

PART III

FINE ARTS

1. CHARACTERISTICS AND PRINCIPLES OF ART EDUCATION

Marinela Rusu, Theodora Chandrinou¹⁹⁴

Abstract: *Arts education is one of the most important educational purposes, in order to develop the whole personality of the child, modelling his character features and behavior. Teacher is the central factor in the teaching process, involving a good communication and efficient means of stimulating creativity. This will provide a lot of positive effects in children's evolution as self-expression, self-knowledge, cathartic effects, better relationships and more interest in education, generally.*

Arts offer the possibility of personal growth and personal awareness. School is the place where the child can understand the metaphor and the language of painted images. We always admit that a portrait in drawing is merely a self-portrait. Our paper presents also, some practical issues, concerning the intervention through art in school, along with some works realized by children under teacher's guidance. We analyze the psychological consequences of this art intervention in primary school.

Education in the arts is essential to students' intellectual, social, physical, and emotional growth and well-being. Experiences in the arts - in dance, drama, music, and visual arts - play a valuable role in helping students to achieve their potential as learners and to participate fully in their community and in society as a whole. Arts provide a natural vehicle through which students can explore and express themselves and through which they can discover and interpret the world around them.

Key words: *art intervention, art education, curriculum, cognitive styles, art teachers*

Multiple means for art teaching. There are many ways to bring the arts into the classroom on a daily basis. But how to do it? On the basis of the review, it is clear that there are compelling reasons to nurture arts education in the elementary years. And it is also clear that there is no single approach best suited for all students; what is required is a ***multiplicity of approaches***. Here are four reasons for cultivating a wide number of strategies for embedding arts education into the fabric of children's daily lives (Fox, 2000)¹⁹⁵:

1. Children differ from one another and, consequently, often learn in profoundly differing ways, even within the arts.
2. Cultural and regional characteristics require flexibility in approaches to teaching and learning, in order to maximize opportunities for children to thrive in their communities.
3. Teachers bring differing strengths and areas of expertise to the teaching of the arts.

¹⁹⁴ Researcher PhD, Romanian Academy, Institute "Gh. Zane" from Iași Branch of Romania, email: marinela1808@yahoo.com, Teacher and Artist, Primary Schools from Athens of Greece, email: arteducate@gmail.com

¹⁹⁵ Fox, D., B. (2000). "Music and the baby's brain". Music Educators Journal. 87 (2). 23-29

4. Arts education must include learning in, about, and through the arts, and these different approaches to the arts require differing levels of resources and expertise.

British researcher John Sloboda (2001) similarly concluded that the key component to a viable arts education for today's students is variety – variety in providers, in funding, in locations, in roles for educators, in trajectories, in activities, in accreditation, and in routes to teacher competence. His response to the multiple ideas about the function of arts education is to create multiple forms. Fox (2000) makes a plea for what she calls an *integrated delivery system*, where there is a shared responsibility to provide the best possible experiences for young learners by bringing together funding sponsors, researchers, educators, parents, and families.

Creativity as a life dimension. At the core of the life force is the presence of a constant moving and creating energy. Intrinsic to this “dance of life” are all of the variations of energy moving-flowing, fragmented, gentle, forceful, expanding, contracting, dense, light, dissipating, and regathering. Out of this generative process, all life forms emerge and manifest in the natural world and in human consciousness and action. The creative play of the life force lies in the flux between creation and death, harmony and conflict, like elements and opposite elements forming in relationship to one another. Observing the presence of this creative play in the natural world can be inspiring, renewing, and beautiful.

Creativity connects us to the natural process that exists in all things on the biological, emotional, mental, and spiritual planes. Tapping into the energy of this foundational life force constantly moving in us and around us, we can reconnect with the innate human impulse for creation and evolution. We can develop the capacity to tolerate tension and let go of static and constricting forms that block the healthy and creative flow of life energy, the very flow that makes change possible. As these basic impulses and capacities in us are awakened and strengthened, so is our innate intelligence, which allows us to apprehend creative relationships between what often seem like contradictory pulls.

Psychological development in childrens drawings. The observation is now and then made that a striking resemblance exists between the art of primitive man and the art of the child. Owing to widespread interest manifested in the United States and Great Britain in the activities of Franz Cizek of Vienna, who has been guiding children through art activities for two decades, much discussion of the nature and potentialities of child art has been stimulated. In recent years, research has been directed toward a better understanding of the conditions under which children are creative. According to Cizek any child has the capacity to express his experiences creatively. If he does not, Cizek asserts, it is the pedagogy that is at fault¹⁹⁶.

¹⁹⁶ Cizek cited by Daria Halprin (2003), in vol. “The Expressive Body in Life, Art, and Therapy: Working with Movement, Metaphor, and Meaning.” Publisher: Jessica Kingsley, London, p.16

Creations of children from all sections of the world where educational facilities have made possible their study disclose a wealth of child ideas that are vital, in some instances humorous, and in other instances clever. In many of them definite aesthetic merit is demonstrated. Extensive studies made in normal public school situations in the United States have shown that, when children have been given the liberty of choosing what they wish to paint, although the subject matter is restricted somewhat to themes arising from fairy tales and stories that all children know at a given age, supplemented by things seen in the community, they produce a great variety of pictures.

Perhaps, only one out of twenty of these would be classified as creative in the sense that it represents something unique, vital, and unusual. Most children even at the ages of six to nine tend to express themselves in a more or less stereotyped manner. Some children express themselves in creative ways at any age, but they comprise a small minority. There seems to be, therefore, little scientific substantiation of the Cizek thesis that any child, if left to himself, will produce an abundance of creative products. Even Cizek's children must profit from suggestions unavoidably obtained from seeing the work of children displayed on the walls and from the criticisms of Cizek himself. It is, however, altogether probable that any child will respond to judicious training and under favorable conditions will produce many interesting drawings or even paintings. It is also to be observed that children's failure to produce creatively may be attributable to some extent to the lack of suitable materials.

A sharply pointed pencil is not a suitable tool for the child, whereas clay for modeling or soft chalk or tempera paint may, in the hands of many children, stimulate activities of a superior type. As the child matures still further, into the fifth or sixth year, and particularly if a rapid maturation of motor skill accompanies the mental development, the products will more and more resemble recognizable objects. A rectangle with two spools under it will become a train or car, an elongated oval with a circle at the top will become a man, to which in time will be added two lines for legs and two other lines for arms. Some children of course, develop these forms much in advance of others and are very industrious in their production of them.

The specifics of age are visible in the way a child is drawing, in the subject he chooses for representation. For example, at the age of six and seven some children will produce even elaborate drawings of figures or objects such as trains, automobiles, airplanes, or boats. When large areas are available to work upon, such as a blackboard or large sheet of paper, the child may draw a house with children playing in front of it or almost any kind of compositional assembly. A feature of these products is that the child in the front yard will often appear to be larger than the house, or that the furniture in the house will be plainly visible through the walls.

These are not errors in perspective, nor should they outrage the adult's sense of proportion. The child is not engaged in naturalistic representation; he is simply using graphic means for consolidating and integrating his developmental experiences. With each drawing of a boat or plane he is learning more about

those objects. His failure to complete his drawing satisfactorily at one instance stimulates him to notice details about the locomotive the next time he sees it; hence it follows that next time his drawing will be better. Through that process he extends and enlarges his visual concepts of his world. He draws those things in which he is interested, and he draws them in the proportions that interest him. Hence, other children are far more important to him than a house or tree, and he is interested more in getting the children into the picture. Furthermore, he knows what is in the house. Therefore, he draws it in, oblivious to the fact that it bothers the adult to see objects in the pictures that do not appear from a definite vantage point.

In time, these supposed errors correct themselves as a result of the psychological evolution of the child. He/she slowly perceives the spatial relationships as does the adult. It is usually, therefore, pedagogically unwise to attempt an exposition of the laws of perspective to a six-year-old child, who simply is not interested and furthermore has not the capacity as yet to grasp its significance.

Art of the child and that of primitive. The art of the child is therefore like that of primitive man in some respects and quite different in others. At its best, it has the vitality and expressive accuracy frequently found in the art of early man. On the other hand, it lacks the work/manlike/character and finish of the primitive product. It is also not related so emotionally and directly with the vital necessities of life as must have been the case with primitive man. In the use of materials, the work of early man discloses resourcefulness and the employment of graying tools seldom utilized by the child. The former in many instances was motivated by a philosophic or religious interest that could hardly enter to any real degree into the child's reckoning. With primitive man, therefore, the art activities were deadly serious; with the child they enter largely into the play aspect of life and serve incidentally to consolidate and integrate his developing or growth experience.

The importance of art in the normal development of personality. Education in the arts is essential to students' intellectual, social, physical, and emotional growth and well-being. Experiences in the arts – in dance, drama, music, and visual arts - play a valuable role in helping students to achieve their potential as learners and to participate fully in their community and in society as a whole. The arts provide a natural vehicle through which students can explore and express themselves and through which they can discover and interpret the world around them. The process of drawing, painting or building is complex, in which the child meets various elements of his experience to re-build a new a whole with a new meaning. "In the process of selecting, interpreting and reforming these items, children gave us more than a painting or a sculpture, they gave us a part of themselves: their way of thinking, feeling and looking at the world"¹⁹⁷ (Lowenfeld, 1987: 2).

¹⁹⁷ Lowenfeld, V. (1987). "Creative and Mental Growth", Prentice-Hall Inc., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey

Art is vital for children. This is how a young child can interact and can thus understand the environment in which he lives. This will help him to participate more often in complex and confused world of adults. Involving a child in art is a very personal and individual experience. It gives the child the opportunity to create and to see the result of his own creative act. Art can be a mean of self expression and communication with others but can at the same time, be a personal interaction, intimacy between the self and the artistic world. The moderator may make the child aware of his own value, developing thus the self-esteem, and beginning to understand the world in which the child lives.

The development of metaphorical language - means exploring the consciousness or the self-knowledge, without asking how to get to this state. It is believed, generally, that the part of our personality that dictates feelings, memories, emotions, impulses and desires is constructed from a succession of sequences. In our childhood the responses are at the primary level of consciousness that encompasses sensations, instincts and movements. As adults, we become much freer to express and experience memory, language and symbols. And yet, as humans, we will also experience specific skills acquired through development. And whatever psychological model we choose to explain human personality, these stages of development cannot be circumvented. Thus, the personality development will also form later its own identity. Are we confident? Are we introverts? Impulsive, generous? We indulge in our dreams daytime? Past humiliations caused feelings of shame and guilt? Each of these responses help us understand who we are, the amount of our own self. In this way we experience our outside world.

The unconscious basis of creativity. On the level of psychology, the creative process connects us with the unconscious, opening us up to the impressions of the psyche that lie out of reach during our ordinary daily routines. Working in a “nonlinear” way, which creative process engenders, brings forth content from the unconscious—images, memories, sensations, and sources of knowledge or ideas that we do not get at directly through analytic thinking or the censoring mind. Returning to Rollo May’s (cited by Moss, 1987) proposal that we should explore creativity as “representing the highest degree of emotional health,”¹⁹⁸ I would add that the absence of creativity inhibits our well-being. We can see that, without creativity, we lose access to the richness of the unconscious. Mirroring western society’s long history of fearing and resisting the mystery of the nonrational, intuitive qualities of the imagination, our educational, religious, family, and social training cuts off the link between creativity and the unconscious very early in our lives.

Instead, the social imperative values goal over process, and linear thinking over imagination. Activities that cultivate and provide an outlet for imagination are relegated to the backseat, seen as “extracurricular pursuits” or “hobbies.” Lack of creative dialogue with the unconscious robs us of the opportunity to use the vast amount of energy and resource material of our inner life for conscious

¹⁹⁸ Moss, L. (1987) “Art/or Health's Sake”, London: Carnegie UK Trust, p. 7, 8, 24

understanding and expression. The pathway between imagination and unconscious made possible by the creative process is, therefore, as significant for all human beings as it is for the declared artist.

Art therapy – a new way of optimisation through art. Art therapy is recognized for many therapeutic effects on aspects of mental, physical, spiritual and notably, emotional well-being (Hagman, G. – 2005)¹⁹⁹: To provide meaning for *strengthening ego* - allow better sense of identity through discovering of personal interest and growth issue; to provide a *cathartic experience* - let emotions that have immobilizing effect be released through physical act of creating personal expression through art; to provide means to *uncover anger* - use of color and shape to detect sense of aggression; to offer an avenue to *reduce guilt* - conveying inner thoughts of past feelings and behavior in guilt process; to *facilitate impulse control* - allow freedom of self-expression, rather than repression; to help patients/clients use as *a new outlet* during incapacitating illness - use as a tool in strengthen the *mind-body connection* by using various art media to augment the imagery aspect of self-healing (Arguile, R. 1992)²⁰⁰.

Integrating a service of art therapy in schools is an opportunity that teachers can consult and supervise the withdrawn, isolated children with which they work. This may provide a structure in which teachers can ask tough questions, addressing the emotional impact to them - dealing with such problems - and listening to stories about the trauma of these children (Buchalter, Susan, 2004)²⁰¹.

Practical results in art intervention. From the rich creative, educational intervention through art in school, teacher and artist Theodora Chandrinou has been applying a set of original topics to art classes in Athens, Greece (2013a²⁰² and 2013b²⁰³). Children's age was between 7 and 11 years. Proposing to express, be it different feelings and emotions (Fig. 1), to draw portraits or to imitate the style and themes of great artists (Van Gogh – Fig. 2, Matisse, and Picasso), have resulted in the end a lot of interesting works.

Also, could be highlighted many beneficial consequences in their whole personality and interrelational behavior. Some of the emotions portrayed were: happiness, sadness, anger, tears, fear, enthusiasm, joy and smile. Also, the art teacher, Theodora Chandrinou proposed to children to express some subjects as follows: *How should I be if I was a flower?* (Fig. 3), *How should I be if I was a leaf?* (Fig. 4). Creations that you can see in the end of our paper, reflect not only

¹⁹⁹ Hagman, George (2005), *Aesthetic Experience: Beauty, Creativity, and the Search for the Ideal*. Publisher: Rodopi. Amsterdam

²⁰⁰ Arguile, R. (1992), *Art therapy with children and adolescents* in Waller, D. and Gilroy A. *Art Therapy: A Handbook*, Publisher: Open University Press. Philadelphia

²⁰¹ Buchalter, Susan (2004), *A Practical Art Therapy*. Publisher: Jessica Kingsley. London

Hagman, George (2005), *Aesthetic Experience: Beauty, Creativity, and the Search for the Ideal*. Publisher: Rodopi. Amsterdam

²⁰² Chandrinou, Theodora (2013a), "Innovative Art Interventions in Primary Education Providing emotional intelligence and life skills", in (Editor) Marinela Rusu, *Expressing and Self-Regulating Emotions*, Publisher Ars Longa, Iași, p. 133-150

²⁰³ Rusu, Marinela and Chandrinou, Theodora (2013b), "Art therapy - a way of intervention and optimization of personality", in (Editor) Marinela Rusu, *Expressing and Self-Regulating our Emotions*, Publisher Artes, Iasi, p. 8-30

the free expression of the child's personality (sense of inner freedom that any creative act gives) but also, a number of other *psychological dimensions*. Among these we can identify the *cognitive*, *affective* and *behavioral dimensions*.

Cognitive elements include: *self-knowledge* and the ability *to identify* their own emotions/affective states, intelligence/mental ability *to reflect through a logical image* (a human face) the outward expression of an emotion; also, these creations involve enriching the human knowledge universe from an early age.

Affective dimensions include: the inner strength *to live*, and at the same time, *to detach* from a particular emotion, amplification of the emotional sensitivity (*emotional granularity*), knowing already that people with greater granularity and plasticity of the self, will have more diverse emotional reactions and will adapt more easily in life (Barrett-2006; Gross-2007, M. Rusu-2005); the development of *empathy*, the ability to recognize and understand and even feel, the emotions of others, *finding yourself* inside the group through emotions and common emotional experiences. We would add to this the development of *imagination*, ingenuity and *uniqueness* of self; the creative capacity of the children is driven by the desire to seek the original forms to express a common theme proposed by the teacher. Also, they can discover talented children who may later choose a real artistic career.

From a *behavioral* point of view, the intervention through art has an important impact and often easily to observe: *the kathartic* effect is soothing, relaxing and providing a source of positive thoughts about themselves and of others, helping to eliminate any mental tensions or frustrations. Children who participated in this experiment became more cooperative, more active, or conversely, the aggressive behaviors or irritation reactions were visibly improved, showing a more acceptable/temperate behavior. Interpersonal relationships have much benefited, as shown in the children's answers to a brief interview (Chandrinou, Theodora, 2013, Rusu, Marinela & Chandrinou, Theodora, 2013)²⁰⁴.

"The group pictures begin with choosing a place to work, the shape and the medium. Each person is encouraged to voice preferences or even abhorrence. What is acceptable becomes apparent, not usually quickly. Once the paint has touched we are focused, we move around each other to reach the spaces we drawn to the marks we leave are a record of a curious intimate dance of strength, dominance, respect, mutual interest, distress and amusement" (Buchalter, Susan - 2004)²⁰⁵.

We quote in the end of our paper one of the children's confessions, referring to drawing experience: "*Working on group painting was different, depending on my mood on the day. An interesting experience and mostly enjoyable in a way. I felt I had to hold back somewhat because I didn't want to "step on anyone's toes" but part of me felt like I needed to leave my mark in a positive way. Preconceived ideas of things hindered me in expressing myself freely.*" We

²⁰⁴ Rusu, Marinela and Chandrinou, Theodora (2013b), p. 8-30

²⁰⁵ Buchalter, Susan (2004), "A Practical Art Therapy." Publisher: Jessica Kingsley. London

understand though that drawing experience and art teaching are revealing activities in the complex process of education, which need a lot of preparation and a good child-teacher communication.

References

1. Arguile, R. (1992), "Art therapy with children and adolescents" in Waller, D. and Gilroy A. *Art Therapy: A Handbook*, Publisher: Open University Press. Philadelphia
2. Barrett, Lisa, F., (2006), "Solving the emotion paradox: Categorization and the experience of Emotion", in *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 2006/10, 20-46
3. Buchalter, Susan (2004), "A Practical Art Therapy." Publisher: Jessica Kingsley. London.
4. Chandrinou, Theodora (2013). "Innovative Art Interventions in Primary Education Providing emotional intelligence and life skills", in (Editor Marinela Rusu), *Manifestarea și auto-reglarea emoțiilor*, Publisher Ars Longa, Iași, 2013, p. 8-30
5. Fox, D., B. (2000). "Music and the baby's brain." *Music Educators Journal*. 87 (2). 23-29
6. Gross, J.J. (Ed.) (2007), "Handbook of emotion regulation." New York, NY: Guilford
7. Hagman, George (2005), "Aesthetic Experience: Beauty, Creativity, and the Search for the Ideal." Publisher: Rodopi. Amsterdam
8. Halprin, Daria (2003). "The Expressive Body in Life, Art, and Therapy: Working with Movement, Metaphor, and Meaning." Publisher: Jessica Kingsley, London
9. Lowenfeld, V (1987). "Creative and Mental Growth" (eighth edition) Prentice-Hall Inc., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey
10. Moss, L. (1987). "Art/or Health's Sake", London: Carnegie UK Trust, p. 7, 8, 24
11. Rusu, Marinela (2013). "Manifestarea și auto-reglarea emoțiilor", Publisher Ars Longa, Iași, p. 133-150
12. Rusu, Marinela and Chandrinou, Theodora (2013), "Art therapy - a way of intervention and optimization of personality", in (Editor Marinela Rusu), *Manifestarea și auto-reglarea emoțiilor*, Publisher Ars Longa, Iași, p. 8-30
13. Rusu, Marinela, (2005). "Inteligența emoțională – Empatie și comunicare interpersonală", Publisher Universitas, Iași
14. Sloboda, J. (2001). "Emotion, functionality and the everyday experience of music: Where does music education fit?" *Music Education research*. 3.243-252



1. Emotions expressed in children's drawings. (7-11 old, Athens)



2. Children's drawings after masterpieces - Van Gogh



3. How would I be as a flower?



4. How would I be as a leaf?