

Evaluation Model for Assessing the Intercultural Educational Objectives of Primary and Secondary School Textbooks

Name of organisation:
Helpdesk for Intercultural Learning Materials

World Music for Citizens of the World

Tsvetelina Harakchiyska

Milena Katsarska

Our aims

Being a universal language, music is a key element both in building bridges between differences and in imagining communities without borders. What is more, the young people who grow and study in Bulgaria today are the future citizens of the world and should be able to actively engage in communication without prejudices. Thus, the learning materials in this subject should, on the one hand, reflect and construct the social diversity of societies and, on the other, promote to the learners acceptance of diversity in the spirit of equality.

Our analysis focuses on the issues of diversity and equality in the ways they appear on all levels which contribute to the learning experience of the young people in music classes. We also offer suggestions for ways in which the intercultural potential of the 9th grade teaching materials can be enhanced.

Educational context¹

The overall framework of the curriculum in music postulates that “at the centre of the learning process [in music] is the individual development of the learner”² and that it aims to develop “musically-cultured individuals with broadened talents and interests on the basis of diverse musical and social experience”³ thus focusing on two key aspects in intercultural education – the recognition of learners’ social diversity and the reflection of this diversity in music and cultural phenomena. Further on, the educational context and the activities in the school curriculum allow for meaningful practice of those principles because students should be given the opportunity to “express interest in a diversity of music genres, types and styles”⁴ and “to comment on the reasons for different music tastes according to age, sex, experience, temperament, background knowledge etc”⁵ when “arguing own and commenting on others’ points of view”⁶ in a context of “tolerance and acceptance”⁷. This provides the starting point for an educational orientation of school documentation towards developing positive attitudes towards communication and intercultural understanding of differences related to race, ethnicity, language, religion, sexual orientation etc.

The promotion of acceptance, in a spirit of equality, however, is not explicitly present in the educational documentation, where Standard 4 – which treats the discussion of music phenomena in view of ‘the dominant social values and issues’⁸ – might potentially lead to neglecting marginal, minority, weak and ‘less empowered’ groups, which are nevertheless a valuable contribution to social diversity both in Bulgaria and in the world.

The Music Textbook at First Glance

The Textbook in Music for 9th grade of “Prosveta” Publishing House meets the latest State requirements of the newly introduced curricula published in 2000. In the words of its authors it “encompasses **all** cultural phenomena of the 20th century”⁹. The textbook aims at creating a dynamic, multilayer image of 20th century music culture which meets the needs of the younger generation.

The reviewed textbook elaborates on the topics of folklore and heritage, music-cultural flows and influences both within national boundaries and in a transnational perspective. It discusses issues of globalisation and music, media and technology. It presents popular music in its diverse manifestations, genres and styles, and it seeks to place Bulgaria in the world music culture of the 20th century. One of the typical features of the textbook is that it creates a context for active involvement with the learners through the rubric ‘Dialogues about music’ which engages the pupils in a range of educational activities. The textbook also offers a colourful selection of images, diverse techniques for rendering the learning material in an organised, accessible and up-to-date manner.

Evaluation of the intercultural potential for experiencing diversity offered by the textbook

The **content** of the textbook possesses considerable potential for developing the idea of social diversity through musical diversity. For example, Unit 1 considers the varied uses over time of folklore (labour, holiday, wedding), and Unit 2 presents the concept of world music in terms of the globalization processes in which Bulgaria also participates. Unit 3 extends this discussion in terms of musical globalization in relation to the development of technology. Unit 4 deals with “high” and “low” popular music genres, and finally Unit 5 considers the place of Bulgaria in the musical culture of the 20th century.

Despite the declared multiperspectivity of the content, a lack of equality in the representation of the diversity of societies can be observed. The emphasis falls primarily on the musical culture and heritage of Europe. The requirements stated in Theme 1, Standard 2, Nucleus 3 – “*Key moments in the development of the popular music in Europe and USA during the 20th century*”- could account for the Europe-centered representation of world music and its limitation to the Anglo-Saxon part of the world (as found in Unit 2):

- p.47, “Vocabulary” rubrics – “ ... In rock World Music is related to the name of Peter Gabriel and to the organized by him and named after him ... festival in England”;
- p.65, “Do you know ...” rubrics – “ ... 70 years later this theatre became an opera theatre and today it is the leading one in Britain’s opera life” .

This tendency, however, deprives the young Bulgarian of the opportunity to discuss, for example, the influences on such impressive popular music markets as Russia or India, the development of Chinese popular music or the Japanese hardrock phenomenon. This model, which is based on “territorial limitations”, can be noticed in the first three chapters of the textbook where world folklore diversity finds expression only in the photos of other (not Europe or North America) continents. Moreover, these photos are not supplemented with captions, and thus remain superficial illustrations of world diversity. Since, as the authors claim¹⁰, the experience in intercultural education of other countries shows that the content of textbooks should be selected in such a way that “*European music is not allowed to prevail over the folk traditions of different emigrant groups*” living within the respective countries, it would be useful to inculcate in the future citizens of the world who are brought up in Bulgaria an idea of its diversity outside Europe, too.

Along with the unbalanced representation of diversity in the world, the representation of ethnic diversity in Bulgaria is somewhat problematic. A striking example of this can be found in topics like “The Musical Glory of Bulgaria”¹¹ and “Contemporary Bulgarian Music”¹² (Unit 5) where not a single representative of any of the ethnic minority groups in the country, who identify themselves as Turks, Armenians, Jews and so on, is mentioned. These groups are present in the visuals accompanying the topics of folklore and the power of ‘small’ in World music but apparently they have no place when we discuss the ‘national’ contribution of Bulgaria. Isn’t the musical culture of a given society a unity of the musical cultures of all the ethnic groups in it?

The one-sided representation of ethnic diversity in Bulgarian society in this context allows for inequality and does not promote tolerance to, and acceptance of, different musical cultures within students’ own culture, which contradicts the multicultural potential of education documents. Therefore, we consider that the representation of the diversity of societies should be an inseparable part of the textbook content. This can be introduced in the classroom through the inclusion of topics that cover the musical culture of all continents and through rendering the musical culture of all ethnic groups in Bulgaria, especially in the chapter focusing on our national contribution to world music.

The **linguistic means** of the learning materials offer excellent opportunities for reflecting and constructing social diversity in the world and promoting attitudes for its acceptance as equally valuable. However, improvement is possible in this area.

In Unit 1, we can note the somewhat problematic use of the word ‘Bulgarian’ in rendering the topic of folklore. Sentences like, quoting only one example, “In the Bulgarian calendar of rituals coexist pagan (pre-Christian) and orthodox (Christian) and secular elements...”¹³ might leave the learners under the impression that Bulgarian society comprises a single ethnic and religious group – that of orthodox Christians, which is true neither from a historical perspective or a contemporary point of view. Undermining the achievements in presenting a diverse social reality through the subsequent chapters of the textbook, the final unit treats the Bulgarian contribution to world culture only on a national level without representatives of ethnic communities such as Turkish, Roma, Jewish, Armenian, and Russian. It appears that, on the map of the world, Bulgaria is present only through ethnic Bulgarian achievements. What is more, the language used is quite emotional and value-laden on the one hand, and Bulgarian “national successes” are represented in terms of folklore, classical, opera and chamber music. Here are some examples:

- p. 119, paragraph 2, line 1 – “... the Bulgarian nightingale...”
- p. 119, paragraph 4, line 1-3 – “The artistic achievements of the renowned Bulgarian singer are so monumental and impressive, that he was crowned in his life-time as ‘the king of bas singers’”
- p. 119, paragraph 1, line 3-5 – “... the singer who with his artistic work elevates to unforeseen heights the creative genius of the Bulgarian...”

In such cases we would suggest changes in the heightened emotionality of the language used when describing the achievements of a national culture through its singers, composers, conductors etc. to the effect of showing how we equally value the contribution of all who have a share in it regardless of their social group and preferred musical genre. In this way, we would be working toward developing tolerance, respect and acceptance of other cultures in our learners.

Similarly, it would be advisable to enrich the genre diversity of texts related to music, i.e. through magazine articles, radio interviews, personal opinions from fan-sites, etc., which would ‘talk’ to the learners with the variety of languages and registers of the various authors

and the social groups to which they belong and which they address. This is a way not only of reflecting the diversity of the society in which learners participate but it will also construct this diversity in the classroom if we ask the pupils to actively contribute with bringing and discussing articles, fanzines, TV and radio programs etc. which they like, read, listen to or watch and last but not least, such materials with which they can identify.

The textbook offers a rich collection of **visual materials** that provide for the development of students' idea of social diversity. The objects of representation do to a large extent create a mosaic of social communities – the topic “Music and Folk Wedding”¹⁴ represents social, ethnic and religious differences; regional diversity is represented the regional dialects which are part of the discussion about folklore within the boundaries of Bulgaria¹⁵; Bulgaria on the Balkans, urban as well as rural music is seen throughout the textbook. Gender representation of women, in a whole range of social roles connected with the uses of music, is included.

It should be noted, however, that the sources of the visuals are not given, which deprives students of the opportunity for developing critical thinking skills about the messages encoded by the creator of the respective image, the medium chosen or the possible target audience it is aimed at.

The absence of representation of disabled people in the visual materials as well as in the context is also problematic. This could be changed by posing the problem of the link between disabled people and music, of social differences (economic, educational or related to the family), which affect the development of tastes as well as the access to music. The broadly formulated standards in the curriculum allow for their inclusion¹⁶ and for their successful incorporation into educational tasks such as small-scale ethnographic research in which students are engaged.

The visual materials give an idea about age diversity in the world and provide opportunities for learners to identify with images from the textbook (the photographs of coevals of the students in the rubrics “Dialogues about music”¹⁷) as well as topics and genres such as rave party in Berlin¹⁸ or senior prom¹⁹.

The wide range of **educational tasks and activities** presented in the teaching materials – reproductive, active and creative, small scale research, ethnographic, of test and quiz type – allows the pupils to sense diversity in the very process of education and this is what makes the learning process interesting and valuable. Still, in order to actively promote a deeper understanding of diversity and its acceptance, it would be beneficial to create conditions for relativizing personal positions and opportunities to experience empathy through role play. Additionally, it is worth developing further the topics for discussion in the classroom so that students are asked to argue for opinions they do not necessarily share. In view of the above, the rare cases of ‘closed’ questions (the ones that presuppose a single possible answer) of the type “Why are they [your favourite songs from the Revival period] intransigent for Bulgarians of different generations?” which we find in the “Dialogues about Music”²⁰ can hardly contribute to the development of critical and empathic citizens.

In conclusion

In view of the aims which we set out to achieve through our evaluation, it is especially worth considering the topics which render globalization, world music and the power of ‘the small’ in it from the chapter “The Music of the World and Its Faces” since it offers a fruitful starting point for developing multicultural music education, as the authors themselves recognize. ‘Globalization of music culture and multicultural music education of today are most frequently linked to the so-called World Music’²¹ and the “Power of the Small in World Music” is a topic which best illustrates the prospects and challenges local styles face in a globalizing world. ‘On the Balkans and in Europe one of the most colorful and cosmopolitan musicians are

Roma and Jews – examples of their typical music styles illustrate pluralistic tendencies in world culture of today²². The ambition to present ‘without prejudices the diverse faces of world music including the music of various ethnic groups’²³ gives us a first attempt in this direction which is worth acknowledging indeed. As a result the learners acquire a deep and multidimensional idea of the contribution of these two groups with examples of composers, singers, street musicians, etc. In no way attempting to undermine the contribution of these two communities, as well as the efforts of the authors of the textbook in ‘giving them a voice’ in view of the highlighted relations between periphery and centre, majority and minority, local and global, the ultimate effect is to a large extent in empowering certain weak positions to the disadvantage of others. As a result, the ethnic diversity in Bulgaria is read primarily as the dominance of certain groups (ethnic Bulgarians, Jews, and Roma) which leads to the neglect of other communities (Turkish, Armenian, etc.) whose contribution is equally valuable.

Apparently, our discussion so far has been trying to answer, from a variety of view points, the questions which face of the world the young people see, whose voices they hear and with which of its representatives they effectively communicate on the pages of the music textbook. It is nonetheless important, however, whether the young persons see themselves as citizens both of Bulgaria and of the world. As we have argued, signs of good will and potential for developing citizenship attitudes in learners are present in the Music textbook for 9 grade, what is absent, however, is the very use of the word citizen, its ‘habituating’ and filling with meaning. In this way we could make the difference between Bulgarian – as representatives of the largest ethnic community in the country; Bulgarian – in the sense of Bulgarian citizens; and what is more, Bulgarian – as citizens of Bulgaria with which we will make the first step towards educating the future citizens of the world.

1 For the purposes of the present report we have used the following educational documents: 1. ‘Curriculum for 9 Grade Music – Mandatory’, in Ministry of Education. Curricula part III. Central Office of Pedagogic Publishing, Sofia, 2000: 112-126. 2. ‘Educational Field: the Arts, Subjects: Music and Fine Art’, Appendix 6, article 4, paragraph 6, ‘State Educational Requirements to Learning Content’, State Newspaper, Issue 48, 2000: 100-103.

2 ‘Curriculum for 9 Grade Music – Mandatory’, in Ministry of Education. Curricula part III. Central Office of Pedagogic Publishing, Sofia, 2000: 113

3 *ibid.*

4 *ibid.* 115

5 *ibid.* 117

6 *ibid.* 115

7

ibid. 120

8 ‘Curriculum for 9 Grade Music – Mandatory’, in Ministry of Education. Curricula part III. Central Office of Pedagogic Publishing, Sofia, 2000: 118

9 As stated on the back cover of the textbook.

10 Teacher’s Book, p.18

11 pp.118-125

12 pp. 126-129

13 p. 14, lines 2-4

14 pp.18-21

15 p.28 in the textbook, as well as “Teacher’s Book” p. 17

16 such as, Standard 2, p. 116 which reads, ‘[the learners should be able to] Express their opinion in educational discussions on music as part of socio-cultural discourse’

17 pp. 36–37

18 p. 4

19 p.16

20 pp 130-131

21 Teacher’s book p. 19.

22 *ibid.* p.20.

23 *ibid.* p. 18.