creating individuals. That is when we learn for life (Jederlund, 2011, p. 34, my translation).

By combining theoretical with practical-aesthetic knowledge, we may be able to learn for life.

According to Jernström and Lindberg (1995), it is important for all people to be able to see things holistically. When it comes to school the theoretical knowledge is often prioritized which may lead to students with a disinterest towards the school. Jernström and Lindberg (1995) say that research show that a stimulus of both halves of the brain is of equal importance and when this occurs the learning results improve. Furthermore, they refer to Linton (as referred to in Jernström and Lindberg, 1995) who is a memory researcher. She points out how important it is for us to have an emotional experience to be able to remember that particular knowledge.

Palmer (2009, in *Music Education for Changing Times*), writes about how the disciplines in schools are divided in a way that both protects that certain subject and also defines it. Music on the other hand, to be fully understood, relies on many other subjects. To grasp the full complexity of music, how it works in our society and culture, it is of importance to find parallels and connections to other subjects, for example

history and sociology (Palmer, 2009, in *Music Education for Changing Times*). Palmer goes on by saying that the approach to music education in schools should be both deep and broad, and that teachers should look to different subjects to gain knowledge on a broader field (2009, in *Music Education for Changing Times*).

According to Krantz and Persson (2001), reality is not divided into different subjects, and students may not see problems in the world according to schools' division of subjects. Krantz and Persson (2001) are concerned that the children's curiosity may be reduced if the subjects are divided. At the same time they point out that not only interdisciplinary nor subject specific work should be used. Interdisciplinary work should be used when there are pedagogical advantages and preferably in secondary school (Krantz, Persson, 2001).

Another reason to use cross-curricular work seems to be greater curiosity for the subjects.

Interdisciplinary course offerings in middle schools have resulted in increased interest in social studies when these have featured instruction in the form of learning native dances, performing music, and dramatizing myths and folk tales that characterize cultures that are foci of the social studies curriculum (*Drake, 1998, as cited in Cosenza, 2005*).

According to Cosenza (2005), using a cross-curricular approach to teach social studies may enhance the learning of the students. Cosenza draws on several sources showing students who report that they had a higher interest in a certain subject when it was taught interdisciplinary with visual arts, drama, or music (Cosenza, 2005).

Mathiasson (2004) says that there is no research that in a convincing way has proven that aesthetic subjects may enhance the learning in other subjects. Mathiasson interviews Lars Lindström, professor in pedagogy and researcher, who says that even though there is a widespread agreement that by working cross-curricular with aesthetic subjects this will improve understanding and make learning easier, this has never been able to be proven. Mathiasson (2004) goes on and writes about music and the arts intrinsic value, and that they should not be seen as help to other subjects. But according to Hägglund, who also was interviewed by Mathiasson, it does not have to be either or. Hägglund speaks of examples where he has seen aesthetic subjects being used in for example history to enrich that lesson. This way of working creates more entry points for the students, and if they find it easier to acquire the knowledge from the lesson in this way, then it itself has its own intrinsic value (Mathiasson, 2004).

## **3.2 Regulatory documents**

The secondary school in Sweden is regulated by Lgr11 (Curriculum for primary and secondary school, and kindergarten). In this section episodes from the curriculum of the social science subjects will be highlighted. The social science subjects are divided into four different subjects; history, geography, religion, and civics. In this section I will show common areas of study between these four and music.

### **3.2.1 History**

History and music are naturally intertwined with each other. Music has been used in all of mankind's history and is now exerted by more people than ever before. Even in music we teach 'music history'. It is a fact that there has been music in history, but is there history in music? According to the curriculum for history, students' will develop an understanding of how historical narratives are being used in our modern society and also in our everyday life. Through this understanding the students will acquire new and different perspectives on others', but also their own, values, identities and beliefs (Skolverket, 2011). Furthermore, it is written in the curriculum that students should learn how to "reflect on their own and others use of history in different contexts" (Skolverket, 2011, p. 172, my translation).

### **3.2.2 Geography**

Although geography is a subject that, when I think of it in terms of music, is easy to connect with national anthems, traditional music from different countries and different cultures, and instruments from different parts of the globe, there are no references to music in the Swedish curriculum for geography in secondary school.

When looking outside the boundaries of this study to find any links to music in geography, there is one to be found for primary school. Teaching for the lower years, 1-3, should include "children's literature, songs and movies" (Skolverket, 2011, p. 160, my translation) that depict present and past life of, for example, school or how families lived during that specific time.

### **3.2.3 Religion**

Through the religious studies students shall acquire knowledge about religions as well as worldviews, from the society they live in and all over the world. Furthermore, the students should become aware of how people express their beliefs, and the teaching

should holistically show how different religions could affect the society, including social cohesion (Skolverket, 2011). “Through education the students are given the premise to be able to interpret cultural expressions related to religious traditions” (Skolverket, 2011, p. 186, my translation). Although not explicitly referring to music in any kind of way, many religious traditions are connected with music, for example Christmas, were some of the Christmas carols contain lyrics about God and Jesus.

One topic in the curriculum for religious studies is *Identity and questions of life*. The word identity is used throughout the whole curriculum, in many subjects, and also in music. In the curriculum for music it is written that music may affect how a student develops their own identity (Skolverket, 2011). The content for religious studies in secondary school should address how religion may affect people in their choice of lifestyle and in the creation of a lifestyle.

Continuing on identity, teaching should address

how different questions in life, for example the meaning of life, relationships, love and sexuality, are depicted in popular culture (Skolverket, 2011, p. 189, my translation).

Popular culture in this case, according to NE, may refer to popular literature, popular music or popular press (populärkultur). When listening to popular music of today, we find that many, if not all, of the topics mentioned in the quote above are depicted.

### **3.2.4 Civics**

The main purpose of this subject is that the student should gain knowledge of how society and individuals affect each other (Skolverket, 2011). Through decades, musicians all over the world have written music about what is going on in the society, and they in turn have probably affected the society.

In civics, teaching should include how media work in the society to entertain us or how they spread information (Skolverket, 2011). In the term *media*, radio, TV and newspapers are included. Ann Werner, researcher in gender studies at Södertörns University, says in an interview that young people in Stockholm are mostly using the Internet to listen to music (Werner, 2012). In our modern day society maybe the social media Facebook, YouTube, Spotify, and Twitter should be included in the term *media* as well.

Another area of work to be included in the civics subject is for the students to learn how to take a stance for or against something (Skolverket, 2011). Although this not

refers to music, neither implicitly or explicitly, I cannot help but drawing parallels to protest music and political music from different parts of the world.

### **3.3 Earlier research in the subject matter**

Elsner (2000) interviewed 18 teachers, in the fields of theatre/drama, art, and music. The purpose was to find out how these teachers thought that their subject was related to other subjects. In this study Elsner found that teachers of the *arts* believe that their subjects are mostly related to other practical subjects, but also languages and math are referred to as having close links with the *arts*.

In her study Elsner (2000) shows that many of the teachers points out the relations between music and history. The teachers pertain that music may bring to life the knowledge and create understanding for historical periods and different cultures. At the same time the musical knowledge is deepened through the historical and cultural context.

One idea brought forth in this study is about 16<sup>th</sup> century music. One teacher says that by not only listening to the music, but providing the history around it; the church, the community around the church, music will gain ground thanks to this 'about-knowledge' (Elsner, 2000, p. 44). Another suggestion is to analyze lyrics from old songs to gain knowledge of the society around that time. One teacher pointed out that in collaboration with other subjects, the musical technical skills might not be developed. Instead, what the students will achieve is a sense of whole, which will be educational and stimulating in itself (Elsner, 2000)

Bjørkvold (2005) suggest that music should be combined with Civics. As an example he asks himself and the reader what the resistance against the United Nations in the 70's would have been without the protest songs. According to Bjørkvold (2005) the political processes in our society would be easier to comprehend and more clear with the help from music.

Furthermore, Bjørkvold (2005) explains a music project carried out by a music teacher named Gro.

Imagine the 60's, Gro! The Cuba crisis, the space research with its peak with the moon landing, the emancipation of women/women's liberation [...] and we should not forget the music: The Beatles, The Monkeys, The Doors, Jimi Hendrix [...] This can be a great show! (Bjørkvold, 2005, p. 140, my translation).

This theme based project began as collaboration between the music teacher and the social science teacher and ended up including teachers of religion, English, Norwegian, economy and a few more subjects. Bjørkvold goes on explaining that this particular project became so successful because the students felt like what they did had a purpose and they gained a lot of knowledge that was connected (Bjørkvold, 2005).

More ideas of working cross-curricular between music and the social science subjects are presented by Bjørkvold (2005). The teenage revolt in America depicted in the movie 'Blackboard Jungle' with music of Bill Haley and the comets. According to Bjørkvold this rebellion changed the world "socially, culturally, commercially and musically" (Bjørkvold, 2005, p. 147, my translation). Bjørkvold then goes on by saying that the rap group Public Enemy took this rebellion towards the school and turned it against the society and made the American pop music politicized. Another genre that became heavily politicized was the Flower Power-music (Bjørkvold, 2005). All three types of music, the 50's rock music, the rap in the 80', and also the Flower Power from late 60's and early 70's can all be dealt with by using cross curricular work between the social science subjects and music according to Bjørkvold (2005).

### **3.4 Summary**

Jederlund (2011) questions the division of subjects into theoretical and practical-aesthetic. He also challenges the prioritization for the theoretical subjects. Jederlund (2011) also says that when emotions are being addressed with music, we are being inspired because of engagement. Jernström and Lindberg (1995) points out the importance of seeing things holistically. Both halves of the brain need to be stimulated for learning results to be improved. Palmer (2009) says that music relies on many different subjects to be understood, due to the complexity that is music. He adds to this that it is important to find parallels to for example history and sociology. Additionally, Palmer (2009) says that the approach to music in schools should be both broad and deep. Krantz and Persson (2001) points out that reality is not divided into different subjects, and that schools' division of subjects may not be shared by the students. They add to this that not only should cross-curricular or subject specific work be used. Cross-curricular work should only be used when there are pedagogical advantages. Cosenza (2005) says that a cross-curricular approach to social studies with music may enhance the learning for the students. She also cite Drake (1998), who showed higher interest in social studies when it had been taught in the form of learning native dances, music or

dramatizing myths and folk tales. Mathiasson (2004) says that it has not been proven that aesthetic subjects can improve learning in other subjects. Furthermore he talks about music's own intrinsic value, and how music should not be seen as help to other subjects. Elsner (2000) shows in her study that teachers of the arts believe their subjects to be mostly related to other practical subjects, but also mathematics and languages are mentioned. Additionally, Elsner's informants point out the relations between music and history, and that music may bring life to historical periods and different cultures. Two ideas brought forward in Elsner's study were listening to and analyzing old song lyrics, and also when listening to music, that music may gain ground due to 'about-knowledge' provided from the history of that time. Bjørkvold (2005) talks about combining music with civics and he mentions protest songs, and the resistance against the United Nations. Additionally he adds ideas about the 50's rock music, rap music from the 80's and also talks about the Flower Power movement from the late 60's and early 70's.



## **4. Methodology**

In this chapter an explanation of how the collection of data was made will be presented and a clarification of the ethical considerations as well as the validity of the study will also be made.

### **4.1 Pilot study**

Bryman (2011) refers to Kvale (1996, in Bryman, 2011), who points out 10 criteria for a successful interviewer. To name a few of these criteria, Kvale states that an interviewer should be clear and distinct, and familiar with the subject. He also adds that it is a good idea to conduct a pilot study. A pilot study should not only be conducted to make sure that the questions are understandable, but also to make sure that the study will work as a whole (Bryman, 2011). Furthermore, Bryman (2011) points out that questions that are not fully answered, or skipped questions, may be shown in a pilot study. Also, Bryman (2011) says that a pilot study should not include respondents who will be included in the future selection.

Before I decided on my subject for this thesis, a pilot study was performed to see if there were any ideas on cross-curricular work with music to be drawn from the teachers of the social science subjects. An online questionnaire was sent out to 13 civics teachers with questions regarding cross-curricular work between music and the social science subjects. This questionnaire was fully replied by nine teachers and showed that some teachers had many ideas for cross-curricular work. Based on the answers from this questionnaire I later constructed the questions I used in my interviews (See Appendix A).

### **4.2 Research focus and data collection**

The main purpose of this study is to gather ideas on how to work cross-curricular between the social science subjects and music. A secondary purpose was to gain knowledge of teachers' opinions and thoughts on this approach to teaching. When doing a study there are mainly two different research strategies to choose between: qualitative and quantitative. Bryman (2011) describes a quantitative research approach where the main focus lies on proving theories but also that the collection and analysis of data stresses quantification. On the other hand, the qualitative approach has its main focus on

generating theories, and how people observe their surroundings. When choosing between doing a qualitative and quantitative study, my choice fell on the first mentioned. I am in this study not trying to show general patterns, instead I want to create a base, a theory, a compilation of thoughts and ideas on how to collaborate between the before mentioned subjects. This is in line with what Bryman (2011), is saying. Qualitative studies are aiming at “creating theories” (ibid, p.40, my translation), and the focus is on how “individuals perceive and interpret their social reality” (ibid, p.41, my translation). In my qualitative study I am using interviews as my primary method since I believe this to be the best way to get the rich, in-depth answers to my research questions.

### **4.3 Interviews**

According to Bryman (2011) there are many kinds of interviews. A normal interview is a meeting where the interviewer asks the respondent a series of questions and the responses are written down or recorded. But there may also be interviews through so called focus groups or via the telephone. Through interviews it is easier to receive a more thorough and complete response compared with a questionnaire. An interview is a linguistic event and a meeting between two or more people, although it is important not to equate it with a conversation. This is because an interview has a purpose of contribute with specific information. Bryman (2011) goes on by explaining why it is important for the respondent to know the purpose of the study, and also why a trustworthy relation is essential. The purpose of the study is key for the respondent to be willing to use his or her, often valuable, time to answer your questions. A trustworthy relation between the interviewer and respondent is important mainly because of two things described by Bryman (2011). If the relation is not satisfactory, the respondent might feel that he or she no longer want to take part in the interview and therefore decides to abort. On the other hand, if the relation is too good, the respondents' replies may be too long, and that a good relation may result in the respondent answering in a certain way to make the interviewer perceive them in good light.

These factors are important to take into consideration before starting your interview.

## 4.4 Design of the study

This study was made in three steps where the first one was the selection of informants, then how the interview would be made, and lastly the analysis of the data.

### 4.4.1 Selections

The respondents in this study consist of four different teachers, 3 men and 1 woman in varied age groups. All are practicing teachers of the social science subjects in year 7-9 and they work at different schools around Skåne, Sweden.

- Teacher A is a 49 years old man and has been working as a teacher for 13 years. He has a degree in the social science subjects.
- Teacher B is a 25 years old woman and has been working as a teacher for one year. She has a degree in religious studies and history.
- Teacher C is a 38 years old man and has been working as a teacher for 13 years. He has a degree in the social science subjects with deepened knowledge in history and religion.
- Teacher D is a 31 years old man and has been working as a teacher for 10 years. He has a degree in religious studies and media production.

In the selection of informants I have chosen to do what Bryman (2011) calls a *snowball selection*. This means that I choose my informants which someone, in this case principals, recommended. This kind of selection results in non-representative research results. However, I am not striving to do a thesis that concludes all teachers, instead I want to create a knowledge base, and because of this I choose informants who may provide me with this kind of information. By sending emails to different principals in Skåne explaining my inquiry, I received email-addresses to 17 teachers of which 4 allowed me to interview them. There are mainly two factors due to why there is such a big loss in respondents. The first one is that many of the teachers that I emailed referred to a lack of time and therefore were not able to participate in an interview. The second reason is that many of them did not reply at all, even though a reminder was sent.

### 4.4.2 The interviews

I used semi-structured interviews in my research. According to Bryman (2011) this means that the interviewer is using an interview-guide, which contains the basic themes of the study. The questions are open in their character, and furthermore, the interviewer

is free to ask the question in any order he prefers, and he is also allowed to ask follow-up questions on the respondents' answers.

The respondents themselves decided when and where the interviews were to take place. The interviews took between 11 and 29 minutes each and all interviews continued until all of the questions were fully answered. One of the questions during the interview concerned if the respondents could see any links to music in the curriculum. During this question a printed copy of the curriculum for all four of the social science subjects was provided them. All of the interviews were recorded which was approved by the informants. These recordings were transcribed shortly after the interview.

### **4.3 Validity of the study**

The transcriptions of my conducted interviews are literal, but I chose to correct the text grammatically by removing some "fillers". I am well aware that by doing so, my material does not render the interview accurately, but the changes I have made are small, and they do not change the meaning or content of what my respondents have replied. Furthermore, these changes will improve and enhance the understanding of the interviews. In the result section, when quoting these interviews, the reader may sometimes see /.../. This symbol means that there is some text omitted that according to me is not necessary for that specific quote. Also, all quotes in the results section are translated from Swedish to English by me.

### **4.4 Ethical considerations**

It is, according to Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), important to follow four guidelines when doing research about people. Those are confidentiality, informed consent, consequences, and the role of the researcher.

In my study I find no reason to reveal the true names of my respondents. Instead I have chosen to treat them confidential, something I informed my respondents of when I contacted them as well as when we met for the interview. Therefore, I have given all my respondents a number and will refer to from here on out as teacher 1, teacher 2 etc. They were also informed that I will treat all gathered information with a high level of confidentiality and that the information only will be used for this thesis. Furthermore, I have chosen not to name the schools of where the interviewed teachers work to further protect their confidentiality. Also, it is only I who has access to the recordings, transcriptions and other compilations of data.

Informed consent means that I, in advance, informed my respondents about the purpose of my study and how it will be structured. Upon contacting my informants I told them about my purpose with this study, to create a knowledgebase for cross-curricular work between music and the social science subjects. I have also allowed for my respondents to read through my thesis and received their approval of how I have used their answers, so that I do not produce them in bad light. My informants were informed before the interview that they were not obliged to participate in the interview, and that they were free to leave or cancel the interview at any time.

Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) say that a study should cause as little harm as possible for the informants. The probable benefits from the study and the potential knowledge to be spread through it should justify the study. In this study I see no reason to how a respondent may take harm during the interview and the themes that are lifted in it. The questions are not at a personal level, the informants are just sharing their pedagogical knowledge with others. According to Vetenskapsrådet (2011), a research should be beneficial, and, if conducted at a university, it should also be made available for the school. The results from this study will probably benefit many teachers because of the value in getting ideas on cross-curricular work. What I have found, there are no earlier studies like this conducted before, which increases the need for this study.

The role of the researcher is about the honesty, integrity, and the knowledge about ethical guidelines. The strongest demand on the researcher is to produce high quality research which is made scientifically correct (Vetenskapsrådet, 2011). This study will have gone through a peer review before being published and I have tried to explain in as much detail as possible how this research was conducted.

## **4.5 Processing and analysis**

Patel and Davidson (2011) describe a way of analyzing which is based on *Grounded Theory*. This is the approach I have been inspired by when performing my analysis. After transcribing the interviews, I read through the text multiple times after which I began to see patterns in the informants' responses. These patterns were then categorized into themes which quotes were copied and pasted into from the original documents. After reading through these documents a few times some of the themes were merged into one and given a better name, since those responses, according to my analysis, fit together. These themes will be the headlines in the results section of this thesis.

## 5. Results

In this chapter, the results of the interviews will be presented. These results are structured in four different categories; Opinions on cross-curricular work, Ideas for cross-curricular work, Opinions on music teachers, and Pros and cons in cross-curricular work.

### 5.1 Opinions on cross-curricular work

In this section, the respondents' thoughts on cross-curricular work and why or why not it should be used will be presented.

#### 5.1.1 Cross-fertilization

The respondents all agree that the cross-fertilization that occurs when working cross-curricular is all good. Teacher B concludes this by saying “students get a little better understanding of how everything is connected” (Teacher B). Teacher C concurs with this and states that the students receive a picture that is more comprehensive and whole. Teacher D talks about the extremes of cross-curricular work, a best case scenario and a worst case scenario. In the best case scenario, Teacher D believes that the students will reach so much further and gain more from it. In the worst case scenario Teacher D is concerned about the students. “Maybe the students don't get the connection between the subjects which are integrated” (Teacher D).

Teacher A points out that cross-curricular work is when subjects cross-fertilize each other, but that they not necessarily need to be mixed together. An example of this according to teacher A could be that you show a picture to start a discussion. “It does not become the art-subject just because of this” (teacher A).

#### 5.1.2 Entry points to a subject

All but one of the respondents, Teacher B, talks about how a subject, in this case music, may serve as an entry point or a starting point for a subject. Teacher A talks about a class who listened to a song by *Kapten Röd* (a Swedish dancehall/reggae artist) to start a discussion about the society we live in. This song served as an entry point, which lead up to a good discussion (Teacher A). Teacher A goes on by talking about how he uses music in the history subject to enhance a certain time or eras' cultural expressions. “I use it more as a feature” (Teacher A). This is exactly how teacher C uses music as well.

Just by, for example, playing a song for a couple of minutes, which makes a strong impression, to look at the lyrics, what is this song about? It is a zeitgeist for example (Teacher C).

Teacher D concurs with this opinion and talks about entry points, and how something may lead on to something else.

I think that it is just as important to have entry points as it is to get them [the students] to understand. Thus, the entry point may well be in music and then it might not always have to end in music. Or, on the contrary, that the entry point is not in music, but it ends with music. Or you can combine them and go side by side (Teacher D).

Teacher C concludes this by saying that with the use of entry points, the students get something more to associate their knowledge with.

### **5.1.3 Presentations**

Two of the respondents highlight the possibility of students working cross-curricular in their presentations in school. They mean that it does not always have to be an exam or a written assignment that needs to be handed in.

You could let your students show what they have come up with in a specific area of work /.../ by maybe creating a song (Teacher A).

Teacher A emphasizes that when doing this, it is important that the students show in both of the current subjects that they have met and acquired the course objectives. Teacher D says that it is a possibility to let the students themselves choose their own way of doing a presentation. "They could do a short movie, or write a song about it instead" (Teacher D). Teacher D points out that these kinds of cross-curricular presentations should be the student's own initiative.

### **5.1.4 Keep its own value**

When working cross-curricular the respondents points out the importance of not letting the subject lose its own value to another subject. Teacher A says that he has many goals, which the students need to achieve, and that the focus must be on these goals.

I never let it take over the main role because I have another focus, since it is written in /.../ I have to follow the aims and goals in the curriculum. (Teacher A).

Teacher A goes on by saying that he only has one academic year to get all done which is written in the curriculum. Teacher D add to this that it is important to know what you wish to achieve in both subjects. Sometimes it may be better to work with

those subjects separately. "Some things might not just be possible to integrate with one another at the moment, and then we have to, you know, work on it on your own" (Teacher D).

Teacher A concurs with this by stating that it sometimes might be good to teach the subjects separately, and that the cross curricular work must fill a purpose.

It may not be cross-curricular work just because someone at Skolverket just realized that it is probably quite useful /.../ It might be a good idea to teach just geography or just history as well (Teacher A).

Teacher A concludes that there has to be a purpose with the cross-curricular work. If there is no purpose, he rather does not do it at all. Furthermore, he adds in that he believes that music and the arts-subjects are being underrated in school and that there should be more focus and investment in these subjects. This effort needs to be done without it being at the expense of other subjects.

## **5.2 Ideas for cross-curricular work**

Here the different ideas for cross-curricular work will be presented. Sometimes it is hard to distinguish between the different subjects of the social sciences (History, religion, geography and social studies), and therefore these ideas will be divided into five groups: History, religion, geography, social studies, and mixed.

### **5.2.1 History**

Teacher C speaks about contemporary history, a period after World War II from the 50's up to the 90's. He gives an example on how big events can be presented for a class to start a discussion, for example the Vietnam War, or Woodstock, and how these affected and influenced music, fashion and styles. Teacher D says that when teaching about pop and rock history this can without difficulty be associated with the social science subjects.

You could easily then put it in the context of a social science lesson. You could talk about lyrics and what they mean, you could talk about the 68-movement and all of the, the Vietnam War or whatever it may be, but also how the music affected (Teacher D).

Teacher D goes on by mentioning *Swing Kids*, a movie which takes place just before World War II. According to teacher D, this is a movie with which you can work with in both music and history.



Teacher A continues on the World War-theme and presents a lesson he had where his students watched a slideshow and listened to a marching song played in a movie where soldiers were marching.

So they had to reflect on why the soldiers sang while they were marching. Really, what is the purpose of this? Why did they just not march? The music is there as a cultural expression all the time (Teacher A).

Teacher A then explains that especially nationalism uses a lot of songs and marching music.

Some of the respondents mentions how music or some certain songs have funny connections, and gives a few ideas on how these might be used. Teacher B refers to a Swedish midsummer song called *Små Grodorna*, a melody originally from the French revolution – *Le chant de l’Oignon* – *The onion song*.

And there are probably many more examples, that is, songs that we use nowadays, in different traditions, which were made for some reason (Teacher B).

Teacher C uses songs with these kinds of connections to give his students something more to associate their knowledge with. For example, when talking about the development of Man, and in particular the first human-like creature to be found – Lucy.

Well, she is named that way because of the archaeologist who dug out the parts of her skeleton, during the time he lay there and did his thing he was listening to the radio and the song Lucy in the Sky With Diamonds by the Beatles was played (Teacher C).

Teacher B also mentions that when talking about the Native Americans, the students could listen to songs, which represent that particular time, by Bruce Springsteen.

Teacher D speaks about shifting point of view, especially when talking about the industrialization and trading over the world. He points out that normally you tell about spices when covering trading, but there is nothing about that mentioned in the curriculum. “I think it is about how well you want to see the connection or not between the subjects” (Teacher D). He continues by saying that it has not always been possible for all families to own a guitar which cost 700 SEK. This is all thanks to the industrialism and mass production.

### 5.1.2 Religion

The informants speak about listening to different hymns and prayers when giving lessons on different religions. However, their views upon using this are not agreed upon. Teacher A finds it a bit farfetched to play for example some Hindu music-piece since this might as well be an example of geography.

Of course you can listen to a bit of Hindu music /.../ but that might as well be an example of geography as well as Hinduism so to speak. May bring out a Catholic choir who sings something, to enhance the picture of how it was during the Catholic Europe /.../ but that is a bit farfetched, actually (Teacher A).

Teacher C on the other hand do not see it as farfetched, instead he uses hymns and prayers to create a certain mood. He then emphasizes that the authenticity of this kind of music is important. He continues with the suggestion of *Gud har 99 namn* (God has got 99 different names). According to teacher C this is a project which was released a couple of years ago, containing music selections from all of the big religions.

All of the respondents in this study highlights and have something to add about the part of the curriculum, which refers to identity and life questions. The following ideas also touch on ethics, which will be presented here as well.

Teacher D points out the words *popular culture* in the curriculum as being a perfect example of something that refers to music.

I mean, you can just play five music videos of today and discuss /.../ how do you believe this represent you, or, how do you feel, you know, when talking about relationships, sexuality, you can talk about ethics and moral. Is it reasonable that a big amount of today's music videos contain scantily dressed women but only a few lightly clothed men?(Teacher D).

Teacher B comes up with almost the same idea and explains how you may use songs that might be a bit more vulgar or songs which are related to love, and with these in mind discuss ethics and moral. "Is it okay to create songs where they sing in this way, and about this stuff? (Teacher B). She concludes her own trail of thought by exclaiming "Damn what a good idea I just came up with" (Teacher B). Teacher B describes how she has worked with this area, how different life-questions are depicted in popular culture, before. She has used movies and books, but considers that even music would be appropriate, especially since it is part of popular culture. Teacher D agrees with this when he says that many of his students listen to music that processes some kind of life

problems. Teacher C makes a connection from identity to diverse types of music, different genres, but also to fashion.

Teacher A brings up the emergence of different youth groups and how their lifestyle was and what kind of music they listened to.

We had a theme – the 60's, a society in change, where the music stood example of how the youth cultures were expressing themselves. /.../ everything was connected. There is so much more diversity today. Because today, not only one style applies, it is so much more individualized (Teacher A).

Following this he describes that it is very interesting for the students to compare their own lifestyle and music with how it was back then, but also to learn which ideas these groups brought forth. Teacher D continues by saying that the word *lifestyle* definitely is something connected with music.

You can talk about subgroups, or sub cultures that is, the progress of punk music or whatever it may be, people into synth-music, or 'mods' (Teacher D).

### **5.1.3 Geography**

Teacher A starts by telling about a project he had with a music teacher a couple of years ago. In this project they both worked, separately with their own subjects, with cultural meetings around the world.

Music and arts are forms of cultural expression which may vary all over the world and which may stand as examples of how different cultures and cultural meetings appear (Teacher A).

Teacher A goes on by saying that this project was not something where the lessons stuck to each other like glue, but the two subjects influenced and affected each other very well. He continues to talk about climate changes and impacts on the environment, and that these are questions that really touches people. Teacher D also speaks of these same themes and mentions renewable resources and that there are always subjects like these which affect people.

Neil Young released an album a couple of years ago called 'A Fork in the Road' I believe, which is about our use of oil for example. A theme-album that is. I mean, there are always things to use (Teacher D).

Teacher D talks about this theme-album which may be used both in music and in geography to speak about natural resources. In the curriculum for geography it is also written about poverty, and this is something that teacher D also connects with music.

That is, if you are listening to Hip-Hop-music for example, then that is a lot about a tough growing-up, and poor parents (Teacher D).

He explains that these themes are often mentioned in music and that it would not be difficult to involve this in your lessons.

Teacher C describes how his former school had a United Nations-day, where the students were given their own country, and they had to explain a problem that this country had. He then also played the national anthems from these countries for his students. Teacher D suggest talking about Live Aid, the concert that took place in 1985, during geography-lessons.

#### **5.1.4 Social studies**

Many of the respondents highlight critical thinking and source criticism from the curriculum of social studies.

For that kind of thing has come into society much more recently and with the new curriculum so therefore, critical thinking, source criticism and so (Teacher C).

Teacher C then recommends the song *Born in the USA* by Bruce Springsteen as a good song to discuss. Questions like; what is the song about; what does he mean by this, and similar comes up. “To go away and kill yellow people, what is that about?”(Teacher C). Teacher C mentions the song *Staten och Kapitalet* by *Ebba Grön* (*Ebba Grön* is a Swedish punkband from the 80’s with political influenced lyrics) as another source of discussion of critical thinking. Once again he lifts questions as How does the artist look at society, or, how does the artist think? Also teacher D talks about *Ebba Grön* in terms of source criticism.

We listen to Ebba Grön /.../ different political views are reflected in their lyrics. Then you can reflect upon this critically /.../ Is it your world or is it their world or whose world is it? What is their starting point? What kind of self-interest do they have in singing about this? (Teacher D).

Teacher D also mentions the song *Staten och Kapitalet*. According to him this song might not be absolutely accurate, but for the artists, maybe it is. It depends on what your

own political view is, that is, if you have made up a political view yet. Following this he talks about a new wave of punk, a form of music based on dissatisfaction.

This form of dissatisfaction music most often is connected with the political or central events in our lives somehow (Teacher D).

Teacher D gives an example of this kind of music when he connects it with songs written about the war in Iraq (2003-2011). He believes that it would be possible to shed a light on this through music. Also teacher B lifts this subject and talks about music that is performed to show any kind of discontent towards our society.

For example Cornelis Vreeswijk who has certain songs to the society and historically there has most certainly existed, earlier, where you used your music to propagate in some way or used their music to show that it is not OK, the society which we live in (Teacher B).

Also teacher A gives his view on how politics have influenced music, especially during the 70's and 80's during which he says the songs were about the Cold War, Atom Bombs, and so forth. Teacher D says that we could talk about what role musicians have as formers of opinions, or how music affects us in different ways. Another idea presented by him is for the student to research if they have the same political view as their favorite artist does. He goes on by saying that when working with the students' ability to take a political stance that might be an opportunity to write a song about it instead. He compares this to the American folk music scene and artists like Joni Mitchell and Bob Dylan.

The informants all speak about looking at the lyrics of songs, what the lyrics mean. A song often mentioned is *Internationalen*. When teacher A is talking about the democratization he says that you may listen to that song, *Internationalen*, and ask the students what the song is telling. Teacher D mentions *Internationalen* when talking about revolutions over the world. Teacher C uses the song *Rule, Britannia* when teaching about imperialism and analyses the lyrics of that song/poem to understand what it really mean.

Teacher D gives an idea on how to tackle gender during lessons. He talks about *Ladyfest*, a survey conducted in Malmö about female musicians on the biggest scenes in the city.

You can talk about that in almost the same terms. How are, for example, gender depicted in the music life of Sweden. Who are our predominant artists, how does it look, really? Our music festivals for example (Teacher D).

Teacher D also suggests working with copyright infringement and *STIM* (Swedish Performing Rights Society, Svenska Tonsättares Internationella Musikbyrå, an agency working to collect license fees for musical works) when teaching about the possibilities and risks that are associated with Internet.

### **5.1.5 Mixed Ideas**

Teacher D proposes that when working with Blues during music-lessons this could easily be connected to history, politics, geography, society, and also ethics. He mentions the American Civil War, slaves, and the jazz in New Orleans. Questions to work with during class could be connected to geography; why did they choose these parts? Why was that the most logical thing to do? Why was it not more logical to go down to South America? He says that we can look at this ethically as well, what right did the white man have to ship slaves from Africa?

You would be able to weave in as much as you'd like in that (Teacher D).

Teacher D says that all of this is connected with each other and that it would be easy to connect these areas of work to one another.

Teacher C presents an idea he did with a class where the students were asked to bring in a song of their own choice, present it, show the lyrics, explain it, and then relate it to any of the subjects in Social sciences. To give his students an idea of how it may look, he used the song *Sunday Bloody Sunday* by U2.

What is it they are singing about? And then you can take that whole historical background, all that, the conflict, and Ireland, Catholicism, Protestants, and that whole thing (Teacher C).

Teacher A lifts the theme of love and says that many subjects may be involved in this. Even music is welcome while working with this. He does not elaborate on it, but teacher B spoke of how songs, which may be related to love, can be used when teaching ethics for example.

Teacher D also presented a theme which he called *Jigsaw Pieces of a City*.

We worked with pictorial language and we created sound environments, that is, by recording noise or environmental sounds. We later used these to create songs (Teacher D).

He then talks about how all subjects were integrated in this theme-work and that this project ended up as an exhibition at Malmö University.

## 5.3 Opinions on music teachers

A few of the respondents had thoughts and opinions on how the music teacher had to participate with his or hers ideas in cross-curricular work. Teacher B talks about how she hopes that the music teacher has a good understanding of which songs are appropriate and adaptable to what she is working with in the social sciences subjects. Additionally, she says that subjects like art, music and home economics are often looked past when working cross-curricular, that they disappear. This is because, according to teacher B, that it is hard to come up with ideas that go well with a specific area of work. She goes on by saying that communication is important, that you have to ask the teacher for tips and ideas on what may work with this. Teacher C says that he has always had to come up with ideas for cross-curricular work with music on his own. He has never been approached by a music teacher asking if they could work together on a certain subject. He believes that if the music teachers took these initiatives to tell other teachers about ideas they have been thinking of for cross-curricular work, these teachers would gladly embrace the idea and it would result in good collaboration. Following this Teacher C says that being a teacher is a job where you don't have a lot of time, the job rolls at all times.

You may call it a lack of time /.../ but we don't make those connections automatically. And that is something you music teachers could, not only press on, but also help other teachers with (Teacher C).

He continues by saying that teachers would be very thankful for this help, and even though it may not involve that much of a lesson, it would still be helpful.

Teacher A also lifts the problem that their music teacher does not work full time at his school, which becomes a problem when trying to work cross-curricular.

## 5.4 Pros and cons in cross-curricular work

One of the most mentioned pros amongst the informants are that the students, when working cross-curricular, gets a better understanding of how all subjects are connected with each other. Teacher C describes this approach as uplifting, and that it somehow makes your own subject feel more important. He continues by saying that the teachers feel good working this way, and the students get a better sense of wholeness. Another positive aspect of this, according to Teacher D, is that a team of teachers may work together in a bigger project and be able to see different sides of students that they have

not seen before. Although the informants see cross-curricular work as something positive, they also feel that it might be the opposite when this approach is used wrongly. Teacher D is concerned that “it only becomes fuzzy and messy for them [the students]” (Teacher D). He believes that when cross-curricular work is not planned properly, the students will not understand or see the connections between the subjects. Teacher A explains that it might be the case that the subjects lose their own value, their subject profile. It might be a joint task between two subjects, but no one knows exactly what in this task history is.

Another aspect brought forward is the one on time. To be able to work cross-curricular all the informants believe that there is a necessity of more time set aside for planning and follow-up-work. Teacher C says that they need more planning and that the lack of time in school is the only problem for this. At the same time he adds that there is of course a lot to gain by using the cross-curricular approach. Teacher B also talks about this and says that there is a bigger need of planning. She then continues by explaining that when planning the areas of work to go through in years seven, eight, and nine, this should preferably be done in consultation among all teachers. This because the students may talk about the same themes in different subjects, and by not doing the planning together, the students may end up getting the same information, about the same theme, twice, or thrice. Teacher A goes on by saying that the teachers’ work-time is quite managed and that it is hard to find the free time for joint planning. It is not only for planning though, as teacher A continues to explain, but that you also need time to review an area of work as well.

On the plus side it may be that it turned out much better than first thought, and then you have to find something that is more of a challenge – can we do something more of this? (Teacher A).

Furthermore, he explains that he understands that time is money, even for teachers, but that he wishes that there was something to do about it. He concludes this by saying that good ideas take time to develop, and that you have to meet up and discuss things. Teacher B also says that many teachers are not positive towards this kind of work. She states that many teachers do not want to cooperate because they believe that it is too much work to be dealt with.

Teacher B also wishes that she was trained in more subjects. According to her this would mean that it would be easier to make connections, between for example the social science subjects and the music subject, if she had an education in music.



Another negative aspect of working cross-curricular may be that the students feel that there is a big burden on them in one big work.

I myself have experienced from the students that they feel there is quite a lot of pressure to one and the same work, to be assessed in maybe three or four subjects (Teacher B).

Teacher B goes on by saying that this might work the other way round as well, that it might be a positive aspect. By working cross-curricular, the students do not get as many tasks as they would when working with the subjects separately. Teacher A agrees with this point of view and says that a positive aspect of this approach is that what you are working with gets added other dimensions.

Teacher D adds that there are many aspects to be taken into consideration before attempting to work cross-curricular. If these are not taken into thought, there is a risk of the students failing in both/all of the involved subjects.

It's all about what you want them to learn from the two subjects, but also which class you have, how mature they are for this kind of integration /.../ you have to know what level the lesson should be at, and which focus areas you should have (Teacher D).

Following this, teacher D says that cross-curricular work must always be made for the benefit of the students. He says that it should not be to make the work for the teacher any easier. A teacher's job is to make sure that the students get as much out of school as possible.

## 6. Discussion

In this section I will discuss some of the aspects brought forward from this research. The following discussions are divided into seven different categories. In these the thoughts and responses from the informants will be discussed in the light of the literature, and also my own thoughts will be added.

### 6.1 Holistic view-point

Jernström and Lindberg (1995), speak of the benefits of cross-curricular work in terms of students seeing things more holistically. The informants agree with this point of view and say that by working this way their students get a sense of whole, and a better understanding of how everything is connected. But at the same time, some teachers point out that there is a risk of students not understanding which subject is which, or that they do not see the connection between the two subjects being integrated with each other. As Krantz and Persson (2001) point out, not only cross-curricular nor subject specific work should be used. This is agreed upon amongst the respondents as well, since they think that it sometimes might be a good idea to just teach one specific subject, and another time to let something be cross-fertilized by something else. As teacher A said, he would rather not do cross-curricular work if he cannot see the purpose of it. He believes that it sometimes might be a good idea to only teach history or geography even though *Skolverket* (The National Agency for Education) wants cross-curricular work. This is to me a very strong statement. As teachers we have to follow the national curriculum, this is our job. Of course, it is not written in the curriculum that we should work cross-curricular all the time. Rather, on the contrary, this approach should only be provided for by teacher and principle. Nevertheless, it seems important to stress the conditions under which some teachers choose their approach to teaching. If a teacher keeps working strictly from his/hers own perspective and ignores some parts of the curriculum, there might be negative consequences on the quality of teaching.

Although there are different opinions on this matter, the respondents speak well on the cross-curricular approach to teaching. There are two aspects that need to be fulfilled for the respondents to want to work cross-curricular. Those two aspects are planning and the gain in knowledge for students. Both the informants in this study as well as previous research (Krantz and Persson, 2001) explain that this approach should only be

used when there are pedagogical advantages. The planning-stage is not mentioned in the literature I have used, but Hägglund (in Mathiason, 2004) says that if an aesthetic subject is used in for example history, and this helps the students to easier grasp the knowledge, then that way of working has its own intrinsic value.

Continuing on this holistic point of view is Palmer (2009), who thinks that music education should be both deep and broad. This because music is a complex subject which needs connections to other subjects to be fully understood. The respondents in this study all talk about how they have used music in different ways, either to start a discussion, or to give their students something else to which they may connect their new knowledge, and more. They use music as entry points, as a feature, or to create a zeitgeist. This is in line with the study Elsner (2000) did, where the teachers pertain that the music brings life to the knowledge and understanding for, for example, historical periods. In this study only social science teachers have been interviewed, and surely their way of implementing music into their lessons is helpful for their students. But this should also be done in the music teachers' lessons, to make sure that their music education becomes, as Palmer states it, deep and broad.

## **6.2 Emotions, Curiosity, Higher Interest**

None of the informants in this study highlight the fact that cross-curricular work may enhance commitment due to music used in lessons which engage our emotions. But looking at the ideas presented in the results section, many of them may engage the students' emotions. The informants in this study do speak of using music which makes a strong impression, or of ideas which students may find the task interesting. This is in line with what Cosenza (2005) talks about when presenting her sources showing higher interest from students who have taken part in cross-curricular work. Also Drake (1998, as cited in Cosenza (2005), speaks of greater interest when combining for example performing music with social studies. Looking at the ideas presented in the results section, some of the ideas involves exactly this way of working. For example the informants lift songwriting as one way of creating interest, another way could be working with political music groups as a way to start a discussion. Also Bjørkvold (2005) spoke of approaching political music in the terms of cross-curricular work between music and the social science subjects. Linton (In Jernström and Lindberg

(1995), and Jederlund (2011) both point out the importance of having emotional experiences to be able to remember knowledge, to learn for life.

Lindström (in Mathiasson, 2004), points out that it never has been proven in a convincing way that aesthetic subjects can enhance learning in other subjects. Although never proven, the informants in this study uses music as entry points to facilitate learning for their students, to make it easier to connect their knowledge to more things. Mathiason (2004), say that music has its own intrinsic value and that it not should be used as help to other subjects. This is something that the informants seem well aware of, but of course, speaking from their *own* subjects' point of view. Seen from the perspective as a student at Malmö Academy of Music, this is something often brought up to discussion. I definitely agree with the fact that music has its own intrinsic value, the sounding music. But there is so much more to a music lesson than just sounding music, for example music history, how music is used in different media, the emergence of different genres, or a musical performance where different forms of expressions are combined. Of course we should not, and do not have to use cross-curricular work all the time, but I believe that the students might be very beneficial of it, in many subjects, if planned accordingly. If we can improve learning in all involved subjects by using this approach, why not use it?

### **6.3 The aspect of time**

During two of the four interviews conducted in this study, the informants came up with such good ideas that they had to exclaim it out loud. This type of spontaneous joy in finding a good idea for cross-curricular work may be due to some varied reasons. Firstly, I do not believe that teacher B, who has been working as a teacher for one year, has had time to think that much about cross-curricular activities. As a new teacher there is quite a lot to do, with planning your own subject, and to get acquainted with the job. During our interview she is actually given, and takes time for her to think about these kinds of things. Secondly, which may be an overall reason, is the fact that all of the informants speak of the lack of time for this kind of planning. There does not seem to be time set aside to be able to come up with and discuss cross-curricular ideas. Although it is written by *Skolverket* (2011) that both teacher and principal should allow for the students to work cross-curricular, it seems like it is up to individual teachers to set aside time for this. This is, of course, a small study, and no general conclusions may be

drawn, but according to a report by *Skolverket* (2013), most teachers work alone during planning, documenting their student's development, and during lessons.

Teacher C explained that he, from the moment I contacted him via e-mail up to the point of our interview, had been thinking a lot on cross-curricular work with music. How come he did not think of this before? One reason may be that there are 12 subjects (the four social science subjects not included) being taught in Swedish secondary school, and the largest subjects of these, given most teaching hours, are Swedish, Mathematics, and English. It may be easier or more logical to plan cross-curricular work with the three main subjects, than to a *small* subject as music.

As seen in the results, none of the interviewed social science teachers had been approached by music teachers to do this kind of cross-curricular work. Instead, they themselves had to come up with ideas and approach the music teacher themselves. Additionally, the results show that some teachers find it hard to find areas of work that go well with subjects like music and the arts. To facilitate more cross-curricular work I believe that it is crucial that the teachers at a workplace start communicating about cross-curricular ideas with each other. If music teachers promote their subject, just by talking to other teachers, this would probably generate more ideas. Of course this is not only on the music teachers, it goes both ways.

## **6.4 The music used and not used**

One of the interviewed teachers said that he would play national anthems for his students during a project on the United Nations. This may be seen as a reference to older music, since many of the national anthems are written before the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It may also be seen as a reference to classical music (in this study classical music refers to art music based on the traditions of Western music), especially when looking at for example Germanys national anthem *Deutschlandlied* (Lied der Deutschen), which is written by Joseph Haydn (1732-1809). Other references to older music from the respondents are *Rule, Britannia* (1740), a song strongly associated with the British Royal Navy, *Le chant de l'Oignon* (*Små Grodorna*) from the French revolution, and *The Internationale* (1871), a song from the socialist movement. Other than these few exceptions, all of the respondents in this study mainly address music and artists from the 20<sup>th</sup> century in their ideas for cross-curricular work with music.

Looking at the ideas presented in the previous works section, there is one idea referring to 16<sup>th</sup> century music, and another that is to analyze the lyrics of old songs.

The rest of the ideas are referring to music from the 1950's and onward. Why is it that there are so few mentions of classical music, folk tunes or overall old music? When thinking along the lines of the religious subject for example, Bach (1685-1750) had a great influence during the reformation, and especially on protestant church music. There must be a lot of events to tell and draw from this.

Additionally, looking at the artists mentioned by the respondents, we have for example Vreeswijk, Dylan, *Kapten Röd*, and *Ebba Grön*. How come only modern artists (in the sense of 20<sup>th</sup> century artists) are being mentioned? To me, there might be two aspects that are the most prominent in the choice of music/artists. Either the teacher use music which their students already know of, music which will arouse their emotions, and that they may relate to. Or, the teacher chooses music which the students have never heard before, to expand their cultural knowledge. Maybe the respondents in this study do not reflect upon their use of music in their ideas/classrooms, since they see music as being secondary in relation to their own subject. Is it essential to use music from different genres and eras? Maybe not. But it is important to keep the choice in mind, so that it becomes an active choice.

## **6.5 Age**

When going through and analyzing the transcribed interviews it struck me that the older, more experienced teachers had more ideas, and a lot to say about cross-curricular work compared to the young and unexperienced teacher. Since this is a small study with only four informants, no generalizing conclusions may be drawn, but one reason may be that this one younger teacher is not interested in working cross-curricular. Another reason, mentioned above, is the factor of time. Can there be any greater, stronger reasons to this? The main reason seems to be the experience. If schools do follow the Lgr11 and provide for students to work cross-curricular, teachers who have been working for a longer period of time are bound to come up with, but also witness and gather, ideas. Their background and own interest are of course also important. Teacher B said that she wished that she were educated in more subjects, for example music, to be able to easier come up with ideas for cross-curricular work. At the same time teacher D has a degree in media production, and he is able to present many ideas. Numerous schools strive for diversity in age, gender and cultural background when hiring teachers, but may it be that there is a problem for schools in hiring teachers who have the same

interests, in for example music, amongst each other? If many employees have the same musical preferences, maybe no new ideas for cross-curricular work will be presented?

## **6.6 Point of view**

A question that arose during the making of this study is the question on how many lessons that are taught on routine? The informants spoke of shifting point of view, and that it all is about how well you want to see the connections between the subjects. One example of this was that you could, instead of talking about spices, talk about musical instruments during lessons on trading. There are probably many subjects in which the teachers talk about things on routine – about things that they themselves were taught. Why is this? I do not believe that we as teachers are incapable of coming up with our own ideas for new lessons, but perhaps it is hard to change our point of view. What do we need to be able to do this? There are of course many different aspects of this, and some may be additional training or education; input from co-workers (both from our own subject as well as from other subjects); or traveling. There is not always a necessity for this approach of teaching. But maybe, just by shifting our point of view in our lessons, we can make our students find and see the connections between subjects and also increase their curiosity for other subjects. If we do this there will be automatic cross-curricular work which is in line with Lgr11, and, at the same time, the need of more time for joint planning is minimized.

## **6.7 Analyzing Song lyrics**

A lot of the ideas presented include songs as an entry point to a discussion, and the respondents also suggest ideas on different types of questions which may be asked. Since Internet is mostly used by young people in Stockholm to listen to music, according to Werner (2012), maybe these songs could serve as entry points to the usage of digital tools in school as well? The ideas presented by the informants all go well with what is presented in the curriculum for the social science subjects. As presented earlier, students should; develop an understanding of historical narratives and gain new perspectives, interpret cultural expressions, look at certain perspectives of life questions in popular culture, and look on how media spread information. Is this awareness of the curriculum and the connection to music wide spread? Or is it just a case of *I'm looking for what I'm told to look for*? There is a risk that the informants only came up with these ideas because I asked them to. Some of the informants made sure to clarify after

telling their ideas that they actually had made this type of lesson themselves. Why? Nevertheless, it generated plenty ideas which may be used in the future.

## **6.8 Conclusion**

The main purpose of this study was to compile an inspirational knowledge-base for future collaboration between teachers of the social science subjects and music. Many ideas has been drawn from the informants, and my research question “What are the possibilities of combining the social science subjects (Religion, History, Geography, and Civics) with music?” has been answered accordingly. There seems to be many possibilities of combining these subjects, as long as the teachers involved are given enough time to come up with and plan these ideas. Another necessity seems to be that the teachers involved wants to do cross-curricular work and communicate with their fellow co-workers about this approach.

The informants agree with both the positive and negative aspects in the literature. Cross-curricular work is good when students understand the connection between the subjects, when the planning and follow-up work is carried out thoroughly, when the subject keeps its own intrinsic value or facilitate easier learning and/or understanding of another subject, and also because of the holistic point of view given to the students. On the contrary, cross-curricular work is not as good when there is no time for planning, when teachers cannot take help from one another (for various reasons), or when they do not have the knowledge required in the subject being integrated.

As pointed out before, the ideas presented here are not complete lesson plans; instead they are to be seen as a hint on how it is possible to integrate the subjects with each other. The list of ideas is, of course, not exhaustive. Instead it shows a sample on what is possible, and only a teacher’s imagination and willingness can put limitations to future ideas. The respondents in this study presented and came up with all the ideas in less than two hours. Visualize how many ideas may be possible to draw, if all teachers spend one hour each on this.

No form of report is free from the researchers’ own interests, experience, nor intentions. My own experience in conducting a study and as an interviewer is not excessive, which is something I have realized along the way, especially during the analysis of the transcribed interviews. Several times I asked myself why I did not ask follow-up questions, or why I did not asked the informant to develop or expand on his or hers response. This may have caused my results to not be exhaustive, and that I could



have received greater explanations on, for example, the ideas for cross-curricular work. This being said, I do not believe this to have such big impact on this study, since the results are to be seen as inspiration for future collaboration between music and the social science subjects. Hence, no exhaustive explanations of the ideas are necessary, because they are not to be seen as maps for collaboration.

## **6.9 Ideas for future research**

How frequently do teachers make cross-curricular links to the music subject, and in what kind of ways? By observing lessons without giving too much information about the purpose to the teacher, this would, I believe, be very interesting to look at. This would both give a handful of useful ideas to implement for other teachers, and also give an indication on the usage of cross-curricular work in schools. Are there many more references to English, or math, for example?

Another aspect, which only caught my attention because of the study made by Elsner (2000), is the fact that none of the interviewed teachers in this study mentioned anything about developing the musical technical skills for the students. There is of course nothing wrong with that, since the social science teachers are not that aware, if all, of the curriculum for music. But it would be interesting to see if it would be possible to implement these technical skills in the social science subjects.

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# 8. Appendix

Interview questions:

## Pre-questions

- How old are you, and how long have you been working as a teacher with the social science subjects?
- Can you shortly explain what kind of education you have as a teacher?
- Which tasks do you have at this school?
- Do you have you any kind of musical background or education?

## Main questions

- How do you define cross-curricular work?
  - Do you believe that there are any pros or cons with this approach?
- Have you made any cross-curricular work with music before?
- Are there any references to music in the curriculum for the social science subjects?
- Do you see any common areas of work between your subject/s and music?
- Is there anything you would like to add?