

# The Music Education of the Future Teachers: Developing Pedagogical Knowledge and Musical Activities

Aida Islam, aidaislam25@gmail.com

Stefanija Leshkova Zelenkovska, stefanija.zelenkovska@ugd.edu.mk

---

## Abstract

The study programs at educational faculties in R. Macedonia in the past years have been changed by implementing the Bologna process and ECTS, which is reflected in the structure of the study program. This paper refers to the subject music education of the future teacher which along with the pedagogical knowledge requires musical aptitudes. A survey was conducted among the students at the Faculty of Education in Skopje (N 21) who had finished the internship. According to the answers, they feel very confident in the theoretical teaching, however, their confidence decrease regarding singing and playing a keyboard. The overcoming of this state students see in: extension of studying music 17 (80,9%), and the optimal allocation of the subject music education 19 (90,4%). These indicate that the music education should be studied in continuity with longer duration, and elongated practical experience in teaching music in school.

*Keywords:* Music education; class teaching; professional development.

## Method

These were those initial burst to make a researching among future teachers to perceive the significance (influence) of the curriculum on the quality of the practical music teaching. For that purpose, the survey was conducted during the academic 2015-2016, among the students of the Faculty of Pedagogy in Skopje (N 21).

In the research technique, the questionnaire was used as the main instrument. Out of many methods in researching the pedagogical phenomena the descriptive-explicative method was applied, which enabled the review of the conditions and the situation. In the research technique, the questionnaire was used as the main instrument. The questionnaire included open-ended and close-ended questions outlined in three parts according to the contents, to find out about: (1) the attitude toward the subject music education, (2) the attitude toward practical performing of music and musical predispositions, and (3) the importance of the study program in musical formation of future teachers.

## Findings

The distribution of responses regarding the attitude of the pre-service teachers for the importance of the subject Music Education shows that only half of the respondents 9 (42,9%) consider it important (14,3% — very important, 28,6% — less important), and 57,1% of them categorize it under not important items, as indicated in Table 3.

Table 3: Distribution of the question *How important is the subject music education?*

Student's attitude	N	%
Very important	3	14,3
Important	6	28,6
Not important	12	57,1

The answers to the following two questions on the awareness of the population to the benefits of music education correspond to their attitude toward the subject: 42,8% — Music is useful for the development of children; 38,1% — There are more important things; 19,1% — Do not know about the benefits.

Table 4: Distribution of the question: *What do you think about the benefit of the music?*

Student's attitude	N	%
--------------------	---	---

Music is useful for the development of children	9	42,8
There are more important things	8	38,1
Do not know about the benefits	4	19,1

To find out their opinion about the place of music education in comparison with other items, in the questionnaire they were offered the opportunity to sort subjects according to personal priority. The student's priorities were: mother tongue and mathematics (23,8%), informatics and foreign language (14,3%), nature (9,5%), music, physical education and art (4,7%). The obtained results indicate the general view that little importance is given to the subject musical education (Table 5).

Table 5: Student's priorities towards school subjects

School subjects	N	%
Mother tongue	5	23,8
Mathematics	5	23,8
Informatics	3	14,3
Foreign language	3	14,3
Nature	2	9,5
Music	1	4,7
Physical education	1	4,7
Art	1	4,7
Total	21	

Given that the study of musical subjects contains practical along with theoretical part the next group of questions concerned playing the keyboards as a compulsory segment of the curriculum. To the question "How often you practice the playing keyboard?", the responses were as follows: 13 (61,9%) — Only before the colloquium; 4 (19%) — Once a week; 2 (9,5%) — Several times a week; and 2 (9,5%) — Do not exercise at all.

With regard to the place of practicing, we received the following responses: 5 (23,8%) practiced at home, and the remaining 16 (76,2%) practiced at faculty during the lectures and exercises. All these confirm that the conditions for practicing instrument are the essential and initial factors for the successful mastering of the practical part of this group of subjects. The students themselves perceive the limited opportunities for the practical playing of instrument as an important segment of teaching, which should be modified in relation to the conditions for practicing after classes 18 (85,7%), duration of the period of studying playing 17 (80,9%), and the optimal allocation of the content of the subject 19 (90,4%).

As for the evaluation of the acquired competencies of students and applications in schools, in the third part of the questionnaire we obtained the following data: 6 (28,6%) don't feel confident theoretical knowledge acquired during the study, 15 (71,4%) in the practical part of teaching (playing and singing).

Students generally experience problems with the successful implementation of planned teaching topics in the actual circumstances in schools in classes with a large number of students 9 (42,9%), lack of teaching equipment and technical aids 7 (33,3%), and the necessity of integrating e-methods in teaching 5 (23,8%).

## 6. Discussion and Conclusions

Effective music education in primary schools is a continuous touchy topic, which initiates numerous debates, different attitudes, dilemmas, and necessity of finding optimal ways to transfer knowledge and skills. Within this complex phenomenon, the important factors that give guidance in terms of acceptance of certain tendencies are socio-economic factors, culture, tradition, and the education system. All these affect the general treatment of the subject of musical education in consultation with other subjects in class school teaching, which primarily stems from a poor awareness of the benefits of music (Islam & Leshkova, 2009, 2010). A more emphasized cultural dimension to this question is given by some hardened attitudes of the type that music is a privilege of individuals because of the necessity of natural predispositions, an economically unattractive profession, etc.

Effective musical education should imply the maximum use of the benefits from the music activities in the development of young personality through complementarities of several parameters such as the role of the teacher, curriculum, and conditions in which teaching takes place. Given the complexity of this issue, at this point we focused only on detecting this situation at the future teachers — generalists regarding the music education in the class teaching

at the Faculty of Education "St. Kliment Ohridski" in Skopje. Three primary factors bear heavily on pre-service generalists' growth as confident and competent music teachers: (a) prior experience and beliefs; (b) university course training; and (c) school-based experience (Hennessy, 2000: 183). The attitudes of generalists towards music teaching, as well as confidence levels, have also been identified as factors connected to their music teaching practices (Gifford, 1993: 33).

The survey showed that during the internship the future teachers do not have difficulties regarding the teaching of the theoretical part of the subject — music theory and notation. Even, sometimes generalists become overwhelmed with content that is too theoretical. The lack of confidence and self-efficacy mainly concerns in the practical performance of music – singing and playing keyboards. Enhancing self-efficacy is the first step in helping generalists to develop the right blend of skills, knowledge and understanding the necessity to teach music.

The additional obstacles which impede the musical upgrading of these students derived from the last changes in the curriculum, and refers to reducing the number of classes, fusion of a few subjects of music education (Fundamentals and Music instruments) as well as the fact that there is no entrance exam for musical aptitude. Actually, the main obstacle is the individual musical ability of students, which often come from their unsatisfactory musical predispositions in mastering certain musical components.

The research data showed that whole population begun with the systemic study of playing the keyboards at the faculty. On the other hand, this segment of music education is of particular importance because it is the basis of the program of all curriculum topics. This issue is more pronounced in the category of graduate students who are employed in schools after a longer period and need to renew the acquired knowledge, particularly keyboard playing. Relying on the necessity for the lifelong learning, one of the most optimal options for overcoming this condition would be organizing music courses or workshops to keep the continuity as well as to deepen the music skills. Students also could use information and communication technologies (ICT) (Islam & Leshkova, 2011), which offer opportunities for extensive and easily available virtual musical practice, through which they can look into music theory, intonation, rhythm, and playing (Foreman & Pace, 2008). However, the process of learning music, especially playing music instruments, still depends mostly on classical teaching, no matter how e-methods are developed and to what extent they are implemented in education.

In brief, considering the findings of this study, there is a need to review the faculty music curriculum. With certain modifications and especially with the increasing the quantity and duration of courses, a higher professional development, and a greater self-esteem would be achieved among the future teachers.

## References

- Foreman, G., & Pace, K. (2008). Integrating technology with music instruction: Using standard technology teaching tools to aid student learning and teach essential music skills. Van Nuys, CA: Alfred Publishing Co.
- Gifford, E. (1993). The musical training of primary teachers: Old problems, new insights and possible solutions. *British Journal of Music Education*, 10, 33-46.
- Hennessy, S. (2000). Overcoming the red feeling: The development of confidence to teach music in primary school amongst student teachers. *British Journal of Music Education*, 17, 183-196.
- Islam, A., & Leshkova, S. (2011). The Need for Integration of modern e- methods in studying the subject musical education in R.Macedonia. VI International Balkan congress for education and science, Ohrid, *Education in Balkans Today*, Book of proceedings no 2, 1359-1365.
- Islam, A., & Leshkova, S. (2009). Attitude of the future teaching staff towards the subject music education in the elementary education. *The 5<sup>th</sup> International Balkan Education and Science Congress*, Trakya University, Edirne, Book of proceedings Vol 1, 32- 35.
- Leshkova, S. & Islam, A. (2010). Ulogata na muzickata edukacija vo funkcija na sproveduvanje na predmetot muzicko obrazovanie vo oddelenskata nastava. *Godisen zbornik, no.1, UGD Stip, FMU*, ISSN 1857-7296, 13-21.