Abstract
This paper considers the subject matter of individual learning that has a positive impact on the development of students’ individual abilities and capacities. New demands of the world we are living in – a considerable need for innovative, expert opinion, complex communication abilities and skills as well as active involvement in all social events – demonstrate the need for individual learning as a dominant form of learning in the contemporary conception of teaching work. Teaching contents of the subjects Science and Social Studies and Music Education in the first stage of primary education are suitable for implementing this form of learning.

Key words: individual learning, contemporary teaching, teacher’s role, music teaching, science and social studies teaching.

INTRODUCTION
Learning process starts at an early stage of human life and continues till death. During their lives people learn different things, get to know the world they live in and events surrounding it. In the process of learning people change themselves due in part to their own activity, and in part to the influence of other factors.

The first serious step in learning and education is primary school where children encounter new environment and surroundings, socialize and get used to the presence of other people who are not part of their family, learn to work together, fulfill certain tasks and meet demands they are faced with.

It is clear that not all children are the same, but they differ from one another in their intellectual development, in their abilities, capacities, motivation, ambition and social status. Therefore, more and more attention is being devoted to individual learning as a form of learning that affects not only students in a positive way but also the development of their abilities and capacities, their higher motivation and achieving major goals and better results due to the fact that this form of learning provides more space for students and greater freedom in learning and studying, thus enabling them to make progress and become independent in their specific way.

TEACHING STUDENTS TO LEARN INDEPENDENTLY
Independent learning originated as a new, powerful theory that can encourage knowledge and abilities transfer in realistic situations, and enable students to become independent from their teachers in the process of improving and broadening their knowledge.
The primary aspect of individual learning is its orientation towards objectives. Other characteristics that contribute to this learning are: the feeling of efficiency, willingness to exercise, commitment, time management, the efficient use of strategies.

Many researchers and practitioners (Sprinthal, Sprinthal & Oja, 1994; Slavin, 1997; Gage & Berliner, 1998) agree that it is possible to talk about individual learning when students are both in cognitive and motivational way aware of what needs to be done in order to reach established goals successfully.

Zimmerman (1998) defines independent learning as an individual process by means of which students transform their mental capacities and learning skills. It is a periodic process taking place in three main stages: before learning, during learning and after learning.

In the stage before learning, necessary learning conditions are created. A student establishes goals, plans strategies that are going to be used and specifies his/her expectations. The learning stage involves processes that take place during the learning, such as keeping attention, self-teaching and self-supervision. In the stage after learning, processes that represent students’ reaction to learning and learning results take place – self-evaluation, own reactions and adaptation.

Independent learning represents an approach to learning that fits students’ individual needs, enabling them not only to accept greater responsibility for their work but also to be fully engaged in that process.

Although this is an approach that allows a high level of autonomy in learning, it is important to provide necessary support in that process.

Support and guidance are the most important factors for the success of independent learning, and that support is going to be demonstrated through the use of appropriate materials for independent learning and properly devised interaction between teachers and students. The success of independent learning depends on the willingness and support of educational institutions’ administration since this forms of educational work imply considerable fund and time investments.

Schools and teachers – educators play a great role in teaching students to learn on their own. It is common knowledge that the traditional form of learning prevails in schools, where the teacher is active and he/she is the only source of knowledge, that is he/she is a lecturer, while students are passive spectators and listeners and their only task is to acquire the presented contents and reproduce them.

Recently, schools have been increasingly striving for different forms of learning where students are more motivated to engage and participate in teaching, but, at the same time, more attention is being devoted to defining and encouraging them to study on their own.

The fact is that education reforms insist upon active methods, involvement and research, in order to make learning livelier, more spontaneous and natural and, thus increase the motivation for learning. In order to make this possible, teachers – educators should know their students very well. This, above all, refers to being familiar with their intellectual capacities, abilities, motivation, previous achievements as it is the only way to guide them properly and encourage them to learn and work on their own.

The teacher’s role in independent learning is different from the usual lesson presentation teaching. The important difference is that instead of having the role of a lecturer, the teacher becomes an adviser about the ways of obtaining information. “The teacher’s role in independent learning is reflected through the guidance of independent learning, where students are, to a smaller extent, able to guide their work or be self-disciplined in learning (in this case the teacher should spend some time helping them); through co-operative planning, where students can direct their activities but they need their teacher’s help to a smaller extent,
and through individual aspirations, where students can define subject-matters, have discussions, identify sources and stick to the time limit” (Gage & Berliner, 1998: 435).

TEACHING CONTENTS OH THE SUBJECT MUSIC EDUCATION FOR THE PURPOSE OF INDEPENDENT LEARNING

Music classes offer the unique aesthetic experience, which is the inherent part of Music teaching and makes music lessons specific in relation to other subjects in the curriculum. And this is precisely why Music teaching in primary schools should be highlighted. Although there is a regular teaching curriculum, with Music teaching having its place within it, teachers with their activities are the ones who have a crucial influence on their students. It is up to teachers to develop interest and love for music in their students through careful work and strong incentives for independent learning within curricular and extra-curricular activities. The students’ involvement in independent learning is closely related to the confidence they have in their own abilities and beliefs that music contents are interesting and worth learning.

The subject of Music Education is suitable for individual learning since it is based on interesting, authentic and current contents that are appropriate for students’ age. Considering the fact that the teaching contents are determined by legal document – the school curriculum, the teacher can make a selection of teaching contents on his/her own starting from the children’s experiences and the experiences of the environment he is working in. The child’s experience includes all that a child has (ideas, feelings, impulses) and acquires spontaneously outside school, as well as all the contents the child learns at school in the organized process of education. Within the strategy of planning individual learning, there must be a connection between the child’s experience, music contents that are determined by law and the teacher. Music contents are conceived in such a way that, in the long run, they encourage, develop and guide students’ music abilities through regular singing, playing, listening and creation of music (Stojanović, 1996).

Among numerous and various contents of Music teaching, which are suitable for individual learning, we separate the following: singing songs of different content and mood or spirit and songs of traditional and artistic music that match students’ vocal capacities and age (it is advisable that in the process of individual learning students connect the songs’ contents to the contents of other subjects: seasons, holidays, customs, homeland, nature and environment, animals…); singing and performing music dances (students should identify, based on tune characteristics, the way in which dancing along with singing is an integral part of life, customs, holidays…); making children’s instruments and playing them as well as auditory distinction of the children’s instruments according to their timbre (when performing music it is important to recognize sounds produced by voice, volume level, different tempos and duration); listening to vocal-instrumental, instrumental and vocal compositions of different content and mood, folk songs and dances, music stories (while listening, students should distinguish among specific sounds in the surroundings, human voices, music instruments, volume level, different tempos and duration); imitating sounds from immediate surroundings by improvising spontaneously (sounds in a house, city sounds, sounds in nature…); devising and performing small rhythmic units from different sound sources (voice, pronunciation of sound groups, objects, children’s instruments), etc.

The development of individual learning plan should contain the sequence of activities accompanied by music content identification (everything that students will be doing within a certain teaching unit), the purpose of particular activity (the teacher should explain students why they are doing a particular activity), encouragement (as a preparation for corresponding individual activities of students) and connections with other areas (establishing connections
with the contents from other areas creates the possibility for integrative approach to setting and fulfilling specific objectives and tasks, and that is a postulate of contemporary school).

Nowadays, since music perception is possible nearly everywhere owing to the technology development and rich music production (internet, CDs, television, concerts and theatres), students should be encouraged to learn on their own with the view to see the unknown and different as challenges helping them to reveal and enrich their cognitive senses.

The advantage of individual music learning in education is that we have the student interested in making effort and focused on knowledge and learning, because everything that the student masters or experiences within the music world, where he/she is motivated and provoked to explore, can be applied not only in other subjects but also in everyday life, which is, in fact, the aim of the process of education (Ivanović, 2007).

**TEACHING CONTENTS OF SCIENCE AND SOCIAL STUDIES FOR THE PURPOSE OF INDEPENDENT LEARNING**

Teaching contents of the subject Science and Social Studies are established in accordance with current curriculum for the subjects the World Around Us in the first and second grade and Science and Social Studies in the third and fourth grade of primary school.

Teaching contents of this subject are based on elementary scientific knowledge from natural and social sciences – Biology, Geography, History, Physics, Chemistry, Sociology, Environmental Science, engineering, technology, traffic, working culture and other areas (Lazarević & Bandur, 2001). None of the subjects in the first stage of primary education covers so many diverse contents from natural and social sciences as the subject of Science and Social Studies does. Taking into account the interdisciplinary nature of this subject, it requires extra effort on the part of the teacher to plan, prepare, organize, present and evaluate the results of teaching.

It is important to emphasize that the complex nature of Science and Social Studies teaching contents is of special significance that is visible in their motivating power, their topicality that incites students to discover and learn. Another reason why the teaching contents of this subject are important is the possibility to choose from and use various didactic teaching systems, sociological forms of work, sources of information, teaching methods and procedures.

Teaching of the subjects the World Around Us and Science and Social Studies is suitable for independent learning implementation since it is based on interesting, original, actual, obvious contents accessible to students’ age. Among the numerous and diverse contents of these subjects, which are suitable for independent learning implementation, we mention the following: living and non-living things – plants and animals with different habitats (the appearance of plants and animals, their habitats, taking care, significance, mutual relations and influence), water, air, soil, sunlight and heat (basic characteristics and significance for the living world); materials and their properties; natural phenomena and their impact on living things (characteristics of seasons, weather conditions and their impact on plants, animals, people and their activities); contents on the culture of living (housing, food, clothes, health care and environment protection); contents on human activity (professions, manufacturing and non-manufacturing activities and their interdependence, children’s rights, the rights of groups, behavior in traffic, mutual impacts of the man and environment); contents on heritage and the past (traces of the family past and the area the particular student is living in, customs, tradition, religious holidays, the past of homeland, famous people of the region, the past of Serbian people) etc.
For this form of work and learning it is advisable and recommended that students observe and follow phenomena and processes in their immediate social and natural environment, work on textual and other materials, do experiments, make tables, herbaria, different collections and groups, applications, keep nature’s calendar, etc.

Considering the fact that in contemporary teaching students are active in the process of learning and acquiring knowledge, it is necessary that, within the teaching of Science and Social Studies, teachers start from non-systematized empirical knowledge of children and guide the process of gaining knowledge towards common, scientifically-based systematized knowledge in the area of nature, society and culture. Thy dynamics of contents realization depends on the variety of learning situations created by teachers, keeping in mind the aims and results of programmes, development potentials, previous experience and knowledge of students. The best results are obtained if the students explore on their own and gain knowledge based on their experience with their teachers directing them in an unobtrusive way.

In order to provide appropriate support and help with learning that students need, so as to be able to achieve goals, teachers, in specific teaching circumstances, “ask questions, direct students’ attention towards the information they missed, towards inconsistencies and anomalies, model the strategies for learning, research and problem solving, give useful advice, while, at the same time, they interfere as little as possible” (Anderson, 2013: 24).

CONCLUSION

Independent learning to a great extent depends on how able and motivated students are for this type of learning, where a major role is performed by teachers - educators who have to know their students very well in order to properly guide and encourage their independence in learning and work.

In order to accomplish the purpose of independent learning in teaching process, it is of vital importance to introduce students gradually to independent learning strategies, control students’ work regularly and prepare students for self-control of their own work and for self-education.

Although there are many learning rules, we are still far from organizing successful learning for each individual student easily and for certain.

Individual differences are great, so the most practical way is to respect those differences and adjust them to individual abilities. However, it is not possible to foresee single situations, so it is necessary that teachers, when they organize and perform teaching, are familiar with general learning rules in order to help students organize their independent learning. Similarly, with the knowledge of some general learning rules, students will more easily identify their own abilities.

REFERENCES


