Croatian Journal of Education
Vol.28; No.3/2026, pages: 761-796
Original scientific paper
Paper submitted: 22nd January 2026
Paper accepted: 18th June 2026
https://doi.org/10.15516/cje.v28i3.43216

# Teaching Visual Art and Music in Mixed-Age Primary Classes

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## Abstract

*Mixed-age or combined classes entail a group of students of different age and abilities. Student diversity and mutual differences present a special challenge for education workers teaching combined classes. The teachers should possess pronounced competences such as creativity, innovativeness, being democratic, rationalisation and self-regulation. Research has shown that children in combined classes develop autonomy and initiative more intensively and delegate their obligations and free time more economically than their counterparts in regular classes. Besides, in mixed-age classes students' creative mechanisms are additionally motivated, and their critical and creative thinking is further developed, which influences the level of self-confidence and ultimately students' self-realisation. Precisely these are the characteristics excelled in arts education (visual art and music). The aim of this study was to examine the characteristics of visual art and music lessons, teachers' role in preparing arts instruction, the organisation of space, and advantages and disadvantages of working in mixed-age classes. The research was conducted in 2024/2025 academic year among first- to fourth-grade teachers working in combined classes (N = 158) in the Republic of Croatia. A quantitative, nonexperimental study was carried out via a questionnaire. Apart from descriptive statistics, non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis test and Spearman's correlation coefficient were used. The results show that using various didactic strategies and instruction planning are important features of teaching visual art and music in combined classes. As leaders of the education process, teachers should use different learning strategies and optimise lessons design, wherein it is important to pay attention to the organisation of classroom environment so that it provides all necessary didactic equipment, materials and means that facilitate the use of different learning and teaching methods. According to the participants' opinions, the greatest advantage of working in a combined class is student autonomy and discipline, followed by cooperation and peer-to-peer teaching. Teachers perceive*

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*simultaneous instruction of different contents in one lesson as a difficulty. It was found that teachers with more years of service perceive students in combined classes as more independent and disciplined than teachers with less years of service do. On the other hand, teachers with shorter work experience consider psychophysical differences between students as a drawback to a greater extent than teachers with longer work experience. At the same time, teachers with more years of service and professional experience use different teaching strategies more often than teachers with less work experience.*

**Keywords:** *arts education; combined classes; primary education; teaching methods*

## Introduction

With regard to children's age, a class can include children of the same age or, alternatively, children of different age. Various terms are found for classes that include children of different ages, such as multi-classes, non-grade schooling, mix grade-age classes, multigrade, multi-age, multigrade, composite class, combined class and stage class (Cornish, 2010; Lindström & Lindahl, 2011; Ronksley-Pavia et al. 2019; Saqlain, 2015). Cornish (2010) discussed two umbrella terms that regard classes of mixed-age children, namely multi-age and multigrade classes, where the term multi-age entails any type of mixed-age class normally created by choice, whereas classes with multiple grades are usually formed out of necessity or due to the lack of staff or students in rural communities and areas with scarce population. Multi-age education is mostly focused on the student, not on the curriculum (Harris et al., 2013; Stone, 2010), and students are taught according to individual needs, interests and learning preferences (Aina, 2001). In non-degree, multi-age classrooms students are not designated by grade level; rather, they are classified individually without a formal affiliation to a specific class cohort. Within such multi-class environments, teachers instruct groups consisting of students from two or more grade levels simultaneously (Mulryan-Kyne, 2007; Proehl et al., 2013).

In the Republic of Croatia's education system, classes are formed based on the number of students and the type of school/programme. Apart from the one-year class attended by age-homogenous students, teaching is also performed in combined, that is, mixed-age classes. Teaching students of different age simultaneously makes combined classes specific (Lucić & Matijević, 2004; Nawab & Baig, 2011). According to the Croatian *National Pedagogical Standards for Primary Education* (2008), combined classes are formed for students across first four years. Students of two, three or four years are taught in one class at the same time. The number of students is legally prescribed for two-grade (16 at the most), three-grade (14 at the most) and four-grade (12 at the most) combinations. The more grade levels in a combination, the fewer students attend the class because such instruction is quite challenging for one teacher. Teachers are expected to be flexible, resourceful in organising lessons (group

work, differentiation, etc.), as well as able to create a safe, supportive and stimulating classroom environment (Barber, 2015; Petrović, 2010; Smit et al., 2015). According to Jensen (2003), teachers should develop not only students' ability to optimise learning but also the love of learning in general.

The education process in combined classes is specific; it encompasses a series of particularities regarding work organisation and teaching methods. The particularity of working in combined classes entails both benefits and drawbacks. According to research, primary advantages are reflected in student independence, cooperation and togetherness (Blašković, 2020; Fagan, 2009; Mulryan-Kyne, 2004). Due to teaching various contents and children of different ages, the relationships between students are better, and the work is characterised by discipline and responsibility (Gutierrez & Slavin, 1992; Mackey et al., 1995). Simultaneous student engagement on different educational contents is a pronounced drawback of working in combined classes and demands teachers to adjust the curricula and combine multiple work methods (Smit et al., 2015; Šuvar, 2011). Hence, working in mixed-age classes gives teachers the freedom to choose didactic strategies and teaching methods as well as the type of student evaluation, but it also requires their thorough preparation (Lucić & Matijević, 2004).

## Arts education in combined primary classes

Engaging with art contributes to children's wholesome development in accordance with their interests and abilities, which is emphasized by many authors in the field of philosophy, pedagogy, psychology and art theory (Arnheim, 2008; Eisner, 2002; Efland, 2002). Teaching visual art and music is specific when compared to other school subjects because it equally develops all aspects of a student's personality: cognitive (Arnheim, 1985; Eisner, 2002; Efland, 2002; Gardner, 1983, 1990; Starc et al., 2004), affective (Čudina-Obradović & Brajković, 2009; Dewey, 2005; Starc et al., 2004) and psycho-motor (Tacol, 1999; Starc et al., 2004). Arts education is specific because it joins theoretical and practical work, motivates students' creative thinking and expression, and it entails an open approach to designing the education process, which assumes the teacher's creativity (Sawyer, 2004; Tomljenović, 2016). Modern approach to teaching arts requires the use of different instructional styles that motivate students' activity and their creative and critical thinking.

Research on education in combined classes in the last thirty years is abundant, but it is not as present in the field of teaching visual art and music (Blašković Galeković et al., 2023; Broom, 2009; Broom et al., 2015; Kelehear & Heid, 2002). Broom (2009) used a questionnaire in his study among visual art teachers who taught multi-age classes in Florida. The results have shown that most participants (83.3 %) considered workspace should be organised to accommodate students' group work in visual art lessons. Many participants reported groups in cooperative learning (77.8 %) and peer assistance (69.4 %) as efficient methods of teaching visual art to multi-age classes. Other implemented strategies included topic-based instruction (47.2 %) and integrative curriculum (44.4 %). Most participants (58.3 %) stated that the use of scaffolding

technique represented the greatest advantage of multi-age visual art instruction. Some of the participants mentioned advantages of peer-to-peer teaching, group cooperation, specific benefits for younger or older students or two-way gains for both groups. The most expressed drawback of multi-age visual art classes regarded the perception that the range of different developmental levels in mixed-age classes is too wide. The participants suggested topic-based approach to teaching visual art that would facilitate developmentally paced exploration of the topics for each student. Broom et al. (2015) conducted a multiple case study when they interviewed three visual art teachers about their experiences of working in multi-age classes. All teachers successfully applied student joint work in groups, cooperative projects or peer mentoring and peer-to-peer teaching. Bastaban and Kurnaz (2024) conducted a study in the field of visual arts in primary education, and the participants indicated that working in a combined class yielded positive outcomes and had a beneficial impact on both the social and artistic development of students. Blašković Galeković et al. (2023) examined arts instruction (music and visual art) in combined classes. They used the qualitative research method, that is, participants were interviewed to gain an insight into teaching visual art and music in combined classes. Teachers generally emphasized the challenges of this type of work, and they pinpointed peer mentoring, tolerance and mutual appreciation as advantages. On the other hand, the downsides of working in combined classes entailed organisation, i.e., planning and efficient use of time.

This study explored teachers' views about teaching art subjects in combined-grade classrooms, examining their professional roles, perceived advantages and challenges of such instruction, and its methodological and spatial organization.

## Methodology

### *The problem, goal and questions of the research*

In the Republic of Croatia, lessons are conducted in two types of classes according to two criteria: if the criterion of homogeneity, that is, peer age is applied, students are placed in one-year class; on the other hand, students are grouped in combined classes if the heterogeneity criterion is respected. The research problems in this study entailed teaching visual art and music in combined classes, particularly with regard to its distinctive rules and specificities. Arts education demands certain spatial conditions, monitoring students and the performance of artistic content itself. The aim of the study was to examine teachers' attitudes towards the characteristics of arts instruction, the teacher's role in its organisation and the related teaching methods, as well as the characteristics of space important for visual art and music instruction in a combined class. Additionally, the study investigated teachers' viewpoints on the advantages and disadvantages of arts education in combined elementary education classes. The following research questions ensued:

1 What are the characteristics of arts teaching in a combined class?

2 What is the teacher's role in organising arts instruction in a combined class?

3 What are the crucial characteristics of space in arts instruction in a combined class?
4 What are the benefits and drawbacks of teaching visual art and music in a combined primary class?
5 Are there differences based on teachers' years of service and their perception of the advantages of working in a combined class?
6 How often do teachers implement individual arts education strategies in a combined class?
7 Are there differences based on teachers' years of service and their perception of the disadvantages of working in a combined class?
8 Are there statistically significant differences among teachers considering their years of service and the frequency of using didactic–methodological approaches in teaching?

### *Research sample*

This study was implemented on a convenience sample including first- to fourth-grade teachers working in combined classes from nine counties in the Republic of Croatia (N = 158), and participation was voluntary. The greatest number of participants were from Zadar County (f = 30), Krapina-Zagorje County (f = 27), Lika-Senj County (f = 26), Osijek-Baranja County (f = 19), Zagreb County (f = 18), Virovitica-Podravina County (f = 16) and Brod-Posavina County (f = 12), while the fewest number of the participants were from Dubrovnik-Neretva (f = 5) and Šibenik-Knin County (f = 5).

The review of the participant profiles showed that 50 teachers (31.6 %) had ten years of work experience, while 57 (36.1 %) participants had between 11 and 20 years in service, and 51 (32.3 %) had more than 21 years of work experience. One teacher with only two months of working in a combined class at the time of the study's implementation had the shortest work experience, whereas a participant with 41 years of teaching a combined class had the longest work experience. The participants had, on average, 18 years of service (M = 18.23; SD = 10.27). Most participants (87.3 %) gained experience in working in non-mixed, that is, one grade-level classes, while 13.3 % of the participants had experience in teaching exclusively combined classes.

Teachers who work in combined classes can have minimally two and maximally four combinations. A combination of two grades is most common in Croatian education. Regarding the participants in this research, 28 teachers conducted classes in the combination of first and second year (18.5 %), 36 teachers worked in the combination of first and third year (23.8 %), 22 worked in the combination of first and fourth year (14.6 %), 26 taught the combination of the second and third year (17.2 %), 32 taught the second and fourth year (21.2 %), while 20 teachers worked in a class combination of year three and year four (13.2 %) at the time of the study's implementation. A three-year combination of the first, second and third year was taught by 62.6 % of the participants; 19.6 % worked in a combination of the second, third and fourth year; and 17.8 % taught the combination of the first, third and fourth

grade. The fewest number of the participants, that is, 5.1 %, worked in a four-grade combined class at the time of the research.

According to official data from *Rudnik*[1], 144,801 students across first four primary school grades in the Republic of Croatia were distributed in 9,673 classes in the academic year 2024/2025. Out of them, 9,232 students attended a combined curriculum from the first to the fourth grade, wherein 3,602 students attended school in the counties where the study was conducted, and they have been taught by 531 teachers, which makes up 37.5 % of the study's sample. In the whole Republic of Croatia, 1,417 teachers worked in combined classes in total.

### Instrument

A two-part questionnaire was constructed for the needs of this study. The first part entailed questions on the teachers' socio-demographics (years of service, work experience in combined classes, place of work, the combination of grades and the number of students in a combined class). The second part of the questionnaire comprised multiple-choice questions regarding the teacher's role, importance of certain characteristics of arts instruction and features of space in teaching visual art and music in a combined class. Two multiple-choice questions regarded the benefits and drawbacks of teaching arts in a combined class. The frequency of implementing arts teaching strategies in a combined class was examined via an ordinal scale.

The internal consistency coefficient was calculated for the scale-type questions, and it showed a high reliability – $\alpha = 0.86$. Besides, the validity of the instruments was checked via the main components factorisation process. Two factors were found with characteristic roots over one that together explained 68.77 % of the variance (KMO = 0.886; Bartlett's test: p = 0.000). Two factors were created in total on the basis of 14 claims. The internal consistency coefficients for each obtained factor were satisfactory. The first factor regarded visual art teaching strategies, and it was calculated as $\alpha = 0.72$, and the second considered music teaching strategies, and it was found to be $\alpha = 0.69$.

The study was conducted in 2024/2025 academic year via an online questionnaire.

### Data analysis and statistical processing

The collected data were processed using the statistical programme SPSS. For descriptive statistics of nominal and ordinal variables, the following measures were calculated: frequencies (f), relative frequencies (%), arithmetic means (M), dominant values (mode), medians (Md), standard deviations (SD) and the measures of the

[1] Rudnik (2024/2025) The Ministry of Science and Education of the Republic of Croatia. Available at: https://app.powerbi.com/view?r=eyJrIjoiZWE3YTE4OWQtOWJmNC00OTJmLWE2MjktYTQ5MWJlNDNlZDQ0IiwidCI6IjJjMTFjYmNjLWI3NjEtNDVkYi1hOWY1LTRhYzc3ZTk0ZTFkNCIsImMiOjh9 (18.6.2025.)

distribution's normality (skewness, kurtosis). Since the distribution was not found normal, non-parametric statistics was used, i.e., Kruskal-Wallis test.

## Results and discussion

### *Characteristics of arts education in a combined class*

Due to their nature, school subjects such as visual art and music demand specific teaching strategies. According to Blašković Galeković et al. (2023), visual art and music are based on practical and creative work, so the realisation of classes requires more specific teaching strategies and conditions (instruments, audio-visual technology, various equipment and materials, etc.). In this research, using different types of work and teaching strategies (f = 68; 43 %), as well as planning the instruction (f = 61; 38.6 %) are recognised as the most important characteristics of teaching arts in combined classes. The participants also perceive the significance of cooperation and students' mutual appreciation (f = 50; 31.6 %), class atmosphere and discipline (f = 45; 28.5 %), as well as respecting student individual differences (f = 44; 27.8 %) and efficient use of time (f = 42; 26.6 %). Teachers assign the lowest importance rank to the use of general and specific teaching strategies (f = 17; 10.8 %) and classroom layout (f = 10; 6.3 %). The results are presented in Figure 1.

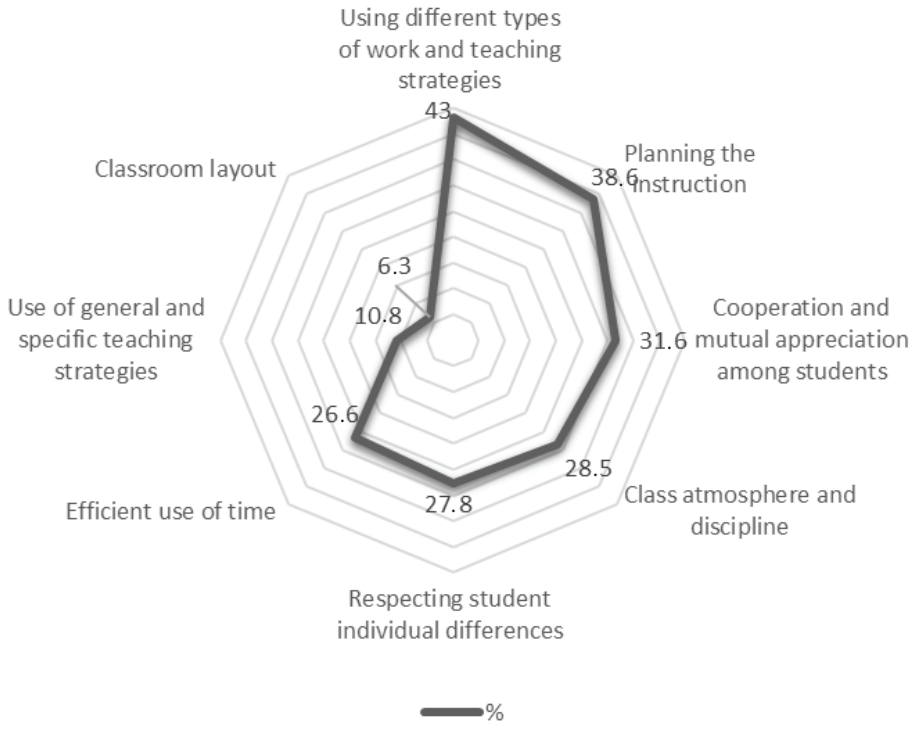



*Figure 1.* The characteristics of teaching arts in a combined class (N = 158)

### Teacher's role in organising arts instruction in combined classes

The teacher's role is very important for quality arts education. Jelavica and Alajbeg (2023) emphasized that "a qualified and competent teacher is the linchpin of a successful education system" (p. 1014). A teacher should mind the dynamics of the education process as well as optimal use of time due to simultaneous presentation of various curricular contents to different age groups (Lucić & Matijević, 2004). Working in combined classes is very challenging and demands teachers' flexibility, resourcefulness and agility (Petrović, 2010). According to Yue and Ji (2020), modern teachers should be cooperative and interactive, both with students and colleagues, participate in professional education, apply new and sustainable teaching methods, and provide feedback to raise the quality of the overall education process. Vanek et al. (2021) mentioned that openness, communication, patience, fairness, availability and width of general knowledge are all characteristics of a good teacher. Zrilić and Marin (2019) summed up the levels of teachers' competences: „1 – methodology of designing the curricula; 2 – organising and leading the education process; 3 – assessing student academic achievement; 4 – creating classroom atmosphere; and 5 – educational partnership with parents" (pp. 391-392). One of the characteristics of working in a combined class is also a deeper connection between teachers and students, which is necessary for each student's individual growth (Shalom et al., 2021). Figure 2 presents the results regarding the participants' opinions about the teacher's role.

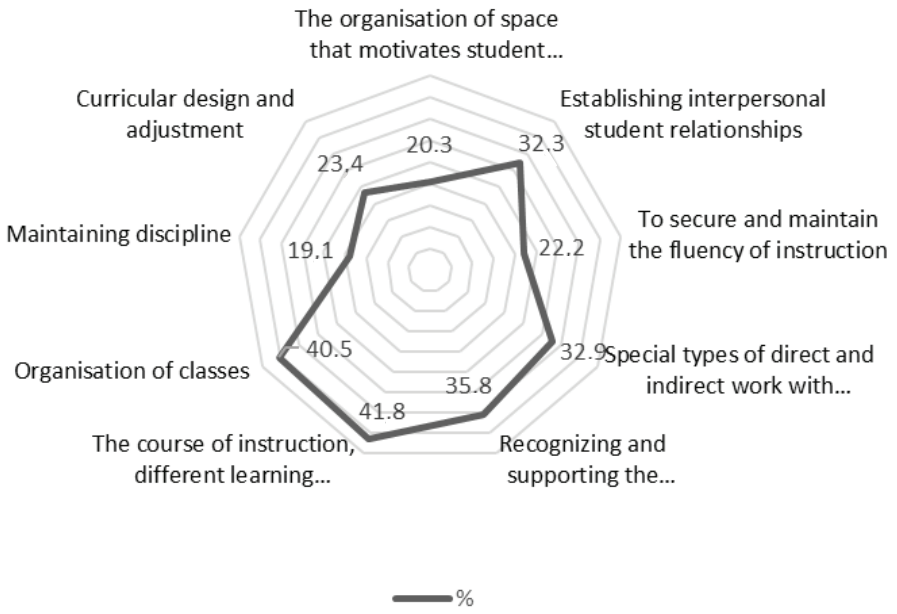



*Figure 2.* Teacher's role in combined classes (N = 158)

Research participants perceive that in the course of instruction, different learning strategies should be utilized (f = 66; 41.8 %) alongside planning and effective use of time, that is, organisation of classes (f = 64; 40.5 %), which also encompasses special types of direct and indirect work with students (f = 52; 32.9 %) and establishing interpersonal student relationships (f = 51; 32.3 %). Furthermore, teachers feel that constant provision of quality materials and incentives for students is very important to secure and maintain the fluency of instruction (f = 35; 22.2 %). The significance of curricular design and adjustment to efficiently conduct lessons is recognised by 37 teachers (23.4 %). On the other hand, participants attribute less importance to maintaining discipline (f = 30; 19.1 %) and the organisation of space that motivates student creativity and desire to explore and solve problems (f = 32; 20.3 %). For teaching and learning processes to be appropriated to the individual, it is necessary to diversify students and identify the most efficient ways of learning via research and discovery (Shalom et al., 2021). When applying the stated to arts education, each student should be allowed to develop practical skills and experience the world of art through gradual understanding of the related concepts and rules of using art signs in each individual domain of arts education (Tomšić Amon & Tacol, 2005).

### *Characteristics of space in art instruction in a combined class*

Space is very significant in the education process. The way the interior is arranged, that is, how classrooms are laid out, should motivate different forms of play and learning, establish quality interpersonal relationships and facilitate independent research and problem solving in different types of activities. Barrett et al. (2009) stated that motivational space significantly improves children's cognitive development, as well as their engagement and exploratory behaviour. Kok et al. (2015) conducted a national survey in the Netherlands on a sample of 1,752 teachers on the relationship between the quality of spatial and functional aspects of educational institutions and learning achievement. The results have shown that both classroom size and classroom equipment are essential for learning to be successful. In the design of educational environments, it is pivotal to provide opportunities for social interaction and organise a thought-through, sustainable and smaller physical spaces with the potential to improve learning quality and interpersonal relationships. The characteristics of space, i.e., classroom layout that the participants deem important for working in combined classes are presented in Figure 3.

The presence of didactic equipment and appropriate materials and means in the classroom (storage cupboards for student individual art portfolios, water availability, instruments, exhibition space, etc.) is perceived by 77 teachers (48.7 %) as the most important characteristic of space organisation for teaching art subjects in combined classes. Classroom layout that facilitates different simultaneous forms and types of work is a prerequisite for successful instruction in multi-age classes recognised by 47 participants (29.7 %). Somewhat smaller number of teachers, 35 of them (22.2 %),

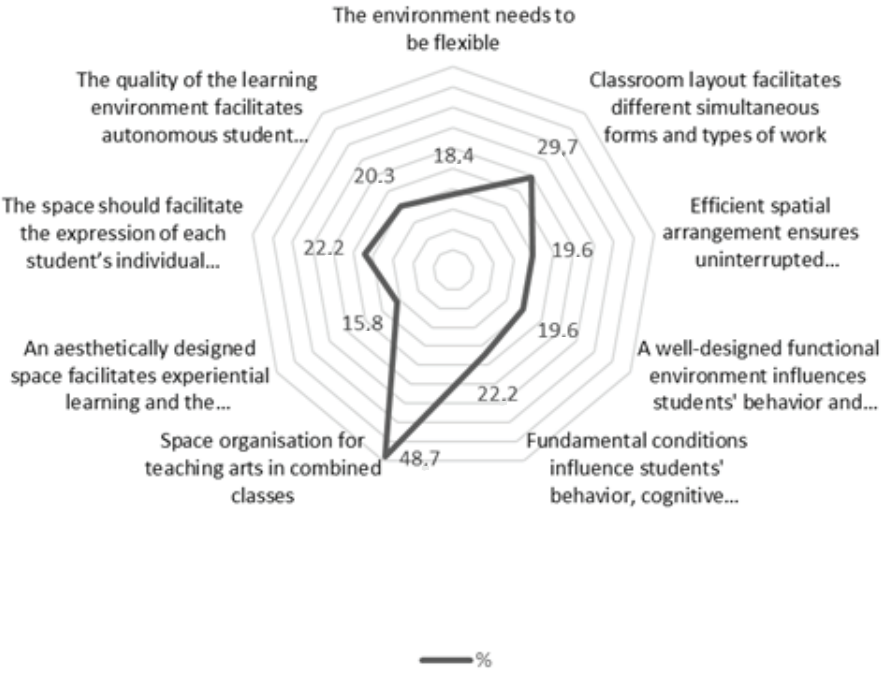



*Figure 3.* Important characteristics of space in a combined class (N = 158)

stresses that quality classroom layout provides for undisturbed communication of the participants during classes and the expression of individual student potential and curiosity. Thirty-two (20.3 %) teachers consider that classroom settings should facilitate independent student exploration in cooperation with peers and/or adults. Study participants perceive the configuration of classroom furniture and desks, and aesthetic features of space less important for arts teaching in combined classes. Tomšić Čerkez and Zupančič (2011) emphasized the importance of exploring space and its influence on the didactic perceptions of the educational process itself.

## *Benefits of teaching visual art and music in combined primary classes*

Working in combined classes has its advantages. They entail teaching flexibility, which is recognisable in the appropriation of the curricula to the individual. It was emphasized in relevant literature that learning in combined classes fosters student cooperation, which effects social skills development and motivates collaboration between students of different ages (Aina, 2001; Harris et al., 2013; McEwan, 2008). Precisely student autonomy, cooperation and togetherness, as well as teacher's timely reaction were stressed in other studies (Cvjetićanin et al., 2008; Mulryan-Kyne, 2004; Fagan, 2009). The benefits of teaching combined classes recognised by the participants are presented in Figure 4.

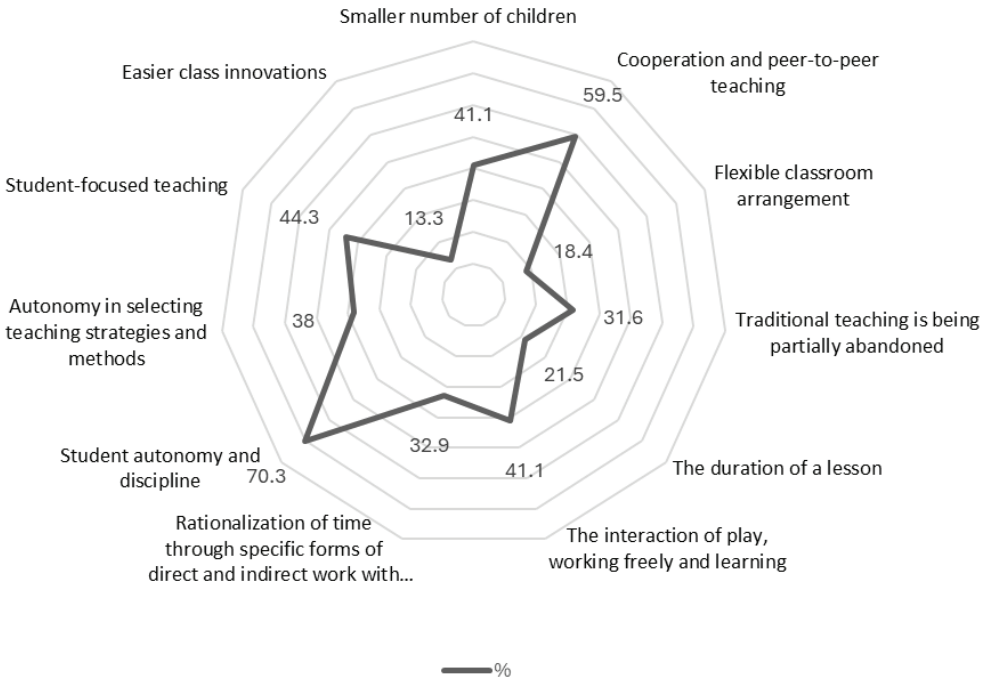



*Figure 4.* Benefits of teaching combined classes (N = 158)

Participants stress student autonomy and discipline (70.3 %), followed by cooperation and peer-to-peer teaching (59.9 %), as the greatest benefits of teaching combined classes. The same results were obtained by Blašković (2020) in her study conducted among female teachers, who observed that teaching combined classes was intense and interesting, but they also emphasized peer-to-peer teaching and children's togetherness as the greatest advantages. According to Broom (2009), younger or less experienced students can benefit from older students' strengths when working jointly on assignments they possibly could not do by themselves, whereby older or more experienced students might develop a sense of own worth. Student-focused teaching (44.3 %), smaller number of children (41,1 %) and the interaction of play, working freely and learning (41.1 %) are perceived as advantages of teaching a combined class by the participants in this study. On the other hand, they consider flexible classroom arrangement (18.4 %) and easier class innovations (13.3 %) as least beneficial. The present study also sought to examine the differences between teachers' work experience and their perception of the advantages of teaching combined classes. Kruskal-Wallis test was used to find out whether statistically significance differences between the variables existed (Table 1).

Due to the unequal distribution of participants with respect to years of service, the respondents were categorized into three groups.

Table 1
*Differences in teachers' perceptions of the advantages of teaching combined classes according to work experience (N = 158)*

| | Years of service | N | $M_{Rank}$ | Kruskal – Wallis | df | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Fewer children | 0-10 | 50 | 75.58 | 1.448 | 2 | 0.485 |
| | 11-20 | 56 | 78.23 | | | |
| | More than 21 | 52 | 84.63 | | | |
| Cooperation and peer-to-peer teaching | 0-10 | 50 | 72.78 | 4.495 | 2 | 0.106 |
| | 11-20 | 56 | 77.13 | | | |
| | More than 21 | 52 | 88.52 | | | |
| Flexibility in classroom layout | 0-10 | 50 | 78.20 | 2.569 | 2 | 0.277 |
| | 11-20 | 56 | 75.66 | | | |
| | More than 21 | 52 | 84.88 | | | |
| Partly abandoned compartmentalized learning according to distinct subjects | 0-10 | 50 | 81.30 | 0.191 | 2 | 0.909 |
| | 11-20 | 56 | 78.20 | | | |
| | More than 21 | 52 | 79.17 | | | |
| Duration of a lesson | 0-10 | 50 | 79.04 | 0.235 | 2 | 0.889 |
| | 11-20 | 56 | 78.25 | | | |
| | More than 21 | 52 | 81.29 | | | |
| Interaction of play, working freely and learning | 0-10 | 50 | 74.08 | 4.833 | 2 | 0.089 |
| | 11-20 | 56 | 75.32 | | | |
| | More than 21 | 52 | 89.21 | | | |
| Time rationalization via special types of direct and indirect work with students | 0-10 | 50 | 78.06 | 6.678 | 2 | 0.035 |
| | 11-20 | 56 | 71.23 | | | |
| | More than 21 | 52 | 89.79 | | | |
| Students are more independent and disciplined | 0-10 | 50 | 77.62 | 0.657 | 2 | 0.657 |
| | 11-20 | 56 | 78.07 | | | |
| | More than 21 | 52 | 82.85 | | | |
| Freedom in choosing the teaching methods and strategies | 0-10 | 50 | 75.82 | 0.939 | 2 | 0.625 |
| | 11-20 | 56 | 79.38 | | | |
| | More than 21 | 52 | 83.17 | | | |
| Student-directed instruction | 0-10 | 50 | 78.74 | 0.226 | 2 | 0.893 |
| | 11-20 | 56 | 78.23 | | | |
| | More than 21 | 52 | 81.60 | | | |
| Innovations | 0-10 | 50 | 76.78 | 7.352 | 2 | 0.025 |
| | 11-20 | 56 | 74.07 | | | |
| | More than 21 | 52 | 87.96 | | | |

*$p \leq 0.05$

The Kruskal–Wallis test was utilized to examine the differences in teachers' perceptions of the advantages of working in combined classes regarding the length of their work experience. Statistically significant differences are found for time rationalization via special types of direct and indirect work with students – $H(2) = 6.68$, $p = .035$, $\eta^2 = .03$, and for innovations – $H(2) = 7.35$, $p = .025$, $\eta^2 = .04$. In both cases, the effect sizes are small. Teachers with more than 21 years of service report higher mean ranks in time rationalization ($M_{Rank} = 89.79$) and innovations ($M_{Rank} = 87.96$) compared to teachers with less work experience, indicating that more experienced teachers perceive these aspects as greater advantages of working in combined classes. No statistically significant differences are found on other variables.

## *Drawbacks of teaching visual art and music in combined primary classes*

Apart from the benefits, certain drawbacks to teaching combined classes also exist. Research showed that teaching these combinations is extremely demanding (Suzuki, 2003) and that teachers feel inadequately prepared for it (Ames, 2006; Berry & Little, 2006; Mulkeen & Higgins, 2009; Šuvar, 2011; Taole & Mncube, 2012). A large obstacle lies in the fact that the faculties of teacher education in the Republic of Croatia do not prepare students for teaching combined classes (Lucić & Matijević, 2004). Participants' opinions are shown in Figure 5.

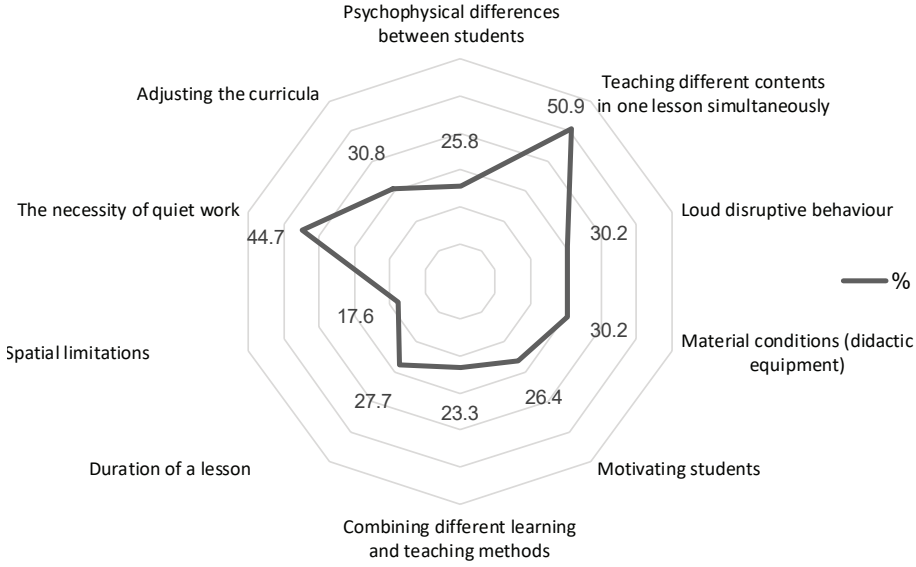



*Figure 5.* Drawbacks of teaching combined classes (N = 158)

Participants recognise simultaneous instruction of various contents in one lesson (50.9 %) as the biggest drawback of teaching combined classes. This is also perceived

as the greatest challenge of such instruction because contents of multiple years/grades are taught simultaneously (Lucić & Matijević, 2004), which is the main characteristic of composite classes. Besides, teachers also perceive the need for quiet work as a drawback (44.7 %). Spatial limitations are observed as the least serious challenge.

Additionally, the study sought to examine how teachers assess the listed disadvantages regarding their years in service. The results of the performed Kruskal-Wallis test are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

*Differences in teachers' perceptions of the drawbacks of teaching combined classes according to years of service (N = 158)*

| | Years of service | N | $M_{Rank}$ | Kruskal – Wallis | df | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Psychophysical differences between students | 0-10 | 50 | 80.46 | 3.915 | 2 | 0.141 |
| | 11-20 | 56 | 85.48 | | | |
| | More than 21 | 52 | 72.13 | | | |
| Teaching different contents in one lesson simultaneously | 0-10 | 50 | 78.50 | 0.047 | 2 | 0.977 |
| | 11-20 | 56 | 79.91 | | | |
| | More than 21 | 52 | 80.02 | | | |
| Loud disruptive behaviour | 0-10 | 50 | 78.72 | 0.169 | 2 | 0.919 |
| | 11-20 | 56 | 78.61 | | | |
| | More than 21 | 52 | 81.21 | | | |
| Material conditions (didactic equipment) | 0-10 | 50 | 76.14 | 5.856 | 2 | 0.053 |
| | 11-20 | 56 | 73.38 | | | |
| | More than 21 | 52 | 89.33 | | | |
| Motivating students | 0-10 | 50 | 75.72 | 1.026 | 2 | 0.599 |
| | 11-20 | 56 | 79.84 | | | |
| | More than 21 | 52 | 82.77 | | | |
| Combining different learning and teaching methods | 0-10 | 50 | 81.78 | 3.186 | 2 | 0.203 |
| | 11-20 | 56 | 73.43 | | | |
| | More than 21 | 52 | 83.85 | | | |
| Duration of a lesson | 0-10 | 50 | 78.80 | 0.029 | 2 | 0.986 |
| | 11-20 | 56 | 79.93 | | | |
| | More than 21 | 52 | 79.71 | | | |
| Spatial limitations | 0-10 | 50 | 80.36 | 6.955 | 2 | 0.031 |
| | 11-20 | 56 | 71.84 | | | |
| | More than 21 | 52 | 86.92 | | | |
| The necessity of quiet work | 0-10 | 50 | 74.42 | 1.897 | 2 | 0.387 |
| | 11-20 | 56 | 78.82 | | | |
| | More than 21 | 52 | 85.12 | | | |
| Adjusting the curricula | 0-10 | 50 | 79.80 | 0.220 | 2 | 0.896 |
| | 11-20 | 56 | 80.93 | | | |
| | More than 21 | 52 | 77.67 | | | |

*$p \leq 0.05$

The same as for the advantages, statistically significant difference is found only for one variable – spatial limitations. According to $M_{rank}$ (6.995; p = 0.031) value, teachers with less than ten years of service and teachers with more than 21 notice this drawback more than teachers with 11 to 20 years of work experience. A statistically significant difference is found for only one drawback – spatial limitations – H(2) = 6.96, p = 0.031, $\eta^2 = 0.03$, indicating a small effect size. Post hoc analysis shows that teachers with more than 21 years of service perceive spatial limitations as a greater drawback ($M_{Rank}$ = 86.92) compared to those with 11 to 20 years of experience ($M_{Rank}$ = 71.84).

According to Duncan and Lockwood (2009), the purpose of spatial organization is to enable students' social interaction through smaller, self-sustaining physical environments that contribute to the quality of learning. In combined classrooms, flexibility represents an essential characteristic of high-quality space, as it allows for modifications in spatial configuration to accommodate different activities (e.g., one grade engaging in group work, another working individually, or students constructing complex structures) (Tomišič Čerkez & Zupančić, 2011).

### *The use of individual arts education strategies in combined classes*

Teaching visual art and music in combined classes demands skilful combination of various didactic strategies. The participants expressed the frequency of using different teaching strategies on a four-degree ordinal scale (1-never; 2-rarely; 3-sometimes; 4-often), The results are presented below (Table 3).

Table 3

*Descriptive statistics for the use of didactic strategies in teaching combined classes (N = 158)*

| | Min | Max | M | Mo | Md | SD | SK | KA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Structural interdisciplinary correlations | 2 | 4 | 3.61 | 4 | 4.00 | 0.54 | -0.14 | -0.96 |
| Intradisciplinary integration | 2 | 4 | 3.55 | 4 | 4.00 | 0.55 | -0.66 | -0.68 |
| Arts-based teaching methods | 1 | 4 | 3.06 | 3 | 3.00 | 0.68 | 0.02 | -0.32 |
| Learning a song by ear | 1 | 4 | 3.47 | 4 | 4.00 | 0.73 | 1.25 | -1.31 |
| Musical dictations | 1 | 4 | 2.89 | 3 | 3.00 | 0.79 | -0.22 | -0.36 |
| Music-didactic play | 1 | 4 | 3.30 | 3 | 3.00 | 0.67 | 0.56 | -0.70 |
| Experiential-analytical listening | 1 | 4 | 3.24 | 3 | 3.00 | 0.75 | 1.08 | -0.97 |
| Vocal warm-ups | 1 | 4 | 2.96 | 3 | 3.00 | 0.84 | -0.44 | -0.44 |
| Playing percussion instruments | 2 | 4 | 3.28 | 3 | 3.00 | 0.61 | -0.59 | -0.24 |
| Demonstration of visual art techniques | 1 | 4 | 3.51 | 4 | 4.00 | 0.70 | 1.14 | -1.31 |
| Analytical observation | 1 | 4 | 3.38 | 4 | 3.00 | 0.66 | 0.06 | -0.74 |
| Illustrative methods | 1 | 4 | 3.13 | 3 | 3.00 | 0.69 | -0.47 | -0.29 |
| Visual thinking strategies | 1 | 4 | 2.96 | 3 | 3.00 | 0.72 | 0.02 | -0.36 |
| Combining different teaching methods | 1 | 4 | 3.58 | 4 | 4.00 | 0.58 | 1.54 | -1.20 |

It is visible from the data in Table 3 that the participants use most of the listed didactic strategies sometimes or often. According to the calculated arithmetic means, teachers often use structural interdisciplinary correlation (M = 3.61; SD = 0.54), the combination of different teaching methods (M = 3.58; SD = 0.58), intradisciplinary integration

(M = 3.55; SD = 0.55) and demonstration of a visual art technique (M = 3.51; SD = 0.70). Teachers sometimes use specific arts teaching methods (M = 3.06; SD = 0.68) and the method of learning a song by ear (M = 3.49; SD = 0.73). If the fact that children only learn singing by ear is considered, the obtained result is worrying because it means that teachers do not understand the nature of song acquisition or they include singing in music lessons only at times. It is important to use vocal warm-up before singing to prepare and properly use the voice (Špiler, 2012; Blašković, 2015; Jeremić & Stanković, 2020). However, the participants in this research reported rare use of vocal warm-up as well as musical dictations, whose purpose is to develop listening sensitivity. The situation is the same with experiential-analytical listening, which is used by the teachers only sometimes (M = 3.24; SD = 0.75), although music should not be taught without it. Teachers sometimes use music-didactic games (M = 3.30; SD = 0.67) and playing percussion instruments (M = 3.28; SD = 0.61). The infrequent use of vocal warm-up exercises, musical dictation and an analytical approach to music listening may reflect teachers' perceptions of insufficient competence in these areas of music education. Singing is the most commonly employed form of musical activity, as teachers can rely on prerecorded accompaniments and song recordings. This reduces the need to play an instrument, which requires continuous practice, or to sing independently, particularly in cases where teachers experience difficulties with intonation.

Teaching methods in visual arts education are grounded in active learning, creative expression and the development of visual literacy. Therefore, visual thinking strategies (VTS), a research-based teaching method that enhances students' ability to describe, analyze and interpret images and information through observation and discussion of visual art, represents one of the most significant pedagogical approaches. VTS supports the development of critical thinking skills and encourages participation in collaborative discussions (Flood et al., 2025). The results of this study show that teachers most often use the demonstration of visual art techniques method (M = 3.51; SD = 0.70). They sometimes utilize the analytical observation method (M = 3.38; SD = 0.66) and the method of illustration (M = 3.13; SD = 0.69). On the other hand, the study participants use the visual thinking strategies method least frequently (M = 2.96; SD = 0.58). The goal of this method is to raise awareness about and acquire aesthetic values of art works, where the emphasis is placed on the strategies of passing down aesthetic information to students.

One possible reason for the less frequent use of visual thinking strategies as a subject-specific instructional method is the time constraints inherent in classroom teaching, which are particularly pronounced in multigrade classrooms where teachers simultaneously work with students from different grade levels. Additional factors may include material, technical and organizational conditions that limit the implementation of this approach. Some other studies found similar results on the prevalence of using general, rote teaching methods in contrast to modern and subject-specific methods in teaching arts subjects in lower primary school grades (Blašković Galeković et al., 2023; Tomljenović, 2016).

This study also examined differences in the frequency of didactic strategy use in relation to years of service. Regarding the obtained distribution not being normal, Kruskal-Wallis test was used, and the results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4
*Differences in the use of didactic strategies according to years of service (N = 158)*

| | Years of service | N | $M_{Rank}$ | Kruskal – Wallis | df | p |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Structural interdisciplinary correlations | 0-10 | 50 | 73.55 | 2.618 | 2 | 0.270 |
| | 11-20 | 56 | 78.97 | | | |
| | More than 21 | 52 | 85.79 | | | |
| Arts-based teaching methods | 0-10 | 50 | 70.95 | 3.962 | 2 | 0.138 |
| | 11-20 | 56 | 80.78 | | | |
| | More than 21 | 52 | 86.35 | | | |
| Learning a song by ear | 0-10 | 50 | 73.72 | 2.965 | 2 | 0.227 |
| | 11-20 | 56 | 77.58 | | | |
| | More than 21 | 52 | 87.13 | | | |
| Musical dictations | 0-10 | 50 | 74.25 | 1.699 | 2 | 0.428 |
| | 11-20 | 56 | 84.37 | | | |
| | More than 21 | 52 | 79.31 | | | |
| Music-didactic play | 0-10 | 50 | 74.69 | 1.553 | 2 | 0.460 |
| | 11-20 | 56 | 84.75 | | | |
| | More than 21 | 52 | 78.47 | | | |
| Experiential-analytical listening | 0-10 | 50 | 75.82 | 0.782 | 2 | 0.676 |
| | 11-20 | 56 | 82.88 | | | |
| | More than 21 | 52 | 79.40 | | | |
| Vocal warm-ups | 0-10 | 50 | 66.52 | 9.611 | 2 | 0.008 |
| | 11-20 | 56 | 79.54 | | | |
| | More than 21 | 52 | 91.94 | | | |
| Playing percussion instruments | 0-10 | 50 | 73.49 | 1.540 | 2 | 0.463 |
| | 11-20 | 56 | 81.00 | | | |
| | More than 21 | 52 | 83.66 | | | |
| Demonstration of visual art techniques | 0-10 | 50 | 73.20 | 2.639 | 2 | 0.267 |
| | 11-20 | 56 | 78.92 | | | |
| | More than 21 | 52 | 86.18 | | | |
| Analytical observation | 0-10 | 50 | 77.88 | 0.759 | 2 | 0.684 |
| | 11-20 | 56 | 78.04 | | | |
| | More than 21 | 52 | 82.63 | | | |
| Illustrative methods | 0-10 | 50 | 75.95 | 0.450 | 2 | 0.799 |
| | 11-20 | 56 | 73.11 | | | |
| | More than 21 | 52 | 89.80 | | | |

| | Years of service | N | $M_{Rank}$ | Kruskal – Wallis | df | p |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Visual thinking strategies | 0-10 | 50 | 71.54 | 4.897 | 2 | 0.086 |
| | 11-20 | 56 | 81.16 | | | |
| | More than 21 | 52 | 85.37 | | | |
| Method of art-aesthetic communication | 0-10 | 50 | 83.67 | 3.018 | 2 | 0.221 |
| | 11-20 | 56 | 80.78 | | | |
| | More than 21 | 52 | 74.12 | | | |
| Combining different teaching methods | 0-10 | 50 | 83.67 | 1.628 | 2 | 0.443 |
| | 11-20 | 56 | 80.78 | | | |
| | More than 21 | 52 | 74.12 | | | |

* $p \leq 0.05$

A statistically significant difference is found only for vocal warm-ups – $H(2) = 9.61$, $p = 0.008$, $\eta^2 = 0.05$, indicating a small to moderate effect size. Post hoc analysis shows that teachers with more than 21 years of service ($M_{Rank} = 91.94$) perceive vocal warm-ups as more frequently used compared to teachers with less than ten years of experience ($M_{Rank} = 66.52$).

## Conclusion

Working in combined classes assumes teachers' knowledge about contemporary education trends that contribute to greater quality of arts instruction. According to the opinions of the participants, the greatest advantage of teaching combined classes is student independence and discipline, as well as cooperation and peer-to-peer teaching, while the most pronounced drawback regards the simultaneous processing of different contents. In such situation, teachers are forced to engage some grades in quiet/independent work, while the other grade level is actively involved with the teacher. The organisation of the education process in combined classes is specific and characterised by a series of particularities, starting from work organisation to adjusting didactic strategies and teaching methods. This study has shown that teachers place the greatest accent on expert-content, pedagogical and organisational preparation of lessons. They deem important the use of various learning strategies, different forms and ways of work, respecting individual student abilities and inclinations, planning and effective time use via special types of direct and indirect work with students, and building a positive, open and cooperative student/teacher relationship. On the other hand, they direct less attention to the functioning and aesthetic organisation of classroom space. The teachers perceive the importance of the availability of quality classroom equipment, i.e., didactic materials and means (audio-visual technology, instruments, cupboards for student portfolios, water availability, exhibition space, etc.), and they also recognise the significance of the classroom layout that facilitates undisturbed communication between students as well as expressing individual student potential.

The main characteristic of arts education is its practical and creative character, so teachers are expected to apply creative education strategies based on the knowledge

about the particularities of visual art and music domain (use of specific arts teaching strategies and interdisciplinary correlation). It is evident from the study's results that teachers make insufficient use of certain teaching methods in the field of art education, indicating a need for further professional development in the area of art pedagogy, which would in turn contribute to the establishment of improved teaching practices.

Since no similar research was conducted in Croatia heretofore, primary contribution of this study is reflected in establishing positive and negative aspects of arts teaching in combined classes. The research findings may also contribute to the more effective design of future programmes for the professional development of teachers working in combined classes. Future research should examine teachers' perceptions and opinions about their competence for working in combined classes. The focus of the conducted research was on teaching arts in combined classes; future research could therefore address other school subjects within primary education.

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# Nastava umjetničkih predmeta u kombiniranome razrednom odjelu u primarnome obrazovanju


## Sažetak

*Kombinirani razredni odjel formiran se od skupine učenika koji se razlikuju po dobi i sposobnostima. Raznolikost i različitost učenika poseban je izazov za učitelja. Poželjno je da učitelj ima izražene kompetencije poput kreativnosti, inovativnosti, demokratičnosti, racionalizacije te samoorganizacije. Istraživanja su pokazala kako djeca u kombiniranim razrednim odjelima intenzivnije razvijaju svoju samostalnost, inicijativnost, ekonomičnije raspolažu obvezama i slobodnim vremenom. Dodatno se potencira stvaralački mehanizam, razvija se kritičko i kreativno mišljenje što utječe na razinu samopouzdanja i u konačnici na samoostvarenje učenika. Upravo su to obilježja koja se razvijaju u umjetničkome obrazovanju (likovna i glazbena kulturu). Cilj je istražiti obilježja nastave umjetničkih predmeta, ulogu učitelja u metodičkoj organizaciji nastave umjetničkih predmeta, ulogu prostora te prednosti i nedostatke rada u kombiniranome razrednom odjelu. Istraživanje je provedeno u školskoj godini 2024./2025. s učiteljima razredne nastave koji rade u kombiniranim razrednim odjelima (N = 158) u Republici Hrvatskoj. Provedeno je kvantitativno, neeksperimentalno istraživanje putem anketnoga upitnika. Uz deskriptivnu statistiku, korišteni su neparametrijski Kruskal-Wallis test i Spearmanov koeficijent korelacije. Rezultati pokazuju kako je korištenje raznolikih oblika i načina rada i planiranje nastavnoga procesa važno je obilježje nastave umjetničkih predmeta u kombiniranome razrednom odjelu. Učitelj, kao voditelj odgojno-obrazovnoga procesa, treba koristiti različite strategije učenja te optimizirati organizaciju nastave. Za organizaciju nastave važan je izgled i opremljenost prostora didaktičkom opremom, materijalima i sredstvima radi mogućnosti različitih oblika i načina rada. Prema mišljenu ispitanika, najveća prednost rada u kombiniranome razredom odjelu jest samostalnost i disciplinirano učenika, potom suradnja i vršnjačko poučavanje. Ono što učiteljima predstavlja poteškoću jest simultana obrada različitih sadržaja na nastavnome satu. Pokazalo se da učitelji s više radnoga staža u većoj mjeri primjećuju da su učenici u kombiniranim razrednim odjelima samostalniji i disciplinirani u odnosu na učitelje s manje staža. S druge*

*strane, učitelji s manje staža više primjećuju psihofizičke razlike u dobi učenika kao nedostatak nego učitelji koji imaju dulji radni staž. Ujedno, učitelji s više godina radnoga staža i iskustva češće koriste različite didaktičko-metodičke postupke u nastavi umjetničkih predmeta od učitelja s manje godina radnoga staža.*

**Ključne riječi:** *kombinirani razredni odjeli; metodička organizacija; nastava umjetničkih predmeta; primarno obrazovanje*

## Uvod

Nastava se prema dobi djece može biti organizirati u razredne odjele koje pohađaju učenici iste dobi, ali i u razredne odjele u kojima su učenici različite dobi (Cornish, 2010; Lindström i Lindahl, 2011; Saqlain, 2015). Cornish (2010) raspravlja o dva krovna pojma koja se odnose na razrede mješovite dobi, a to su višedobni i višerazredni, pri čemu se pojam višedobni odnosi na bilo koju vrstu razreda mješovite dobi obično stvorenoga po izboru, dok se razredi s više razreda obično formiraju iz nužde zbog nedostatka osoblja ili učenika u ruralnim zajednicama i područjima rijetke naseljenosti. Višedobno obrazovanje uglavnom je usmjereno na učenika, a ne na kurikul (Harris i sur., 2013; Stone, 2010), a učenici se podučavaju prema svojim individualnim potrebama, interesima i preferencijama učenja (Aina, 2001). U takvim nestupnjevitim, višedobnim razredima učenici se ne nazivaju prema razredu, već se kategoriziraju pojedinačno, bez službene veze s određenim razredom. U višerazrednim okružjima, učitelj poučava razrede koji se čine učenici iz dva ili više razreda istovremeno (Mulryan-Kyne, 2007; Proehl i sur., 2013).

U sustavu školstva Republike Hrvatske razredi se ustrojavaju prema broju učenika i prema vrsti razrednoga odjela. Osim jednorazrednoga odjela koji pohađaju učenici homogeni po dobi, nastava se provodi i u kombiniranim razrednim odjelima. Ono što kombinirane razrede i odjele čini specifičnima jest istovremenost odvijanja nastave za učenike različite dobi (Lucić i Matijević, 2004; Nawab i Baig, 2011). Prema *Državnom pedagoškom standardu osnovnoškolskog sustava odgoja i obrazovanja Republike Hrvatske* (2008) kombinirani razredni odjeli ustrojavaju se za učenike od prvoga do četvrtoga razreda. U istome razredu istovremeno se radi s učenicima dvaju, triju ili četiriju razreda. Zakonski je određen broj učenika za dvorazredne (najviše 16 učenika), trorazredne (najviše 14 učenika) i četverorazredne odjele (najviše 12 učenika). Što je više razreda u kombinaciji, broj učenika se smanjuje jer takva je nastava prilično izazovna za jednoga učitelja. Od učitelja se očekuje fleksibilnost, snalažljivost u organizaciji nastave (primjena grupnoga rada, diferencijacija…) kao i sposobnost stvaranja sigurnoga, podržavajućega i poticajnoga okružja u učionici (Barber, 2015; Petrović, 2010; Smit, Hyry-Beihammer i Raggl, 2015), a kako ističe Jensen (2003) uloga je učitelja razvijati kod učenika sposobnost optimalizacije učenja, ali i ljubav prema učenju općenito.

U kombiniranim razrednim odjelima odgojno-obrazovni proces je specifičan, s nizom posebnosti u organizaciji rada i metodičkim postupcima. Posebnost rada u kombiniranim razrednim odjelima nosi svoje prednosti i nedostatke. Osnovna

prednost, prema istraživanjima, jest samostalnost učenika, suradnja i zajedništvo (Blašković, 2020; Fagan, 2009; Mulryan-Kyne, 2004). Zbog obrade različitih sadržaja i djece različite dobi, odnosi među učenicima su kvalitetniji, a rad karakterizira disciplina i odgovornost (Gutierrez i Slavin, 1992; Mackey i sur., 1995). Istovremeno angažiranje učenika u razrednom odjelu na različitim obrazovnim sadržajima, veliki je nedostatak rada u kombiniranim odjelima i zahtijeva od učitelja prilagođavanje nastavnih planova i programa te kombinaciju različitih oblika rada (Smit i sur., 2015; Šuvar, 2011). Takav rad omogućuje učitelju slobodu u odabiru strategija i metoda rada kao i načina praćenja i ocjenjivanja učenika, ali zahtijeva i dobru pripremu učitelja (Lucić i Matijević, 2004).

## *Poučavanje umjetnosti u kombiniranome razrednom odjelu u primarnome obrazovanju*

Uključivanje umjetnosti od najranije dobi doprinosi cjelovitom razvoju učenika u skladu s njihovim mogućnostima i interesima što naglašavaju brojni autori iz područja filozofije, pedagogije, psihologije i teorije umjetnosti (Arnheim, 2008; Eisner, 2002; Efland, 2002). Nastava umjetničkih predmeta specifična je u odnosu na ostale školske predmete jer u jednakoj mjeri potiče sva područja učenikove osobnosti: kognitivne (Arnheim, 1985; Eisner, 2002; Efland, 2002; Gardner, 1983, 1990; Starc i sur., 2004), afektivne (Čudina-Obradović i Brajković, 2009; Dewey, 2005; Starc i sur., 2004) i psihomotorne (Tacol, 1999; Starc i sur., 2004). Obilježje nastave umjetničkih predmeta jest da je ona spaja teorijski i praktični rad, potiče kreativno mišljenje i izražavanje učenika te otvoreno pristupa oblikovanju nastavnoga procesa i predmnijeva kreativnost učitelja u osmišljavanju istoga (Sawyer, 2004; Tomljenović, 2016). Suvremeni pristup nastavi umjetničkih predmeta zahtijeva upotrebu različitih stilova poučavanja koji potiču aktivan rad, kreativno i kritičko mišljenje učenika.

Istraživanje obrazovanja djece u kombiniranim razredima zadnjih tridesetak godina su brojna, no manje ih je u području nastave umjetničkih predmeta (Blašković Galeković, Novaković i Tomljenović, 2023; Broom, 2009; Broom, Heid, Johnston i Serig, 2015; Kelehear, Heid, 2002). Broom (2009) je proveo anketno istraživanje s učiteljima likovne kulture koji izvode nastavu višedobnim razredima na Floridi. Rezultati istraživanja pokazuju da većina ispitanika (83,3 %) smatra da organizacija prostora mora omogućiti grupiranje učenika tijekom nastave umjetnosti. Mnogi ispitanici izvijestili su da smatraju korištenje grupa za kooperativno učenje (77,8 %) i vršnjačke pomoći (69,4 %) učinkovitim metodama poučavanja prilikom poučavanja nastave likovne kulture za više dobnih skupina. Druge strategije koje su koristili učitelji likovne kulture uključivale su nastavu temeljenu na temama (47,2 %) i integrativni kurikul (44,4 %). Većina ispitanika (58,3 %) izjavila je da korištenje tehnika skela predstavlja najveće prednosti višedobnoj umjetničkoj nastavi. Neki od ovih ispitanika spomenuli su prednosti vršnjačkoga poučavanja, suradnje u grupi, specifične koristi

za mlađe ili starije učenike ili dvosmjerne koristi za obje skupine. Najčešće izraženi nedostatak višedobne nastave umjetnosti odnosio se na percepciju da je raspon različitih razvojnih razina unutar višedobnih umjetničkih učionica prevelik. Ispitanici predlažu tematski pristup nastavi umjetnosti koji bi omogućio učenicima da istražuju takve otvorene teme vlastitim tempom i na vlastitoj razvojnoj razini. Broom i suradnici (2015) proveli su višestruku studiju slučaja ispitujući tri nastavnika likovne kulture o njihovim iskustvima izvođenja nastave u višedobnim odjeljenjima. Zajedničko svim nastavnicima jest uspješno korištenje slučajeva u kojima su učenici radili zajedno primjenjući grupni rad, suradničke projekte ili pružanje vršnjačkoga mentorstva i poučavanja. Sudionici istraživanja Bastaban i Kurnaz (2024) na likovnome području u primarnome obrazovanju pokazuje da rad u kombiniranom razredu ima pozitivne rezultate i pozitivno utječe na socijalni, ali i na umjetnički razvoj učenika. Blašković Glaleković, Novaković i Tomljenović (2023) istraživale su izvođenje umjetničke nastave (glazbene i likovne umjetnosti) u kombiniranim razredima. Koristile su kvalitativnu metodu istraživanja, tj. sudionici su intervjuirani kako bi se dobio uvid u rad u kombiniranim razredima unutar umjetničkih područja. U svojem intervjuu, učiteljice su naglasile izazovnost takvoga načina rada, pri čemu ističu vršnjačko mentorstvo, toleranciju i međusobno uvažavanje kao prednost. S druge strane, nedostatci rada u kombiniranim razredima povezani su s organizacijom nastave, odnosno na planiranje i učinkovito korištenje vremena.

S obzirom na izazovnosti s kojima se susreću učitelji u kombiniranome razrednom odjelu s posebnim naglaskom na likovno i glazbeno područje, u rad se analizira učiteljska perspektiva pri čemu se razmatraju njegova uloga, percepcija prenosti i nedostataka te metodička i prostorna organizacija nastave u kombiniranome razrednom odjelu.

## Metodologija

### *Problem, cilj i istraživačka pitanja*

Nastava u Republici Hrvatskoj provodi se u dvije vrste razrednih odjela pri čemu se primjenjuje kriterij homogenosti, tj. vršnjačke dobi, prema kojem učenici mogu biti u jednorazrednom odjelu, ali prema kriteriju heterogenosti mogu biti u kombiniranome razrednom odjelu. Problematika rada usmjerena je na provođenje nastave umjetničkih predmeta u kombiniranim razrednim odjelima. Naime, umjetnička nastava (likovna i glazbena kultura) ima svoje zakonitosti i specifičnosti. Umjetnički predmeti zahtijevaju određene prostorne uvjete, praćenje učenika i samu izvedbu umjetničkih sadržaja. Cilj istraživanja povezan je s izvođenjem nastave umjetničkih predmeta u kombiniranome odjelu. Ispitivala su se stajališta učitelja o obilježjima nastave umjetničkih predmeta, uloga učitelja u organizaciji i metodičkom oblikovanju nastave umjetničkih predmeta te prostorna obilježja bitna za izvođenje nastave umjetničkih predmeta u kombiniranome razrednom odjelu. Dodatno su se ispitivala stajališta učitelja o prednostima i nedostatcima nastave umjetničkih predmeta u kombiniranome razrednom odjelu u primarnom obrazovanju. Iz navedenoga slijede istraživačka pitanja:

1. Koja suobilježja nastave umjetničkih predmeta u kombiniranome razrednom odjelu?
2. Koja je uloga učitelja u metodičkoj organizaciji nastave umjetničkih predmeta u kombiniranome razrednom odjelu?
3. Koja su obilježja prostora bitna za izvođenje nastave umjetničkih predmeta u kombiniranim razrednim odjelima?
4. Koje su prednosti i nedostatci izvođenja nastave umjetničkih predmeta u kombiniranom razrednome odjelu u primarnome obrazovanju prema stajalištima učitelja?
5. Postoje li razlike između ispitanika s obzirom na staž i percepciju prednosti rada u kombiniranome razrednom odjelu?
6. Koliko često ispitanici provode pojedine metodičke postupke u nastavi umjetničkih predmeta u kombiniranome razrednom odjelu?
7. Postoje li razlike s obzirom na staž ispitanika i percepciju nedostataka rada u kombiniranome razrednom odjelu?
8. Postoje li razlike između ispitanika s obzirom na staž i učestalost korištenja didaktičko-metodičkih postupaka u nastavi?

### *Uzorak ispitanika*

U istraživanju su sudjelovali učitelji razredne nastave koji rade u kombiniranim razrednim odjelima iz devet županija Republike Hrvatske (N = 158). Najviše je ispitanika sudjelovalo iz Zadarske županije (f = 30), Krapinsko-zagorske (f = 27), Ličko-senjske (f = 26), Osječko-baranjske (f = 19) Zagrebačke (f = 18), Virovitičko-podravske (f = 16) i Brodsko-posavske (f = 12), dok ih je najmanje sudjelovalo iz Dubrovačko-neretvanske (f = 5) te Šibensko-kninske (f = 5).

Profil ispitanika pokazuje kako njih 42 (26,6 %) ima do pet godina radnoga staža. Isti broj ispitanika (f = 42; 26,6 %) ima radno iskustvo između 6 i 10 godina radnoga staža. Njih 38 (24,1 %) ima između 11 i 20 godina, 28 (17,7 %) između 21 i 30 godina, dok 8 (5,1 %) učitelja ima više od 31 godine staža. U uzorku ispitanika najkraći radni staž ima učitelj koji radi dva mjeseca u kombiniranome odjelu, a najviše ima ispitanik s 41 godinom staža u kombiniranome odjelu. Ispitanici imaju radno iskustvo u prosjeku 18 godina (M = 18,23; SD = 10,27). Većina ispitanika (87,3 %) ima iskustvo rada u jednorazrednom i kombiniranome razrednom odjelu, dok iskustvo izvođenja nastave isključivo u kombiniranome razrednom odjelu ima 13,3 % učitelja.

Učitelji u kombiniranim razrednim odjelima mogu imati minimalno dvije, a najviše četiri kombinacije. Dvorazredna kombinacija najčešće je prisutna u hrvatskome školstvu. 28 ispitanika (18,5 %) izvodi nastavu u kombinaciji prvoga i drugoga razreda, 36 (23,8 %) ima kombinaciju prvoga i trećega, 22 radi u kombinaciji prvoga i četvrtoga (14,6 %), 26 drugoga i trećega (17,2 %), 32 drugoga i četvrtoga (21,2 %), a 20 u kombinaciji trećega i četvrtoga (13,2 %). Trorazrednu kombinaciju prvoga, drugoga i trećega razreda izvodi 62,6 % učitelja, 19,6 % rade u kombinaciji drugoga,

trećega i četvrtoga, a 17,8 % prvoga, trećega i četvrtoga razreda. Najmanji broj učitelja (5,1 %) radi u četverorazrednoj kombinaciji.

Prema službenim podatcima s Rudnika[1], u Republici Hrvatskoj 144 801 učenika pohađa školu od prvoga do četvrtoga razreda raspoređenih u 9 673 razrednih odjela u školskoj godini 2024./2025. Njih 9 232 pohađa kombinirani program od 1. do 4. razreda. Od toga je 3 602 učenika iz županija u kojima se provodilo istraživanje, a s tim učenicima radi 531 učitelj, što čini 37,5 % istraživačkoga uzorka. Ukupno, na području cijele Republike Hrvatske nastavu u kombiniranim razrednim odjelima trenutačno izvodi 1417 učitelja.

### Instrument

Za potrebe istraživanja konstruiran je upitnik koji se sastoji od dva dijela. U prvome dijelu su pitanja sociodemografskoga tipa (staž, godine rada u kombiniranome razrednom odjelu, mjesto rada, kombinacija razrednoga odjela, broj učenika u kombiniranome razrednom odjelu). Drugi dio upitnika sadrži pitanja višestrukoga odabira koja se odnose na ulogu učitelja, važnosti pojedinih obilježja nastave umjetničkih predmeta i prostornih obilježja u nastavi umjetničkih predmeta u kombiniranome razrednom odjelu. Dva pitanja višestrukoga odabira odnose se na prednosti i nedostatke rada u kombiniranome razrednom odjelu u nastavi umjetničkih predmeta. Učestalost provođenja metodičkih postupaka u nastavi umjetničkih predmeta u kombiniranome razrednom odjelu ispitivala se ordinalnom skalom.

Koeficijent unutarnje konzistencije izračunat je prema pitanjima sa skalom, a pokazuje visoku pouzdanost $\alpha = 0{,}86$. Dodatno, valjanost instrumenta provjerila se i postupkom faktorizacije glavnih komponenata. Utvrđena su dva faktora s karakterističnim korijenima iznad 1, koji zajedno objašnjavaju 68,77 % varijance (KMO = 0,886; Bartlettov test: $p = 0{,}000$). Ukupno su dva faktora nastala na osnovi 14 tvrdnji. Koeficijenti unutarnje konzistencije za svaki dobiveni faktor su zadovoljavajući. Prvi faktor koji se odnosi na *likovne metodičke postupke u nastavi* iznosi $\alpha = 0{,}72$, a drugi faktor koji se odnosi na *glazbene metodičke postupke u nastavi* je $\alpha = 0{,}69$.

Istraživanje je provedeno u školskoj godini 2024./2025. putem online upitnika.

### Analiza podataka i statistička obrada

Prikupljeni podatci obradili su se u statističkom programu (SPSS). Za deskriptivnu statistiku nominalnih i ordinalnih varijabli izračunale su se frekvencije (f), relativne frekvencije (%), aritmetička sredina (M), dominantna vrijednost (mode), median (Md), standardna devijacija (SD) te mjera normalnosti distribucije (skewness, kurtosis). S obzirom na nenormalnost distribucije upotrijebljen je neparametrijski Kruskal-Wallisov test.

[1] Rudnik (2024./2025.) Ministarstvo znanosti i obrazovanja Republike Hrvatske. Dostupno na: https://app.powerbi.com/view?r=eyJrIjoiZWE3YTE4OWQtOWJmNC00OTJmLWE2MjktYTQ5MMWJlNDNlZDQ0IiwidCI6IjJjMTFjYmNjLWI3NjEtNDVkYi1hOWY1LTRhYzc3ZTk0ZTFkNCIsImMiOjh9 (18. 6. 2025.)

# Rezultati i rasprava

## *Obilježja nastave umjetničkih predmeta u kombiniranome razrednom odjelu*

Umjetnički predmeti, poput likovne i glazbene kulture, zbog svoje prirode zahtijevaju specifične metode rada. Prema Blašković Galeković, Novaković i Tomljenović (2023) likovni i glazbeni odgoj bazira se na praktičnom i stvaralačkom radu tako da realizacija nastave zahtijeva i specifične metodičke pristupe i uvjete (instrumente, audiovizualnu tehnologiju, različiti pribor i materijale…). U ovome istraživanju vidljivo je da je najvažnije obilježje u nastavi umjetničkih predmeta u kombiniranom razrednom odjelu, korištenje raznolikih oblika i načina rada (f = 68; 43 %) kao i planiranje nastavnoga procesa (f = 61; 38,6 %). Ispitanici smatraju da je suradnja i međusobno uvažavanje učenika (f = 50; 31,6 %), razredna atmosfera i disciplina (f = 45; 28,5 %) uz uvažavanje individualnih razlika učenika (f = 44; 27,8 %) isto važna kao i efektivno korištenje vremena (f = 42; 26,6 %). Najniže su rangirali korištenje općih i specifičnih metoda (f = 17; 10,8 %) i izgled razreda (f = 10; 6,3 %). Rezultati su prikazani u Grafikonu 1.

Grafikon 1

## *Uloga učitelja u metodičkoj organizaciji nastave umjetničkih predmeta u kombiniranome razrednom odjelu*

Za kvalitetno provođenje nastave umjetničkih predmeta, važna je uloga učitelja. Jelavica i Alajbeg (2023) ističu kako je „kvalitetan i kompetentan nastavnik okosnica uspješnoga nastavnog sustava" (str. 1014). Učitelj treba paziti na dinamiku nastavnoga procesa kao i na optimalno korištenje vremena zbog istovremenoga odvijanja različitih nastavnih sadržaja za različite dobne skupine (Lucić i Matijević, 2004). Rad u kombiniranim razrednim odjelima vrlo je izazovan i zahtijeva fleksibilnost, snalažljivost i spretnost učitelja (Petrović, 2010). Prema Yue i Ji (2020) suvremeni učitelji treba biti suradljiv i interaktivan, kako s učenicima tako i s kolegama, usavršavati se i primjenjivati nove i održive načine rada s učenicima, davati povratnu informaciju kako bi omogućio kvalitetu cijeloga odgojno-obrazovnog procesa. Vanek, Maras i Karabin (2021) napominju kako su otvorenost, komunikativnost, strpljivost, pravedenost, dostupnost te širina općega znanja, važne karakteristike dobroga učitelja. Zirlić i Marin (2019) sumirali su razine kompetentnosti na „1. kompetencije učitelja u području metodologije izgradnje kurikula; 2. kompetencije učitelja u području organizacije i vođenja odgojnoobrazovnoga procesa; 3. kompetencije učitelja u području utvrđivanju učenikova postignuća u školi; 4. kompetencije učitelja u području oblikovanja razrednoga ozračja 5. kompetencije učitelja u području odgojnoga partnerstva s roditeljima" (str. 391-392). Obilježje rada u kombiniranim razrednim odjelima jest i veća povezanost učitelja s učenicima, što je potrebno za individualni razvoj svakog učenika (Shalom, Luria, Schrei i Shaham, 2021). U Grafikonu 2 prikazani su rezultati mišljenja ispitanika o ulozi učitelja.

Grafikon 2

Prema mišljenju ispitanika tijekom nastavnoga procesa treba koristiti različite strategije učenja (f = 66; 41,8 %), uz planiranje i efektivno korištenja vremena, tj. organizaciju nastave (f = 64; 40,5 %). To se odnosi i na organizaciju vremena u posebnim oblicima posrednoga i neposrednoga rada s učenicima (f = 52; 32,9 %) te stvaranje međuljudskih odnosa između učenika (f = 51; 32,3 %). Da je za izvođenje nastave važno prilagođavanje nastavnoga plana i programa, smatra 37 učitelja (23,4 %), a da bi se nastavni proces neometano odvijao, važno je omogućiti kvalitetne i stalno dostupne materijale i poticaje učenicima (f = 35; 22,2 %). Manje važnom ulogom ispitanici smatraju strukturiranje prostora koji potiče učenikovu kreativnost, želju za istraživanjem i rješavanje problema (f = 32; 20,3 %) i uspostavljanje discipline (f = 30; 19,1 %). Kako bi se procesi poučavanja i učenja prilagodili pojedincu, potrebno je identificirati načine na koje učenik najbolje uči istraživanjem i otkrivanjem te primjenjivati raznolike metode poučavanja i učenja (Shalom i sur., 2021). U umjetničkim predmetima to znači omogućiti svakom učeniku da obogati razvoj svojih praktičnih vještina, da doživljavaju s postupnim razumijevanjem koncepata umjetnosti i pravila upotrebe umjetničkih znakova unutar procesa obrazovanja za pojedino umjetničko područje (Tomšić Amon i Tacol, 2005).

### *Prostorna obilježja važna za izvođenje nastave umjetničkih predmeta u kombiniranim razrednim odjelima*

Prostor igra važnu ulogu u odgojno-obrazovnome procesu. Uređenje unutrašnjega prostora treba poticati različite oblike igre, učenja, stvaranje kvalitetnih međuljudskih odnosa te mogućnost samostalnoga istraživanja i rješavanja problema u različitim vrstama aktivnosti. Barrett, Davies, Zhang, Yufan i Barrett (2009) navode da poticajan prostor značajno i pozitivno utječe na kognitivni razvoj, razinu djetetove angažiranosti te istraživačko ponašanje. Kok i suradnici (2015) proveli su nacionalnu anketu u Nizozemskoj na uzorku od 1752 učitelja o povezanosti kvalitete prostornih i funkcionalnih aspekata u obrazovnim institucijama s uspjehom učenja. Rezultati su pokazali da je za uspjeh učenja važna kako veličina učionica tako i njihova opremljenost. U dizajnu okoliša važno je omogućiti socijalnu interakciju i stvoriti smišljena, samoodrživa i manja fizička okružja koja mogu doprinijeti kvaliteti učenja i međusobnih odnosa. Prostorna obilježja važna za rad u kombiniranome razrednom odjelu prema mišljenju ispitanika, prikazana su u Grafikonu 3.

Grafikon 3

Najvažnije prostorno obilježje važno za izvođenje nastave umjetničkih predmeta u kombiniranim razrednim odjelima, 77 (48,7 %) učitelji smatraju opremljenost učionice didaktičkom opremom, materijalima i sredstvima (ormari za mape, dostupnost vode, instrument, izložbeni prostor…). Da prostorna organizacija mora istovremeno omogućiti različite oblike i načine rada, smatra 47 (29,7 %) ispitanika. Nešto manji broj, njih 35 (22,2 %) istaknulo je kako kvalitetna organizacija prostora omogućava neometanu komunikaciju sudionika nastavnoga procesa te kako bi prostor trebao

omogućiti izražavanje individualnoga učenikova potencijala i znatiželje. 32 (20,3%) učitelja smatra da prostor mora omogućiti samostalno istraživanje učenika u suradnji s vršnjacima i/ili odraslima. Manje važno obilježje prostora za izvođenje nastave umjetničkih predmeta u kombiniranim razrednim odjelima smatraju konfiguraciju namještaja i klupa (raspored) i estetsko oblikovanje prostora. Tomšić Čerkez i Zupančič (2011) naglašavaju važnost istraživanja prostora i njegov utjecaj na same didaktičke vidike odgojno-obrazovnoga procesa.

### *Prednosti izvođenja nastave umjetničkih predmeta u kombiniranome razrednom odjelu u primarnome obrazovanju*

Rad u kombiniranim razrednim odjelima ima svoje prednosti. Prednosti su fleksibilnost nastavnoga procesa koji je prepoznatljiv u prilagođavanju nastavnoga plana i programa pojedinom učeniku. U relevantnoj literaturi naglašeno je da učenje u kombiniranim razredima potiče suradnju učenika, što utječe na razvoj socijalnih vještina i motivira suradnju između učenika različite dobi (Aina, 2001.; Harris i sur., 2013.; McEwan, 2008.; Spina, Ehrich i Smeed, 2013). Upravo samostalnost učenika, suradnja i zajedništvo te brza reakcija učitelja naglašava se i u drugim istraživanjima (Cvjetičanin, Segedinec i Adamov, 2008; Mulryan-Kyne, 2004; Fagan, 2009). Prednosti koje navode ispitanici istraživanja prikazani su u Grafikonu 4.

Grafikon 4

Ispitanici kao najveću prednost ističu samostalnost i disciplinirano učenika (70,3 %), potom suradnju i vršnjačko poučavanje (59,9 %). Isti rezultati dobiveni su i u istraživanju Blašković (2020) u kojem su učiteljice, uz napomenu da je rad u kombiniranim razredima intenzivan i zanimljiv, naglasile kao najveću prednost upravo vršnjačko poučavanje i zajedništvo među djecom. Prema Broom (2009) mlađi ili manje iskusni učenici mogu imati koristi od pomoći starijih učenika u zadatcima koje možda ne bi sami obavili, čime stariji ili iskusniji učenici mogu razviti osjećaje vlastite vrijednosti. Ispitanici kao prednost ističu usmjerenost nastave na učenika (44,3 %), manji broj djece (41,1 %) i interakciju igre, slobodnoga rada i učenja (41,1 %). Najmanje prednost vide u mogućnosti fleksibilne organizacije prostora (18,4 %) i lakše inoviranje nastave (13,3 %).

U istraživanju se provjerilo ima li radni staž učitelja utjecaja na percepciju prednosti rada u kombiniranome razrednom odjelu. Upotrjebljen je Kruskal-Wallisov test za ustanovljenje statistički značajnosti između varijabli (Tablica 1).

Tablica 1

Kruskal–Wallisov test korišten je za ispitivanje razlika u percepciji učitelja o prednostima rada u kombiniranim razredima s obzirom na duljinu njihova radnoga staža. Statistički značajne razlike utvrđene su za racionalizaciju vremena putem posebnih oblika izravnoga i neizravnoga rada s učenicima, $H(2) = 6,68$, $p = 0,035$, $\eta^2 = 0,03$ te za inovacije, $H(2) = 7,35$, $p = 0,025$, $\eta^2 = 0,04$. U oba slučaja veličine učinka bile su male. Učitelji s više od 21 godine radnoga staža ostvarili su više prosječne rangove

u racionalizaciji vremena ($M_{Rank}$ = 89,79) i inovacijama ($M_{Rank}$ = 87,96) u usporedbi s učiteljima s kraćim radnim iskustvom, što upućuje na to da su iskusniji učitelji te aspekte percipirali kao veće prednosti rada u kombiniranim razrednim odjelima. Na ostalim varijablama nisu utvrđene statistički značajne razlike.

### *Nedostatci izvođenja nastave umjetničkih predmeta u kombiniranome razrednom odjelu u primarnome obrazovanju*

Osim prednosti, postoje i nedostatci rada u kombiniranome razrednom odjelu. Istraživanja pokazuju kako je rad u takvim odjelima izrazito zahtjevan (Suzuki, 2003) i da se učitelji osjećaju nespremnim za takav način rada (Ames, 2006; Berry i Little, 2006; Mulkeen i Higgins, 2009; Šuvar, 2011; Taole i Mncube, 2012). Veliki je problem u tome što učiteljski fakulteti ne pripremaju studente za rad u kombiniranim razrednim odjelima (Lucić i Matijević, 2004). Mišljenje ispitanika prikazano je u Grafikonu 5.

Grafikon 5

Kao najveći nedostatak ispitanici ističu simultanu obradu različitih sadržaja na nastavnome satu (50,9 %). To je i najveći izazov u nastavi jer se sadržaji za više razreda izvode simultano (Lucić i Matijević, 2004) i to mu je glavno obilježje. Potom, problem vide u neophodnosti tihoga rada (44,7 %). Najmanje nedostataka vide u prostornome ograničenju.

Dodatno, željelo se provjeriti kako ispitanici procjenjuju nedostatke s obzirom na staž. Rezultati Kruskal-Wallisova testa prikazani su u Tablici 2.

Tablica 2

Kao i kod prednosti, samo je na jednoj varijabli statistička značajnost, a radi se o prostornim ograničenjima. Prema vrijednosti $M_{Rank}$ (6.995; p = 0,031), učitelji s manje od deset godina staža i oni s više od 21 godine staža uočili su taj nedostatak više nego učitelji s 11–20 godina radnoga iskustva. Statistički značajna razlika utvrđena je samo za jedan nedostatak – prostorno ograničenje, H(2) = 6,96, p = 0,031, $\eta^2$ = 0,03, što upućuje na malu veličinu učinka. Post hoc analiza pokazala je da su učitelji s više od 21 godine radnoga staža percipirali prostorna ograničenja kao veći nedostatak ($M_{Rank}$ = 86,92) u usporedbi s onima 11–20 godina iskustva ($M_{Rank}$ = 71,84).

Prema Duncan i Lockwoodu (2009) svrha prostorne organizacije je omogućiti učenicima socijalnu interakciju u manjim, samoodrživim fizičkim okružjima koja doprinose kvaliteti učenja. Za rad u kombiniranim odjelima fleksibilnost je važno obilježje kvalitetnoga prostora jer omogućava promjenu njegove konfiguracije za različite aktivnosti (primjerice, jedan razred radi grupni rad, drugi razred radi individulano ili stvaraju složene konstrukcije…) (Tomišič Čerkez i Zupančić, 2011).

### *Korištenje pojedinih metodičkih postupaka u nastavi umjetničkih predmeta u kombiniranome razrednom odjelu*

Nastava u kombiniranim razrednim odjelima na umjetničkim predmetima zahtijeva spretno kombiniranje različitih didaktičko-metodičkih postupaka. Ispitanici su prema

četverostupanjskoj ordinalnoj skali (1 - nikada; 2 - rijetko; 3 - ponekad; 4 - često) ocjenjivali učestalost upotrebe različitih postupaka u nastavi (Tablica 3.)

Tablica 3

Iz Tablice 3 može se iščitati kako većinu navedenih didaktičko-metodičkih postupaka ispitanici koriste od ponekad do često. Prema rezultatima aritmetičkih sredina često koriste strukturalnu međupredmetnu korelaciju (M = 3,61; SD = 0,54), kombiniranje različitih metoda (M = 3,58; SD = 0,58), unutarpredmetnu integracija (M = 3,55; SD = 0,55) i demonstraciju likovne tehnike (M = 3,51; SD = 0,70). Ispitanici ponekad koriste *specifične metode rada na umjetničkim predmetima* (M = 3,06; SD = 0,68). Prema rasponu Min i Max može se vidjeti da postoje ispitanici koje specifične metode nikada ne koriste. Većina navedenih metoda u tablici, osim tri načina rada (međupredmetna korelacija i unutarpredmetnu integracija te sviranje na udaraljkama), neki ispitanici nikada ne koriste specifične metode. Upravo ovaj rezultat nadovezuje se na korištenje specifičnih metoda na likovnom i glazbenom području. Ponekad koriste metodu *učenja pjesme po sluhu* (M = 3,49; SD = 0,73). Ako se uzme u obzir da djeca jedino uče pjevanje po sluhu ovaj je podatak zabrinjavajući, znači da učitelji ne razumiju prirodu usvajanja pjesme ili znači da pjevanje uključuju povremeno u sate glazbene kulture. Prije pjevanja važno je provoditi upjevavanje radi zagrijavanja glasa i pravilnoga korištenja istoga (Špiler, 2012; Blašković, 2015; Jeremić i Stanković, 2020), a ispitanici ovoga istraživanja upjevavanje koriste rijetko, kao i glazbene diktate kojima je svrha razvoj slušnoga senzibiliteta. Ista je situacija i s doživljajno-analitičkim slušanjem koje koriste povremeno (M = 324; SD = 0.75), a bez kojeg se ne bi trebao provoditi sat Glazbene kulture. Ponekad koriste glazbeno-didaktičke igre (M = 3,30; SD = 0,67) i sviranje na udaraljkama (M = 3,28; SD = 0,61). Rijetko korištenje upjevavanja, glazbenih diktata i analitičkoga pristupa slušanju vjerojatno je odraz osjećaja nedovoljne kompetentnosti za navedena glazbena područja. Pjevanje je najčešći oblik glazbene aktivnosti jer učitelji imaju potporu matrica i snimki pjesama. Ne moraju svirati, jer to zahtijeva kontinuirano vježbanje instrumenta, ni pjevati pjesme ako imaju intonacijskih problema.

Metode rada u nastavi vizualno-likovne kulture temelje se na aktivnom učenju, kreativnom izražavanju i razvijanju vizualne pismenosti, stoga je strategija vizualnoga mišljenja (VTS) kao metoda poučavanja temeljena na istraživanju koja poboljšava sposobnost učenika da opisuju, analiziraju i interpretiraju slike i informacije putem promatranja i rasprave o vizualnoj umjetnosti, jedna od najvažnijih metoda. VTS podržava razvoj vještina kritičkoga mišljenja i potiče sudjelovanje u suradničkim raspravama (Flood, Nolan i Boss, 2025). Rezultati istraživanja pokazuju da učitelji najčešće koriste metodu demonstracije likovne tehnike (M = 3,51; SD = 0,70). Ponekad koriste metodu analitičkoga promatranja (M = 3,38; SD = 0,66) i ilustrativne metode (M = 3,13; SD = 0,69), a najmanje koriste strategije vizualnoga razmišljanja (M = 2,96; SD = 0,58) čiji je cilj osvještavanje i usvajanje estetske vrijednosti likovnih djela pri čemu je naglasak na postupcima prijenosa estetskih informacija učenicima. Razlog rjeđega korištenja

strategije vizualnoga mišljenja kao specifične predmetne metode može biti vremensko ograničenje nastave koje je izrazito naglašeno u kombiniranome razrednom odjelu u kojem učitelji istovremeno rade s djecom različitoga godišta. Drugi uzroci mogu biti materijalno-tehnički i organizacijski uvjeti rada koji to ne dopuštaju. Slične rezultate o prevladavanju korištenja općih, ustaljenih metoda rada u odnosu na suvremene i specifično predmetne metode u nastavi umjetničkih predmeta nižih razreda pokazuju i neka druga istraživanja (Blašković Galeković i sur., 2023; Tomljenović, 2016).

U istraživanju se ispitivalo postojanje razlika između ispitanika u učestalosti korištenja didaktičko-metodičkih postupaka u nastavi s obzirom na staž ispitanika. S obzirom na nenormalnost distribucije upotrijebljen je Kruskal-Wallisov test. Rezultati su prikazani u Tablici 4.

Tablica 4

Statistički značajna razlika utvrđena je samo za vokalne vježbe upjevavanja, $H(2) = 9{,}61$, $p = 0{,}008$, $\eta^2 = 0{,}05$, što upućuje na malu do umjerenu veličinu učinka. Post hoc analiza pokazala je da su učitelji s više od 21 godine radnoga staža ($M_{Rank} = 91{,}94$) vokalne vježbe upjevavanja češće koristili u usporedbi s učiteljima s manje od 10 godina radnoga iskustva ($M_{Rank} = 66{,}52$).

## Zaključak

Rad u kombiniranim razrednim odjelima pretpostavlja upućenost učitelja u suvremene odgojno-obrazovne trendove koji mogu doprinijeti većoj kvaliteti izvođenja nastavnoga procesa u umjetničkim predmetima. Najveća je prednost, prema mišljenju ispitanih učitelja samostalnost i discipliniranost učenika te suradnja i vršnjačko poučavanje, dok je najveći nedostatak simultana obrada različitih sadržaja na nastavnome satu. Učitelj je prisiljen u takvoj situaciji na odvajanje pojedinog/ih razreda u tihi – samostalni rad, dok je drugi razred u aktivnom suodnosu s učiteljem. Organizacija odgojno-obrazovnoga procesa u kombiniranim razrednim odjelima je specifična, s nizom posebnosti u organizaciji rada, prilagodbi metodičko-didaktičkih postupaka do nastavnih metoda rada. Istraživanje pokazuje da učitelji najveći naglasak stavljaju na stručno-sadržajnu, pedagošku i organizacijsku pripremu. Važno im je korištenje različitih strategije učenja, raznolikih oblika i načina rada, uvažavanje individualnih mogućnosti i sklonosti učenika, važnost planiranja i efektivnoga korištenja vremena uporabom posebnih oblika posrednoga i neposrednoga rada s učenicima te izgradnja pozitivnoga, otvorenoga suradničkog odnosa učenika i učitelja, dok manje pozornosti posvećuju funkcionalnom i estetskom oblikovanju prostora. Bitna im je opremljenost učionice didaktičkom opremom, materijalima i sredstvima (audiovizualna tehnologija, instrumenti, ormari za mape, dostupnost vode, izložbeni prostor…) te prostorna organizacija koja omogućava neometanu komunikaciju učenika kao i izražavanje individualnoga učenikova potencijala.

Glavno obilježje odgoja i obrazovanja u umjetničkome području jest praktični i stvaralački karakter pa se od učitelja očekuje kreativan metodički pristup temeljen

na poznavanju specifičnosti likovnoga i glazbenoga područja. Na temelju rezultata istraživanja vidljivo je da učitelji nedovoljno koriste pojedine metode rada na umjetničkom području što ukazuje na potrebu stručnoga usavršavanja učitelja na likovno-pedagoškom području i time pridonijeti uspostavi boljih praksi u nastavi.

Budući da prethodno nisu provedena slična istraživanja u Hrvatskoj, primarni doprinos ovoga istraživanja ogleda se u detektiranju pozitivnih i negativnih aspekata izvedbe nastave umjetničkih predmeta u kombiniranim razrednim odjelima. Rezultati istraživanja također mogu pomoći u kvalitetnijem osmišljavanju daljnjega profesionalnog usavršavanja učitelja za rad u kombiniranim odjelima. Daljnjim je istraživanjima potrebno ispitati stavove i mišljenja učitelja vezano uz njihovu osposobljenost za rad u kombiniranim razrednim odjelima. Fokus provedenoga istraživanja povezan je s izvođenjem nastave umjetničkih predmeta u kombiniranome razrednom odjelu, buduća istraživanja bi se mogla odnositi na druge nastavne predmete u primarnome obrazovanju.