

# THE SITUATION OF TEACHING FOLKLORE AND FOLK ART IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS BASED ON THE STUDY ENTITLED *INNOVATIVE METHODS IN TEACHING FOLK ART* WRITTEN BY KATALIN BORDÁSNÉ GYURIS

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## **Abstract:**

Based on the study by Katalin Bordásné Gyuris entitled *Innovative methods in the teaching of folk art*, this article presents the state of the art of teaching ethnography / fine arts in secondary schools.

**Keywords:** ethnography and homeland studies, folklore

## **1. THE RELATIONSHIP OF AUTHOR TO THE TOPIC, A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY**

Career socialization efforts to help students learn the teaching profession, such as mentoring, are key tasks in today's teacher training policy. In addition to problems related to discipline and organization, the main challenges faced by early career teachers include methodological preparation, a diverse methodological culture, and a lack of adaptability. The mentor teacher can use his or her knowledge and experience to help the student through the initial difficulties and overcome problems with teaching. The author of the study, as a teacher of folk arts, was confronted with a lack of literature describing folk art education during their mentor training. To fill this gap, in her paper, the author provides methodological guidance for teaching folk art to university students (Bordásné Gyuris, 2018, pp. 143–187).

The structure of the study follows the *hypothesis - analysis - synthesis* method. First of all, the literature related to the topic as well as the historical antecedents of the teaching of ethnography and folk art in secondary schools in Hungary and abroad are presented, followed by the possibilities and legal framework for folk art education today. In the second main part of the text, the Kós Károly Secondary School of Art is examined, particularly in view of the fact that folk art has been taught as a separate subject at the school since 1992. The third major topic, after a brief introduction to teaching methods and procedures, focuses on the use of modern, innovative methods. In this section, the author uses research results and his own experience to illustrate how modern teaching methods and techniques can be applied within the framework of folk art education based on the transmission of tradition.

## 2. INTERNATIONAL OUTLOOK

In the first third of the paper, the author states that the debate regarding the inclusion of ethnography and folk art in the curriculum goes back centuries. According to the author of the study, the document adopted by the General Assembly of UNESCO in 1989, which recommended the protection of traditional culture and folklore to the international community, is fundamental in this respect. The document defined the concept of intellectual assets, the ways of preserving these assets, and the possible forms, channels, and institutions for the transmission of folklore. The recommendation also identified the need for public authorities and legal instruments to protect folklore, as well as the need for international cooperation. The document stated that folklore is part of cultural heritage and that governments must ensure that it is protected, with special attention to the teaching of folklore in both curricular and extra-curricular settings. At the World Congress of the *International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences* in 1998, the issues related to the transmission of folk culture and its education in schools were given a prominent place. As the author points out (Bordásné Gyuris, 2018, p. 146), in 2003, the 190 Member States of UNESCO adopted the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage at its XXXII General Assembly, in which the teaching of traditional folk culture and its methodology also played an important role.

## 3. BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE HISTORY OF ETHNOGRAPHY AND FOLK ARTS EDUCATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN HUNGARY

The author reviews the history of the teaching of Hungarian ethnography and folk art in secondary schools from the beginning of the 19th century. Through numerous examples, Bódisné Gyuris highlights and illustrates that secondary school and college students, with the help of their teachers, actively participated in the nationwide collection of folklore that took place in the 19th century and in competitions that encouraged the collection of folk art. Benedek Csaplár, a Piarist teacher in Szeged and Nyitra, collected folklore along with his students for Arnold Ipolyi, while students of the Reformed College in Marosvásárhely, led by their teacher Sámuel Szabó, created a collection of folk poetry consisting of about 900 items; in addition, a selection was published from the poems collected by students from Nagyszalonta as the last volume of the Hungarian Folk Poetry Collection. At the end of the 19th century, István Lázár, a teacher at Nagyenyed College, was the first to articulate the importance of folk culture in secondary school education. He asked his students to present the folklore and poetry of their hometowns in a written assignment. Following these examples from the 19th century, Bordásné Gyuris then presents the history of ethnography education in secondary schools in the 20th century. She emphasizes the role of the Folklore Fellows movement established in Helsinki in 1907, whose Hungarian section, led by Gyula Sebestyén, collected folk poetry with the involvement of several secondary schools in the country; she also mentions the private school founded in 1920 by the artist Álmos Jaschik, where folk decorative art was also included as part of the education in the spirit of Art Nouveau. The author describes in detail the efforts to introduce the teaching

of ethnography in secondary schools in the 20th century. The first unsuccessful attempt to recognize ethnography as an official secondary school subject was made by the Hungarian Ethnographic Society in 1919. In 1929, Sándor Solymossy, the first appointed professor of ethnography at the University of Szeged, urged the teaching of ethnography as a secondary school subject, citing English, Prussian, Scandinavian, and Finnish examples; however, in 1934, the curriculum prepared on the basis of Article XI introduced ethnography as a part of geography and not as a separate subject. The prominent ethnographers of the period, Sándor Bálint, István Tálasi, and István Györffy all took a stand for the importance of ethnography education. Sándor Bálint considered the knowledge of folk culture to be a foundation on which not only a subject but a whole system of secondary school studies could be built. In the period before the Second World War, the Institute of Regional and Ethnographic Research took the initiative to organize landscape and ethnographic research for secondary school students, which in 1941 resulted in a successful collection of 131 entries of high-quality ethnographic material. When discussing the post-war period, Bordásné Gyuris highlights the introduction of ethnography to the third-year curriculum of agricultural secondary schools, based on the textbook of Iván Balassa. Apart from this brief period, the teaching of ethnography remained within the framework of higher education. This situation was only partially changed by the educational reform of the second half of the 1970s, which introduced ethnography as an optional subject in the secondary school curriculum. In the section concluding the historical overview, which deals with the period following the regime change, the study emphasizes that in 1995 ethnography was given an important role in the requirements of the National Core Curriculum and was first included as a subject in the curriculum for public education in 2000 under the name “ethnography and homeland studies”. In the same year, the editorial board of the journal *Home Studies* also launched a column entitled *School and Homeland Studies*, which aims to provide professional and methodological assistance for the education of young people in the field of homeland studies.

#### **4. THE STATE OF ETHNOGRAPHY/FOLK ARTS EDUCATION IN THE RECENT PAST**

In the chapter of Bordásné Gyuris’s study entitled *The education of folk art – legal background* (pp. 150–154), the author emphasizes that the 2012 National Core Curriculum, which provided the legal framework for the education of folk art, assigns an important role to the development of national tradition and national consciousness, placing significant emphasis on the development of a sense of identity associated with the nation and the homeland in a narrower and wider sense. The legislation subordinated the teaching of homeland and ethnic studies in grades 5-8 of primary school to these objectives. Of the literacy areas of the National Core Curriculum, the subject of homeland and ethnic studies, part of the area of study referred to as *man and society* in the document, includes the major historical elements of Hungarian national culture, Hungarian folk tradition, as well as the cultural memories, customs, and cultural presence of the nationalities living in Hungary. In a 2014 amendment, the Ministry of Human Resources included national

consciousness and patriotic education among the general development areas and educational goals. On the basis of the amendment, the competencies of secondary school pupils – i.e., high school, vocational secondary school, and vocational school – include knowledge of the annual cycle of festivals based on folk traditions and religious roots, the ability to recall certain significant elements and characteristics of Hungarian folk culture, the importance of local history, the importance of national and ethnic cultures and respect for the traditions of different peoples and cultures. According to the study, the curriculum places emphasis on the development of social and civic competencies to develop a sense of national identity and attachment to the country and Europe based on realistic foundations and knowledge. Despite the objectives and expectations summarised by Bordásné Gyuris, the framework curriculum<sup>1</sup> only makes provisions for teaching national and folk studies in primary school in grade 5 in one lesson per week (which is shared with dance and drama). In secondary school, the objectives of the National Core Curriculum and the framework curriculum must be met in regard to the different subject areas (Hungarian language and literature, History, Geography, Arts, Class teacher lessons, etc.). Due to the increased number of science subjects and physical education classes, there is practically no time available to teach a separate subject on ethnography / folk arts in secondary schools (p. 152). The author of this review considers it of utmost importance that the study by Bordásné Gyuris draws attention to the contradiction between the teaching of ethnography / folk arts and the social and educational policy perceptions surrounding it. There is an increased social interest in ethnography, folk art, and traditions, and the National Curriculum also emphasizes these areas of culture in education policy. In contrast, the teaching of ethnography and fine arts as a separate subject in the secondary school curriculum is still not considered to be a solution (p. 182).

Bordásné Gyuris, Katalin (2018). Innovatív módszerek a népművészet oktatásában – Módszertani útmutató egyetemi hallgatóknak. In Bihari Nagy Éva (Ed.), *Örökség és oktatás. Studia folkloristica et ethnographica* 80. (pp. 143–187). Debrecen.

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<sup>1</sup> A document containing specific policies and objectives for the education system of a country or region. The framework curriculum is generally comprehensive in nature and sets out learning objectives and their content, as well as timing and methodology at different levels. It serves as a guide for educational institutions to ensure that students receive a coherent, consistent and effective education.