

## METHODOLOGICAL POSSIBILITIES OF USING MUSIC LEARNING TOPICS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INTEGRATED TEACHING

UDC 371.311::78; 371.3::78J:373.32; 371.214.5:37.026

**Vesna Zdravković, Aleksandar Stojadinović,  
Jelena Vučkovski-Minevska**

Pedagogical Faculty in Vranje, University of Niš, Serbia

**Abstract.** *This paper focuses on the review of scientific articles and publications from the field of Teaching Methodology published in Serbia and the region that show the possibility of using music learning materials in the implementation of integrated teaching. The provided examples of these papers show that certain learning topics from the Music lessons are suitable for the intradisciplinary integration; however, they can also be used in other courses as well. Both the historical method and theoretical analysis method were used in this paper, which proved useful when it comes to theoretical research of this kind, and the aim of the paper is to promote the concept that music art is integrated with other learning topics through Music Education lessons in class teaching, in order to achieve the integrity of professional and pedagogical education of future school teachers and preschool teachers and thus make music art accessible to everyone.*

**Key words:** *integrated teaching, learning topics, Music lessons*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Integrated teaching is a teaching model which connects the learning topics of two or more subjects. This teaching model blurs the boundaries between different subjects. In integrated teaching, meaningful connections are made between similar aspects of different disciplines.

The goal of integrated learning is to connect complex issues from different subjects, which should lead to an interdisciplinary synthesis of knowledge, so that students get a unique (complete) overview of the world (Vilotijević, 2006). Its effects and application allow

---

Received June 22, 2020/Accepted July 3, 2020

**Corresponding author:** Vesna Zdravković

Pedagogical Faculty in Vranje, University of Niš, Partizanska 14, 17500 Vranje, Serbia

Phone: +381 17 422 962 • E-mail: [vesszdravkovic@gmail.com](mailto:vesszdravkovic@gmail.com)

the students to be educated as socially communicative, intelligent, free, developed and responsible people. The knowledge and skills that a student acquires in school should be based on the principle of integrity, which is manifested in thinking, emotions, actions and behavior (Jovanović, 2016).

In order to achieve this goal, teachers have to use related learning topics of different subjects and to connect them into one whole and explain them as such to the students. In doing so, the teacher should take into account what specific learning topics are used for the purpose of integrated lessons.

Integrated approach to teaching is a thematic approach because it connects and organizes thematic units and learning topics that are similar or common in different disciplines. When it comes to the primary school level of education, an especially important segment of this process is implemented within class teaching. "Learning topics are mostly interconnected and intertwined in class teaching by the nature of things, because the subjects that are studied do not follow a strict scientific basis due to the age of the students" (Nađ-Olajoš, 2016, p. 18). The integrated approach to learning can be used in working with students of all ages and in all types of education. However, it is important to take into account the psychological foundations of the integration of learning topics that are conditioned by student age, development of thinking skills, deduction, as well as by student abilities and interests.

## 2. INTEGRATED APPROACH TO MUSIC EDUCATION

Music lessons in primary school require thorough lesson planning and preparation and ways of acting in certain situations in order to make the teaching process more efficient. Certain didactic methods are used in music lessons, which cannot be applied to all the topics taught without adapting them to the specifics and requirements of this subject. "The learning topics taught within this subject cannot simply be broken into teaching topics, they are fragmented and integratively intertwined through different activities, and it is impossible to connect them into didactic and logical wholes" (Zdravković, 2017, p. 327). It is practically possible to create lesson plans by activities for the learning topics specified by the curriculum, however, this type of lesson planning does not specify how to group these topics, in what order they should be taught, how they will be connected with other topics within the particular subject or with other subjects.

Certain music education learning topics are very suitable for the integrated teaching approach because such topics are diverse and present in other disciplines as well. Therefore, the integration of music education learning topics should not be seen as an addition to other subjects – on the contrary, the related topics of different subjects should be a motivation to see the complete picture of the studied phenomena.

A notable number of authors offered concrete methodological solutions and recognized that Music Education is a subject that provides exceptional opportunities for integration.

Jensen (2003) emphasizes that the Music Education lessons can be integratively connected with different subjects. As an example of that, he mentions the connection between Music Education and Literature, where a poem (song) to be taught is firstly selected from the musical and then from the literary aspect. Opera can be taught in the same way, as well as other music genres which include literary works in any way. He makes a connection between history and music through historical epochs, with the suggestion that each epoch can be treated from the historical and musical aspect. As for the connection between Music

Education and Geography, he suggests that when teaching students about a region or a foreign country, its music should also be introduced. He sees the connection between Mathematics and Music through the symbolism of numbers and the role of numbers in music, while from the aspect of Physics and Music he finds a connection in acoustics.

Vidulin-Orbanić (2004) believes that there are not that many opportunities for integration between Music Education and non-music related learning topics. Connections are possible only in the form of comparative interpretations of real connections between certain phenomena, that is, regarding folklore and historical topics. This author believes that the integration of music education with other subjects is reduced to a comparison of learning topics of those two subjects, and offers an example that while explaining and showing how to breathe properly while singing we can remind students of the respiratory system, or when learning musical notation, we should remind students that they have already learned one alphabet.

Glavina (2005) emphasized the methodological benefits of organizing an integrated learning month, where the main topic would be the *Month* of the books written by Ivana Brlić Mažuranić. In cooperation with other teachers, the author planned, prepared and implemented the idea of an integrated learning month dedicated to the above writer, in order to encourage students to read. The integration of the following subjects was performed: Mother tongue, Nature and Society, Mathematics, Arts and Music Education. Students danced to the selected music, acted certain dramatic pieces, completed the unfinished story, changed the ending of the fable according to their own opinion, wrote their own fairy tale, passed rules on reading and saving books, solved language issues, watched TV shows, watched cartoons, prepared for a conversation with the writer and participated in the competition for the best literary and art work.

Rojko (2005) mentions one possible type of integrated teaching that is occasionally used in the classroom. It is a process where students express their musical experiences artistically or literary, and vice versa, a process where a non-musical experience is expressed through music. An example of it is reciting poetry over a musical accompaniment. The possibility for students to express their musical experiences artistically or literary, clearly indicates the interconnectedness of arts.

Drobnjak (2007) organizes the learning topic *Saobraćaj [Traffic]* as an integrated learning day, by connecting the learning topics of different subjects: Serbian language, The world around us, Art Education, Music Education and Mathematics. In Serbian language lessons, a song about traffic was taught, which created internal integration by connecting literature and language. In the subject World around us, students learn a song about traffic and cover the defined topic of traffic, which allows them to expand their knowledge on this topic by repeating the material. Painting the badges with traffic motifs creates a connection between Art Education and traffic. The author connects the Music education with the traffic topic with the song *Tramvaj, auto, voz [Tram, car, train]*, while Mathematics is linked with traffic by talking about *Straight line, half-line and line segment*, where students apply the acquired knowledge on a complex picture of the intersection.

Djordjević (2007) presents a model of an integrated teaching day with the topic *Al' se nebo osmehiva [The Sky is Smiling]*, through a workshop including Serbian language, Art lessons, Music lessons, Nature and Society and Mathematics. Students were divided into four groups and worked according to their current affinities with the possibility of changing activities, with one group analyzing the song, the other focusing on the art depiction (drawing) of the experience of the song, the third group dramatizes the song, and the fourth solves math problems regarding the topic in the song. All groups make a poster as feedback on their work.

Sprenić (2007) connects the learning topic *Rastko Nemanjić - Saint Sava* with Serbian language, Mathematics, Society, Art education and Music education subjects. The school day begins with an expressive reading of the short story *Zlatno jagnje [The Golden Lamb]*, written by Svetlana Velmar Janković, which serves as the center point with which all other topics are connected and integrated. Students are divided into five groups, each of which represents one particular subject. The Serbian language group analyzes the short story, the Mathematics group solves problems regarding the Saint Sava topic, the Science & Social Studies group looks at the character and work of Rastko Nemanjić from a historical perspective, the Art Education group paints the elements from the short story, while the Music Education group presents a certain section from the short story with dramatization and performs the *Hymn to Saint Sava* on a metallophone.

Knežević (2008) states that the subjects Literature, Art Education and Music Education are seen as a whole when analyzing literary works. In the younger grades of primary school, the teacher is given the opportunity to integrate the analysis of a literary work with the relevant topics from other subjects. The analysis of a literary work will be more understandable to the students if it is supplemented with pictures and music. Particular emphasis is on poetic images in a literary work, which are in synergy with Art Education. In this way, the student understands the concept of the painting and the concept of character in a literary work. In order to enhance the emotional experience of a literary work in students, it is necessary to add music listening when the literary work and the circumstances allow it. Specific examples of poem, short story and fairy tale analysis in integration with Art and Music Education presented in this paper are: lyric poem *Au, što je škola zgodna [School is the Greatest Place]* by Ljubivoje Ršumović, short story *Train Whistle* by Milenko Ratković, *The Tale of the Fisherman and the Fish* by Alexander Pushkin, and a folk tale *Castle neither in heaven nor on earth*.

Stošić (2008) uses the example of *dodolska* song (rainmaking song) *Mi idemo preko polja [We go across the field]* to explain how this song develops vocal abilities, and also creates a foundation for future musical literacy, considering that this song is suitable for younger school age children, both in terms of traditional heritage and in terms of melody scope. When telling students about these songs and why they were written, we affect their cognitive development, and also expand their vocabulary, which integrates this learning topic with the Serbian language subject.

Starting from the fact that the use of music in the organization and implementation of physical activities is very significant for children and represents an inseparable part of physical activities, Džinović-Kojić (2009) connects musical and physical activities through thematic activity *Do - Re - Mi*. The aim of that paper was to help teachers to use the activities from in these thematic areas “to expand children’s movement vocabulary and improve their dancing skills by using dance activities, while at the same time exploring the range of movement responses to stimuli, that is, music” (2009, p. 185).

Stojanović (2011) emphasizes the importance of integrated teaching as a precondition for a successful interpretation of folk literature. The author of the paper, attempting to establish a firm connection between the related learning topics between different subjects, proposes a plan for the interpretation of folk literature in the third grade. She connects the Serbian language teaching unit *Marko Kraljević i Beg Kostadin [Prince Marko and Bey Kostadin]*, the epic folk poem, with the learning topics from the subjects Nature and Society, Music Education, Art Education and Folk Tradition. By analyzing this specific epic poem in Nature and Society lessons, students gain knowledge about famous people from their region. As for

Music lessons, students listen to a folk song from Serbia – *Dim se vije na vrh Cakora* [*Smoke rises from the top of Cakor*], which is in line with the theme and epoch, while the Arts lessons include learning about Ornaments, Contrast, Magic of light and dark. This topic was linked with Folk Tradition by learning about plants and the house (fireplace, water, lighting ...) and holidays.

Dobrota (2012) claims that music lessons are suitable for both intradisciplinary and interdisciplinary integration of learning concepts. As an example of interdisciplinary integration, the author mentions the connection between the composition *Sabre Dance* from the ballet *Gayane*, and the Korčula Dance *Moreška* with the aim of deepening students' knowledge of cultural heritage. As the author states, interdisciplinary integration can be applied when analyzing folk poems or compositions through which students get to know the instruments, folk costumes, and social circumstances in which that specific song or composition was created and in which it was performed. Intradisciplinary integration is achieved with the music learning topics themselves. For example, a comparison between the compositions in which *accelerando* occurs *In the Hall of the Mountain King* from suite no. 1 by Edvard Grieg, and the *Toy Symphony* by Leopold Mozart, or a comparison between the compositions in which the same musical theme is applied, for example *The Tortoise* from *The Carnival of the Animals* by Camille Saint-Saëns, and *Can Can* from *Orpheus in the Underworld* by Jacques Offenbach.

Nadj-Olajoš (2013) uses the example of analyzing the fairy tale *Cinderella* intended for the fourth grade of primary school, and points to the possibility of connecting it with learning topics from Art Education, Music Education, Physical Education, Religious Education and Folk Tradition and claims that such an interdisciplinary approach can give positive results in terms of knowledge quality and durability. The school day begins with literature lessons, and a folk tale is analyzed. Furthermore, the thematic day continues with the Art lesson – where a ball gown is drawn, and with a music lesson where the students listen to waltz music. Physical education classes can be used to organize a ball, while the integration in Religion lessons include the structure and meaning of Liturgy and Mass. Folk tradition lessons provide students with knowledge about beliefs as well as the symbolism of the spindle.

Zdravković and Stojadinović (2016) investigate the connection between the subjects Music Education and Physical Education through the learning concepts that focus on children's folk songs and dances. The authors state that children's folk songs and dances as an integral part of Music lessons and Physical Education lessons within class teaching are suitable for integrated teaching approach, because it would avoid unnecessary repetition and at the same time students would acquire deeper and more systematic knowledge. This paper presents examples suitable for integrated teaching (*Hajd na levo* [*Hop to the left*]; *Dunje ranke* [*Fresh Quince*]; *Ja posejah lubenice* [*I planted the watermelons*]; *Zeleni se jagodo* [*Green Strawberry*]; *Kolaricu, Panicu* [*Cat's cradle*]; *Prolecno kolo* [*Spring circle dance*])... in order to highlight that children's folk songs and dances should be analyzed and performed exclusively with a close connection between Music lessons and Physical Education lessons.

Zdravković (2017) proposes the musical story *Medvedova zenidba* [*Bear's Marriage*] by Desanka Maksimović and Lambra Dimitrijević, as a learning topic suitable for the integration between Music Education, Serbian Language and the World Around Us. The author proposes special learning objectives for each subject. In Music lessons, students are supposed to recognize male and female voices in the story, to distinguish the characteristics of voices, distinguish the musical instruments being played, recognize the vocal characteristics of different characters from the story. The learning objectives proposed for the Serbian

language are: getting acquainted with the text of the storyline, observing the poetic wholes, observing the aesthetic values of the literary work, identifying the key message of the literary work. In the World around Us lessons, students had to recognize the differences between the animals of the forest and animals of other habitats, as well as to get acquainted with the characteristics of forest animals. The author concludes that the proposed model should encourage teachers to search for the learning concepts from different subjects that will provide modern students with coherent knowledge.

Simić (2019) emphasizes the advantages of the integrated approach to teaching, with particular emphasis on music education. The author highlights the importance of the curriculum and especially the learning objectives while planning the lessons that integrate music education with other subjects. The author believes that song is the main concept to be used for integrated learning purposes in Music lessons. As the author states in the paper, song represents learning material that has great integrative potential because, in addition to musical components, it also contains poetic ones. Integrated teaching approach that focuses on the song as the main concept, uses the song characteristics, that is, the analysis of its musical aspect allows for the Music education learning objectives to be met, while the analysis of its poetic text allows for the learning objectives of other subjects to be achieved as well. The suggested learning concepts are only an illustration of an integrated approach to teaching, that is, these are not complete and even less the only solutions. The author deliberately omits a detailed elaboration of integrated lessons, since, as he states, he did not want to create lesson models, but rather to emphasize the importance of connecting such activities with the curriculum and to encourage the discovery of integration possibilities.

### 3. CONCLUSION

Based on the presented examples of methodological applications, it can be concluded that music learning materials can be very helpful in the implementation of integrated teaching.

Based on the main ideas, and the methodological and conceptual solutions shown in the presented methodological applications, it is possible to draw the following conclusions about the importance of integrated teaching approach:

- a certain number of Music education learning concepts are of interdisciplinary character and provide an opportunity to integrate knowledge from several fields;
- the majority of papers emphasize the possibility of integrating Music education learning concepts with the concepts from other subjects within class teaching, while a small number of authors analyze the possibility of applying the integration of music learning concepts in subject teaching;
- within class teaching, Music education learning concepts are mainly integrated with Serbian language, Nature and Society, Art education, and to a lesser extent with learning concepts from Mathematics and Physical Education;
- in subject teaching that relies on the integrated teaching approach, Music education learning concepts are mostly connected with Literature, History, Geography and Art education;
- thematic integrations in class teaching are achieved by connecting the Music Education learning concepts with Serbian language, Nature and Society, Mathematics and Art Education;

- by applying the integrated teaching approach, students simultaneously adopt different topics of two or more subjects, or different topics within one subject;
- the integrated teaching approach can largely meet the students' needs in both class and subject teaching, because students would gain knowledge and experience in a comprehensive and integrated way;
- group work is usually used in integrated lessons through which allows the students to achieve collective learning objectives;
- integrated learning enables a combination of artistic and scientific, rational and emotional.

All of the above should encourage teachers to include the integrated teaching approach in the classroom, at least occasionally. Given that our schools still predominantly use traditional education concepts, more frequent attempts are needed to rectify its shortcomings and modernize it with appropriate methodological systems. Although the division into scientific fields and subjects/courses is necessary, the curricula and the teaching process itself should not be based on a limited relationship between different subjects and related or similar learning concepts, as this leads to a fragmentation of students' knowledge.

It is important that students observe similar learning concepts through different subjects and learning areas, to get acquainted with different solutions and with a system of knowledge acquisition where everything is interconnected and dependent, which further enables complete cognition of certain phenomena, knowledge acquisition and connections between different subjects, as well as being able to understand how important the acquired knowledge is for everyday life.

#### REFERENCES

- Dobrota, S. (2012). Korelacija u glazbenoj nastavi [Correlation in Music Teaching], *Tonovi*, 27(59), 18-23.
- Drobnjak, N. (2007). Integrativna nastava [Integrated Teaching], *Obrazovna tehnologija*, (1-2), 81-91.
- Đorđević, V. (2007). Inovativni modeli nastave [Innovated Teaching Models], *Obrazovna tehnologija*, (4), 76-81.
- Džinović-Kojić, D. (2009). Pokret i muzika kroz ples kao determinante stvaralačke sinteze u preplitanju fizičkih i muzičkih sposobnosti [Movement and Music through Dance as the Determinants of Creative Synthesis between Physical and Musical Abilities], *Metodička praksa*, 13(2-3), 185-198.
- Glavina, A. (2005). Prikaz razrednog projekta integrirane nastave [Presentation of a Class Project of Integrated Teaching], *Život i škola*, (14), 107-115.
- Jansen, E. (2003). *Super nastava [Super Teaching]*. Zagreb: Eduka.
- Jovanović, M. (2016). *Utjecaj integrativne nastave na postignuća učenika u nastavi prirode i društva u dijaspori [The Influence of Integrated Teaching on Students' Achievements in Nature and Society Lessons in the Diaspora]*. (Doktorska disertacija) [Doctoral Thesis]. Vranje: Pedagoški fakultet.
- Knežević, M. (2008). Etika epskih narodnih pesama kao model u vaspitno-obrazovnom radu, U: *Etička dimenzija obrazovanja [The Ethics of Epic Folk Poems as a Model in Educational Work]*, In: *Ethical Dimension of Education* (str. 123-131). Jagodina: Pedagoški fakultet.
- Nađ-Olajoš, A. (2013). Međupredmetna korelacija u nastavnoj obradi narodne bajke [Interdisciplinary Correlation in Folk Tales Teaching], *Obrazovna tehnologija*, (2), 211-218.
- Nađ-Olajoš, A. (2016). *Mogućnosti primene korelacijsko-integracijskog metodičkog sistema u razrednoj nastavi [The Possibility of Application of Correlation and Integration Methodological System in Class Teaching]*. (Doktorska disertacija) [Doctoral Thesis]. Novi Sad: Filozofski fakultet.
- Rojko, P. (2005). HNOS za glazbenu nastavu [The Croatian National Educational Standard for Music Education], *Tonovi*, 45-46, 5-16.
- Simić, U. (2019). Nastavni program kao polazište u integrativnoj nastavi muzičke kulture [Curriculum as a Starting Point in Integrated Teaching of Music Education], *Metodička teorija i praksa*, 2, 265-278.
- Spremić, A. (2007). Integrativna nastava [Integrated Teaching], *Obrazovna tehnologija*, (1-2), 74-80.
- Stojanović, B. (2011). Savremena nastavna tehnologija i narodna književnost [Modern Instructional Technology and Folk Literature], *Inovacije u nastavi*, 2, 103-110.

- Stošić, A. (2008). Pesma - spona u integrativnom pristupu nastave muzičke kulture, srpskog jezika i književnosti za decu, U: *Književnost za decu u nauci i nastavi [Song - The Link in the Integrated Teaching Approach to Music Education, Serbian Language and Literature for Children, In: Literature for Children in Science and Instruction]* (str. 392-403). Jagodina: Pedagoški fakultet.
- Vidulin-Orbanić, S. (2004). Glazbeno stvaralaštvo učenika OŠ Vladimira Nazora u Rovinju [Musical Creativity of Vladimir Nazor Elementary School Students in Rovinj], *Tonovi*, 45/46(1), 44-62.
- Vilotijević, N. (2006). *Integrativna nastava prirode i društva [Integrated Teaching of Nature and Society]*. Beograd: Školska knjiga.
- Zdravković, V., i Stojadinović, A. (2016). Integrativni pristup decjoj narodnoj pesmi i igri u nastavi muzicke kulture i fizickog vaspitanja [The Integrated Teaching Approach to Children's Folk Songs and Dances in Music Education and Physical Education Lessons], In: *Tradicija kao inspiracija, Vlado S. Milosevic – etnomuzikolog, kompozitor i pedagog [Tradition as Inspiration, Vlado S. Milosevic - Ethnomusicologist, Composer and Pedagogue]* (str. 615-621). Banja Luka: Akademija umjetnosti.
- Zdravković, V. (2017). Integrativni pristup početnoj muzičkoj nastavi u osnovnoj školi [Integrative Approach in Initial Music Education in Primary School], *Godišnjak Pedagoškog fakulteta u Vranju*, VIII, 325-341.

## METODIČKE MOGUĆNOSTI PRIMENE MUZIČKIH SADRŽAJA U REALIZACIJI INTEGRATIVNE NASTAVE

*Predmet ovog rada su publikacije iz oblasti Metodike nastave objavljene u Srbiji i zemljama u okruženju, koje osvetljavaju mogućnost primene muzičkih sadržaja u realizaciji integrativne nastave. Navedeni primeri prikazanih radova pokazuju da su pojedini sadržaji predmeta Muzička kultura pogodni za unutarpredmetnu integraciju, ali i da se sadržaji ovoga predmeta na određeni način mogu implementirati i u sadržaje drugih nastavnih predmeta. U radu je primenjena uporedno istorijska metoda i metoda teorijske analize, koja se pokazala korisnom kada su teorijska ispitivanja ovakve vrste u pitanju, a cilj rada je sadržan u promociji koncepta da se muzička umetnost kroz nastavne sadržaje Muzičke kulture u razrednoj nastavi, integriše sa ostalim nastavnim sadržajima u cilju postizanja celovitosti stručnog i pedagoškog obrazovanja budućih učitelja i vaspitača i time muzička umetnost učini dostupnom svima.*

Ključne reči: *integrativna nastava, nastavni sadržaji, Muzička kultura*