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STRATEGIES FOR LISTENING TO MUSIC AND MUSIC APPRECIATION IN COMPULSORY SCHOOL

Pregledni znanstveni članek/ Review Article

Abstract

The goal of this paper is to highlight the importance of listening to music in compulsory school. Even this field is present in the Croatian curricula over sixty years, it is evident that it has a cognitive implication because is oriented towards the recognition of musical elements. After the new reform in 2019, listening to music shifts from the position of dominant activity to the one which is very close to other activities, as singing, playing, and creativity. The intention of the author is to describe new concepts and approaches of multimodal listening, music understanding and appreciation in musical and wider context. The attention will be paid on: Listen to music with music making activity (LMM model), cognitive-emotional (CE) approach and Stage – English language – Music (SEM) concept.

Keywords: approaches for listening to music, compulsory school, interdisciplinarity, music teaching, music understanding.

Izvlaček

Strategije poslušanja glasbe in razumevanja glasbe v obvezni šoli

Cilj prispevka je poudariti pomen poslušanja glasbe v obvezni šoli. Čeprav je to področje v hrvaških učnih načrtih zastopano že šestdeset let, ima razvidne kognitivne implikacije, ker je usmerjeno v prepoznavanje glasbenih elementov. Poslušanje glasbe po novi reformi l. 2019 ni več glavna dejavnost, temveč se približa položaju drugih dejavnosti, kot so petje, igranje in ustvarjanje. Avtorica predstavlja nove koncepte in pristope k multimodalnem poslušanju in prepoznavanju in vrednotenju glasbe v širšem kontekstu. Pozornost namenja poslušanju glasbe in ustvarjanju glasbe (LMM model), kognitivno-čustvenemu pristopu (CE) in konceptu oder – angleški jezik – glasba (SEM).

Ključne besede: pristopi k poslušanju glasbe, obvezna šola, interdisciplinarnost, poučevanje glasbe, razumevanje glasbe

Music teaching in Croatian compulsory schools in the light of the new reform

Since the independence of the Republic of Croatia numerous attempts, proposals, guidelines, experimental programs and curricula have contributed to the reflection on how to conceptualize a quality, innovative and creative school tailored to students. The extent to which they have contributed and been successful is evident today, when the quality and results of the education system is reexamined, and on that basis the new steps are directed. Recent reforms that have strived to change the school system, such as the Hrvatski nacionalni obrazovni standard [Croatian National Education Standard] which was introduced in the 2006 and the related documents as the Nastavni plan i program [Teaching Plan and program] (2006) and the Nacionalni okvirni kurikulum za predškolski odgoj i obrazovanje te opće obvezno i srednjoškolsko obrazovanje [National Curriculum Framework for Preschool Education, Compulsory and Secondary Education] (2011), have made possible the comprehension of advantages and disadvantages of the primary and secondary compulsory and high schools. The contents of the subjects were questioned, as well as the role, purpose and concept.

Music teaching in compulsory school was reviewed in 2006, for the first time in regard to its conception, not only the contents, which is the biggest novelty since the end of World War II. After centuries of emphasis on singing, and afterwards music literacy, listening and music understanding were set as the only mandatory activities within the so-called open model. The open model is actually semi-open because it prescribes the compulsory activity, proposes singing, playing, creativity, and literacy as the second activity, with emphasis on only one enumerated activity. The purpose is that students actively participate in the target activity, in a way that they acquire the musical competencies by a particular activity.

“Although there are guidelines and suggestions to improve teaching practices, and a new concept of music teaching, an open model, a curriculum that is going to meet the needs of new generations, it is still necessary to find the ideal way of making the phenomenon of music and art music attractive to young people” (Vidulin, 2016, 354). The fact is that there is still possibility for progress and that teachers need to be more involved in finding methods, strategies and approaches that will make music teaching more interesting and attractive, and thus useful.

In the light of the new curricular reform called School for Life, changes in the educational vertical are visible. School for Life searches for quality in education according to the needs of the individual and society. Changes are visible in all subjects, although only tested in certain classes that were part of the experimental reform. Thus also in the Subject Curriculum of Music for Primary Compulsory and Secondary Education, which after a one-year experimental program was approved and implemented into schools at the beginning of this school year (2019/2020).

Kurikulum nastavnog predmeta Glazbena kultura za osnovne škole i Glazbena umjetnost za gimnazije,¹ 2019, 6) [Curriculum for Music Culture in Primary Schools and Music Art for High Schools; abbreviated as Subject curriculum] started to be valid from the school year 2019/2020. The classes that were included in the experimental year (1st and 5th grade

¹ Narodne novine 7/2019 (Official Gazette no. 7/2019).

of compulsory school, and 7th only for certain subjects) continue to work according to the experimental program, while only the new 1st and 5th grades are included into the school reform program. It is highlighted that teaching should be open, tailored to students' interests and abilities, integrative and interdisciplinary, and teachers are given the possibility to freely create the teaching process and apply different teaching methods. This is not a novelty of the current reform, as we find the same focus in the Croatian National Education Standard, according to which the Nastavni plan i program [Teaching plan and program] (2006) was created.

Although reforms are a very important segment of progress and a way to achieve a modern school, it is important to note that written documents are not the one that will encourage a teacher to become creative and innovative. Besides numerous consultations, seminars, round tables, workshops and practical models, with the goal that the new curriculum become operative, it is necessary for teachers to understand the importance of creating a contemporary school. It implies encouraging the students' independence and creativity, enabling them to acquire knowledge, develop skills and critical thinking, affecting their overall intellectual, but also emotional and social development.

The role of listening to and understanding music in the new curriculum

Listening to and understanding music is present in all cycles of compulsory school, that is, in the first cycle that covers the first and second grades, the second that covers the third, fourth and fifth grades, and in the third cycle (sixth, seventh, and eighth grades). In the three proposed domains, listening and learning about music are within domain A. "The starting point of Domain A is to learn about music using audio and video, and direct students' encounter with music. By active listening to music, students will become acquainted with music of different types, styles and genres, acquire knowledge of musical components and different levels of music organization, and experience, learn, understand and evaluate music." (Subject Curriculum, 2019, 6).

Auditory experience is the primary experience of a child, so most of the music lessons are based on an auditory experience: the song is first listened to in order to be interpreted; to play a song, students have to listen to it first; to encourage their creativity, listening to different models has to be performed first, etc.

Music is heard repeatedly, actively and analytically, theoretically and musicologically. Getting to know music by visiting theaters is also encouraged. According to the Subject Curriculum (2019), listening to music introduces the components of music, the principles of the organization of a musical work (musical forms, types of music), the characteristics of musical works, and different traditional cultures and subcultures. "Listening to and learning about music provides many opportunities for aesthetic students' upbringing. In doing so, the music work becomes one of the goals of teaching music and introduced to its value. Musicological contents are introduced by listening to a piece of music. (...) Considering the age of the students, attention must be given to the duration and character of the art works. (...) Students should be introduced to musical works of different periods, styles, types and genres, in order to establish value standards for the aesthetic and critical experience of music and to develop musical taste. It is of particular importance to have an

immediate encounter with music in an authentic environment and to make it available to students as much as possible.” (Subject Curriculum, 2019, 73)

When evaluating students, it is significant to evaluate what is possible to assess, and what is not related to the student’s performing skills. The perception and differentiation of musical and expressive components such as tempo, pulse, meter and rhythm, pitch and melody, dynamics, timbre, organization, mood and character, composition and composer names, different types of music and music-stylistic periods, directions and genres are evaluated. The novelty is also a personal review of the musical experience in written or oral form. “In music teaching, the teacher also takes into account the hidden effects of music teaching, i.e. the relationship to the subject, or music. Therefore, in teaching music, the teacher evaluates and takes into account student visits to theater and concerts, participation in music projects, monitoring of television, radio and internet music programs, etc.” (Subject Curriculum, 2019, 79).

The perception and differentiation of musical-expressive components and auditory identification are gradually upgraded through the educational cycles. The teacher can independently choose music works to listen to appropriate to the age of the student. It is advisable for the student to attend at least one music-cultural event with the teacher, which is a novelty over previous curricula.

As an example, we will list the contents and outcomes for the fifth grade of compulsory school, which is the end of the second educational cycle. In the fifth grade, three to ten art works of different kinds of music (short fragments or complete) should be introduced: artistic, traditional, popular, jazz, film music. For shorter art works, full listening is required, and repeated listening is recommended, as it will encourage students to remember the art work and the composer. In terms of content, fifth grade students should distinguish between timbres, types, performing role of singing voices, as well as distinguish between deep, medium high and high male and female singing voices in solo and group performances. According to the Subject Curriculum (2019, 30) “... students are expected to distinguish between types of singing voices (female, male, children’s), show knowledge regarding musical terminology (soprano, mezzo-soprano, alt, tenor, baritone, bass) and types of choirs.”

Furthermore, students need to distinguish between the sound and appearance of string and plucked instruments, observe their performance role, distinguish between bands and orchestras. Fragments of the song or shorter complete music works are listened to. On the basis of listening to music, they should distinguish between vocal, instrumental and vocal-instrumental music and different vocal, instrumental and vocal-instrumental works, as well as basic musical forms (two-part form, strophic form, three-part form, music period).

Comparing the new curriculum with the most recent curriculum from 2006, it can be concluded that, mainly, the objective, approach and concept of music listening, and most of its contents have remained the same. The standard way of listening to and understanding music is oriented on repeatedly listening to smaller parts or a whole. It is encouraged by the analytical tasks that lead to synthesis. By observing, analyzing and critically evaluating musical components, students get to know and understand musical

works. Educational achievement for fifth grade students (Teaching plan and program, 2006, 73) relates to: “recognizing music works (according to students’ personal abilities); knowing the name of the composer and composition; identifying instruments; capriccio, elegy, prelude, instrumental ensembles names, tempo, dynamics, and the like - at the level of recognition on specific musical examples.” There are two topics that are addressed: Forming musical work and String instruments.

We can conclude that the contents of the new curriculum are identical as the previous one: recognizing the names of works and composers, distinguishing string instruments and musical forms, while the concepts of capriccio, elegy, prelude are omitted in the new curriculum; singing voices are not systematized in the new curriculum and it introduces plucked instruments. It can be noted that the new curriculum does not have a list of suggested music works for a particular class, while the previous curriculum gives a list that teachers may or may not have used to teach.

However, this standard didactical approach neglects the broader musical context because, in order for a music piece to truly be adopted, the student needs to perceive its identity, and it is impossible without knowing the identity of the individual composer, time, social circumstances, environment, and the external characteristics of the work which influence its final form.

The choice to select music works should not be left to the expected list of works, as it directly affects the emotional, behavioral and aesthetic upbringing of the student, therefore, special attention should be paid to this. Apart from the quality criteria, the length of the work, the ability to show its own ideality and to relate the work to different circumstances, attention should also be paid to the age of the student, his / her current knowledge and ability to accept artistic music. Carefully selected works of art for students should represent a special experience and can influence their cognitive and emotional development.

Concepts and approaches of multimodal listening and music understanding in Croatia

Contemporary education implies a new environment and an interdisciplinary approach to learning, the multimodal one. Kress (2010) points out that the term multimodality encompasses multichannel communication and interpretation. It encompasses, according to Knežević Florić and Ninković (2011), a combination of words and symbols, images, sounds, etc. Multimodal learning uses multisensory and (inter)active approaches to learning (Massaro, 2012; Fadel and Lemke, 2012), all maintained in a supportive school environment.

“The multimodal school environment supports a number of cultural contacts and new technologies, providing each student with resources to help them find their unique learning path and guide them to numerous opportunities.” (Gazibara, 2016, 326) The author (ibid.) points out that research has confirmed positive relationships between active learning and a multimodal environment, emphasizing the greater importance of speaking over written texts (Ginns, 2005) and greater student motivation (Parbuntari, Ikhsan, 2014).

Today's multimodal teaching experience is one of the contemporary models of working in school, regardless of the subjects or fields. It is not new to music teaching in the European and American regions, although the number of professional and scientific descriptions, practical models and researches are rare. There are, we assume, a greater number of individual attempts and examples of good practice, but it is not sufficiently documented and there is a lack of research in this direction.

In music teaching, multimodal learning is possible because the primary medium of music is music itself, which is available through technology, audio and video devices or live performances. Besides music and speech, pictures, movies and radio programs, computer programs, quizzes and other multimedia tools that affect the psychological, cognitive, social and emotional aspects of learning are used in teaching. Higher levels of learning are achieved by engaging and activating different senses and stimuli: auditory, tactile and kinesthetic.

All music fields, from singing, playing, music making to listening to music, can be multimodal. Listening to music is an example of this. „Listening to art music can be accompanied by a stage play, artistic expression or language elements. Stage plays may be associated with wider musical and non-musical connotations of the work, especially with the works of programmatic nature, in other words, with works that have a content which may be affected and positioned through drama. (...) The linguistic context can be seen through the recitation of verses appropriate to a particular piece of music, reading poetry or content with an emphasis on interpretation. Vocal and vocal-instrumental works can be studied, of course to the extent that this is possible for compulsory school pupils, in the language in which the work was written, in its original form (Vidulin, 2016, 356).

Proclaiming music teaching in the last twenty years as interdisciplinary and multimodal, Vidulin (2007, 2013, 2016, 2017, 2019), through school musicals, composition activities, recordings with original songs made by compulsory school students created at composing extracurricular classes, then by establishing the SEM concept (Stage – English language – Music), the LMM² model (listen to music with music making activity), as well as the CE³ approach (cognitive-emotional) music-pedagogical oriented, introduced novelty into regular and extracurricular lessons based on scientific research and practical experience made with students in compulsory schools. Concepts, models and approaches were created primarily to promote art music, better understanding and acceptance by students. However, this does not mean that the approaches are intended solely for the purpose of introducing art music; they can serve to introduce any musical genres. While the LMM model is intradisciplinary because it looks at music through / with music, the SEM and CE approaches are interdisciplinary oriented.

Listen to music with music making activity (LMM model)

The LMM model is based on listening to music and linked to music making. „Pupils perceive and understand musical works over those musical elements which are filtered by

² Original: Slušanje glazbe i stvaralaštvo (SGS)

³ Original: Spoznajno-emocionalni pristup (SEP)

their cognitive system, in accordance to their previous experience and what they already know about the musical works.” (Vidulin, 2017, 148)

The first step towards music making is listening to music and analyzing a piece of music. In this way, students recognize and understand the musical components and get to know the way in which the work is composed. In relation to the given frame for music making (composing) that they find through listening to music, the students become able to create some minor work. „By listening to music and learning about musical elements pupils become aware of what music is made of. Listening to music, observing and analyzing musical components such as rhythm, melody, dynamics, tempo, musical form, instrumental and vocal ensemble, pupils get to know the compositions better.” (Vidulin, 2017, 149). The second step is that by discovering and comparing the relation between tones, rhythm, forms, they create different rhythmical-melodic structures which can be sung and played, even modified and upgraded. The last step is composing minor music forms with all the elements a musical work is made of.

The specificity of the approach is that first music is introduced and then created, but the conditions are musical in nature: listening to music and music making. Elementary music literacy is one of the prerequisites for this activity, while it is also desirable that students know how to play an instrument so that they can play and change the music lines.

Cognitive-emotional (CE) approach: musical-pedagogical context

Another alternative approach to listening to music also depends on the possibilities of experiencing a music work and is a challenge for teachers, as their professional and didactical preparation is a pre-condition for students to understand and accept a piece of music. The initial idea was given by Vidulin and Radica (2017), after which Vidulin elaborated the musical-pedagogical context of the above approach. The emotional fragment of the approach was elaborated with psychologists Plavšić and Žauhar.

In considering a cognitive-emotional approach to listening to music, Vidulin and Radica (ibid.) pay attention to student-centeredness; to the perception and understanding of a music work through those components that have been filtered by the students' cognitive system, in accordance with what they already had as their previous experience and what they know about the work. The original experience in regard to the music work also plays a special role during the teaching process.

By learning about and distinguishing between the structural musical constituents of the music work, the approach seeks to make students accept artistic music as their own. Experiencing and understanding are important elements in this process since they lead to accepting music. The first step is to choose valuable and quality music works that will appeal to the children, which they will feel and on the basis of which they will express their impressions.

In addition to standard analytical tasks, particular attention should be paid to the introduction to listening with a multimodal character, which is an integral part of the musical-pedagogical context of the cognitive-emotional approach. The approach includes the theoretical analysis and musical elaboration of works and composers in the context of

time and circumstances, then the performance of short inserts through singing and playing, the use of multimedia and other non-musical elements. Particular attention is paid to the general values and life situations by which students could conclude on the positive characteristics of the human race, the strength an individual can find in himself / herself and learn how to help others.

In the research of the cognitive-emotional approach to music listening in school in regard to its musical-pedagogical context conducted by Vidulin and Plavšić from September 2018 to December 2018, as many as 15 music teachers and 557 fifth-grade students were included. The research was conducted in 16 compulsory schools in Croatia. The results of the study so far, comparing the standard and cognitive-emotional approach to listening to music in music teaching, have shown several advantages of the cognitive-emotional approach. Students' perceptions of music teaching and the works presented are more positive (Vidulin and Plavšić, *forthcoming a*). In regard to quantitative results, students who were exposed to a cognitive-emotional approach generate a greater number of answers to open-ended questions related to the cognitive and emotional experience of music (Vidulin, Plavšić, Žauhar, *forthcoming*). Qualitative results show that these students provided multiple answers related to the thoughts, feelings, and didactical articulation of the lesson (Vidulin, Plavšić *forthcoming b*). The benefits of a cognitive-emotional approach to the didactical articulation of a music lesson can be attributed to the multi-contextual approach, musical and non-musical activities, increased interaction and active participation of students in music classes (Vidulin, Plavšić and Žauhar, *forthcoming*).

The results obtained by comparing two types of lesson plans, with two different didactical approaches, show that the standard approach includes the analysis of cognitive elements, while the cognitive-emotional approach is accompanied by the musical elaboration of works and composers in the context of time and environment, as well as enriched through musical and non-musical elements (Vidulin, 2019). It can be noticed that the tasks are common in both approaches (tempo, dynamics, instruments), but while the musicological context in the lesson plans for the control group is mostly absent, all the lesson plans for the experimental group can be observed within the musical aspect (theoretical and musicological), the socio-humanistic aspect (pedagogical, psychological, social and ethical) and the aesthetic aspect.

Stage – English language – Music (SEM concept)

With the intention of expanding musical knowledge and skills and make an interdisciplinary connection with the drama arts and English and Italian languages, in 2010 the SEM concept was created by professors of English language, drama and music, within the Association for the encouragement of excellence in education „SEM“ (Udruga za poticanje izvrsnosti u odgoju i obrazovanju „SEM“), from Pula.

“The SEM concept of music education proposes learning about and understanding artistic music by listening to, analyzing musical works, singing and playing, in order to develop their general and musical culture. The specificity that characterizes the SEM concept is the

creative fervor of producing an overall story, which connects musical contents with elements of drama and language.” (Vidulin, 2015, 191).

Students are trained to understand music art with a multimodal approach. “The purpose of getting to know music, analyzing and (self)working is to influence the culture of listening to, learning about, understanding and accepting art music, therefore, it is oriented towards acquiring knowledge about musical-stylistic periods in music art, and about the characteristics of a particular work and its artistic values at the time it originated. By listening to music and analyzing musical works, children get to know musical instruments, singing voices, solo, chamber and group ways of performing music, musical forms, instrumental, vocal and vocal-instrumental types, musical-stylistic periods, composers and performers.” (ibid.).

Given that the annual SEM workshops were realized as part of extracurricular and out-of-school activities, a practical idea that has been repeatedly realized was the project *Traveling through Europe*. Students met 11 European countries and get acquainted with music, composers, celebrities, sights and attractions of individual European countries.

Conclusion

Interdisciplinarity in music teaching, although a perennial European and even more American trend, was not reflected in the teaching of music in Croatia until a few years ago. Music was approached almost exclusively with musical stimuli, with a distinct auditory and analytical approach. Although there were examples of different practices, the standard method of listening to and music understanding was a mandatory didactical route. In this way, students from most Croatian academies and faculties were educated and teachers were trained during professional seminars.

Today, with occasional workshops and lectures on the possibility of an interdisciplinary and multimodal approach to listening to and music understanding, the new Subject Curriculum indicates that it is desirable that the domains A, B and C be intertwined with the aim of a complete experience and development of students’ musical abilities. Domain C, *Music in context*, is actually derived from domain A (listening to and music understanding) and domain B (singing/playing music). “The starting point of this domain (domains C, *author’s comment*) are domains A and B, on the basis of which the student discovers the values of rich regional, national and global musical and cultural heritage, notices the development, roles and influences of music art on society, and links music art with other arts.” (Subject Curriculum, 2019, 7)

Listening to music, especially music taught in school, is not a favorite activity. The fact is that students listen to their music, in their own way, when they want it, where and how much they want it. Getting them to listen in class, at a specific time, and to follow and actively participate in finding out what the music says, what it is, etc., can only be done by changing the approach to listening to music. Some approaches have been told through this paper and some are waiting to be found. There is a big role for each teacher: to make music teaching close to the student so that music persists and remains an important part of his or her identity.

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Povzetek

Prispevek obravnava cilj in namen poslušanja glasbe ter predstavlja nove modele poslušanja in spoznavanja glasbene literature v osnovni šoli. Glede na to, da poslušanje umetniške glasbe ni v središču pozornosti osnovnošolcev, se zastavlja zelo pomembno vprašanje v zvezi z metodičnimi postopki pri posredovanju glasbe, ki je del koncertnega repertoarja in ki ga učitelj želi predstaviti učencem. Poleg spoznavnega elementa, ki se pri glasbenem pouku najpogosteje obravnava kot primarni, in vključuje tempo, dinamiko, značaj skladbe, zasedbo, obliko, glasbeno in slogovno obdobje, moramo k učencem pristopiti tudi z druge strani. Spodbujanje celostnega razvoja učencev pravzaprav vključuje njihovo srečevanje z glasbo skozi emocionalni in socialni kontekst, zato je treba tudi to vključevati v glasbeni pouk. Eno od možnosti za to predstavlja ravno poslušanje glasbe. V novem kurikulumu (*Kurikulum nastavnog predmeta Glazbena kultura za osnovne škole i Glazbena umjetnost za gimnazije*, 2019) poslušanje glasbe ni več glavna dejavnost. Povezana je z drugimi dejavnostmi: petjem, igranjem na inštrumente, ustvarjanjem. Poslušanje poleg glasbenega usmerjanja vpliva tudi na spoznavanje glasbe v kontekstu.

Nekateri pristopi in modeli za spodbujanje poslušanja glasbe, ki so bili predstavljeni na Hrvaškem in v tujini, so se izkazali za uspešne. V prispevku jih na kratko sistematično predstavljamo. Večinoma imajo izključno glasbeno-strokovno orientacijo in se interdisciplinarno dopolnjujejo z drugimi glasbenimi dejavnostmi, en pa je interdisciplinaren in povezuje glasbo z jezikom in dramsko umetnostjo. Model LMM (*Listening to music with music making activity*) povezuje poslušanje glasbe z glasbenim ustvarjanjem. Izhaja iz poslušanja glasbenega dela, pri katerem učenec prepozna, identificira in razume njegove sestavne elemente ter jih nato uporabi pri ustvarjanju krajšega glasbenega dela. CE pristop (*Cognitive-emotional approach*) ima težišče v tem, da učenci doživijo in razumejo glasbeno delo v širšem kontekstu, da bi ga na koncu sprejeli. Uporabljajo se multimodalne strategije, pri čemer ni namen le spoznavanje glasbenega dela, temveč celotnega konteksta njegovega ustvarjanja, kar prispeva k hitrejšemu in lažjemu povezovanju učencev z glasbo. SEM koncept (*Stage – English language – Music*) takoj razvidno pokaže interdisciplinarni značaj, saj povezuje glasbo z jezikom in dramsko umetnostjo. V glasbenem delu se obravnava določen skladatelj in njegovo delo ob tem, da se glasba spoznava v širšem kontekstu nacionalnih in kulturno-umetniških značilnosti države, iz katere prihaja. Glasbene dejavnosti se povezujejo z dramsko improvizacijo, igro, gibom in konverzacijo v angleščini. Menimo, da poslušanje glasbe v multimodalnem okolju in večslojnem izrazu vpliva na dejavnost učencev, zainteresiranost za glasbene vsebine in k večjemu sprejemanju (umetniške) glasbe.