

CREATIVE EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES THROUGH EXTRACURRICULAR MUSICAL ACTIVITIES

Extracurricular activities became a significant component of education and schooling, and with their expansion, openness, diversity and freedom they are of crucial importance to students, for their universal development.

The work in extracurricular activities is free, spontaneous, dynamic, various, flexibly organized. It proceeds from pupils' interest, their desires, preferences and talents. Previšić (1987, 28) highlights that "a student participates in them with the intention to deepen his/her knowledge, to have fun, to enjoy himself/herself, that he/she pleasantly and usefully spends the free time out-of-class or school".

Covay and Carbonaro (2010) mentioned that with these activities a great number of pupils are enabled to satisfy their interests and develop their competences and skills for particular fields. In this way school, being an educational institution, is a stimulator and a model of young people's free time, especially in smaller places where school is an only place with systematized and necessary skilled, organised and material conditions; they can provide systematic work and follow the child's development.

Extracurricular musical activities are an integral part of educational school structure in the Republic of Croatia. As a part of eight-year primary education, every pupil encounters himself/herself, next to regular classes, with the possibility to select various extracurricular activities. Together with regular music lessons they contribute to update the pupils' knowledge, development of their music skills and acquisition of positive human characteristics.

Extracurricular musical activities are established through the yearly school curricular. The number of group is determined by it, and also the types of extracurricular activities, then time in which, weekly and yearly a particular extracurricular activity takes place. A freely chosen activity, open approach and flexibility, pleasant environment and skilled-professional teachers' help, will make from an extracurricular activity a desired activity, and consequently the results will be more valuable (Pejić Papak, Vidulin-Orbanić, 2011).

According to staffing and material possibilities, school should offer as many programs as possible, then involve experts from other organizations, with the aim of connecting school with the environment where pupils live and work.

At the beginning of the school year pupils decide which extracurricular musical activities they are going to attend. Their contents and organisation can be advertised in different ways: by placing an exhibition, presenting photographic documentation, published literary work and sections from the school paper, holding thematic lectures, showing drawings, competitions and performance results, by radio and TV broadcasts, music recordings, holding a class meeting. Group advisors (and form teachers) get pupils acquainted with the contents and work organisation so that they can decide which group they want to attend. They can express more wishes making a list, and teachers help in deciding which is the most appropriate for them, considering the previously noted preferences and abilities.

In general education primary schools in the Republic of Croatia different extracurricular musical activities are performed with the focus on vocal, instrumental or vocal-instrumental music playing, dancing and various types of music creativity. The most frequent extracurricular musical activities include choral singing, solo singing, playing an instrument (individual and in group), music creativity, song composition, dancing, folklore and musical projects. These activities encourage pupils' authenticity, their interests, motives, needs, capabilities, creativity, criticalness and responsibility.

The teaching curriculum of extracurricular musical activities contributes with its choice of contents to unburdening of regular classes, as well as to enrichment of topics of extracurricular musical activities, especially for the pupils who want to know more. A correlation between contents of different school subjects such as Croatian language, art, music culture and history, and geography, can develop an interdisciplinary character of the working process.

In the existing timetable more time should also be planned for pupils' individual and creative work, for optional topics and topic reinforcement in extracurricular activities. Activities can be specific for a single school, depending on pupils' interest and school, or they can be adjusted to the area the school belongs to.

We will describe one of the extracurricular music activities: the work on the musical *Your path*. The purpose of this school musical is to encourage the creativity of students and enable them to participate in a more complex type of music. Working on the musical means the development of singing and acting skills of students. It encouraged their creativity and resulted in the creative act – staging of the school musical. In order to perform a musical, program content and activities designed by the collaboration of three groups of students: composers, choir and drama groups of school, was necessary.

In the shaping of a musical it is important to determine how to design and produce a specific action (children's world into a visible reality), a way of connecting plot and musical numbers, describing and expressing the action with view and dancing, working with a larger numbers of students of different interests and orientations. In the musical *Your path* the teachers have talked with students about the topics of love and friendships, changing behaviours, fears and desires and influence of peers, to determine in which direction to move the action of musical. In this way the leaders see how students perceive and experience the life situations and this way the focus of discussions was determined. It is important to emphasize that the music and lyrics were the impetus for creating the basic outline of the story of musical.

The full text and the characters were created based on the improvisation of eleven members of the drama group, students from the seventh and the eighth grade. That is how children's story about Marko and Ana was created. Through the joys and disappointments of love, during one school year and four seasons, talking and singing, they were accompanied by their friends and rivals. Given the fact that the songs talked about what was close, interesting and important to the students, it was easy for them to play the created characters who spoke about their experience in the world, friendship and love. Each group practiced separately and with active participation in the process of making musicals, students learn about the musical form.

The musical work on the musical *Your path* started in the extracurricular musical activities of composing. The composing lasted for two years, in preparing of the musical material, from which certain songs became part of the musical. In the next year instrumental support for selected compositions was recorded, and that year began the work on the musical, vocal spots with the choir and vocal soloists. First, the singers learned all the songs together in two voices, and then they were selected for certain fragments as soloist, a duet for a song of romantic character and a part for a vocal ensemble that was supposed to perform the song in three voices. The choir performed the songs in two and three voices.

After the final song acquired physiognomy, students started working on the choreography. Members of the choir who have had experience in dancing (attended extracurricular dance activity) divided the choreography. Some dances were designed for dancing in a group, or one or two students, the other required the entire choir to dance, or even some actors to dance. In the meantime, while singers trained in points and choreography, the drama school section was devising the plot of the musical and musical dialogues.

Given that the musical *Your path* became a school project, the work involved the students in extracurricular art activities which designed the scenery for a musical.

Our experience is that children are prone to learn in a creative manner, researching, experimenting and questioning. Shulruf, Tumen and Tolley (2008) point that the school is the right place to encourage and respect the creative potential of students and a place of creative outcomes. School creativity is a priority in the design of the contemporary education. Extracurricular musical activities, with regular classes contribute to the updating of knowledge of students, making the teaching process dynamic and diverse (Vidulin-Orbanić, 2013). Extracurricular musical activities are the opportunity to detect and improve creative potential of each student.

In the last decade, many programmes are offered to pupils in order to encourage their overall development. The work style ranges from demanding to stimulating, which is the basis for affirmation of pupils' originality and creativity. However, one should not forget that without hard work and effort of pupils themselves, the expected quality and potential cannot be realized and improved.

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