

## ПОЧЕТНА НАСТАВА СОЛФЕЂА У РАДУ СА УЧЕНИЦИМА ОШТЕЋЕНОГ ВИДА

## INITIAL TEACHING OF SOLFEGGIO INTENDED FOR STUDENTS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENT



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In this monograph, the author is dealing with the topic of initial solfeggio teaching intended for the blind and partially sighted children. Due to the particular nature of the disability, this group of students requires the application of specific, adapted teaching methods and aids in class, Braille music code, and contemporary electronic devices.

In addition to the concepts from the scope of music pedagogy and solfeggio teaching methods, the monograph systematically and clearly presents the concepts from the field of special education, typhology, typhlo-pedagogy and methods of working with persons who are visually impaired. Everyone, who is working with visually impaired persons, needs an explanation of these concepts, especially music educators in this case. They often feel incapable of working with visually impaired students when it comes to practical teaching.

Music teaching starts with solfeggio, which in the broadest possible meaning, implies developing every category of the musical ear. The initial solfeggio teaching is considered as the most important period in music education. Within this period, it is necessary to form different melodic, rhythmical and harmonic

ideas in students, to determine basic pitch and make students musically literate. Initial teaching of solfeggio intended for the visually impaired students is specific in many ways. These specificities primarily refer to the ways of perceiving stimulation coming from the outside world, reading and writing Braille music on Braille typewriters, using adapted literature textbooks, using special aids, communication of music educators with blind and partially sighted students, using technical equipment and also creating an individual curriculum for each one of the visually impaired students.

Music pedagogues emphasize the importance that the early discovery of music talents has in their future education. A musically talented child, including a visually impaired child, reacts intensively to music and the reaction is often followed by motion – moving body, swaying, swinging, hopping or, if it is a song – an attempt of singing. Children, who have certain musical abilities, should attend musical kindergartens or different music workshops and should be enabled to go through a test of musical abilities for the entrance exam in order to enroll at a music school.

During our research, in the school year of 2008/2009, 22 primary school students with visual impairment were educated in the Resource Center for Children and Youth “Podgorica” in Podgorica. A research conducted in April 2009 answered the question regarding how many students have certain musical ability. There were 13 students with visual impairment of all the students, who were encompassed by the research (total number 22). For the purpose of testing musical abilities of blind and partially sighted students in the Resource Centre, we created four groups of tasks aiming to check the repetition of pitches, perception and memorizing of musical phrases, reproduction of individual tones within the chords and intervals and testing rhythmical capabilities. The research led to the selection of seven visually impaired students, with higher or lower musical abilities. Notwithstanding the disparity between age groups, we started the initial program of solfeggio teaching with them, so that they could acquire basic music knowledge and eventually start regular education in music schools.

The most important and specific thing in teaching solfeggio of blind and partially sighted students is reflected in the way the reading and writing of note symbols is done. Blind students need to be taught music literacy in Braille music code, they should be trained to read music note symbols on Braille typewriters, they must be prepared to read various texts with note symbols independently, which makes instrumental classes efficient and is also a necessary prerequisite for the study of specialized subjects such as harmony, counter-punctuation and musical forms, which are taught in high school and at academic level of teaching. Partially sighted students are using notation in larger print and they also use sheets with enlarged linear systems in writing. The use of magnifiers and additional lighting is common in classes and it depends on the individual needs of each student. Students with visual impairment should be allowed to use the recorder to record the teaching material and other actions in class.

Demands in the field of rhythm include introducing students to note duration: a quarter note, half, whole note and the eighth. These requirements should be expanded in working with the blind and partially sighted students so that the students are introduced to unit counting divided in four-sixteenths, since the duration of one note and the sixteenth in the Braille music code are recorded using the same symbols.

The specificity of the musical symbols in Braille makes it possible to familiarize oneself with pitches and tone duration and learn them at the same time. One must follow the basic working principle – movement from the sound towards the note image, which means that different types of rhythmic type and rhythmic figures are placed over folklore and children’s songs that are learned by hearing. Songs that have been learned by heart remain permanently in the mind of students, providing later perception and reproduction with the help of associations to memorize the song.

In this monograph, we stress out the importance of respecting the elementary principles of Vasiljević’s functional method, even though in teaching visually impaired students, a standard musical symbol which is a note in a linear system, is replaced with symbols in Braille music code. Beside Vasiljević’s original song model, a solfeggio teacher should find a few songs from the folklore music heritage for each tone in which the first solmization syllable matches the height of initial syllable of a song. Along with setting of basic tones, it is necessary to conduct exercises of observation, or to be more precise – recognizing, first of the individual tones then of short motifs, based on the elements of songs that are learned by ear.

When starting to teach solfeggio to visually impaired students, great attention should be paid to Orff’s instruments. The experience in teaching visually impaired students show that basically every child likes playing Orff’s instruments. The fact that these instruments are designed to look almost like toys is a contribution factor, yet they are not toys and there is a chance for a student to learn to play them

for a relatively short period of time. Children, whose vision is impaired to any extent, are focused on sounds from their environment and their fascination with the fact that they themselves can make a sound on an instrument and influence the length and strength of the sound, is understandable.

Teaching methods of musical education of visually impaired students must be adapted to these characteristics of Braille music notation. Based on the experience gained in the practical work with visually impaired children and after careful consideration and systematization and consultations with blind adult professional musicians, we have concluded that the best and most appropriate introduction of notation should start with eights because in Braille music letter a sign for the basic symbol of a certain pitch matches the sign for that pitch with duration of the eighth. This means that at the same time students are adopting the symbol for both a specific pitch and for the duration as well.

Direction of teaching for the visually impaired students must be the same as in teaching the students of general population: sound-image-interpretation. For the visually impaired students, an image, i.e. visualization, actually implies a form - materialization - since musical symbols are perceived in a tactile way. One should try to link the sound of a tone with its 'form', which is recognized by touch. The targets set should be in line with the objectives of teaching music defined by Vasiljevic: training students to register and recognize the level and duration of the tone, training them to be able to reproduce the pitch and rhythm of the notation vocally, to be able to write down previously prepared sound signals in note sheets and to have a developed music memory.

Inclusion in music schools requires special attention. The difficulties, which visually impaired musical students are facing in music schools, are numerous and the most common are inadequate adaptation and insufficiently equipped school buildings, music teachers that are not trained enough to work with the visually impaired students, the lack of support coming from family and the wider community that fail to recognize a visually impaired child

on time. Organizational conditions in the first place refer to the reduction of the number of students in the class to a number that is optimal for the organization of individual work with the visually impaired students. Since one of the basic principles of inclusion involves adjusting schools to students with special educational needs, it is particularly important that we realize the need that music school building and the facilities inside classrooms are adapted in order to have more access for visually impaired students. This particularly applies to equipping classrooms with the Braille code which would make visually impaired students move around independently. It is necessary to provide an area with the functional equipment of typhlo-didactic teaching aids and also the use of special tools for orientation, modern optical and electronic aids. The visually impaired students should be in a position to use basic teaching aids while learning to read and write with special and adapted letter.

In order that music pedagogues could successfully teach the visually impaired students, they must have certain competencies. Required competencies can be grouped in terms of typhlo-pedagogy and also as those related to inclusive education. Among other things, the aim of modern music education should also reach a certain level of having skilled teaching personnel that will enable the music pedagogues to, first of all, make a blind and partially sighted student musically literate, then musically educated, and encouraged and supported in acquiring professional music knowledge.

Modern music pedagogy emphasizes the importance that engagement with art, especially dealing with music, has in the life of every child. Beside the specific tasks accomplished in learning music, like development of all categories of musical ear and playing the selected instrument, music has positive effect on the development of the overall child's personality. Considering all the positive aspects that playing music can have on child's personality development, we became aware of the role that music education can have in the life of a child with visual impairment.

У овој монографији ауторка се бави проблематиком која се односи на почетну наставу солфеђа у раду са слијепом и слабовидом дјецом. Због специфичности хендикепа, у настави је потребно примијенити специфичне, прилагођене наставне методе и наставна средства, Брајево музичко писмо, савремене електронске уређаје. Представљени су појмови из области музичке педагогије, методике наставе софлеђа, дефектологије, тифлологије, тифлопедагогије и методике рада са особама са визуелним сметњама.

Важан дио монографије посвећен је почетном периоду музичке наставе.

Објашњава се поступак музичког описмењавања слијепих ученика, гдје је потребно тонске висине, њихова солмизациона и абецедна имена повезати са симболима на Брајевом музичком писму.

Као најбољи начин стицања професионалног музичког образовања ауторка истиче инклузивни модел школовања, те наводи шта је потребно урадити да би инклузија у музичким школама постала стварност. Посебна пажња је посвећена компетенцијама које треба да посједују музички педагози да би успјешно одговорили захтјевима које пред њих ставља настава са ученицима оштећеног вида.