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Changes in Conceptions of Music Education in Junior High School Curricula during the Twentieth Century in France

Tripier-Mondancin Odile
Université de Toulouse, France
odile.tripier@toulouse.iufm.fr

Abstract

The paper aims at describing and analysing the emerging explicit and implicit values in seven series of curriculum for the teaching of music from 1925 to 1997. The dimensions and transformations which can be found in these official texts are analysed from an epistemic and didactic point of view according to the text analysis method (Tropes software). The analyses highlight different teaching approaches.

Before 1977, the references employed show that these texts are more teaching-oriented than learning-oriented. The various sorts of knowledge are superimposed according to positivist cumulative even teleological logic as regards the history of music, solfeggio, audition and singing. 1977 marks a transition: training in art and through art. From 1977 to 1998, historic determinism is replaced by a constructivist representation of knowledge: the advent of the subject pupil, the primacy of sensitivity and of practice over knowledge. The auto-structuring aims (expression, invention) replace the hetero-structuring aims (works, history of music, solfeggio).

1. Introduction

Analysing values in official texts means first of all asking oneself questions about the meaning of this concept. We understand the concept of value as any idea or preference judged valid by a group of people, in the present case, the writers of the curriculum [1], any idea which motivates, which determines a choice, which is considered as a reference to evaluate as well as any ideal or ought to be [2]. This definition, a synthesis of many written works was elaborated through the method called the “proximity associative matrix” for the purpose of denotation [3]. The definitions which have been collected have been compared with what is considered as value in the works of various specialists, from a categorical and no longer definitional point of view.

When referring to values, several terms are used. According to David Wiggins (1991) cited by Ruwen Ogien [4], the term value can be distinguished from that of norms, the former being evaluative and made of expressions of appreciation or depreciation,

whereas the latter are prescriptive or directive (expressions of obligation, interdiction, deontic markers like “one must” “it is necessary” “it is forbidden”). According to the semiological approach [5], the synaesthetic (sensorial) dimension is present in the utterances of values.

While values can only be attained by inference since they are not always conscious in the actors’ minds [6], on the contrary opinions, behaviours, choices in terms of preferences [7], judgments, hierarchisations, convictions and evaluations are observable and become indicators of values.

So, to infer values from the totality of the archived curricula, we have observed and analysed in particular the names of the subjects, the teaching schedules, the purposes of music education, the structuration and formalisation of these texts, the knowledge to be taught, the aesthetic references, the tools advocated for teaching. Two main periods can be distinguished: from 1925 to 1977 [8] [9] [10] [11] [12], from 1977 to 2008 (year when the series 1995-1998 was applied for the last time) [13] [14] [15].

1977 indicates a turning point in the way aims are expressed. Although some concepts disappear (“solfeggio”, “history of music”), what they covered until then (for example the “signs of musical score”, “lengths from the double crochet to the semibreve”, “rests/silences”, “alterations”, “2/4, 3/4 time”, “chords”, etc.) still remains during that series under another name: “practice of vocal and instrumental language” and “listening culture”.

The analysed texts are precisely cited in the references.

Tableau 1 Structuration of curricula from 1925 to 1998

1925	1938	1943	1944	1960 - 1961	1963 - 1964	1977 - 1978	1985 - 1987	1995-1997	1998
<p>Arrêté</p> <p>1. Lulli Rameau</p> <p>2. 3 Bach Haendel</p> <p>4.5. France : opéra comique, opéras de Gluck</p> <p>6.7. Haydn Mozart</p> <p>8.9. Beethoven</p> <p>10. Influence de Gluck sur la musique dramatique française Méhul, Spontini. Influence de Rossini sur l'opéra comique et l'opéra français, Auber, Meyerbeer</p> <p>11. Le romantisme de Weber, Berlioz</p> <p>12. En Allemagne la symphonie, la musique de chambre et le lied après Beethoven et après Schubert. Mendelssohn, Schumann, Liszt Brahms</p> <p>13. Wagner</p> <p>14. En Italie après Rossini, Verdi. En France Gounod, Bizet, Saint Saëns, Franck, influence de l'école russe, Debussy</p>	<p>Arrêté</p> <p>1. Voix</p> <p>2. Lecture (intonation et rythme)</p> <p>3. Dictée (intonation et rythme)</p> <p>4. Solfège</p> <p>5. Chant</p> <p>6. Histoire de la musique (de Lulli à nos jours)</p>		<p>Arrêté</p> <p>1. Voix</p> <p>2. Solfège</p> <p>3. Audition (de la 5ème à la 4ème)</p> <p>4. Chant</p> <p>5. Histoire de la musique (de l'Antiquité à Franck)</p> <p>6. Auditions</p>	<p>Arrêtés</p> <p>1. Solfège</p> <p>2. Culture auditive</p> <p>3. Répertoire vocal</p> <p>4. Histoire de la musique</p>	<p>Arrêtés</p> <p>1. Culture vocale</p> <p>2. Culture auditive</p> <p>3. Solfège</p> <p>4. Répertoire vocal</p> <p>5. Histoire de la musique</p> <p>6. Audition</p>	<p>Arrêtés de 1977 (6^e-5^e) et de 1978 (4^e 3^e) :</p> <p>Introduction</p> <p>Culture vocale et chant</p> <p>Culture auditive, pratique du langage musical</p> <p>Culture musicale par l'audition d'œuvres</p> <p>Compléments à la musique (Danse, poésie, art dramatique)</p>	<p>Arrêté 1985</p> <p>1. Nature et objectifs</p> <p>2. Instructions¹</p> <p>2.1. Éducation de l'oreille</p> <p>2.2. Pratique et étude du langage musical. La pratique vocale. La pratique instrumentale. L'étude du langage musical</p> <p>2.3. Accès à une culture musicale par l'écoute des œuvres. Le principe de relativité. La situation culturelle actuelle.</p> <p>2.4. Activités d'invention et de création</p>	<p>Arrêtés de 1995 et 1997</p> <p>I - Chant</p> <p>A - Choix du répertoire</p> <p>B - Appropriation d'un chant</p> <p>II - Écoute</p> <p>III - Approche d'une pratique instrumentale A - Flûte à bec. B - Percussions C - Technologies actuelles</p> <p>IV - L'évaluation</p>	<p>Arrêté</p> <p>Compétences attendues à la fin du cycle d'orientation</p> <p>I - Interpréter de mémoire un répertoire vocal diversifié incluant éventuellement des éléments polyphoniques : Contenus, Compétences. Commentaires</p> <p>II - être sensible au discours musical, en sachant identifier ses principales composantes et leur organisation : Contenus, Compétences. Commentaires</p> <p>III - Réinvestir dans une pratique instrumentale les notions et les éléments du langage musical étudiés : Contenus, Compétences. Commentaires</p> <p>IV - Improviser, inventer, créer Évaluation</p> <p>Composantes et notions musicales de référence. Espace temps couleur forme</p>
	<p>Circulaire : chant choral</p>	<p>Circulaire</p> <p>1. Personnel</p> <p>2. Répertoire</p> <p>3. Enseignement</p> <p>4. Procédés</p> <p>5. Nuances</p> <p>6. Exécution</p> <p>7. Marches</p> <p>8. Chant de repos</p> <p>9. Meneur de chants</p>				<p>Circulaire 1977 :</p> <p>Enseignement de l'Éducation artistique dans les collèges Objectifs</p> <p>L'exercice de la sensibilité</p> <p>Le contact avec les œuvres d'art</p> <p>La création personnelle</p> <p>Instructions</p> <p>Annexes Ressources audio-visuelles et éducation artistique</p>	<p>1987 Compléments pour la sixième et cinquième. Méthodes et pratiques.</p> <p>3. 1. Écoute des œuvres :</p> <p>3.2. Éducation de l'oreille</p> <p>3.3. Activités d'invention et de création</p> <p>4. Évaluation</p> <p>4.1. Principes méthodologiques</p> <p>4.2. Exemples d'exercices d'évaluation</p>	<p>Accompagnement 6^e :</p> <p>I - Cohérence</p> <p>II - Espace</p> <p>III - Équipements (A. Chaîne hi-fi, B. Poste vidéo, C. Poste d'informatique musicale)</p> <p>IV - Chorale</p> <p>V - Évaluation</p> <p>VI - Environnement culturel</p> <p>Accompagnement Cycle central :</p> <p>I - Écoute</p> <p>II - Les pratiques instrumentales</p> <p>III - Contribution de l'éducation musicale à la maîtrise de la langue française</p>	<p>Accompagnement 3^e</p> <p>I - Pratiques vocales et instrumentales</p> <p>II - Un cycle d'écoute (Fiche didactique, Fiche pédagogique, évaluation, Document de travail de l'élève)</p> <p>III - Nouvelles technologies et musiques du XXe siècle</p> <p>IV - Pratiques vocales, instrumentales et créatives autour d'une chanson de variétés</p> <p>V - Un chemin pédagogique entre l'oral et l'écrit</p> <p>VI - Pratiques rythmiques</p> <p>Recommandations pour l'équipement de la salle</p>

¹ Les instructions sont communes aux quatre classes du collège.

Table 2. Representation of development in the curricula as sedimentary layers

1998, 10th	Memory interpretation of various repertory (polyphony)	Transfer in an instrumental practice the notions and elements of musical language	To be sensitive at identify the most important components and organisation	Assessment. Musical notions of reference	Improvisation, invention, creation	
1997, 8th 9th	Singing	Instrumental practice	Listening	Creation of songs	Creation of songs	
1995, 7th	Singing	Instrumental practice approach recorder, percussion, new technology	Listening	Evaluation		
1985	Education of the ear (perception).	Vocal practice and musical language study	Instrumental practice and musical language study	Musical culture by hearing works of art (relativity, current situation).	Activities of invention and creation	
1977	Vocal culture and Singing	Listening Culture, Instrumental and vocal practice of musical language	Musical culture by hearing works of art			
1960	Vocal culture	Vocal repertoire	Solfeggio	Hearing Culture	Music history (chronological). Hearing	
1944	Voice	Singing	Solfeggio	Hearing	Music history (chronological). Hearing	
1938	Voice (production, breathing, placement)	Singing	Sight Reading (sight singing and rhythm).	Solfeggio	Musical dictation (intonation and rhythm). Musical history from Lulli to our days	Hearing (work of art critics).
1925	Works of art Explanations from Lully to Debussy				Hearing (piano, violin, singers).	

2. A frequency of publication in line with other subjects

We have constituted/examined the complete corpus of these texts during our research at the National Centre of Pedagogical Documentation, as

well as in the official journals. From 1920 to today, there have been seven series of junior high school curricula (years 7, 8, 9, 10), one roughly every ten to fifteen years. The rewriting of the eighth series began in October 2006 and was published in the Education Nationale’s Official Bulletin of August 28, 2008 (this last text is not analysed in this article). The series of 1925 which relates to senior

high (years 11 and 12) is not included, but analysed as a reference.

We have adopted a longitudinal approach (chronological and comparative) to present the results of the evolutions between the seven series as the best way of revealing the similarities and differences of the changes. The term series is employed, because the rewriting of a program is seldom completed in one year. The dates of publication of the texts testify to this:

- 1920,
- 1925, (senior high: years 11 & 12)
- 1938,
- 1943-1944,
- 1960-1961-1962-1963-1964,
- 1977-1978,
- 1985-1986-1987,
- 1995-1998,
- 2006-2008

The frequency and the dates of publication are similar in other subjects, with a margin of a few years; thus French, the history-geography, the mathematics and the natural science curricula for junior high are dated 1925, 1938, 1977, 1985 and 1995 [16]. From this point of view, there are no hierarchical distinctions between the different subjects. The value of musical education is considered equal to that of the other subjects.

3. Parity of the subjects according to the official texts

A decree is an act emanating from the President of the Republic or from the Prime Minister, which is published in the Official Journal (OJ), or by extension in the Official Bulletin (OB) of the Education Nationale if it is a text which concerns this institution. An order, in the hierarchy of the norms, is inferior to a decree: it emanates from ministers, prefects or mayors. It is also published in the OJ, then in the OB. Circulars, opinions and memorandums are published in the Official Bulletin of each Ministry. Memorandums relate to the internal organisation of these services. Consequently, the source and statute of an official text induces a hierarchy. Just like for other school subjects, the texts concerning the curricula and instructions as well as the schedules, are all orders emanating from successive Ministers of state education, then from the Education Nationale.

There are also curricula accompaniments, which are circulars or memorandums, issued for all school subjects. However, a distinction exists, at the beginning of the twentieth century, between that which concerns choral singing, on the one hand, and the teaching of music, on the other: the former is the object of circulars, while the latter of decrees, except in 1938 when the subject was entitled “choral singing”.

4. In the large market of teaching schedules, there is no equality

It is obvious that a hierarchy exists between school subjects, in France, regarding the weekly schedule: Musical Education and Visual Arts are the two disciplines with the smallest allocation of hours. This schedule remained unchanged for about a hundred years: one hour a week for each of the two artistic disciplines. The only exception appears in the order of August 18, 1920: one compulsory hour was to be devoted to the study of school songs with one and two voices to which was added an optional hour devoted to musical theory including solfeggio. But this characteristic was never applied according to Maurice Chevais [17]. Generally, the activity of choral singing after 1949 was added to the compulsory weekly schedule, at a rate of one hour but only for voluntary pupils. Consequently, the subject was esteemed less important by the institution itself.

5. Teaching, Practising, educating: variations on the names of the subject

The name of the subject in these decrees varies from “the teaching of works of art” (1925), to “choral singing” (1938), to “the teaching of music” (1944), to “Musical education” (1960), to “music” (1977, years 7 and 8), again to “Musical education” (1978, years 9 and 10), to “complements to musical complement” (1978, years 9 and 10) and finally back to “Musical Education” (1985, 1995, 2008). At times there are hesitations and contradictions between general titles of the subject and terms used in the texts. Thus in 1977, in the curricula of years 7 and 8, the title mentions “Music” whereas the first words of the text are: “The goal of Musical Education...”.

Teaching, educating: these two great stakes explicitly traverse the subject names. Even if the title does not say it (“Music”), a third option allows one to envisage the practise of music: this is confirmed by the examination of the subtitles of paragraphs mentioned in certain texts. There are subtitles like (in 1998: “Interpretation from memory”, “reinvesting in instrumental practice”, in 1995: “singing”, “instrumental practice”, in 1985: “Vocal practice [...] instrumental practice”, from 1938 to 1960 “voice”, “singing”) testify to the importance of musical practice desired by the legislator.

A precise examination of the occurrences used in each text authorises a first level of analysis, with regard to the relationship between the subject names and the ideas expressed in the text. Thus, in the text of 1925, the term “works” (17) arrives first, followed by that of “piano” (16) then “opera” (14) “choir or orchestra” (14) “art” (12), “symphony”

(12), whereas the title speaks of the teaching of works.

In 1943, the terms “singing” (48), “pupil” (15) and “teaching” (14) appeared most frequently in the circular on choral singing. In 1944, though it is music which is being taught, the terms “singing” (41), “music” (23), “voices” (14), “hearing” (13) and “scales” (11) are the most represented. The 1960s largely take up the contents of the 1944 curricula again: we thus logically find in first place “music” (14 occurrences for years 7 and 8 and 10 for years 9 and 10) then “singing” (9 for years 7 and 8), “voice” (6 for years 9 and 10) and “exercise” (9 and 5), for a title of “Musical Education”: the intentions do not match the contents.

L’ decree of 1977 (years 7 and 8) stressed “culture” (10) then “singing” (7), “exercises” (7), the “voice” (6) and “works” (6): the subject was entitled “Music”.

One year later, however, in 1978 (years 9 and 10) while the terms “culture” (8), “class” (8), “voice” (7), “teaching” (6) and “work” (6) remained at the head, the term “pupil” came into its own, for the first time, in eighth place. From a semantic point of view “pupil” combined with “class” and with “teaching” formed the most representative category of the occurrences, justifying that same year the subject title “Musical Education”, no longer “Music”.

The term “pupil” appeared systematically among the first three categories of references used in the texts of 1985 and 1995; the term “education” or “teaching” is also very present alongside the term “pupil”. The name has thus been stabilised as “Musical Education” for the past twenty years.

This first level of analysis shows that (except in 1960) the headings reflect, from a semantic and statistical point of view, the values or choices made by the writers in each of the texts or corpuses. Taking into consideration the values conveyed by the subject titles, two great periods emerge with a turning point around the years 1960-1978.

6. From 1925 to 1977, linear cumulative, transflexive logic

When isolating the purposes uttered in each text and when treating them globally at first, we observe that 80% of the verbs are of the factive type. Moreover, the illocutory and perlocutory force of these verbs clearly shows an action from the teacher towards the pupils ; “ *have them listen to*” (1925), “ *train ear and voice*” (1938), “ *have them appreciate, develop their taste*” (1944-1960), “ *open up the children’s and adolescents’ minds*” (1977), “ *have them appreciate artistic creation*” (1995). The reference “ *teaching*” is more often used than the term “ *pupil*”. We can conclude from

these first elements that the system of values is transmission-oriented, teaching-oriented rather than learning or autonomy-oriented .

The analysis of the integrality of the texts corroborates and completes that of the purposes : the references to the works of art, to music, to musical knowledge to be taught are far more numerous than the references to pupils from 1925 to 1978. For instance, in the order of 1925: the aim is to “ *have them listen*”, explain what the masterpieces are, give “ *a knowledge of the works of art*”. The criteria referring to what is considered as “ *work of art*” from Lully to Debussy are mentioned with the use of high intensity modalisations: “ *the penetrating charm of Bellini’s melodies*”, “ *Méhul, the vigour and sensitivity of that great musician*”.

The work of art becomes value, its authority is indisputable: the “ *great works of art*” mentioned were composed by “ *masters*” exclusively belonging to composers of tonal, learned music from XVIIth to the beginning of XX century.

Then there is continuity in the texts from 1938 to 1964. Some changes can be seen in what is meant by music knowledge: from the only knowledge of works of art in 1925 we move to the practice of singing as soon as 1938, to an explicitation of the music phenomenon, based on scientific, technicist foundations (solfeccio, theory). The chronological approach of the history of music (from 1925 to 1964) is copied exactly on that of the teaching of history and literature: “ *link the brief history of music to historical and literary studies*” (1944, 1960-1964). Aesthetic values are still clearly stated through the hierarchization of the repertoires gradually opening up to some sort of pluralism (“ *French and foreign folklore*”), reference to “ *jazz band*”, opening onto “ *the unknown*”) without however going as far as eclecticism. This pluralism goes hand in hand with the taking into account of the wishes and emotions of pupils: “ *It is recommended that pupils should discover by themselves and say what they like, what moves them in a melody*” (1944-1960). Nevertheless, the authority of the master is still there : “ *have them appreciate music*” “ *improve their taste*” (*ibidem*).

These sorts of knowledge are the same as those taught in specialised forms of teaching (the Paris conservatoire since 1795 and its branches afterwards) but also in the associative sector (male choirs, popular education) as well as in the first chairs in the history of music which have contributed to the implementation of musicology in France (1904-1951).

Therefore, from 1925 to 1977, the various sorts of knowledge are superimposed according to cumulative logic (like in history or mathematics) reminding of the positivist conception. Particularly, as regards the history of music, solfeccio, singing,

the representation of knowledge is linear even teleological. Strong historic determinism prevails.

7. Cultural opening, dehierarchization in the curricula from 1977 to 1978

From the 1977 series onwards, the tendency towards teaching rather than ~~to~~ learning is counterbalanced by the use of the verb “open up” (reminiscent of the tendency to pluralism already apparent since 1944). For example, we can read: “the aim of music education is: opening up ~~the~~ children’s and teenagers’ minds to the conscious perception of the world of sounds, of timbres and rhythms [...] encouraging their need for expression through singing or through the use of very simple instruments [...] preparing their creativity [...] have them feel the wish for a direct communication with the world of sounds”(1977). More and more often the “needs” “the wishes” “the creativity” of pupils are taken into account. Other factive verbs along with substantives testify to pupils’ active participation in the musical phenomenon: “encourage their need for expression through singing or through playing very simple instruments” (1977).

The aims of this 1977 series from then on testify to the fact that the subject pupil is gradually becoming more important even if the “denivellation” between teacher and pupil remains written until 1998. Sensitivity and practice (expression) prevail over knowledge: “it is important to feel at first, then to understand, finally to learn”. What has become of the works of art to be taught, which until then had been authoritative like the great narratives?

In the two orders concerning this series, the most frequently-used reference is for the first time “culture” instead of “work of art” (1925) or even of “singing” (1944), or of “music” (1964).

Culture would then replace the cult of the work of art. It is corroborated by the absence of titles of works of art and by very few mentions of composers (only J.S. Bach and L.V. Beethoven are mentioned in years 9 and 10). If knowledge still seems to be there implicitly, the recurrence of the substantives “auditive culture” “vocal culture” tends to show a dilution of the cult of the work of art into a more globalizing generalizing culture. The loss of “aura” of the works of art [18] is beneficial to the teacher who is free to choose the works of art he wants to teach as this excerpt from a complementary order demonstrates: “It is in a spirit of liberty and progressivity that the general orientations described in the official texts relative to music education will be implemented”. This loss also benefits the pupils’ practice (be it vocal or instrumental, the latter being new), benefits their

creative possibilities (*cf.* the paragraph on the pupils’ personal creation but which remains vague).

We notice that the term “*solfeggio*” disappears and is replaced by “*musical language*” operationalized in instrumental practice; but the knowledge that the *solfeggio* covered remains. “*The history of music*” disappears as well from the titles of paragraphs. The notion of chronology which went hand in hand with that of the history of music, disappears in years 7 and 8 (“we learn how to listen to the works of art from all times and origins”). Chronological approach appears again in years 9 and 10 testifying to the hesitations of the legislator concerning a linear or non linear approach. The writers then resolutely move away from the musical social reference practices conveyed until then by the specialised teaching of music in France. These texts show that a real epistemological break is taking place.

8. From 1985 to 2008, relativism, socioconstructivist representation of knowledge

The tendency observed in the analysis of all the corpuses before 1977-1978 is inverted in the texts of 1985, 1995 and 1998 : the word “pupil” recurs more often than the words concerning musical knowledge. Thus, in 1985, we can read : “*artistic teaching develops in pupils personal creation [...] sensitivity and intelligence. They enable them to have access to the world of arts and to personal creation. They lead them [...] to expression and communication through images, sounds, gestures*” In the order concerning years 7 and 8, it is written that: “*the purpose of music education is to help pupils orient themselves in a world of sounds more and more diversified (...) to satisfy and develop their need for expression and for communication, to stimulate their imagination and inventive spirit*”. Or even ten years later in the 1995-1998 series: “*it is the duty of music education to give the means to grasp this mode of expression*”, “*by confronting their practices with works of art (...), pupils can give meaning to what they are doing and situate what they are learning*” (1995).

These aims mean that the advent of the situated pupil-subject approach persists, that both in 1985 and in 1977 there is primacy of sensitivity and practice (expression) over knowledge: “*first to feel*”. Opening up to non occidental cultures; pluralism take on more and more importance. This opening is accompanied by an abandon of hierarchy in the repertoires. One paragraph devoted to the “*principle of relativity*” states it more precisely in 1985 (years 7 and 8 curricula) : “*Music education, which must not impose anything and which must not exclude anything aims at opening new horizons, at creating other encounters and at*

giving enough landmarks to encourage pupils to discover by themselves.” The pupils are guided in their discoveries by vocal and instrumental interpretation practices, by invention practices. So, these texts become the representatives of a socioconstructivist representation of knowledge [19]. In the 1998 curriculum (year 10), the list of competencies being expected, the paragraph on evaluation (already there in 1985) the cultural landmarks replacing the history of music reinforce the impression of a notional, transversal approach less oriented towards the knowledge of a precise musical patrimony. The official texts and curricula seem to have moved away from historic determinism.

9. Conclusion

To sum up the ideas expressed in this paper, the reader can refer to the table below: it recaps the structuration of each text analysed.

Between 1925 and 1977 the curricula testify to a transcendental conception of values (imposed by an external authority) through purposes and hetero structuring knowledge (works of art, history, solfeggio). On the contrary, from 1985 to 1998 (this last order being in use until 2008), we deal with an immanent conception because of the auto-structuring purposes (thanks to the pupils’ musical practice, expression, invention and thanks to the teacher’s freedom of choice) [20]. In other words, before 1977 the legislator is in line with the “*teacher-centered*” pedagogical trend whereas after 1985 he lies within a more “*student-centered*” trend [21]. Three series of elements can explain these sets of values.

If we take the example of the series 1977-1978, links between the emerging values of these curricula and the specific history of music education as a school subject can be observed: the appointment of Chief Inspector Marcel Landowski in 1975 who as soon as 1968 opposed the ideas of the previous General Inspector Georges Favre about solfeggio and the history of music that he found “*harmful*” (May 3rd 1968) can explain the disappearance of these two categories of knowledge [22].

The history of the education system and of the other school subjects, the political ideas can also play a part in the values conveyed in the texts that we have just analysed: the debate between historians which divided Michel Debré Minister of Education in 1960 and the upholders of a non linear history seems to have pervaded the ideas of the writers of the series 1977-1978. Paul Ricoeur advised to move away from historical determinism (the idea of an after necessarily coming after a before). He developed the concept of “*défataliser*” (taking history out of fatalism) that is to say moving it away from a too linear vision of history

as meant by the notion of “*time’s arrow*” [23]. Besides, relativism and the opening up of the curricula of 1977 remind us of the democratic stakes inherent in post modern mutations whose emergence dates back from the 1970s. The need for urgent educative and pedagogical renovation, the revision of the aims and conception of school that the Conference of Amiens in March 1968 yearned for, can also be observed as well in the texts: “*it is important that one should move away from an exclusively intellectualist and encyclopaedic conception of culture*” [24]. This is what these texts say: culture “*by*” “*and*” the practice of the instruments and of singing.

Lastly, the social context, the “*active*” musical methods developed all along the century as well as research in the fields of psycho pedagogy, among others, may also have influenced the writers of these texts.

Let us note that there is not necessarily any mechanical correspondence between these texts and the contexts in which they appeared.

10. References

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