

МУЗИЧКА ПЕДАГОГИЈА У ЕВРОПИ / MUSIC EDUCATION IN EUROPE

dr Branka Rotar Pance

Academy of Music, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia
brankarotar-pance@ag.uni-lj.si

CREATING AS PART OF THE SLOVENE PRIMARY SCHOOL SYLABUSS AND THE *NATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF KNOWLEDGE*

Abstract

In all grades of Slovene primary school, creating is one of the three main activity areas in music education. The operational learning objectives and contents of creating as well as the related standards of knowledge and didactic recommendations are set out in the syllabus. Teachers are encouraged to include cross-curricular connections and the use of ICT in the area of creating, as well as to consider the individualisation and differentiation principles and to apply suitable assessment methods. In 2012 and 2014, attainment of objectives as stipulated by the music education syllabus was subject to the *National Assessment of Knowledge (NAK)*. The present paper presents the structure of the NAK examination in music education, focusing particularly on area 5 – creating. The examination is based on the Bloom's cognitive taxonomy. As the rest of the examination, creative exercises as well are in the form of written test. In 2012, 4222 nine-graders took the exam. The exercises in creating were based on the use of graphic notation. In 2014, the music education NAK involved 4130 nine-graders. The exercises in creating were based on the use of standard music notation. The present paper first gives examples of the creative exercises from the examination sheets and the assessment scale used and then presents and compares the results of both examinations. Certain aspects of the NAK and the creative exercises presented are oriented more towards the use of musical knowledge than towards stimulating students' imagination to generate original musical ideas. Furthermore, the solutions of the exercises have never been performed, which also means that they have never received aesthetic evaluation and critical reflection on the musical ideas used. Therefore, we cannot consider these exercises as authentic creative exercises.

Key words: Slovene primary school, music education, creating.

Introduction

The Slovene Music Education Syllabus (*Učni načrt. Program osnovna šola. Glasbena vzgoja, 2011*) places *creating* in all grades of nine-year primary school as one of the three fundamental activity areas. Operational learning objectives and contents in the field of creating are defined according to triennia. This concept is based on process orientation and the basic idea that creating is one of the most active forms of learning. It represents the most direct contact of a student with music, processes of working with music and sounds, as well as with music as means of communication (Oblak, 2001; Borota, 2013, Sicherl Kafol, 2015). As an authentic form of learning, it involves the use of acquired musical knowledge in a new situation.

Objectives in the field of creating are directed towards:

- a) exploration of sounds, creation of various musical contents (e.g. sound experiments, improvisations, creation of sound pictures, rhythms and melodies, accompaniments for songs and instrumental melodies, writing music to lyrics, etc.) and elaboration of sounding bodies and improvised musical instruments;
- b) performing activities in class (singing and playing instruments with emphasis on interpretation, musicality and expressiveness);
- c) transfer of musical experience and perceptions to areas of movement and dancing, art and verbal expression.

Fulfilment of objectives in the area of creating also includes cross-curricular connections with other subjects, e.g. Slovene language, Arts, Sports, Crafts and Technology. There are many new possibilities brought about by computer-based learning environments and tools. The degree and ways of their use depend on the ICT equipment of schools, teachers' digital literacy and their attitude towards the use of ICT in music education (Lango, 2011).

Music Education Syllabus defines standards of knowledge for the above mentioned segments of creating according to triennia and offers guidelines for teachers: "Creativity should also be encouraged in research and creation of musical notations" (*Učni načrt. Program osnovna šola. Glasbena vzgoja, 2011:17*); "Creative achievements should serve as motivation for discussion, exchange of opinions and evaluation of music." (*ibid.:21*). As far as connections with other activity areas are concerned, there is also a recommendation on reasonable use of electronic instruments, computer-based tools and environments in creative activities.

Music Education Syllabus also underlines the principles of individualisation and differentiation, according to which in planning, carrying out and assessing musical creativity tasks and achievements, a teacher should motivate, engage and include pupils who attend music school or other forms of music training and implement strategies to discover and work with talented pupils (Sicherl Kafol, 2015; Rotar Pance, 2015).

In connection to assessment of knowledge, the syllabus points out complex and regular assessment of all activity areas, emphasising the value and importance of quality feedback by teacher, encouragement to pupils to monitor their own progress, and self-regulated learning. There is a requirement for teachers to establish assessment criteria on the basis of the defined learning objectives and standards of knowledge, include them in their yearly preparation and inform pupils and parents about them.

Process orientation and a pupil's personal engagement in the creative process are regarded as important aspects in the assessment of pupils' creative achievements, which also takes into account the level of pupils' musical abilities, skills and knowledge. Creative achievements are not evaluated according to artistic criteria but on the basis of a pupil's originality and progress made. Pupils are also directed towards self-evaluation of their achievements. The originality criterion includes, among others, new ways of expressing with musical elements and elements of musical language which pupils learned in music education (Borota, 2013).

Exercises in musical creativity give students the opportunity to gain musical experience and knowledge through authentic learning. However, teacher plays the key role in inspiring them for musical creativity. The teacher's learning and teaching strategies will give students encouragement and opportunities to actively experience creativity in musical communication or in connection with it and to raise awareness of the "dominant function of creativity in the arts" (Oblak, 2002, p.5). The teacher will stimulate students' creative thinking by pointing out problems, posing questions, encouraging discussion, steering attention, providing quality and timely feedback, creating favourable conditions for cooperation, ensuring a suitable environment for presentation and evaluation of creative achievements. Elaboration and presentation of assessment criteria is an opportunity for the teacher to discuss the aspects of musical creativity with students, thus also stimulating their critical thinking and aesthetic evaluation (Holcar Brunauer, 2010; Kokotsaki, Newton, 2015).

For the purpose of solving creative tasks, individual, in-pairs or group work can be used. For each type of creative task the teacher must give very clear instructions and then monitor, encourage and steer the creative process. Finally, they must ensure the in-class performance of final products and the reflection upon them. Pupils reflect on the basis of their experience, but at the same time analyse the elements used, give suggestions for improvement or participate in selecting the products which would be performed by the entire class.

Creating as Part of the *National Assessment of Knowledge (NAK)* – Results and Discussion

In Slovenia, assessment of attainment of objectives and standards of knowledge as defined in course syllabi has been carried out at the national level as the *Na-*

tional Assessment of Knowledge (NAK) for several years. For the purpose of NAK, music education can be chosen as the third (optional) subject in the 9th year of primary school. The NAK system only allows written exams and establishes the Bloom's cognitive taxonomy as the basis for the preparation of tests as well as their assessment in all subject areas (Žagar, 2002; Rutar Ilc, 2003). Written tests have to consist of 30 % of taxonomy level one (knowledge, comprehension) tasks, 35 % of level two (comprehension and application) tasks and 35 % of level three (analysis, synthesis, evaluation) tasks.

Music education was included in the NAK in the years 2012 and 2014 and was tested on comparable and representative samples of primary schools from all Slovene regions and on comparable number of pupils. In 2012, NAK in music education was held in 111 primary schools and it was taken by 4222 nine-graders. In 2014, NAK in music education was held in 117 primary schools and it was taken by 4130 nine-graders. The tests of the two exams were comparable in terms of difficulty level and taxonomic composition of the exercises. In both cases, the maximum number of points was 70. The tests were comparable in terms of the Difficulty Index (DI): in 2012 $DI = 0.68$, in 2014 $DI = 0.62$. The Reliability Index was higher in 2014 ($\alpha = 0.94$) than in 2012 ($\alpha = 0.84$).

The structure of the examination was the same in both cases, involving the following areas:

1. Listening to, Analysis and Evaluation of Musical Works
2. Comprehension and Use of a Music-related Text
3. Knowledge and Understanding of Musical Culture
4. Comprehension of Musical Score
5. Creating

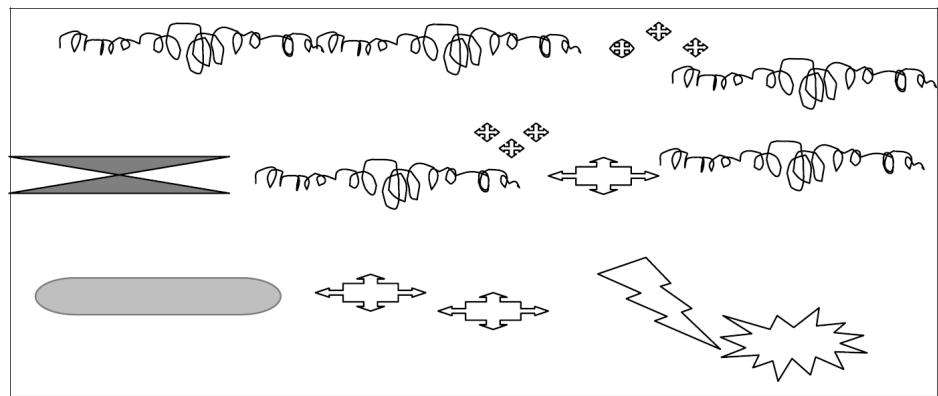
For all activity areas, the NAK provides conceptual explanations. As regards creating, it says: "Creativity is not only the most active form of learning, but also an excellent form of examining the developed musical abilities and the acquired musical knowledge. The exercises are designed in a way which enables pupils to write down the musical contents they create." (*Structure of the 2014 NAK – Music Education*).

The examination sheet that pupils receive contains instructions and an example of a finished exercise. In 2012, students had to compose a sound picture entitled *In the Playground* (*Na igrišču*) and write it down with graphic notation.

Exercise with Instructions and Example (*Glasbena vzgoja. Preizkus znanja*, 2012):

We use different types of notation to write down music. Look at the example of a sound picture entitled *Busy Street* and its legend.

Busy Street: notation of a sound picture



Legend:

Sources of sound	Ways of producing sounds	Graphic symbols
Voice	Imitates the sounds of a car, motorbike, bus	
Triangle	Bicycle bell: Roll a steel mallet on the inside of the triangle	
Harmonica	Car horn: Short and strong blow into the instrument	
Cabasa	Braking: Spin the cabasa quickly	
Tambourine	Crush: Hit the tambourine strongly	

Create your own graphic notation. Write down a sound picture entitled *In the Playground* (*Na igrišču*). Choose three sources of sounds which you will use to represent the happening in the playground as you imagine it. Write down the sources of sounds, ways of producing sounds and symbols in the legend. You cannot use the elements from the example above.

This exercise stimulated the sound imagination, while musical experience and knowledge reflected in the elaboration of the legend, where the sources of sounds and methods of producing sounds were defined and graphic symbols created. The maximum possible amount of points was 11.¹

Results showed that pupils ($N = 4221$) solved the exercise very well and that they found it easy ($DI = 0.86$). On average, they achieved 9.46 points ($SD = 0.23$). The original notations they created complied with and fulfilled the requirements. The levels of inventiveness in the use of sources of sounds, methods of producing sounds and creating a notation differed. However, this was not measured (*Nacionalno preverjanje znanja. Letno poročilo o izvedbi v šolskem letu 2011/12, 2012*).

In 2014, the exercise in creating was more demanding, as it included the use of standard notation:

Exercise with Instructions and Example (*Glasbena vzgoja. Preizkus znanja, 2014*):

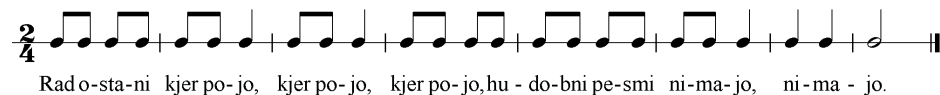
Below, there is an example of a melody written to the text of a Slovene proverb. Materials used: tone pitches, rhythm of the text. Look at the example, than complete the exercises 31 and 32:

Materials:

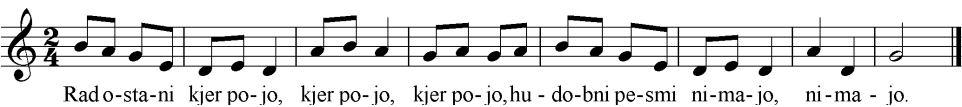
Tones:



Rhythm of the text:



Melody:



32. Based on the example given, write a melody to the text of another Slovene proverb, given below. Write your melody into the empty stave. Use the given materials: tones

¹ For each element written down in the *Legend* (Source of Sound, Method of Producing Sound and Graphic Symbol), pupils received a point (total: 9 points). In order to receive 2 points for the production of graphic notation of the sound picture In the Playground (*Na igrišču*), they had to use all three symbols presented in the *Legend* (*Glasbena vzgoja. Navodila za vrednotenje, 2012*).

instruments). Also, it does not take account of holistic and authentic assessment, as it excludes the psychomotor and affective domains which are very important in music education, representing the experiential basis for cognitive knowledge.

With its instructions and given materials the creative exercise is very definite. It is based predominantly on the use of acquired musical knowledge and does not enable pupils to make a step forward into the field of new (Sternberg, 2006). A typical example is the creative exercise from the 2014 NAK in which we can rather assess pupils' comprehension and use of tonal material (pitches and rhythm) than their inventiveness, sound imagination or internal hearing. On the other hand, the 2012 exercise does stimulate sound imagination and inventiveness and does not examine the knowledge of musical language (e.g. notation, musical syntax). However, pupils still remain at a level which is not connected with the internal hearing.

The presented method of assessing creativity in the framework of NAK can be considered problematic also because it is not carried out in an authentic exercise, where the created work would be performed. The exercises are artificial, designed to measure and evaluate the attainment of the objectives defined by the music education syllabus in the area of creating. Therefore, teachers need a lot of awareness raising and encouragement to prepare exercises which will not remain only on paper, but will also see an acoustic realisation followed by adequate reflections by the teacher, pupil-author and peers.

Conclusions

The Slovene syllabus for primary school music education is based on the doctrine of holistic and process-oriented planning (Borota, 2013, Holcar Brunauer, 2013, Sicherl Kafol 2015). The system of the NAK does not enable examination of the learning objectives and standards of knowledge pertaining to the performing activity area (Rotar Pance, 2015). Also, it does not allow examination of the learning objectives connected with creative transfer of musical perceptions, experiences and notions into other media. As Sicherl Kafol (2015) points out, holistic approach, which connects assessment procedures with the music-learning procedures of pupils in the affective, psychomotor and cognitive domains, should be the leading assessment method in music education. She advocates a switch from a culture of examination to a culture of continuous monitoring and assessment as support to pupils in music learning. Even though this objective can be found among the basic premises of the NAK, it is completely overlooked at the implementation level, with the narrow focus of the NAK on the cognitive domain and the «paper-and-pencil» type of examination.

In the framework of the NAK examination in music education, creating is ranked as a top level area according to the Bloom's taxonomy and represented by the most demanding exercises in the examination sheet. Moreover, it needs to be pointed out that «paper-and-pencil» approach to examination enables correct answers even without understanding (Razdevšek Pučko, 1997). It does not require

a certain level of an individual's inner auditive perception and ability to imagine the created musical contents.

The assessment criteria for the exercises in creating are defined very clearly and the results achieved in these exercises were positively commented in both final reports (2012, 2014) by the national music-education assessment commission. But at the same time, new questions emerged in connection with creative processes. With regard to that, Adams (2001) points out that thoroughly structured summative assessment criteria can overlook completely the meaning of creative processes, thus trivialising the nature of the product assessed.

The examples of creative exercises from the 2012 and 2014 NAK presented above show that such examinations focus more on students' musical knowledge than their musical imagination. Instructions containing excessive directions and limitations can hinder students' imagination and original musical ideas and also send the wrong signal to teachers to see creativity more as an assessment exercise. Moreover, such exercises are not authentic due to the fact that the created ideas never see their realisation and reflection.

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др Бранка Ротар Панце

Музичко стваралаштво као део силабуса у словеначким основним школама и национални систем за процену знања

Сажетак

У свим разредима словеначких основних школа, музичко стваралаштво представља једну од три главне активности у музичком образовању. У силабусу су постављени циљеви оперативног учења, садржаји који се односе на музичко стваралаштво и методичко-дидактички стандарди. Наставници се подстичу да у процес наставе уводе интердисциплинарност, користе ICT у област музичког стваралаштва, те теже индивидуализацији наставе и спровођењу одговарајућих метода за оцењивање. Године 2012. и 2014, предмет Националног система за процену знања (НАК) био је остваривање циљева предвиђених силабусом музичког образовања. У раду се представља структура НАК у области музичке педагогије, а нарочита пажња усмерена је на пету област – музичко стваралаштво. Испитивање је засновано на Блумовој таксономији васпитно-образовних циљева у когнитивном подручју. Вежбе које се односе на музичко стваралаштво представљене су у облику писаног теста. Године 2012, испитивање је спроведено са 4222 ученика деветог разреда. Вежбе су засноване на употреби графичке нотације. Године 2014, укључено је још 4130 ученика деветог разреда, када су вежбе садржале употребу стандардне музичке нотације. У раду се прво дају примери за креативне вежбе на посебним листовима и скала за оцењивање, а затим се представљају и пореде резултати оба испитивања. Поједини аспекти НАК и креативне вежбе усмерени су више ка практичном музичком знању него ка стимулисању ученичке маште и стварању оригиналних музичких идеја. Штавише, ученичка решења вежби никада се нису извела, што такође значи да је ученицима ускраћена естетска процена и критичка реакција на употребљене музичке идеје. Стога, не можемо да сматрамо да су наведене вежбе плод аутентичног креативног стваралаштва.

Кључне речи: музичко стваралаштво, словеначке основне школе, национални систем за процену знања, силабус музичког образовања, Блумова таксономија васпитно-образовних циљева