

## INTEGRATING MUSIC AND DANCE INTO SCHOOL CURRICULUM

(Professional paper)

**Lenče Nasev**

*Goce Delčev University of Štip, Faculty of music, Štip, Macedonia*

### Abstract

*Dance, as well as the music, occupies a special place among the arts. It is performed in a certain space and time and in it the man is both the artist and the instrument. In the past, dance had a ritual and a social function. In modern societies of today these functions are gradually forgotten, they disappear or change their function. The need for conservation and scenic presentation of dance as an original, authentic structure within the school curriculum stems from the fact that it is an inseparable part of the spiritual culture of a community in which it is created and applied. The paper shows the presence of integrating music and dance into the frames of school curriculum.*

**Keywords:** *music education, physical education, folk dances, motor development, types of dances, elective curricula subjects*

### INTRODUCTION

Dance as well as the music is a temporal art. It is performed in a kind of space. With the cessation of the artist's performance, the art itself stops too. Dance is associated with the processes of thinking and remembering. Remembering the precise movements, the musical composition, choreography, aligning with a partner or a group – all of this activates the process of thinking. This activation helps the movement to be performed exactly at a certain time and in a certain space. The movement must be aligned with the actual music. Given that every piece of music has its own structure; dancers must constantly listen to music and thus get familiar with the language of music.

Dance is an integral part of the spiritual culture of the people. The need of studying it in modern society appears as a social phenomenon. It is the carrier of cultural symbols through which the unity of a community is expressed and perpetuated.

Dance as an art may be divided and studied as national, social, artistic, amateur (recreational) art and pantomime (Kostić, 1991).

Unlike in the past, when dance had ritual and social functions in traditional cultures, in modern societies today these functions are gradually forgotten, they are disappearing or changing their function. For this reason, a need for their study, conservation and stage presentation in their original and authentic structure within the school curriculum appears. By studying and learning

dances physical and motor development in children are encouraged, love and desire are developed toward dancing and for one's own musical heritage as well as for dance arts of other nations.

Within the program for educational work with preschool children in public kindergartens in the Republic of Macedonia, dance is realized as part of music and physical education (Bureau for Development of Education, 2006).

In the nine-year primary education in the Republic of Macedonia dance as a teaching content is also an integral part of the curricula for the subject's music and physical education. Its application in the course of learning the planned content of these subjects allows students to understand and learn the concepts of rhythm, pace, dynamics, space, and simple folk dances with singing and stylized dances more easily. Beside the fact that it develops the creativeness, it also has an educational and an aesthetic function (Bureau for Development of Education 2007).

Within the school curriculum with the Concept of nine-year education in the Republic of Macedonia (Bureau for Development of Education 2007), besides the regular subjects planned to be studied there are elective subjects as well. Through a survey the school provides information about which elective subjects will become part of school obligatory program subjects. Among these is the subject of the musical art area "Dance and folk dances" (Bureau for Development of Education 2008).

It is planned in the third period of primary school - from grade VII to IX, with 2 hours per week. The curriculum for the subject "Dance and folk dances" as normative staff proposes that classes be realized by a person who graduated on the music academy.

The main goal of this subject is specifically that students learn about the traditional music in the Republic of Macedonia, to learn a number of folk dances as well as the classical and modern dances. Through this subject they will gradually be involve into understanding traditional dances and folk dances, they will learn to appreciate, perform and develop the performing skills of rhythmic body movements synchronized with music; they will become familiar with the performance of artistic and folk dances; they will be encouraged to play individually, in pairs and in groups; to gain confidence in performance (orientation in space, synchronization and coordination of movements, learning and changing the sequence of movements and execution of a complete psycho-motor activity); to experience the beauty of traditional dances; they will be encouraged to freely express themselves in dancing and release of stress and psycho-emotional tension; and to develop interest and love toward the traditional dances.

The curriculum includes the following subjects: 1. *Dances* (10 hours), 2. *Classification of folk dances* (10 hours), 3. *Ritual dances* (16 hours), 4. *Dance areas* (36 hours). Program objectives are realized through practical and theoretical instruction, individual, collective and group work, individual and group exercises done by the students.

During the implementation and demonstration of dances the following methods are used: the method of demonstration by explaining the steps, patterns, dance elements, dance technique, stylistic features, etc.; method of conversation which induces a dialogue between the teacher and the student through questions and answers; and the method of oral presentation used in the methodological analyses of dances in order to describe and explain them.

The need for the study of modern dances as an educational content within the teaching topic *Dances* occurs as a result of the young population's need. Modern artistic dance appeared in the first half of the 20th century as a result of the modern and dynamic lifestyle, perception and action. Its essence is created by the freedom in emotional expression and the freedom of dance symbols merged into stylistic and thematic choreographic solution aligned with the unity of form and content of music. The American dancer of Irish origin Isadora Duncan (1878-1927) is considered the founder of the modern dance. Her work is based on the re-analyses and setting of the classic ancient dance based on the rules of free elastic and introduction of elements of pantomime. She is an opponent of classical ballet technique, the fingers dancing and of costumes (Kostić, 1991).

This paper gives a brief description of an idea for choreography of the teaching content for the per-

formance of modern dance. The movements described are performed to the music by the popular singer Sting - Desert Rose.

**The course of the activity:** the teacher selects 8-10 girls and 8-10 boys. The female student who has the best dancing skills stands in central position. Around her the other girls distant from each other form a circle. The boys are seated on the ground behind each of the girls and they also form a circle.

**The role of the central female student:** her initial position is kneeling. With the gradation of the musical tempo and by moving her hips and hands she stands up, goes out of the circle and dances in front of a few selected boys using a prop - a headscarf. At the end of the dance she returns to the starting position.

**The role of other girls:** from one place they gradually start to dance around the girl, turning in a circle around her, and then they turn to boys and dance toward them. By grading the pace they use scarves (props), pass between boys and turn a circle around them holding each other's scarves. Finally, they return the girl into the middle and kneel around her covering her with scarves.

**The role of boys:** their starting position is sitting. In a playful phase they stand up and holding each other by the shoulder with big steps and raised knees they dance around the central girl, they let go and again with clapping hands and dancing on the spot they watch the girls. Finally, they spread the circle and with hands raised high they end the dance.

## CONCLUSION

From this we can see and conclude that the integration between music and dance is not represented only in the curricula of the subjects music and physical education. It occupies a central and significant place within the elective subject "Dance and folk dances" which is an integral part of the school curriculum in the Republic of Macedonia.

The study of this subject encourages the affection for traditions, nurturing modern dance for personal expression, positive emotions, creativity, and aesthetic expression in individual and team work in students. Moreover, this subject is of great importance for proper physical development of students, for boosting their body, for the development and improvement of motor skills, and the development of the need for physical activity.

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**Correspondence:**

Lenče Nasev

Goce Delčev University of Štip,

Faculty of music, Štip, Macedonia

“Krstе Misirkov” b.b., 2000, Štip, Macedonia

E-mail: lence.nasev@ugd.edu.mk