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**Review article**

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## **INTERCULTURAL CONTENT IN GRAMMAR SCHOOL MUSIC INSTRUCTION IN CENTRAL EUROPEAN COUNTRIES**

### **Abstract**

Music instruction is an area which requires the development of intercultural competences of learners, because music is essentially a multicultural art. Numerous nations have taken part in the historical development of music, and music has developed by interweaving creativity of different communities and different cultures. In music lessons students listen to the music of their own country, and to the music of other nations. By getting to know their own culture they develop awareness of their own cultural identity, whereas by listening to the music of other nations they learn about other cultures, which contributes to the development of interculturalism. The curricula of music lessons in grammar schools in Central European countries are analysed in this paper. The aim of the research is to show to which extent music instruction is based on interculturalism. The results show that intercultural content is inadequately represented in music instruction, and in some cases not represented at all. This means that the development of intercultural competence of students during music instruction remains mostly at a declarative level. We believe that the progress in the creation of educational content with respect to intercultural education during music instruction is possible through exposure to non-European music traditions and cultures, as well as to those of less known European cultures.

**Keywords:** music instruction, grammar school, interculturalism, Central European countries

### **Introduction**

Life in the 21st century has posed numerous challenges, which a person needs to deal with if they want to become/remain a human being who develops their individual potentials successfully, in relation to themselves and others likewise. In other words, if they want to *live* in the full sense of this word. School, as a place which should guide an individual in that very direction, is not an only factor, and very often not a crucial one. Parents, peers and media are some of the educational factors that influence the formation of a person. However, school should be a place where one lives and learns how to live. Because “without basic knowledge of life many value categories are lost, those of the respect of a human being as an independent being and their right to live their life to its fullest” (Previšić 2010, 167). Intercultural education is just one of the dimensions of the tasks that the modern, 21st century school needs to fulfil.

Today, more than ever, due to migration flows, population of Central Europe is very multicultural. Multiculturalism is present in some countries more than in others, but one of the priorities that came with globalisation is the virtue of understanding and acceptance of different cultures and the belonging individuals. Lafraya (2011, in Mrnjauš and Rončević 2012) thinks that multicultural society is the one in which different cultures, nationalities and other groups live together, without the realistic and constructive contact with others. On the other hand, intercultural society is a society in which difference is seen as positive abundance necessary for social, educational, cultural, political and economic growth. Previšić (1994) emphasises that interculturalism as a value presents the upgrade of multiculturalism. Successful intercultural communication with the members of different cultures is a prerequisite for a successful life of any individual, no matter which culture they come from. This also means that intercultural competence is one of the basic competences learners should acquire in schools. According to Šulentić Begić (2015), learners acquire intercultural competence through intercultural education and become aware of different cultures, which they acknowledge and accept. Izgarjan et al. (2013) assert the importance of introducing intercultural elements in multicultural communities so that learners would develop the feeling of respect towards different cultures.

Music instruction in grammar schools offers many possibilities of intercultural education and it is an area in which learners can gain intercultural competence by listening to, singing and playing songs of different cultures, as well as talking about them. An interculturally competent teacher will develop both learners' understanding and tolerance towards the different, through presentation of various music traditions, and a wish to enrich their own cultural identity. However, getting to know and understand the music of European music traditions is not enough; one should also cover those which are both geographically and culturally distant because, as Dobrota (2007, 120) says "intercultural concept of music instruction makes students learn about music expression of various cultures, not staying hermetically sealed inside the boundaries of western European music tradition".

## **Intercultural education and music instruction in grammar schools in Central European countries**

This paper compares how national curricula (i.e. education plans) are designed in Central European countries regarding the intercultural content in music instruction. It analyses national curricula, school curricula, lesson plans and the content of music lesson CDs. The research is done in nine countries (Hungary, Slovenia, Austria, Germany, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Switzerland, northeast Italy and Croatia). Research results for each country are shown below.

In **Hungarian** educational system there are more possibilities of vertical mobility between the primary and secondary education. In most cases primary school lasts for four years, but a student can choose to attend 6-year-long or 8-year-long primary school. There is also a possibility to attend a combined primary and secondary school, which lasts for twelve years. Secondary school lasts for four years (14 to 18 years of age), six years (12 to 18 years of age) or eight years (10 to 18 years of age), depending on the choice. So, students can choose to go to the secondary school after the fourth, sixth or eighth grade or to attend the 12-year-long school (combined type). Students take the final exam after twelve years of education.

Music instruction (*Ének-zene*) is obligatory in the first ten years of education with one lesson per week. In other words, in the last 4 years of grammar school it is obligatory for the first two years only. Schools have the possibility to include more music lessons into their curricula, but only a few grammar schools have actually done that. In the graduation exam students can choose to take the final exam of the basic or extended level.<sup>1</sup>

One of the educational goals of the national curriculum in music instruction is the encounter with various cultures and traditions.<sup>2</sup> The teaching areas include singing, listening, music theory, development of competencies and creative expression. The greatest number of lessons is dedicated to singing and listening to music.<sup>3</sup> However, among the suggested songs (Lukin and Ugrin 2009) there are no pieces which belong to non-European music cultures (with the exception of *Porgy and Bess* by Gershwin and *West side story* by Bernstein) or even different European traditions. Music repertoire mostly revolves around the Hungarian traditional music and western-European art music.

In **Slovenia** nine-year primary education is obligatory. After that students choose one of the high schools, one of which is four-year grammar school. At the end of grammar school education they take the state exam.

Music instruction (*Glasba*) is obligatory in the first grade of grammar school with 70 lessons per year (52 as obligatory subject and 18 as elective). In the second, third and fourth grade it is elective and three different modules are available: Music language, World music culture and Slovenian music culture. All three modules (70 lessons each) are mutually connected and complement each other.<sup>4</sup> Besides, each grammar school must have a choir (with up to four lessons a week).<sup>5</sup>

In grammar school curriculum<sup>6</sup> some of the educational goals of music instruction are:

- Form a positive attitude and responsible conduct towards Slovenian and world music
- Develop receptivity and tolerance towards different music cultures
- Form music values which are important for Slovenian and world music culture

*Listening to music, playing and singing, music creativity and music language* are teaching areas dealt with in music instruction. Multiculturalism is listed as one of the characteristics of lessons, but only in the section dealing with the music of 20th and 21st century. In music examples for state exam<sup>7</sup> there are pieces of western European art music, Slovenian music and jazz. There are no tracks which belong to non-European music cultures.

In **Austria** compulsory education consists of three levels, and at the last level (from 10 to 14 years of age) students may attend the lower level of grammar school (*Unterstufe*

<sup>1</sup> meNet. Music Education in Hungary. Retrieved from: <http://menet.mdw.ac.at/menetsite/english/topics.html?m=1&c=0&lang=en>, 6.3.2015.

<sup>2</sup> Művészetek - ének-zene helyi tanterv 11-12. Évfolyam Batthyány Lajos Gimnázium, Nagykanizsa. Retrieved from: [http://www.blg.hu/tantervek/muveszetek\\_enek\\_1\\_1.pdf](http://www.blg.hu/tantervek/muveszetek_enek_1_1.pdf), 6.3.2015.

<sup>3</sup> Lovassy-László-Gymnasium, Pedagógiai Program. Retrieved from: [http://www.lovassy.hu/online/egyeb-e-dok/pp2013/Enek\\_zene.pdf](http://www.lovassy.hu/online/egyeb-e-dok/pp2013/Enek_zene.pdf), 6.3.2015.

<sup>4</sup> Učni načrt za Glasbeni jezik. Retrieved from: <http://eportal.mss.edus.si/msswww/programi2013/programi/gimnazija/gimnazija/glasbeni-jezik.htm>, 6.3.2015.

<sup>5</sup> meNet. Music Education in Slovenia. Retrieved from: <http://menet.mdw.ac.at/menetsite/english/topics.html?m=1&c=0&lang=en>, 6.3.2015.

<sup>6</sup> Učni načrt za gimnazije. Retrieved from: [http://portal.mss.edus.si/msswww/programi2010/programi/gimnazija/ucni\\_nacrti.htm](http://portal.mss.edus.si/msswww/programi2010/programi/gimnazija/ucni_nacrti.htm), 6.3.2015.

<sup>7</sup> Izbor glasbenih del in video posnetkov za pisni ispit splošne mature iz glasbe 2015. Retrieved from: [http://www.dijaski.net/gradivo/gla\\_mat\\_tematski\\_sklop\\_2015\\_01](http://www.dijaski.net/gradivo/gla_mat_tematski_sklop_2015_01), 6.3.2015.

*Gymnasium*) which is then followed by the higher level (14 to 18). At the end of grammar school students take the state exam.<sup>8</sup>

Music instruction is obligatory in the first two grades of grammar school, whereas in the third and fourth grade students need to choose between subjects *Music* and *Art*. Besides, throughout the four years students can choose elective subjects such as Choir, Music Group, and similar. The number of music lessons per week is somewhat different in different grammar schools and it ranges from two lessons in the first two grades to two lessons in the first three and one lesson in the fourth grade.<sup>9</sup>

In the grammar school curriculum for music instruction it is said that music instruction should:

- Promote tolerance towards the new and the different
- Serve as a means of cultural communication

Teaching areas in music instruction are *music expression (vocal, instrumental, body...)*, *music theory and history* and *listening to music*. There are numerous examples from different music eras which are suggested for playing to students, most of which are western European pieces. However, there are music pieces of other cultures such as Indian, Chinese, Tibetan, Jamaican, and Bulgarian.<sup>10</sup>

Education system in **The Federal Republic of Germany** consists of four-year primary school (*Grundschule*), followed by different school possibilities, one of which is grammar school (*Gymnasium*) which lasts six years. After that, students continue their education in higher level grammar school (*Gymnasiale Oberstufe*) for three years. Music education is obligatory in the first ten years of education (two lessons per week, except for the last two years with one lesson per week), whereas at the higher level of grammar school (two lessons per week) students can choose between music lessons or art lessons (such as literature or drama).<sup>11</sup>

Teaching areas of music instruction in grammar school education are *perception and understanding of music*, *music expression* and *thinking about music*. According to the framework music instruction curriculum of the federal county of Berlin (Rahmenlehrplan Musik-Sekundarstufe II, 2006) the encounter with music and understanding of music of different cultures is one of the outcomes and competences to be developed. Students ought to find out about the diversity and richness of music expression through dancing, singing, listening to and performing pieces of different nations, and thus develop receptiveness towards different subcultures in German society. Although western European pieces are dominant in this curriculum, there is a certain number of examples which belong to the American music tradition (country, rap...), and according to the curriculum of Lohmar Grammar School (*Gymnasium Lohmar*)<sup>12</sup> third-grade students are introduced to Turkish, Cuban, South African and West African music.

In **Czech** educational system children attend compulsory primary school from the age of six to fifteen, and then they attend high school (střední školy). In primary school there is one lesson of music per week. Some students enrol into grammar schools where they can

<sup>8</sup> meNet. Music Education in Austria. Retrieved from: <http://menet.mdw.ac.at/menetsite/english/topics.html?m=1&c=0&lang=en>, 6.3.2015.

<sup>9</sup> Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Kultur. Retrieved from: [https://www.bmbwf.gv.at/schulen/lehrdr/gesetze\\_verordnungen/Verordnung\\_Aenderung\\_der9110.html](https://www.bmbwf.gv.at/schulen/lehrdr/gesetze_verordnungen/Verordnung_Aenderung_der9110.html) 6.3.2015.

<sup>10</sup> Spielpläne Oberstufe: Wissen und Wege, Schülerbuch. Retrieved from: [http://www.klett.de/web/uploads/assets/22/229c4ad9/booklet\\_175001.pdf](http://www.klett.de/web/uploads/assets/22/229c4ad9/booklet_175001.pdf), 6.3.2015.

<sup>11</sup> meNet. Music Education in Germany. Retrieved from: <http://menet.mdw.ac.at/menetsite/english/topics.html?m=1&c=0&lang=en>, 8.3.2015.

<sup>12</sup> Curriculum für das Fach Musik in der Oberstufe des Gymnasiums Lohmar Sekundarstufe II. Retrieved from: [http://www.gymnasium-lohmar.org/images/Faecher/Musik/Curriculum\\_Musik\\_Oberstufe.pdf](http://www.gymnasium-lohmar.org/images/Faecher/Musik/Curriculum_Musik_Oberstufe.pdf), 6.3.2015.

choose to attend music lessons or art lesson in the first two grades (two lessons per week), and in the third and fourth grade these courses are elective.<sup>13</sup>

Music instruction consists of *singing, playing music, moving to the music and listening to music* (Framework Educational Programme for Basic Education, 2007). Intercultural approach is not *per se* stated in the outcomes of music instruction, but it is included in cross-curricular topics which are dealt with throughout all four years, such as *Individual and social education, Education in European and global context*, etc. (Structures of education and training systems in Europe - Czech Republic, 2009). In the content of the subject Music (*Hudební výchova*) the encounter with music of other continents is not planned, except for the pieces of those western artists who had been inspired by non-European music tradition (Školní vzdělávací program pro čtyřleté gymnázium a vyšší stupeň osmiletého gymnázia, 2012).

**Slovak** educational system is the same in the whole country, and the official language is Slovak. National minorities such as Hungarian and Ukrainian may found schools in their language and to them Slovak is treated as foreign language. Primary education is compulsory and it lasts for nine years (from year six to fifteen). After primary school students may enrol into vocational schools or grammar schools, the latter enabling them to continue education at any of the faculties.<sup>14</sup>

In grammar schools music is not a separate subject but it is instructed only partly throughout four years (one lesson per week) as a part of the subject Art and culture (*Umenie a kultúra*). The teaching plans<sup>15</sup> do not define the exact ratio of music content in these lessons. Music is synthesized with other arts (drama, dance, movie...). A positive fact is that the development of a student's intercultural competences for communication and cooperation with members of other cultures is a clearly stated outcome.

Nine-year primary education is compulsory for all children in **Switzerland**. Secondary school education follows, which can be general (grammar schools) or vocational.<sup>16</sup> Music is taught in the first two grades and the first semester of the third grade with two lessons per week. Also, students in grammar schools can choose to enrol into different modules where certain areas are given more lessons. In music module there are more lessons of music per week, it lasts for four years and there are subjects such as *Playing* or *Choir*.<sup>17</sup> In the subject Music (Musik) the following areas are covered: *performing music, music knowledge and skills and encounter with music - music experience*. Western European music dominates here as well, but the teaching content emphasizes the need to encounter music of different cultures (those geographically distant ones, too) and the necessity to acquire intercultural competence.<sup>18</sup>

In Italy compulsory education involves primary education (age 6 to 11) and lower secondary education (age 11 to 14). After that, students can enrol into secondary school,

<sup>13</sup> meNet. Music Education in Czech Republic. Retrieved from:

<http://menet.mdw.ac.at/menetsite/english/topics.html?m=1&c=0&lang=en>, 8.3.2015.

<sup>14</sup> meNet. Music Education in Slovakia. Retrieved from:

<http://menet.mdw.ac.at/menetsite/english/topics.html?m=1&c=0&lang=en>, 8.3.2015.

<sup>15</sup> Učebné osnovy Štvorročné štúdium / vyššie ročníky osemročného štúdia. Retrieved from:

<http://www.gymgl.sk/skvp.php?section=skvp3a>, 8.3.2015.

<sup>16</sup> Eurypedia-European Encyclopedia on National Education Systems. Retrieved from:

<https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfs/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Switzerland:Overview>, 9.3.2015.

<sup>17</sup> Stundentafeln nach Umsetzung des MAR. Retrieved from:

[http://www.baselland.ch/fileadmin/baselland/files/docs/ekd/schulen/lehrpl\\_gym/pdf/studentafeln-gym05.pdf](http://www.baselland.ch/fileadmin/baselland/files/docs/ekd/schulen/lehrpl_gym/pdf/studentafeln-gym05.pdf), 9.3.2015.

<sup>18</sup> Lehrplan für den gymnasialen Bildungsgang · Fachlehrplan Bildnerisches Gestalten. Retrieved from:

[http://www.erz.be.ch/erz/de/index/mittelschule/mittelschule/gymnasium/lehrplan\\_maturitaetsausbildung.assetref/dam/documents/ERZ/MBA/de/AMS/ams\\_klm\\_musik.pdf](http://www.erz.be.ch/erz/de/index/mittelschule/mittelschule/gymnasium/lehrplan_maturitaetsausbildung.assetref/dam/documents/ERZ/MBA/de/AMS/ams_klm_musik.pdf), 9.3.2015.

possibly one of the grammar schools of different profiles which last for five years. Music education (*Educazione musicale*) is offered only in music schools (*Liceo musicale*), but not in grammar schools.<sup>19</sup>

In the Republic of Croatia primary school is compulsory and lasts for eight years. After that, students enrol into one of the secondary schools, among which grammar schools are available as well. Music education is obligatory and there is one lesson per week of Music art in all four years of grammar school education in general, language and classical grammar schools. In science and math grammar schools the subject is obligatory in the first two years with one lesson per week, and in the science grammar schools there are two lessons per week in the fourth grade.<sup>20</sup>

In the National Curriculum Framework for pre-school education, general compulsory and secondary education (2010) one of the general educational goals is teaching learners to respect differences and to be tolerant in order to be able to live successfully in today's global, multicultural world. One of the principles of curriculum design is interculturalism, i.e. understanding and acceptance of cultural differences with the aim of removing prejudice towards members of other cultures. Also, one of the educational goals of social-humanistic area is to help students acquire intercultural competence which will enable them to accept and understand others and the different, regardless of their cultural, ethnic or national background. Likewise, one of the outcomes in the art area is to develop tolerance towards other cultures through listening to and playing pieces of music of different tradition.

In the *Music curriculum* (Nastavni program Glazbene umjetnosti, 1994) multiculturalism and intercultural education are not mentioned, and listening (which is dominant in the curriculum) does not encompass pieces outside the Western European music tradition. However, in textbooks and on accompanying CDs there are twelve pieces from different European countries and twenty pieces belonging to non-European cultures from all continents. Yet, these pieces are very short and they should be introduced over 2 to 3 lessons (out of 140 lessons altogether).

### **The amount of intercultural content in music instruction**

The aim of this paper was to establish the amount of intercultural content in grammar school music instruction in Central European countries. The analysis of national curricula, school curricula, teaching plans and the content of CDs used in teaching shows that in the most national curricula (in the countries where a curriculum is implemented) intercultural competence is one of the competences that students need to develop. This, of course, refers to the area of music as well, but in teaching it is not accomplished to the wanted extent for multiple reasons. First, the number of music lessons in most countries is small (one to two lessons per week), Music is very often not taught in all four years of education and it is often an elective course, sometimes even combined with other subjects. Second, teaching content is exceedingly oriented towards the western European cultural tradition, and the music traditions of other European and non-European cultures are neglected (Table 1).

<sup>19</sup> meNet. Music Education in Italy. Retrieved from: <http://menet.mdw.ac.at/menetsite/english/topics.html?m=1&c=0&lang=en>, 9.3.2015.

<sup>20</sup> MZOS Republike Hrvatske. Retrieved from: <http://public.mzos.hr/Default.aspx?sec=3061>, 10.3.2015.

Table 1. *The amount of intercultural content in music instruction in European countries*

Country	The number of music lessons per week				The amount of music of other cultures - non-Western European and non-European		
	1st grade	2nd grade	3rd grade	4th grade	None	In a small amount	A lot
<b>Hungary</b>	1	1	1 <sup>1</sup>	1 <sup>1</sup>		+	
<b>Slovenia</b>	2 <sup>2</sup>	2 <sup>1</sup>	2 <sup>1</sup>	2 <sup>1</sup>		+	
<b>Austria</b>	2	2	2 <sup>1</sup>	1 <sup>1</sup>		+	
<b>Germany</b>	1	1	2 <sup>3</sup>	2 <sup>3</sup>		+	
<b>Czech Republic</b>	2 <sup>3</sup>	2 <sup>3</sup>	2 <sup>1</sup>	2 <sup>1</sup>	+		
<b>Slovakia</b>	1 <sup>4</sup>	1 <sup>4</sup>	1 <sup>4</sup>	1 <sup>4</sup>		+	
<b>Switzerland</b>	2	2	1/2	-		+	
<b>Italy</b>	-	-	-	-	+		
<b>Croatia</b>	1	1	1	1		+	

1 - as elective subject

2 - combination of obligatory and elective

3 - students choose between music and fine arts

4 - not a separate subject

Table 1 shows that there is not enough teaching content which is oriented towards the music of other cultures. Grammar school music instruction needs to be designed in the opposite direction. Music is, more than any other, an area which interwoven with the spirit of interculturalism. As Dobrota (2009) says, the superiority of Western art tradition is debatable (at least) and it is very questionable to claim that this music is more natural than other types of music. We think that the progress in designing curricula, considering intercultural education in music teaching, is possible by introducing music of less known European and above all non-European traditions and cultures. There is no need to emphasize that today's technology enables us to travel with our students (virally) to the farthest parts of the Earth. Listening to (and watching) Indonesian gamelan orchestra, dancing with students to the calypso sounds of a Caribbean steel-band, teaching them how to sing a nyatiti song from Kenya and talking to

them about the traditions of these faraway cultures - this is the right way for a teacher to play a role in intercultural education of their students.

Such a teacher should, as a part of modern student-oriented education, help students develop their intercultural competences. At the same time, a question is raised whether students who are studying to become educators develop these competences during education and if they do, whether this is enough. The results of a research done at one of the Croatian music academies (Begić 2015) have shown that the intercultural competences of students of Music pedagogy are not sufficiently developed during their studies. Evidently, more attention needs to be given to music and tradition of other cultures for students to acquire more knowledge of cultures different from theirs and to develop intercultural competences required for their future profession.

## Conclusion

Interculturalism in music instruction in modern education means encountering, understanding and accepting music of numerous cultures more or less similar to the culture of our surroundings. Encountering and accepting as many different music traditions as possible is a way towards a more comprehensive view and understanding of the entire human cultural reach. The results of the research done in this paper have shown that the intercultural content is insufficiently represented in music instruction, and in some countries it is not represented at all. This means that the development of intercultural competence in music instruction mostly stays at a declarative level. Therefore, modern intercultural curricula, a teacher who is interculturally competent and the intercultural approach itself in the music instruction in grammar school is a prerequisite and a necessity for the comprehensive and positive development of young people, subjects of the multicultural world and the times we live in.

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