



Original Contribution

THE COMPETENCE OF MUSIC TEACHERS AT THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

The objectives of teaching music in elementary schools are part of the requirements of the professional competence of the teachers. The aesthetical education and culture of children are determined largely by the capacity of teachers to meet the requirements of the society.

Key words: teachers at elementary schools, music education

The change in the role of teachers at elementary schools is important for the reorganisation of the educational system, for its harmonisation with the European and world standards. The positive role of music education in the over-all educational work at schools is well known. The emotional culture, as well as the influence of music, is of great importance for the development of human personality. And this importance increases now, when the global market is transformed into field for expansion of cultural stereotypes, when people communicate by Internet and inevitably exert cultural influence on one another. For this reason, now and under the existing conditions in the age of information when there are no restrictions on cultural exchange, the growing up generation needs a system of values and ability for critical and creative thinking. And just now, when this necessity is strongest, when the number of juvenile delinquents is growing every day, the time for teaching of music in schools is reduced. But it is generally known that the most significant, eternal philosophic theme in the arts is the struggle between good and evil. The reduced number of music lessons in the curriculum is already fact and its negative consequences will reach thus far. This is a wrong trend in time when the complex globalisation processes, combined with problems specific for the transitional period in our country, lead us to social disintegration. Having in mind all this, it is not useless to remind that namely by works of

art, notions of good and evil become generally known among young generation. For this reason, the purpose of this article is to pay attention to the status of music education, to ask questions and to provide ground for reflection and discussion.

The main tasks of music teachers at elementary schools are: to create emotional and aesthetical attitude to music, to guide the development of musical and aesthetical spiritual needs and taste, to enlarge and enrich the ability for profound understanding of musical compositions. It is getting more and more difficult to perform these tasks, when the number of music lessons in the curriculum of elementary schools is decreasing. On the other hand, these tasks are set to teachers, whose obligations include also teaching of many other subjects besides music. Is it possible to teach music to children when teachers are lacking the necessary musical culture? The results of many observations during the past years show that teachers at elementary schools meet significant difficulties in the teaching of music. These difficulties mean that teaching is not effective. But when the same problems are typical for a big group of professionals, this means that the whole system does not function effectively. In the profессиogram of teachers at elementary schools, their work is described as “possessing individual features, which are not found often among teachers at other educational levels, or which are revealed in different ways during their work. These features transform the profессиogram of teachers at elementary schools in distinctiveness, possessing unique traits” (2).

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This description includes by tradition musical and pedagogical knowledge and skills.

We try to generalise here the results of a study on professional training of teachers at elementary schools and their ability to teach music. The main objective of this study was to determine the level of pedagogical and musical knowledge and skills of teachers at elementary schools, teaching music besides all other subjects. The study had two tasks. The first one was to check the ability of teachers to listen and play music. The second task was to check their methodological knowledge and their skills to guide the musical activity of children. By tests, questionnaires and interviews we gathered many information, regarding the following subjects:

- History of music;
- Knowledge of essential musical styles and musical means of expression;
- Ability to analyse the structure of the musical composition and to identify the musical form and its elements;
- Instrumental and singing skills;
- Ability to develop in children emotional responsiveness during listening of music and ability to feel the musical images;
- Aptitude to engage children in expressive and emotional-artistic singing and skills to develop vocal habits;
- Ability to develop in children interest in the musical-creative activity.

The results of these studies proved that the professional musical training of teachers at elementary schools is extremely insufficient and that there are gaps in their knowledge of methodology. The reasons for the low professional level are complex. We will try to explain some of them.

The specific character of different higher educational institutions, where graduates are certified to teach music, imposes differential approach in their training. The faculties of pedagogy, where teachers for elementary schools are trained, have more than 20 years history. One undeniable fact is the reduction of music lessons in the curricula. In such a way is destroyed a tradition of many years' duration, inherited from former pedagogical colleges (where students learned even playing the violin). This positive trend, connected with the study of music, was continued in the faculties of pedagogy, where now are trained teachers for elementary schools. But today we are witnesses of gradual but considerable reduction of music lessons and mostly playing an instrument. It is a paradox, but teachers do not possess even

these musical skills and knowledge, which they have to develop in their pupils. Not to mention that teachers must know much more than this, which they are expected to teach. We are faced with obvious discrepancy between the level of musical training of students and the requirements of the contemporary musical pedagogy. The reasons for the low professional level and the resulting difficulties in the methodology are complex. When new curricula are drawn, in connection with the accreditation of the higher educational institutions, this is made with the presumption that subjects, for which are fixed more hours in the school curriculum, require more intensive study at the university. But if we follow this presumption, it will lead us to the next discrepancy – students who are admitted to the universities, will possess even less knowledge in the domain of music. Instead to compensate this at the university, musical subjects are neglected. Isn't this a paradox that students will receive at the university less knowledge exactly in the field in which they need more training, because of their insufficient musical education at schools! They did not study enough music at schools and just for this reason they will not study enough at the university too! In other words, it is not necessary to study much music in the higher educational institutions, because it is not necessary to teach much music at schools. This is a spiral movement, leading more and more downwards. The preparation of the curricula at universities is a consequence of another, more important reason: everything is done on the basis of state standards for different degree courses. These standards impose:

1. Limited number of hours
2. Inadequate correlation between psychology and pedagogy on the one hand and special subjects, on the other hand
3. After the analysis of results obtained during the study, we drew the following conclusions:
 - a. The musical and pedagogical qualification of teachers at elementary schools is below the required professional level.
 - b. In their practical work, teachers have serious problems in methodology.
4. For this reason, our purpose is to provoke reflection and to submit for discussion the following items:
 - a. Necessity of improved curricula, programs and standards in order to improve the special musical training

- of students and to integrate their general and special knowledge.
- b. Necessity of large discussion, concerning the improvement of state standards.

REFERENCES

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