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THE EFFECTS OF TEACHING PRACTICE ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENT'S KEY COMPETENCIES AND SUBJECT MUSIC THEORY IN PRIMARY MUSIC SCHOOL IN SLOVENIA

Abstract: *Teaching practice, which has a long tradition at the Department of Music Education, Academy of Music in Ljubljana, is the main connection between the basic music-school education and university study level. Student's active participation in the classes of the group subject Music Theory represents a direct connection to the teaching practice in the primary music schools and enables an insight to the current situation at the both levels. Students develop competencies for teaching subject Music Theory with the subject Specific Teaching Methods and Teaching Practice at the master study level. The analyse of data from 2012 to 2015, gained through the student's diaries and questionnaires, showed that students perceived and evaluated their acquired competencies, within both subject areas, as very important for their future professional path. The three year observations of Music Theory's lessons showed a need for changes of the curriculum and permanent education in the area of pupil's special learning needs and cross-curricular connections with the individual instrumental class.*

Key words: *elementary music-school education, future music teachers, master study, Music Education programme, research.*

INTRODUCTION

Key competencies represent a construction of combinations of constantly changing knowledges, skills, abilities, strategies and their effective self-regulation which adapt to the requirements of economic, political and social circumstances. Competencies which are acquired during compulsory education and are defined as knowledge related to individual subject areas and the use of procedures, means and tools, do not stop developing at the end of the education process. Quite the opposite, their process development continues throughout professional career (Key Competencies, 2002). In education, professional development is a life-long process which begins with the conclusion of studies and continues until the retirement period (Cotič et al., 2011). In defining modern teacher's competencies, we follow the categories which are, more or less, commonly agreed upon. They involve competencies related to subject-specific areas and general skills, including quality communication, ability to work in a team, organisational and leadership skills and further professional development. Well developed interpersonal or personal competencies

contribute to quality implementation of ideas and realization of activities in various school and learning circumstances or situations. Thus, a modern teacher's competencies include the following domains: cognitive (problem solving ability, critical and creative thinking), emotional-motivational (view-points, values, motivation) and behavioural (ability to use one's own potentials, adapting them to relevant situations) (Louden, 2000; Key Competencies, 2002; Marentič Požarnik, 2007; Peklaj et.al., 2008; Schulman, 1986, Park & Oliver, 2008, Kleickmann et al., 2013 v Gómez-Arizaga et. al, 2016).

Following the Bologna reform, study programmes emphasise the importance of developing competencies in future general-school music teachers. Based on the European Qualifications for Lifelong Learning (EQF) and AEC Online Bologna Handbook, the European Association for Music in Schools (EAS) highlights three key areas in the development of competencies: 1) Musical and pedagogic knowledge, understanding and skills, 2) General pedagogic knowledge, understanding and skills, and 3) Generic knowledge, understanding and skills (Niermann et al. 2008). European study programmes for future music teachers offer a broad spectrum of subjects as a support to the development of professional competencies: artistic subjects, music theory/music science and music pedagogy (Rotar Pance, 2012).

In the present paper, particular attention is dedicated to the development of competencies in students - future music teachers, who study to become teachers of Music theory in music schools. We will look into students' perception of the competencies acquired at the music pedagogy subjects Specific Teaching Methods and Teaching Practice. Teaching Practice is a subject where students get direct experience in the learning and teaching processes. During the practice, an important information flow is established in a multidirectional communication, enabling insight into the problems of teaching Music theory in music school. Practice is an interactive link in the process of identifying possible gaps and defining the necessary improvements and guidelines at the primary and higher music education levels. A challenge for the future is to implement solutions to the detected shortcomings in the curricula of the primary level subject Music Theory and higher education level subjects Specific Teaching Methods and Teaching Practice.

HIGHER EDUCATION OF FUTURE MUSIC TEACHERS IN SLOVENIA

As the only Slovene higher music education institution, the Academy of Music, University of Ljubljana, offers three levels of study: first cycle – undergraduate level (3 years), second cycle – master's level (2 years) and third cycle – doctoral level (3 years). Students can choose among various programmes: Musical Arts, Music Education (first cycle); Musical Arts, Instrumental and Vocal Teaching, Music Theory Teaching, Music Education (second cycle). All second cycle programmes, except the programme Musical Arts, provide training and acquisition of fundamental competencies for music teaching in various areas and levels of music education. The programme Instrumental and Vocal Teaching focuses on the development of pedagogic competencies necessary to teach individual singing or instrument lessons, while the

programme Music Theory Teaching develops pedagogic competencies for teaching theoretical musical subjects in primary and secondary music schools and in general secondary schools.

Music Education is a study programme with a long standing tradition in Slovenia, while other pedagogic programmes mentioned above were introduced in the academic year 2012/13, following the Bologna reform. Since the topic of the present paper is the development of pedagogical competencies in future primary music school teachers, the following chapters focus on the development of pedagogic competencies within the Music Education study programme. Within this study programme, acquisition and development of competencies of future general schools music teachers starts as early as in the first year of the first cycle. Students are trained to plan and carry out music education and choral singing in general primary and secondary schools as well as pre-school programmes in music schools. Apart from musical competencies, students acquire also general pedagogic competencies, such as working in teams with other teachers, parents and other professionals. These competencies can be transferred into the framework of non-formal education, thus enabling participation in professional cultural institutions, amateur cultural activities and the media (e.g. working in music and music education sections of various media). In the following chapters, we focus on the development of pedagogic competencies in the second cycle master's study programme Music Education.

SPECIFIC TEACHING METHODS AND TEACHING PRACTICE AS SUPPORT TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF PEDAGOGIC COMPETENCIES

After concluding the first cycle study programme Music Education, graduates can enrol in the second cycle master's programme. At this level training focuses on deepening the previously acquired competencies and acquisition of additional ones to teach primary music school subjects Music Theory and Solfeggio. Students learn about the musical and pedagogic fundamentals of these two subjects at Specific Teaching Methods, a subject organically connected with the subject Teaching Practice.

Music Theory and Solfeggio are independent compulsory group subjects in primary music school which pupils have to attend besides individual singing or instrument lessons. The main objective is to develop musical abilities, skills and knowledge in five key areas: solfeggio, performing and interpretation of examples from music literature, creating, listening, musical-theoretical and formal knowledge. The planning and execution of lessons is goal- and process-oriented and activity-based. Solfeggio primarily emphasizes the development of auditory-analytical perceptions of musical content, the ability to perform music from music notation and the ability to transcribe heard musical content. Performing and interpretation of examples from music literature stimulates musical development with the aesthetic performance of musical examples, in connection to tempo and dynamic labels. Listening develops musical abilities, skills and knowledges (i.e. functional music literacy) through

experiential and analytical listening of musical elements, while creating develops them through generation of musical ideas and their translation into standard music notation. The final result of this process is reflected in musical-theoretical and formal knowledge. The activities solfeggio and musical-theoretical and formal knowledge are fundamental areas and are organically linked to the development of functional-musical literacy. The solfeggio method is a common thread connecting all areas of musical activity (Curriculum, 2003).

During teaching practice, students observe, carry out and reflect on learning and teaching processes within the vertical of group music school subjects. Teaching Practice involves observations, classroom teaching and continuous teaching practice. Continuous teaching practice is carried out in two separate weeks, one in each semester. It is the crucial period in the development of various competencies. Teaching practice involves Music Theory (a subject taught in classes 1 to 6 of music school) and Solfeggio (a subject in 7th and 8th grade of music school), and is usually organised in the music schools in a student's hometown in the classroom of a teacher-mentor. Student carries out independent classroom teaching three times in the first week and four times in the second week, while on daily basis, they carry out partial classroom teaching which means that they teach one activity planned for the lesson. Classroom teaching is monitored and evaluated by the teacher-mentor, who provides feedback and guides the student through their work during the week. In the weeks of continuous teaching practice student acquires and deepens competencies by observing and monitoring the work of a professional teacher and musical development and achievements of pupils, with flexible application of knowledge about specific teaching methods acquired at the stage of planning and executing the learning process, by developing the skills of process-oriented planning, time management skills and abilities to reflect and self-reflect. Apart from monitoring the learning process, students experience the working rhythm of music school also by attending other activities that take place during the week of teaching practice, e.g. choral or orchestral rehearsals, meetings, performances, etc. Furthermore, this enables them to develop general competencies, such as ability to communicate with other professionals, ability of team work and cooperation and comprehension of institutional frameworks of the work (regulatory requirements, necessary documentation, legal aspects of educational work). Before the beginning of the first continuous practice week and after the conclusion of the second one, the student prepares and autonomously carries out a lesson under the mentorship of a higher education teacher. The first of the two independent lessons is a starting point for identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the student's teaching process which then serve as guidelines for steering the student's work during teaching practice. Following the conclusion of the second week, the final lesson is prepared in which the student shows the acquired and improved musical and general pedagogical competencies, as well as the ability of self-reflection, self-evaluation and self-regulation of a quality pedagogic work.

RESEARCH

DEFINITION OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Teaching Practice is the subject which provides students with direct experience in learning and teaching processes and insight into the issues related to the primary music school subjects Music Theory and Solfeggio. In the triangulation student – higher education teacher – teacher-mentor, multidirectional communication is established which enables the flow of information regarding the current state and needs of primary level music schools as well as those of higher level music education.

For the purpose of the study, we defined the following research questions:

- How do students evaluate the musical and pedagogic knowledge, general pedagogic and generic competencies to teach Music Theory and Solfeggio in music schools, acquired during their training?
- Is there a need to fill any gaps or introduce changes in the music school subjects Music Theory and Solfeggio and the higher education subjects Specific Teaching Methods and Teaching Practice?

METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out on the basis of quantitative and qualitative research methods. For the quantitative approach we used descriptive and causal-nonexperimental method of pedagogical research. Qualitative data were obtained by analysing students' diary notes.

RESEARCH SAMPLE

The study involved 49 year-one students of master degree programme at the Department of Music Education. The research sample included students who attended the subjects Specific Teaching Methods and Teaching Practice in the period between 2012 and 2015, specifically 16 students in the academic year 2012/13, 12 in the year 2013/14 and 21 in the year 2014/15.

Table 1. Sample structure – number of students in individual academic years

Academic year	f (students)	f%
2012/13	16	32,6%
2013/14	12	24,4%
2014/15	21	42,8%
Total	49	100%

DESCRIPTION OF MESURING INSTRUMENTS AND DATA COLLECTION

For the purpose of the study, we collected data by means of a questionnaire for students, covering the academic years in the period from 2012 to 2015. We excluded the data about Specific Teaching Methods and Teaching Practice which are related to students' evaluation of the acquired musical and pedagogic knowledge and general pedagogic and generic competencies. We analysed students' diary records for the period of three years. This, together with answers to the final questions, provided important feedback to study the issues in question.

DATA ANALYSIS

The data were processed in Excel. Students evaluated the acquired competencies, using a 6-grade numeric scale: min = -3, max = +3. We presented the numeric data in mean values (M) and their deviations with standard deviation (SD). The results are presented in tables and diagrams.

RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION

Students' Evaluation of Professional Musical and Didactic Knowledge and General Competencies Acquired in the Study Process

Table 2. Mean values of students' evaluations of the acquired knowledge and competencies, necessary to teach Music Theory and Solfeggio in music schools (2012 to 2015)

Student's subject		2012-13 (N = 16)		2013-14 (N = 12)		2014-15 (N = 21)	
		Know-ledge	Compe-tence	Know-ledge	Compe-tence	Know-ledge	Compe-tence
Specific Teaching Methods (STM)	Mean (M)	2,38	2,41	3	2,55	2,06	2,13
	St. dev. (SD)	0,93	0,91	0	0,78	1,67	1,77
Teaching practice (TA)	Mean (M)	2,38	2,25	2,66	2,66	2,07	1,87
	St. dev. (SD)	0,93	0,97	0,94	0,94	1,68	1,91

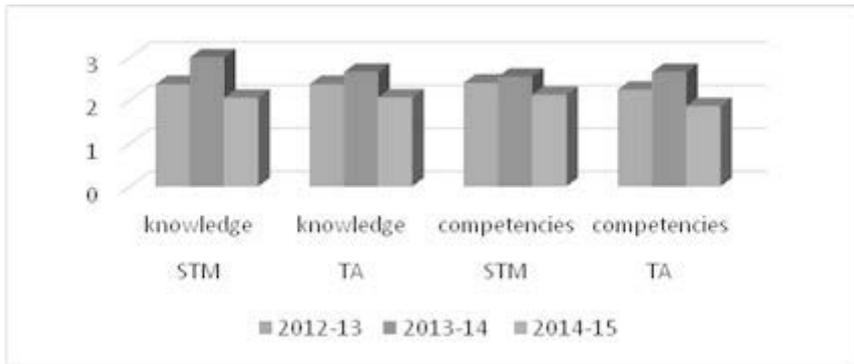


Diagram 1. Mean values of students' evaluations of the acquired knowledge and competencies, necessary to teach Music Theory and Solfeggio in music schools (2012 to 2015)

A quality implementation of the learning process during professional career requires suitable professional musical and pedagogic knowledges as well as general pedagogic and generic competencies. Table 2 and Diagram 1 above show that competencies in musical and pedagogic knowledges lead over general pedagogic and generic competencies. Students expressed and assessed that attending the subjects Specific Teaching Methods for Music Theory and Solfeggio and Teaching Practice during their studies, they had acquired more professional musical and pedagogic knowledges than general pedagogic and generic competencies. Deviations in students' evaluations, between the categories knowledge and competencies and between the subjects Specific Teaching Methods and Teaching Practice are minimal. We expected that students would rate higher the level of competencies acquired in Teaching Practice, since in the period of practice transfer of knowledge acquired in Specific Teaching Methods occurs through direct planning of the learning process and execution of musical activities and contents, in connection with a suitable choice of musical methods and forms of work. During the implementation stage, students also have to tackle unforeseen situations which occur among the planned activities. These situations are connected to the specific characteristics and motivation of each group and individual and require empathy, adjustability and inventiveness. We presume that students perceived slips, mistakes and lower ability of inventiveness and adaptability as negative and did not accept them in the positive sense – as possibilities for further improvement of the learning and teaching processes on their path of developing general pedagogic or generic competencies. This is undoubtedly one of the reasons for somewhat lower evaluations of competencies acquired in the field of teaching practice which requires student's ability to successfully manage and carry out teaching processes, learning forms and methods and to adapt to the situations which occur during the learning process. On the other hand, students' opinions are also connected to the feedback provided by the higher education teacher who also assessed the execution of the lesson with a numeric mark. Despite all these facts, the results are encouraging, as their total mean value

is higher than 2 ($M=2.36$, Table 1) and they indicate a positive attitude towards study processes in Specific Teaching Methods and Teaching Practice, which are the key subjects for the development of professional competencies.

STUDENTS' DIARY RECORD ANALYSIS

Analysis of diary records from 2012 to 2015 showed that students perceived planning and execution of Music Theory and Solfeggio group lessons as a demanding and responsible work, in particular with regard to the selection of quality music contents and activities which would motivate pupils to participate. Students detected the need of and considered efficient teaching approaches that would contribute and lead to pupils' comprehension of abstract music elements. They were also aware that difficulties in comprehension stemmed from pupils' developmental characteristics. Thus, we could observe that students' approaches were consistent with the concrete logical level of thinking. Consequently there was a shift from musical experience and pupils' own active participation in the activities to apprehension of musical theoretic and formal knowledges. Observations and students' reports show that effective time planning, i.e. attributing each activity within the lesson just the right amount of time, represented the biggest challenge. Time planning ability is connected with the transition from planning 45-minute learning units, which apply to the entire vertical of general education and which students were trained for in the first cycle, to planning learning units for group lessons in music schools which last either 60 or 90 minutes, depending on the number of pupils.

Students reported that the activities they had carried out during teaching practice were of paramount importance for the acquisition of fundamental competencies, necessary for their further professional path. They attributed the highest importance to quality and detailed feedback provided by the teacher-mentor and the higher education teacher, which is something that Rus (2016) already reported about. Analysis of the diary records revealed that students emphasised the important role of the teacher-mentor who served as a role model, with their teaching style and approach, and contributed indirectly to students' higher motivation and engagement during the weeks of teaching practice. Furthermore, we noticed that teacher-mentor's positive professional attitude had positive impact to the student's professional self-image as well as their positive attitude towards the profession of music school teacher. In their study of the role of teaching practice in future pre-school teachers, Čotar Konrad and Rutar (2015) also reported that students pointed out their mentors' competence as an important factor in the development of their own professional path.

GUIDELINES FOR PRIMARY AND HIGHER MUSIC EDUCATION

Analysing the period 2012 to 2015, we detected the need for some changes based on observation of teaching practice and interviews with Music Theory teachers. Teachers expressed the wish for placing bigger emphasis on the connections with individual

instrument lessons (Zadnik, 2016) and the need for constant further training in the field of working with students with specific learning disabilities as well as for changes regarding the learning content in lower grades of Music Theory. The needs detected in primary music school practice led to a consideration on further orientation at the higher music education level and some changes have already been introduced. For example, the Academy of Music in Ljubljana has prepared an optional subject *Pupils with Specific Learning Disabilities in Music Education*. Also, cross-curricular connections between Music Theory and individual instrument lessons are dealt with in the framework of lectures and seminar papers in Specific Teaching Methods. However, the issue of developing students' competencies in the field remains open for teachers of both, group and individual instrumental or vocal lessons.

CONCLUSION

Every music teacher is, in the first place, a musician. Therefore, it is of crucial importance to have well developed professional musical competencies which can be efficiently implemented in the learning process on the basis of pedagogic knowledges and general pedagogic and generic competencies. Awareness of one's own musical competencies and strong points is a prerequisite for their introduction into planning and carrying out lessons, as well as stimulating pupils' enthusiasm for music and music education (Zadnik, 2015). A curious teacher, open for new ideas, with a critical attitude, able to reflect on their own and pupils' development (Sicherl Kafol, 2015) who acts in the classroom as musician encourages pupils' creativity and creates positive attitude towards musical activities and music as art. Research (Oblak, 1987, Rotar Pance, 1999 as cited in Sicherl Kafol, 2015) point out that teacher's own interest in musical arts and culture and positive professional attitude towards working in education are the most decisive factors in their professional path. Teachers always serve as role models who, by setting an example, help shaping pupils' interest in music (Andrews, 2016). In the period of study of future music teachers, special attention and care need to be dedicated to their development of suitable musical and pedagogic knowledges, general pedagogic and generic competencies, as well as a positive motivation for teaching music later on in their professional career.

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UTICAJI PEDAGOŠKE PRAKSE U RAZVOJU KOMPETENCIJA STUDENATA I PREDMETA NAUK O GLAZBI U OSNOVNOJ GLAZBENOJ ŠKOLI U SLOVENIJI

Sažetak: *Pedagoška praksa, koja ima dugačku tradiciju na odjelu za glazbenu pedagogiju na Akademiji za glazbu u Ljubljani, predstavlja temeljnu vezu između muzičkog obrazovanja na osnovnoj i visokoškolskoj razini. Aktivna uključenost studenata u nastavu grupnog predmeta Nauk o glazbi predstavlja direktnu vezu sa pedagoškom praksom u osnovnoj glazbenoj školi i omogućava uvid u trenutačnu situaciju na obije razine obrazovanja. Studenti razvijaju kompetencije za nastavu predmeta Nauk o glazbi kroz predmete Specijalna glazbena didaktika i Pedagoška praksa na magistrskoj razini postdiplomskog studija. Analiza podataka, prikupljenih u periodu od 2012. do 2015. godine iz studentskih dnevnika i anketa, pokazala je da studenti sagledavaju i evaluiraju svoje kompetencije, stečene kroz oba predmeta, veoma važna za njihov budući profesionalni razvoj. Trogodišnje opservacije pokazale su potrebu za promjenama kurikuluma, kroskurikularnim povezivanjem sa individualnom instrumentalnom nastavom, te permanentnim obrazovanjem na području rada sa učenicima sa posebnim obrazovnim potrebama.*

Ključne riječi: *budući glazbeni nastavnici, Glazbena pedagogija, magistarske studije, osnovno muzičko obrazovanje, studije.*