

# INTEREST OF PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN MUSIC

---

**INES CVITKOVIĆ KALANJOŠ**  
**VESNA RUŽIĆ**

*Department of Teacher Education Studies in Gospić*  
*University of Zadar*  
ikalanjos@unizd.hr

*Elementary school Vrbani, Zagreb*  
vesna.ruzic2202@gmail.com

---

UDK: 78:373.3.046-021.64  
Prethodno priopćenje  
Primljen: 13. 1. 2022.  
Prihvaćen: 28. 1. 2022.

## ABSTRACT

Teaching music, which is carried out in primary school education through the subject Music Culture plays a major role and forms students' musical competences as part of the cultural development of students. Listening is the only activity in music that includes an aesthetic level, so the level of aesthetic education depends on the amount of time devoted to this activity. The interest of children in music has the greatest influence on the cultural environment, but the influence of the family is even greater, no matter how accessible listening to music is with mass media. Attitude towards music is mostly inherited from parents.

This paper discusses the interest of primary school students for music and what type of music they are opting for. The research was carried out by survey involving pupils from 1st to 4th grade in two primary schools in the area of Koprivnica-Križevci County. The aim and task of the research was to determine possible problems both in teaching Music Culture and the musical life of students and try to find a solution to them, so that they would be more interesting and useful to the students and to awaken students' interest. A descriptive method was used during the study and as the subject of the survey research. We assumed that the interest of primary school students is high and that their interest is moving in the direction of folk and turbo folk

## KEYWORDS:

*interest, student, music, teacher, development*

music. A survey conducted in the two schools of Koprivnica-Križevci County showed that the majority of students of these schools have a positive approach to music, but also observed differences between the school in urban and the school in the rural area.

## INTRODUCTION

Music is a very important part of human culture and should have an important place in general education. Two basic principles permeate teaching Music Culture: the psychological takes into account the fact that students love music and actively want to deal with it, and the cultural-aesthetic, for which the starting point is that teaching music must prepare students for life and to be a competent user of music culture. In primary school, music can strongly encourage positive emotions and a sense of belonging, togetherness and tolerance. It is important to focus on the student's musical activity in order to enrich their feelings and sharpen their artistic sensibility. (CNES, 2006) Vidulin and Radica (2018) state that, when approaching listening to music, all attention should be focused on the students, their experience, understanding and acceptance of music. It is the teacher who is methodically responsible to be the mediator between music and students, and should have the ability to convey a desire to explore music, as the point of listening to music is, among other things, finding its place in their lives.

Upon coming to school, students already have developed interests in certain subjects, forms of work or activities that are conditioned by the influence of their environment. The teacher's task is to recognize these interests and develop them through individual assignments and engagement. There are also often students in elementary school that attend a music school as well. It is important to address their strong interest and ability and give them recognition as well as satisfaction by giving those students additional, more difficult and individual tasks. Through music education we want to achieve the permanence of certain skills and habits, which depends on various factors, such as the emotional preparation of students, developing their interest, the intensity of musical experiences, public performances, the ability to apply acquired skills and knowledge, etc. In addition to the above factors, the durability depends on meaningful exercises, repetition and determination. (Požgaj, 1988) Everything is available to children nowadays, we could even say allowed, so it is important that the teacher guides students on the right path and helps them develop their own critical thinking. Therefore, our goal and task were to identify and try to find solutions to possible problems, both in teaching Music Culture and in the musical life of students, to make them more interesting and useful to students and awaken greater student interest.

At the beginning of the research, we have assumed that students have a great interest in music, and that students' musical "taste" is moving in the direction of folk and turbo folk music. We have also compared urban and rural areas, where greater differences in attitudes towards music are observed. The research was conducted on students from 1st to 4th grade in two primary schools in the Koprivnica-Križevci County, using a descriptive method and survey as research instruments. We have also paid attention to existing theories, already conducted research, and critically evaluated certain shortcomings. We have also proposed some procedures to improve or enhance future research.

### **EARLY RESEARCH ON STUDENTS' INTEREST IN LISTENING TO MUSIC**

In 2012, Šulentić Begić (2012: 6-8) conducted research in the area of Slavonski Brod, in three primary schools, wherein teaching Music Culture in the first three grades was observed and the extent of listening activity monitored. The final result showed that listening is not sufficiently represented in teaching Music Culture, i.e., that it is still not at the centre of Music Culture class. Research has also shown that students enjoy listening to a variety of musical works and expressing their experiences through a variety of movements, which confirms that they indeed experience and hear it. In such an activity, it is important not to expect the students to sit still and listen, but to allow them to express their experiences.

A study conducted in Pula at the Elementary School "Kaštanjer" and Elementary School "Monte Zaro" in 2018, which examined the musical preferences of second, fifth and eighth grade elementary school students to classical music and the impact of knowledge of music fragments on musical preferences, showed that second grade students show a higher preference for classical music in comparison to fifth and eighth grade elementary school students. By gender, it has been confirmed that female students show a greater preference for classical music, as do male students who attend some extracurricular musical activities. It has also been established that students least prefer 20th century music, which can serve as a good guideline for educators in designing a future musical approach to bring such music closer to them (Mendiković, 2018).

Dobrota and Ćurković (2006) conducted research in 2005 at the Elementary School "Spinut" in Split, which included three fourth-grade and three eighth-grade classes. The musical preferences of young school children were investigated, their experience and attitude towards artistic music of different stylistic periods. The research found that a positive attitude is far more present than a negative one among fourth-graders, while the majority of eighth-graders expressed indifference toward classical music. If we look at the entire research, we may say that the attitude of students towards classical music is not negative, and the reason for this is that students are becoming familiar with it from the first grade. By listening to this type of music, they will develop a positive attitude towards it, so listening should certainly be encouraged on all levels of elementary education, which would enhance contact with artistically valuable works outside of school. Fourth graders have shown an interest in different, unfamiliar music, the reason for which is that they do not have fixed attitudes and prejudices that tend to increase with age and make it harder for them to learn. As in the previous research, the interest in music of the 20th century is quite weak, which Dobrota and Ćurković attribute to the low listening rate of musical works from that period in Music Culture education.

In the open model, listening to music is at the heart of Music Culture education. According to Rojko (2012: 22, 23), listening is the only activity in music that includes an aesthetic level, and the level of aesthetic education depends on the amount of time devoted to that activity. It is important that students get to know different music and specific musical works. This way, the musical taste of students and their critical thinking are being developed. When listening to music in class, interest and attention should be awakened in students, as it transforms into active listening under those circumstances. Unlike passive listening, in active listening the students transform into a form of the composer's collaborators, which is achieved by giving the students certain tasks, so that they focus on the melody, repetitions, instruments and the like. The essence of these tasks is to activate the students, not to do an analysis of which type of composition they are listening to (Horvat, 2010). Failure to respect listening as the most important teaching area of the open model leads to its partial implementation (Šulentić Begić and Begić, 2015). Tasks given by teachers must be precisely defined, as they will guide students through the musical work they are listening to and lead them to important insights. The clarity and simplicity of the tasks are important, starting from the performer,

topic, all the way to the dynamics, tempo, etc. The teacher should also ask students short questions while listening and write notes on the board. In addition to the demonstration method, it is important to use the method of oral presentation and conversation. Students will better understand the composition if they explain the observed rhythm, melody, dynamics, timbre, etc. (Vidulin Orbančić and Martinović, 2015). The teacher does not have an easy task in listening to music in Music Culture education. It is important for it to be pedagogically-didactically-methodically designed, clearly structured and precisely guided. It is difficult for students to develop a love for artistic music, it takes a lot of time and investment. If the interest does fail to develop, it may be due to numerous factors such as: unmotivating teaching, lack of student interest, an unprofessional teacher, etc. However, even a minimal shift in tolerance towards artistic music may be achieved even in those cases (Vidulin Orbančić and Martinović, 2015).

## RESEARCH

The research was conducted in two primary schools in the Koprivnica-Križevci County. Students from the Elementary School “Ljudevit Modec” in Križevci and the Elementary School “Grigor Vitez” in Sveti Ivan Žabno from the 1st to the 4th grade, 21 classes with a total of 301 students participated in the research. The research examined how much interest students have in music and which direction their musical taste is taking. The differences between a school in the urban and a school in the rural area was also observed, and the most prominent differences were singled out. Before the beginning of the research, the already existing knowledge on the researched topic was studied in order to observe the differences and possible progress or decline in Music Culture education and students’ interest in music in general over the years.

The assumptions at the beginning of the study were as follows:

1. Students’ interest in music is great and is moving in the direction of turbo folk and folk music.
2. Singing is the most common activity in Music Culture class, not with the teacher playing an instrument, but with the help of a CD or matrix.
3. There is a difference between urban and rural areas, students in urban

areas show greater interest in music and additional musical activities.

4. Folk and turbo folk music is more represented in rural areas than in urban areas.

A descriptive method was used in this research, while the research instrument was a survey questionnaire, in which students answered questions related to their opinion, attitude and interest in listening to music in writing. At the beginning of the survey, it was clearly explained to the students what was required of them and they were instructed to complete the questionnaire. It took 5-10 minutes to complete the survey. During the survey, the anonymity of students was respected, and before conducting the research, parental consent was requested. The age of the students also had to be taken into account, i.e., the appropriateness of questions for certain ages. After the survey, a quantitative analysis of the data was made, which consists of ranking and grouping the results. After the analysis, the data was interpreted and the hypotheses compared to the obtained results. At the end of the research, the starting problem was answered, and all the knowledge gained in our research presented. Finally, there are some suggestions that could solve or at least reduce a certain problem.

Analysis of the answers to the first question led us to the following data: 10% of students listen to folk music, 6% to classical, 1% to opera, 34% to rock, 37% to pop and 12% to turbo folk at home. Thus, pop and rock music are the

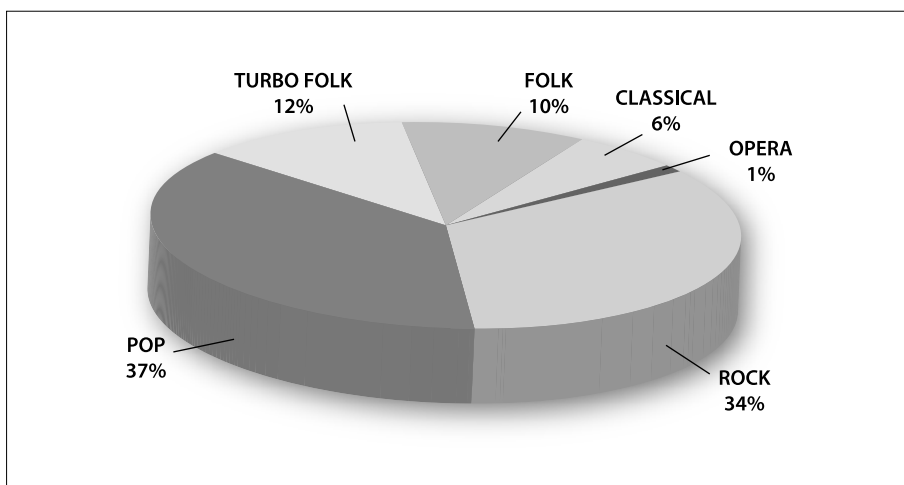
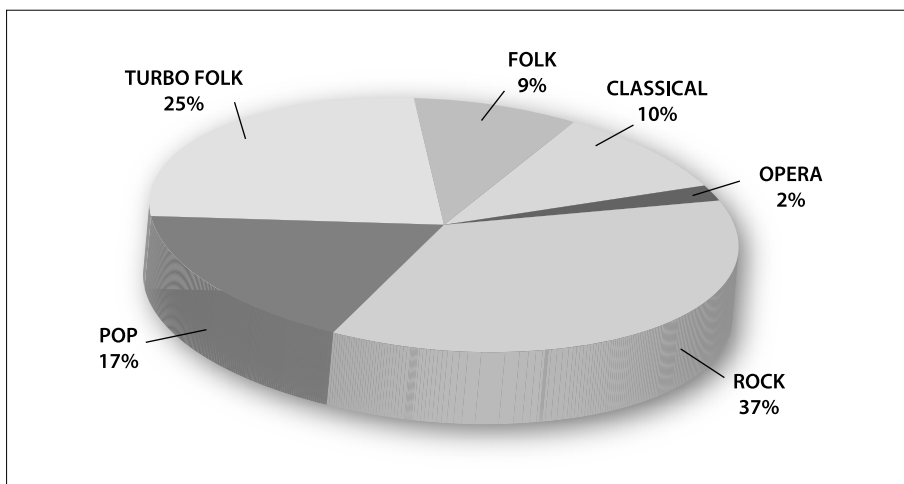


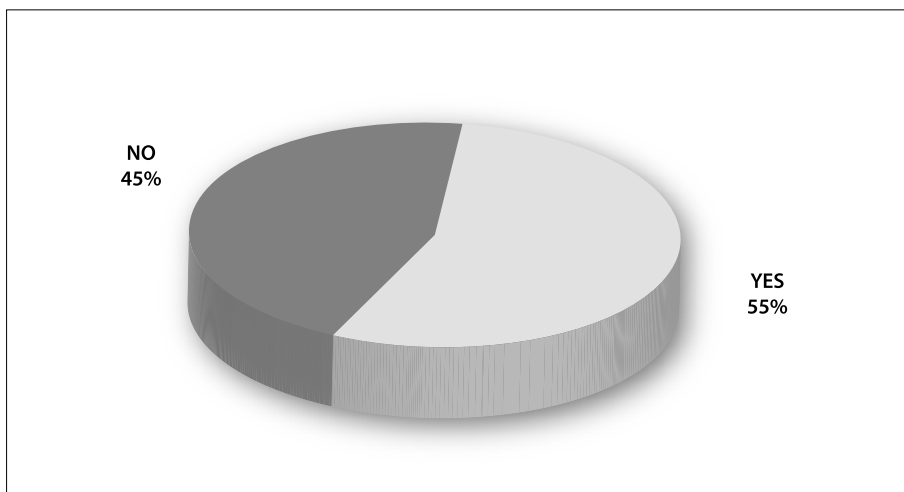
CHART 1 What kind of music do you listen to at home: folk, classical, opera, rock, pop, turbo folk?



**CHART 2** Listen to the following music clips and circle which one you like best: folk, classical, opera, rock, pop, turbo folk?

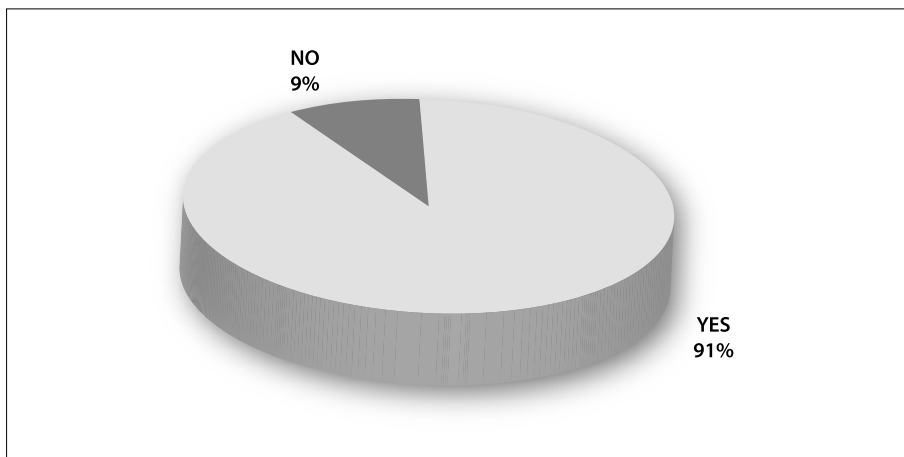
most represented, turbo folk and folk music much less, while classical music and opera are least preferred by children.

The students were asked to circle what kind of music they listen to the most at home: folk, classical, opera, rock, entertainment, turbo folk. They also had to listen to six prepared music clips and then note which clip or genre they liked most. They had the opportunity to choose between six genres: folk



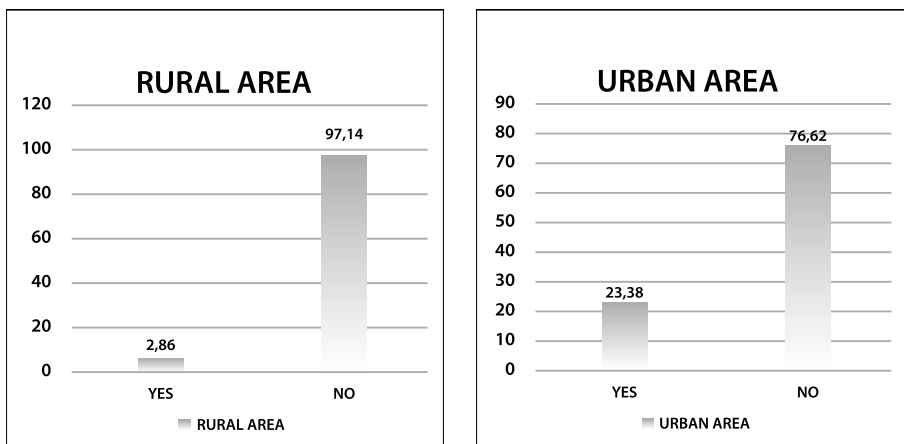
**CHART 3** Does your teacher play an instrument in Music Culture class?





**CHART 4** Does the teacher sing along with you when learning a new song?

(Halid Bešlić – *Miljacka*), classical (Vivaldi – *Spring*), opera (Luciano Pavarotti – *O Sole Mio*), rock (Queen – *We Will Rock You*), pop (Jelena Rozga – *Bižuterija*), turbo folk (MC Stojan – *La Miami*). Preference was given to rock music chosen by 37% of students, followed by turbo folk 25%, pop 17%, folk 9%, classical 10% and opera 2%. Here we also see that, again, classical music and opera are the least represented, but also that turbo folk music comes in second place according to the musical taste of the surveyed students while they liked

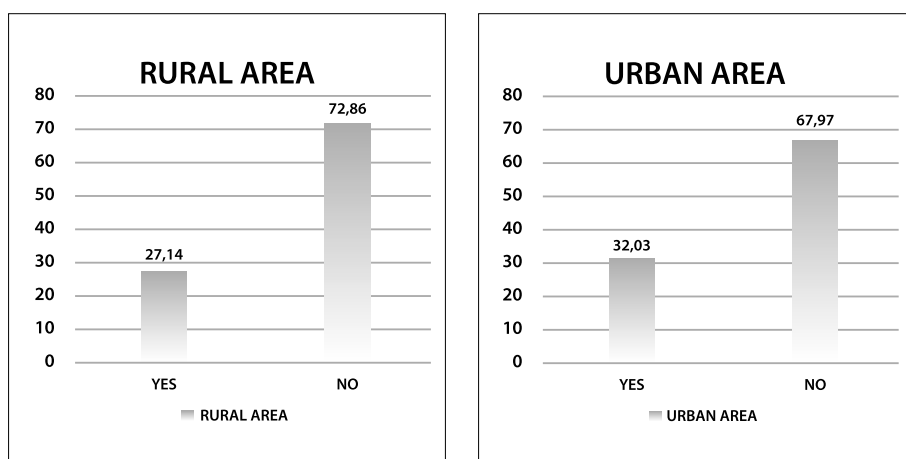


**CHART 5** Do you attend music school?

(Rural area - Elementary School "Grigor Vitez" Sveti Ivan Žabno. Urban area - Elementary School "Ljudevit Modec" Križevci)

pop music a little less. Students listen to popular music in their free time, so it is not unusual that this result was achieved. Students can be helped with building their musical tastes by listening to classical, as well as high quality popular music in school.

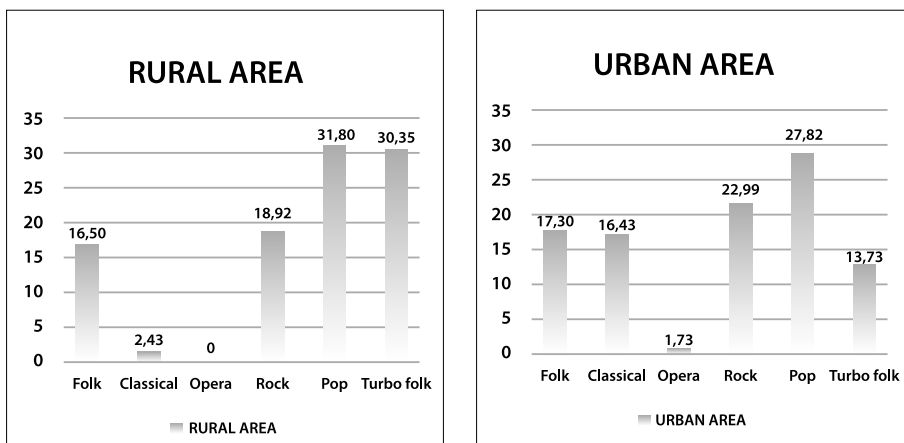
55% of respondents answered that their teacher does play an instrument in Music Culture class, and 45% answered negatively. Most of the affirmative answers have been noted with students in the fourth grade, where the Music Culture is taught by dedicated subject teachers, as well as in a second-grade class, while in other grades and classes the teachers do not use musical instruments. Why the teachers of the examined classes do not play music lessons we can only guess, whether it is due to a feeling of incompetence in this area or something else, we do not know, but this may certainly be the subject of future research.



**CHART 6** Are you attending some extracurricular music activity?

(Rural area - Elementary School "Grigor Vitez" Sveti Ivan Žabno. Urban area - Elementary School "Ljudevit Modec" Križevci)

On the other hand, it seems that teachers feel safer in the field of singing, so 91% of students answered that their teacher sings along with them when learning a new song, while 9% of them do not sing, as shown in the chart. Teachers singing is certainly inevitable when learning a new song because we personally do not see another way to properly teach singing. In any case, the teacher can play the song on one of the sound carriers, but we believe that there are always some corrections in singing, such as rhythm, singing the



**CHART 7** What kind of music do you listen to at home: folk, classical, opera, rock, pop, turbo folk?  
 (Rural area - Elementary School "Grigor Vitez" Sveti Ivan Žabno)  
 (Urban area - Elementary School "Ljudevit Modec" Križevci)

wrong melody, tones, etc.

Attending music school is more prevalent in urban areas, visible even from the fact that in the rural area 2.86% of students attend a music school, while in the urban area 23.38% students do so. Music school is more accessible to the students of the urban area, the town of Križevci, than to the students of Sveti Ivan Žabno, so this information is not at all surprising. In order to attend music school, students from rural areas must visit the urban, by personal or public transport, which is not organized specifically for this purpose. When such activities are concerned, parents are forced to drive their children to the city, which is impossible in most cases, as classes at music school take place during their working hours.

It was also compared how many students from urban and rural areas attend extracurricular music activities. 27.14% of students in rural areas do attend, while 72.86% do not, and in urban areas 32.3% do, while 67.97% do not attend some extracurricular musical activity. No large difference has been noted here, but again, urban area students showed a little more interest in additional musical activities. There are major shortcomings in the existing Music Culture program in both schools. They offer students only one extracurricular musical activity, choir. Students' interest could be stimulated by offering them more musical extracurricular activities, so that they could choose what they wanted and what they are more talented for. Of course, not all students are talented

for musical activities, but this way, by offering them more choice, their interest could increase. Some of those potential activities are singing, playing instruments, music and stage performances, folklore, composing and more.

Graph 7 shows us which type of music is more preferred at home in rural, and which in urban areas. The most, 31.80% of students chose pop music, so it is therefore the most represented in rural areas, followed by turbo folk music, which was chosen by 30.35% of students. Rock music also gained an advantage over folk music, which we assumed was the most listened to in rural areas with folk music. 18.92% of students chose rock and 16.50% of folk music. Pop music is also the most represented in the urban area, it is preferred by 27.82% of students, followed by rock music chosen by 22.99% of students, while turbo folk was preferred by a very small percentage of 13.73%, just behind opera, which was preferred by 1.73% of students. Classical music is also slightly more represented in the urban area with 16.43%, whereas in the rural area it was 2.43% and opera is not listened to at all.

## CONCLUSION

Music plays a key role in children's lives and in their cultural, emotional and cognitive development. It also has an aesthetic significance by developing students' critical thinking as well as enabling and encouraging the creation of their own attitudes. Nowadays, children are, like adults, surrounded by a variety of music that includes high quality and lower quality music, and in order to distinguish a good piece from a bad one, it is necessary to have the above-mentioned skill of critical thinking and attitude. Media nowadays mostly presents popular music, so children are mostly exposed to it, although it has practically no artistic elements. This research has also shown that most students listen to popular music such as rock, pop and turbo folk in their spare time, and the music with the most artistic elements, classical and opera, is preferred only by a small number of students. On the other hand, there are high quality pieces to be found in popular music that can be listened to in Music Culture class, so that students may become aware of the differences between good and bad popular music. It is this freedom of choosing what will be listened to in Music Culture class that allows an open model, giving the teacher the opportunity to create classes according to their own discretion and

students' needs. Too little attention is paid to music nowadays and, in fact, few people understand how important it is to our society and each individual. Unfortunately, it has long been essential to create some musically poor pieces that an individual will passively listen to and "enjoy", which is why a lot of teacher effort is needed to somehow bring students out of the crowd blinded by this kind of music. It is important to open students' eyes, show them that each of them will find some piece of music in artistic music that will touch them and awaken certain emotions through Music Culture education. Students generally have prejudices towards this type of music, so teachers have a very difficult task in motivating students and stimulating their interest.

At the beginning of the research, we set four hypotheses, two of which were confirmed at the end, the other two partially. As a result of the research, we found that students' interest in music is as high as expected and is moving in the direction of rock, turbo folk and pop music. The hypothesis that students prefer folk music after turbo folk was refuted, so instead of by folk, turbo folk was joined by rock and pop music according to the popularity of listening. Although students mostly listen to pop music at home, they liked the rock clip the most while listening during the research. Pop was only the third most popular, while turbo folk was in second place, even though students listen to less turbo folk in their free time. Classical music, opera and folk music are the least represented according to the students' choice.

According to previous research, the conclusion was reached that the open model is poorly implemented in schools, that listening to music is not considered the most important area of teaching Music Culture. Thus, the second hypothesis was presented, the assumption that singing is the most common activity in Music Culture class, just not singing along with the teachers playing, but with the help of a matrix. The results showed that Music Culture classes in these schools feature singing and listening equally, while the least number of respondents answered that they listen, so the conclusion may be reached that singing is more common than listening. When learning a new song, the teacher sings with the students, but most of them along to a matrix. Most of the students who answered that their teacher plays an instrument in Music Class are fourth grade students taught by a dedicated subject teacher, as well as one of the second-grade classes, in which students answered that their teacher plays an instrument in Music Culture class. Taking into account that twenty-one classes were examined, only in five of them does the teacher use

an instrument, i.e., play it. Why don't teachers use an instrument in Music Culture class and do they consider themselves competent at all to teach Music Culture in this way? This can certainly be the topic of some future research.

The research also showed that music makes the vast majority of respondents happy and that they listen to it in their free time, while they also enjoy Music Culture classes, in which they feel happy, so one class weekly is not enough for most of them. Music Culture should therefore correlate more with other subjects, which will make it easier for students to acquire new knowledge, because by incorporating music into content students see as uninteresting, their knowledge acquisition and stimulate interest are certainly better facilitated.

The schools in which the research was conducted are located in urban and rural areas, so we noticed certain differences between the two areas, which we have initially assumed would appear and thus confirmed the third hypothesis. Urban students showed greater interest in additional musical activities than rural students. Music school is attended by most students from urban areas, but also a larger number of students in the area attend extracurricular music activities. The connection of village and city by public transport has proven to be problematic for the rural area concerning attending music school. The conclusion that students in rural areas are "deprived" and that they need to be able to freely attend additional activities in urban areas has been reached. Students have generally shown great interest in playing an instrument, so there is no doubt that the organization of transportation for interested students would encourage enrolment in additional, extracurricular musical activities. It is also necessary for teachers to recognize talent in individual students and to encourage and develop it as much as possible.

The fourth assumption was that rural students preferred folk and turbo folk, while urban students preferred rock and pop music, which turned out to be partly true. In this case, rural respondents preferred pop music, followed by turbo folk, while folk music is only in fourth place in terms of popularity. The same result was observed in terms of free time listening and excerpts listened to during the research. Respondents in the urban area listen to rock and pop music the most in their free time, and when listening to music clips, they mostly chose the rock clip, which differs significantly from the results of other genres. Of note was the difference in knowledge of certain music clips, most urban respondents knew who performed the rock clip and its title, while in rural areas no student recognized the clip, but again more chose rock than the

folk clip that was known to all.

After conducting our research, studying the literature and previously conducted research, we can say that children have a great need to learn music, not only because it is their desire, but because of its importance for their overall development. It is important that parents, teachers and the child's environment in general understand this, so they may encourage the child to develop a love of music. We believe that some teachers do not consider teaching Music Culture relevant for children's development, and it is they who should make an effort to provide children with the best possible encounter with music.

“Music gives soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight of imagination and life to everything that exists.”

(Platon)

## SOURCES

- DOBROTA, S. i ĆURKOVIĆ, G. (2006). Glazbene preferencije djece mlađe školske dobi. *Život i škola*, br. 15-16 (1-2), 108-113.
- HORVAT, M. (2010). Pjevanje, slušanje glazbe i elementi glazbene kreativnosti u nastavi Glazbene kulture i primjena istih u nastavi katoličkog vjeronauka. *Život i škola*, br. 23 (1/2010.), god. 56., 85-202.
- MENDIKOVIĆ, A. (2018). *Glazbene preferencije učenika osnovne škole prema klasičnoj glazbi*. Pula, Bachelor's Thesis. (accessed on 4th July 2019) <https://repositorij.unipu.hr/islandora/object/unipu:2699>
- Nastavni plan i program za osnovnu školu. (2006). Zagreb: Ministarstvo znanosti obrazovanja i športa.
- POŽGAJ, J. (1988). *Metodika nastave glazbene kulture u osnovnoj školi*. Zagreb: Školska knjiga.
- ROJKO, P. (2012). *Metodika nastave glazbe teorijsko-tematski aspekti*. Osijek: Sveučilište Josipa Jurja Strossmayera, Pedagoški fakultet Osijek.
- ŠULENTIĆ BEGIĆ, J. i BEGIĆ, A. (2015). Otvoreni model nastave glazbe u razrednoj nastavi. *Školski vjesnik*, 64, 1. 115-116.
- VIDULIN, S. i MARTINOVIĆ, V. (2015). Umjetnička glazba i oblikovanje kulturnoga identiteta učenika. *Školski vjesnik*, 64 (4), 573-588.
- VIDULIN, S. i RADICA, D. (2017). Spoznajno-emocionalni pristup slušanju glazbe u školi: teorijsko polazište. U: Vidulin, S. (Ed.). *Glazbena pedagogija u svjetlu sadašnjih i budućih promjena 5*. (55-71). Pula : Sveučilište Jurja Dobrile u Puli. (accessed on 5th July 2019) [file:///C:/Users/WS/Downloads/916697.Vidulin\\_Radica\\_Sluanje\\_glazbe%20\(1\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/WS/Downloads/916697.Vidulin_Radica_Sluanje_glazbe%20(1).pdf)



## INTERES UČENIKA RAZREDNE NASTAVE ZA GLAZBU

### SAŽETAK:

Glazbena nastava koja se u osnovnoškolskom obrazovanju provodi kroz predmet Glazbena kultura u kulturnom razvoju učenika ima veliku ulogu te formira učenikove glazbene kompetencije. Slušanje je jedina aktivnost u glazbi koja uključuje estetsku razinu pa tako razina estetskog odgoja ovisi o količini vremena posvećenom upravo toj aktivnosti. Na interes djece za glazbu najveći utjecaj ima kulturna sredina ali još više utjecaj obitelji bez obzira na to koliko je pristupačno slušanje glazbe u masovnim medijima. Glazbeni stav prema glazbi djeca uglavnom nasljeđuju od svojih roditelja.

U ovom radu govori se o interesu učenika razredne nastave za glazbu te za koju vrstu glazbe se opredjeljuju. U okviru rada provedeno je istraživanje u kojem su sudjelovali učenici od 1. do 4. razreda iz dvije osnovne škole na području Koprivničko-križevačke županije. Cilj i zadatak istraživanja bio je uočiti i pokušati naći rješenje za moguće probleme kako u nastavi glazbene kulture tako i u glazbenom životu učenika kako bi ona bila zanimljivija i korisnija učenicima te kako bi se izazvao što veći interes učenika za nju. Prilikom ispitivanja korištena je deskriptivna metoda a kao predmet istraživanja anketa. Pretpostavili smo da je interes učenika razredne nastave za glazbu velik te da se njihov interes kreće u smjeru narodne i turbofolk glazbe. Istraživanje koje je provedeno u dvjema školama Koprivničko-križevačke županije pokazalo je da većina učenika tih škola ima pozitivan pristup prema glazbi ali i uočene su razlike između škole u urbanom i škole u ruralnom području.

### KLJUČNE RIJEČI:

*interes, glazba, učenik, učitelj, razvoj*

