

# **THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PRACTICAL WORK OF THE FUTURE TEACHERS FOR THE SUBJECT MUSIC EDUCATION**

## **Abstract**

The paper refers to the primary education in the R. Macedonia. Education is an open process that continuously need to be adapted to the contemporary living. This is the main reason for the continuous monitoring the state of the future teachers and their readiness for the practical schooling. The subject of music education in the training of future school teacher is among those items that besides theoretical preparedness, also require practical engagement as singing and playing an instrument. To evaluate the relationship between theoretical knowledge and practice, the research has been conducted among the students of Faculty of Education, with completed mandatory pedagogical internship. Questionnaires with three groups of questions that reveals the influence of the social-cultural factors, music abilities, and their practice experiences were distributed. Regarding collected data the SWOT analysis shows that the theoretical acquired knowledge is strength, nevertheless the weakness refers to an insufficient number of practical lessons in playing music instruments during their studies. Some of the opportunities are shown in the application of e-learning tools and methods while the main threat students see in the vacuum time after the graduation and the employability.

**Key words:** Music education, future teacher, SWOT analysis.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Education is an open process that continuously need to be adapted to the contemporary living. Generally, effective education implies necessary complementarity of several parameters that are an integral part of this complex process such as educational policy, curriculum, teacher, didactic resources, conditions in which teaching takes place, etc. This is the main reason for the continuous monitoring the future teachers's status and their readiness for the practical schooling.

The general trend in South-East European countries is to increase the opportunities for conducting practical classes, in order to start with practical training for the students at the beginning of the study program, and their theoretical knowledge has been complemented with practical experience. The Republic of Macedonia is in step with these trends, with the need for teachers who have a knowledge, skills and experience gained through practical work during the

initial education. This tendency increased the volume of practical training including wider segments during the mandatory internship in the school in order to get a clearer picture of the external factors, the school relations and conditions. This concept prompted the need for unifying and systematic implementation of practical teaching, thus making the Guideline for practical teaching.

Starting from the academic year 2013–2014, Faculty of Education implemented Guideline for practical teaching during the internship of students in primary schools. Along with the class teaching, the Guideline includes the mandatory communication of the student with all subjects at school, interethnic relations, meetings with civil organizations and relevant educational institutions. As a novelty, these mandatory forms also refer to the responsibilities of the mentor teacher and professor, that provides direct communication between the main actors of the entire practical process.

## **Method**

In this study, we were interested in the implementation of the Guideline for practical teaching on the subject of music art, in order to realize all the benefits and possible weaknesses in achieving an optimal education successfully in our environment. For this purpose, we conducted a student interns survey in primary school *Tefejjuz* Skopje from the group of class teaching in Turkish language, and their mentors–teachers.

Analytical approach to the collected data represents SWOT analysis, which include internal strengths and weaknesses of the Guideline, including the external and development opportunities; limitations and dangers arising out of; and related to the process of pedagogical practice in teaching. Therefore, we believe that such an analysis and an approach will give a summary of the advantages and disadvantages in the implementation of the practice and the opportunity to develop a strong strategy.

To evaluate acquired knowledge and practicing, in the last several years our researches have been conducted among the future teachers studying at the Faculty of Education *St. Kliment Ohridski* in Skopje for the subject *Didactic of music education*. The target group is students who had just completed the mandatory pedagogical internship in primary schools. For this purpose,

we have used questionnaires with three groups of questions that reveal the influence of the social-cultural factors, music abilities, and their practice experiences.

## **Findings**

Having in mind that the curriculum covers classical and traditional folk music, the first set of questions were related on obtaining general information about the cultural standard and musical taste of the population.

Hence, we have received the following answers regarding the genre preferences, concert visits as well as music abilities:

In terms of *preference of musical genres*, it was shown that the largest percentage of respondents (90%) listen to popular local and world music, dominated by the repertoire of pop music from R. Turkey. The responses of the students showed preference to other genres: newly created Turkish folk music (80%), traditional Turkish music (50%), and spiritual (10%). This result is in addition to the second question that referred to the source from which they receive music and shows that all of them listen to music through satellite, cable TV, and the Internet.

Distribution of the questions about visiting music events and concerts again confirms the preference of pop and newly created music, with attendance of 70%. This situation is due to the fact that this music with live gigs and performances of local and foreign names is offered in places where they go out. The attendance also relates to the music events organized by the local government. The number of those who attended concerts with traditional Turkish music is around 30%. Unfortunately, none of the respondents has visited the concert of art music, opera or ballet.

The second set of questions that relates to musical skills of the participants is based on existing implemented methodology with generally accepted forms of research in specialized music schools in our country: the repetition of tone from a given chord, intonation of a given melody and repeating rhythmic pattern. According to the distribution, it can be seen that 49% of respondents correctly intoned a tone of a given major-minor Quint-chord. Thirty-five percent of respondents successfully repeated the whole melodic form, 52% have failed, and 13% of them repeated the same in smaller portions and in more attempts. The most satisfying results were in

terms of repeated rhythmic pattern, where 82% of the population is successful in the first attempt, and 18% in more attempts.

Given the fact that the primary goal was the practical experience of internship students and future teachers particularly because of the implementation of the new Guideline. The questionnaire included the following questions: *Can the report from the Guideline give the real picture of your practical work? Are you satisfied with the cooperation with mentors–teachers? Is the realization of the practical instruction in the presence of mentors important for you?* The answers could be given by completing the following options: *yes, partly, no* and *I do not know*. The distribution for the first question showed that: Guideline may give the real picture (40%), partly (in part) (20%), no (10%), and I don't know (30%). The majority of respondents are satisfied with the cooperation with mentor–teachers (80%), not satisfied (0%), and partly satisfied (20%). Respondents were united in their responses to the great importance of the presence of mentors-teachers and professors in the course of the practical teaching (100%).

In order to get a complete picture of the Guideline implementation results, survey has been conducted also among teachers who had already completed a seminar and presentation of the Guideline and mentored this group of respondents. All answers regarding the practical application of the Guideline were affirmative because of the view that it motivates students to greater attendance, engagement, and meaningful activities. All this is reflected on the motivation of students, which is a great benefit for effective teaching. Surveyed teachers responded that the Guideline is functional for all the subjects, and the optimal number of mentored students should be up to three.

### **Discussion and conclusion**

The following table represents some important parameters for the use of the Guideline for practical teaching in future.

Table 1:

<b>SWOT analysis</b>	
Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Communication between mentor–teacher, mentor–professor and the students regarding the activities and the overall process for the realization of practical teaching / activities;</li> <li>- Clearly determined objectives and goals of the student, mentors, and practical teaching as a whole;</li> <li>- Compulsory attendance of students;</li> <li>- Theoretical preparedness completely corresponds with the practical teaching of music education.</li> </ul>
Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lack of checking music skills of the students upon enrollment;</li> <li>- Motivation of the mentor–teacher;</li> <li>- Communication between the relevant institutions (BRO, Ministry and pedagogical faculties, and teachers);</li> <li>- Possibility of unrealistic evaluation of the mentor–teacher;</li> <li>- Musical instruments in schools.</li> </ul>
Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- System unified performance of practical work in all higher education institutions for teaching staff;</li> <li>- Motivation of student;</li> <li>- Motivation of pupils;</li> <li>- Positive attitude about the importance of the subject;</li> <li>- Developing skills in musical activities;</li> <li>- Exploring new methods, technology materials for teaching music.</li> </ul>
Threats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Absence of coordination between local authorities on the one side and the competent ministries and universities on the other side;</li> <li>- Excessive competence of teachers,</li> <li>- Discontinuity between the time of graduation and employment;</li> <li>- Negative self-perception regarding the music abilities.</li> </ul>

During the SWOT analysis, the research has been *strengthened* by the implementation of the Guideline and it is the mandatory system performance of practical work in all higher education institutions for teaching staff. The result clearly determined objectives and goals of the student, mentors and practical teaching in general. All this requires the compulsory attendance of students. The survey of students confirmed that the theoretical readiness on the subject of music education completely corresponds with teaching content and fosters their self-confidence (which we know that it is a very important factor for quality teaching).

The subject of music education in the training of future school teacher is among those items that besides theoretical preparedness, also require practical engagement with an individual approach to the transfer of teaching material. This is especially true for educational topics of singing, playing, and creative expression, where most apparent are the personal musical abilities, affinities and predispositions of the teacher, and the success of the lessons realized depend on that. Namely, the study of music and its performance — playing, and singing are a complex process, which despite theoretical training depends on many factors, including musicality, sense of rhythm, sense of interpretation, and stage fright of public appearance, which proved to be a weakness. At the same time, a major role has the animation and communication with students, using a variety of musical instruments and accessories, that respondents identified as weak points in the equipment of schools and their use.

The motivation of the mentor–teacher should be systematically encouraged and also overcoming the possibilities for unrealistic evaluation of students.

Through organized communication between mentor–teachers and professors using the Guideline, getting the full picture of all activities of students during the pedagogical probationary period are enabled. Given all these chances and opportunities, we see increasing student motivation, and thus the students develop skills in musical activities, as well as opportunities for exploring new methods, technology materials for teaching music.

The biggest risk in the application of acquired knowledge into practice is the discontinuity between the time of graduation and employment. In such an interface, which can last for several years, pedagogical practice loses its functionality and, therefore, it would be desirable to restore it. One of the possible risks is Negative self-perception regarding the music abilities.

Considering these facts, we conclude that the role of the teacher is quite complex and includes multiple segments. This implies the need to constantly improve the quality of initial education and continuously organizing training of future teachers, educators and pedagogues, and people will guide future young generations who throughout the educational process. The performance of practical teaching / activity is one of the most important segments in the initial education and training of future teachers, educators, and pedagogues as leading actors in the professional service at the school.

Regarding research data, the SWOT analysis method shows that the theoretical acquired knowledge is an advantage, nevertheless the practice is a disadvantage in several segments as their music abilities, playing the keyboard, the need for individualized work, and lack of instruments at home. Some of the opportunities are shown in the application of e-learning tools and methods in the individual development. The main threat students see on collective level, as the discontinuity between the time of graduation and employment. All this contribute to the necessary changes in their working practices, education, organizations, and learning.

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