

4. AREAS OF ARTISTIC EDUCATION IN EARLY EDUCATION: THEORETICAL REFERENCES

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Abstract: *The article describes conceptual aspects related to the artistic tendencies in preschool education. The realization of this process is presented by operating with the concepts of the famous occidental, Russian and local scientists. One of the ideas characteristic to the scientists' pedagogical thinking is that in the process of formation/development of the child through arts, the child is submitting the objects and phenomena to his/her previously acquired assimilation schemes. To insure integrity in the practical way of the early education, the methodology we are proposing is based on a research, a significant theoretical network of successful pedagogical practices of well known scientists. The analyzed theories are a source of inspiration and constitute the theoretical universe which contributes to as-truthful-as-possible preschool education of the child. Early education is the most important period in one's life through the sustainable consequences it has on his/her ultimate development.*

Key words: *artistic tendencies, fields of art, musical skills, early education, the mechanism of knowledge*

1. Introduction

The structure of the child's development through art, together with the general and specific competences, the contents should be organized according to each step of the child's development, but, at the same time, it may constitute the means for the realization of other specific competences. The educator/teacher has thus more freedom in acting depending on the individual peculiarities of the children/pupils, on their options, as well as on the means that the teacher has (video recordings, kinetograms, specialized literature, internet, etc.). The responsibility of the teacher/educator towards the path chosen in developing skills, by diversifying the contents, obviously grows to the same extent.

Every parent, educator, grandparent should be motivated for a qualitative development through art from the perspective of the musical-rhythmical activities. Those that educate aim at promoting the educational practices which stimulate and support the harmonious development of the child.

2. Discussions

The methodological suggestions cover some possible ways to follow in the didactic demarche. The methodological recommendations regarding the formation/development of the elements specific to the artistic field by which the

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familiarization process through art starts, covers music of different character. Thus, three important phases take shape:

➤ **Strictly follow the age peculiarities**, where they aim at selecting a repertoire appropriate for the understanding skills, for the rendering-interpreting means specific to the level of evolution.

➤ **Follow the technical level reached within the activities/classes of formation of the artistic skills**. The technical requirements of the repertoire should follow the level of preparation specific to the children's age, which, in its turn, depends on the psycho-somatic development of the children.

➤ **Emphasize the expressive character of the musical, creation, drawing and dancing activities** – coordinated, by which the understanding of the expressive report between form and content is approached, of the coherent structuring of the artistic elements and of the relationship between the rhythm of the movement and that of music, dance. The repertoire realization is not done for the sake of the goal, but it is used as a means to attain the performer's skills and as an element indispensable for the realization of the child's personality in development/formation/education [3, p.23].

There is no single theory to entirely cover the psycho-pedagogy of the development of the preschool children's artistic skills. For the integrity of the early education practical application, we grounded the methodology we are proposing on a research, a significant theoretical network, of successful pedagogical practices of some remarkable world-known scientists.

The approach of J.Piaget's ideas regarding the impact of learning by discovery and exploration constitutes the basis of education in early education. Being a reliable follower of constructivism, he imposed himself by the child's **levelled theory of cognitive development**, according to which:

- The child's intellectual development undergoes certain continuous phases and stages;
- The consecutiveness is universal, general, and the child's level of development may vary from a field to another, as well as depending on his/her culture and environment;
- The significant stages in the learning process and that of the personality formation are:
 - a) The stage of sensorial-motor intelligence, between 0 and 2 years old;
 - b) The stage of pre-operational thinking, between 2 and 6 years old;
 - c) The stage of concrete operations, between 6 and 11 years old;
 - d) The stage of formal operations, from 11 years old on.

One of the ideas peculiar to the pedagogical thinking, is that in the child's development process through arts, the child submits the objects and the phenomena to his/her assimilation schemes: „to apply” (the sensorial-motor intelligence); to classify (logical operations), to tact, to leap (numerical operations); to relate phenomena (reasoned explanations). By acquiring these operations stage by stage, the child is able to apply them in a larger variety of

phenomena, objects, mentioning the fact that they can be conquered by a game activity only.

According to Piaget's theory, the child interacts with external forces more actively rather than passively: he has a quite intense activity, while he tries to find explanations of the events and the world around. To give an outline to J. Piaget's ideas, we shall emphasize:

- 1) The is formed by stages, which differ by the quality of the children's judgements, the way they act and learn about the world around them;
- 2) The formation is primarily **sensorial**, then **of exploration**, being based on "right here and right now";
- 3) The mental structures, including the interpersonal one, are formed through the child's interaction with the environment.

Erik Erikson through his theory of psycho-social development completes J. Piaget's theory of cognitive development from which the following ideas shall be emphasized:

- 1) Development is a process of integration of the individual biological factors with the education and social-cultural ones;
- 2) Through the course of life, eight polar stages are passed, reflected through the thesis: the child's development potential acquires fulfilment during his/her entire existence;
- 3) Each stage is sensitive for acquiring certain qualities.

In this course of ideas, we should mention that the stages/phases of the child's formation follow a certain consecutiveness and structure. Each stage may take a positive or negative flow, which marks the ultimate development of the personality:

- 4) In the first year of life, there is a bipolar relationship of characteristics – lack of confidence, which generates the trust to adults:
 - Between 1 and 3 years old, the dichotomy is being manifested: autonomy/emancipation – dependence/doubt, which generate the self-control;
 - Between 4 and 5 years old – the dichotomy: the willingness to find out what kind of person he/she will be – the feeling of guilt, which generate the feeling of responsibility;
 - Between 6 and 11 years old - the dichotomy: the initiative – the feeling of inferiority causes the feeling of competition;
 - Between 12 and 18 years old- the dichotomy: the awareness of the I-identity – the confusion of roles, and as positive result- fidelity and loyalty.

By studying the types of behaviours where the children process and assimilate information, the psychologist Howard Gardner has identified certain learning modalities, also called multiple intelligences: social (inter-personal), spatial, linguistic, logical - mathematical, musical, corporal-kinesthetic, naturalistic and existential. Each of the types is based on a neurological structure with own course of development. Starting from the idea that any teaching method is, obviously, unsatisfactory, as each child is different, H. Gardner

considers that the educational process planned and realized from the multiple-intelligence perspective

- Conditions the child-centered and individualization;
- Facilitates the interaction with the world;
- Insures and supports the self-expression success;
- Strengthens the self-image and the feeling of competition [10, p.66].

Howard Gargner has contributed through the multiple-intelligence theory (so far, they make reference to **nine types** of intelligences), according to which:

The musical intelligence implies special skills of rhythm and melody, for activities of rhythm support and emphasis, to write music, play an instrument and sing songs.

The corporal-kinesthetic intelligence is mainly manifested through the sensorial system and physical movements in the learning and expression process: through obvious preferences for role-play, dramatizations, movement games, sports activities, tactile experiences and ways of direct learning [3, p.37].

Jerom Bruner has noticed that, while exploring the social environment, the children acquire the skill to communicate by using the artistic language. There is a relationship of mutuality between the child's artistic language and artistic experience. The artistic experience forms and develops the child's traits of personality. The recognition of this relationship has special importance in the child early-education formation. *As defining elements of the children's artistic experience accumulation process we consider the receiving of the work of art, the elementary artistic creation.*

Kaminsky's educational philosophy addresses the child maintenance – of the needs/necessities, peculiarities (physical, cognitive, socio-emotional), rhythm and the development level of the individual – in the central position in the education thinking and planning [2, p.68].

By using as a criterion the evolution of the affectivity and the dialectics of establishing the self-consciousness H.Wallon (1941) distinguishes the following stages: the stage when the emotional impulsiveness differs from the motor one, the subjectivism and the affective symbiosis with the mother is being structured, the stage of the self-consciousness formation as an expression of socialization and emotional complexity, the stage of the I independence and of the role taking.

A primary place in history is taken by J.Amos Comenius who brought arguments for the therapy of training and education as a system of scientific knowledge. J.A.Comenius has found what the child should have in his/her first six years. His research describes the programme of knowledge and skills the child should accumulate.

Pedagogue, theoretician and publicist I.H.Pestalozzi is the author of the system of pedagogical ideas by which he answers all the main problems of pedagogy. He tried to prove how the harmonized development of the child's moods can be insured and how it can be oriented by using education through

arts. The center of his pedagogical thinking is taken by the idea according to which the nature is formed out of four categories of forces or powers: intellectual, moral, artistic and physical.

The essential contribution to the preschool education development is realized by Fr. Froebel, progressive German pedagogue from late nineteenth century. Froebel considers that the game develops the child's creative possibilities, being the most appropriate activity for the early education.

The scientist creates the concept of arts as one of the richest resources for the preschool children's educational process. Art is a natural component of their game, facilitating the positive and fruitful contact with the adults. Music does not require expensive or demanding equipment; the most valuable instrument for these children is the human voice; there are intimate interconnections between music and children, between music and the artistic language. Music should be an integral part of the every-day activities in kindergarten or nursery [4, p.21].

Ovide Decroly, as a representative of the child-centered school, considers that: "The child is acquiring knowledge as a view of the whole. The child's multiform activities should be grouped around his/her fundamental needs. The activities are mainly represented by games and music, where emulation and pleasure shall be the main incentives". [3, p.22]

For the scientist Lev Vîgotsky, the orientation of the educational process towards the area of proximal development is the priority condition in the child's education. In the context of development stages, the scientist distinguishes:

- The area of the current development;
- The area of the proximal development, meaning the space where the child comes to solve the problem with the adult's help only.

The study of the artistic field realized by the scientist Vlad Pislaru represents a first challenge for the possible theory of the pupils' literary-artistic education, validated conceptually, experientially and experimentally. The conceptual pillar of such a theory is constituted by the double-unitary character of the creation-receipt process of the literature and art works, where the receiver/reader is examined in his quality of the second subject creator of the creation heard. The reading activity based on this principle trains, in a complex and continuous process of interaction, the reflexive thinking, characteristic to the creation-receipt in literature and arts, and the determining thinking, characteristic to the scientific and empirical knowledge. The artistic education is produced simultaneously in all the three types of knowledge, the priority being **the artistic knowledge**.

All the components of the literary-artistic education theory – aesthetic-philosophical fundamentals, teleology, epistemology, contents, technologies – offer the reader related theoretical, experiential and experimental arguments, models and typologies of systems of principles (aesthetical-philosophical, literary-artistic, of literary-artistic education, as well as for each indicated

component); models of the system of the pupils' reading activity, of the system of methods and techniques specific to the pupils' literary-artistic education – conceptual and technological accessories absolutely necessary to any related activity which every literature teacher is doing with his/her pupils[4, p.66]. In the view of the scientist Ion Gagim the pedagogy of arts (teaching of artistic subjects) should build its own rules. They exist empirically in the daily practice of the musical education – otherwise music would not have attained the performances the society knows today. But they should be recognized – collected, selected, described, reasoned, presented in a certain way, developed, enriched, researched[1, p.44].

Thus, our concept about arts and approaching it in early education shall be based on the deep professionalism of music, on the internal energy of this art. Everything that happens in music and with music shall be identified with the child's life happenings. Music should directly reflect the internal states of the child. That is why, any approach of the artistic phenomenon, including that of child formation-development – outside the understanding that he/she is the main actor with the feelings and states specific to everyone in part. „The musical education, with its experiences of centuries, has become a constant and unreplaceable factor in the child's education” researcher M.Morari has concluded. This has been understood by the old Greeks, the educators of one of the most elevated civilizations, placing music and musical education on the top of values. This principle should constitute the fundamental desideratum nowadays as well. It should be the foundation in starting the musical-educational process in preschool education.

Music is, first of all, the art of the „beautiful” sounds, which gives us aesthetic and artistic satisfactions. From this very premise we should start communicating with it, though music in the child's life should not be limited to this issue. In the life conditions of an environment of sounds, music of high artistic value becomes an “ecological” factor for the hearing and spirit. We should emphasize the fundamental principle of musical education in preschool education, acquisition of the communication experience with music under different aspects (audition, interpreting, creation-improvisation, free discussion about the musical phenomena), so formation of the competence to communicate with the art of sounds in different aspects [2, p.55].

3. Results

All these theories are a source of inspiration and constitute the theoretical universe which contributes to as truthful as possible education of the preschool child. For an integral approach of the early education we shall enumerate the early-education general objectives:

- The child's normal and full integral development, capitalizing his physical and psychic potential, following his affective needs and the specifics of his main activity– *the game*;

- The development of the skills to interact with other children, with adults and environment for acquiring knowledge, habits, behaviours and new conducts;
- Discovery by each child of own identity, of the autonomy and development of a positive self-image;
- Support the child in accumulating knowledge, skills, habits and behaviours necessary to enter school and during all his/her life.

After the adoption of the **International Convention of the Children's Rights** in 1989 by 128 states, in March 1990 at Jomtien, Thailand, the World Conference "Education for All" took place. The statement at Jomtien marked a significant moment for the early education, as it emphasized the idea that: "Learning starts at birth. This fact draws the need of early education and care, which can be insured by appropriate involvement of families, communities and institutional programmes".

Early childhood represents the most important period in an individual's life through the sustainable consequences it has on his ultimate development. Each child is unique, and his/her uniqueness represents the starting point in taking decision of his/her full development. Recognition and knowing closely his/her uniqueness shall help us in finding out how to support him/her.

As the children learn and develop by knowing the world around them as a whole, which demands and stimulates the child under all aspects, standards of motor learning are structured by all the development areas of the child formation.

Thus, the premises for the future integration of the children are formed, according to own options, as well as for their judicious orientation in the next stage of the artistic field.

This field represents a mind map that implies the replacement of the accents from the mechanic accumulations of knowledge on their creative assimilation, from the informative character to the formative one of the specialized artistic education, orienting the interest on the child and his options.

In this respect, the arts should have the following objectives:

- To familiarize the children with the languages specific to each genre of dancing, in order to diversify the capacity of expression;
- To form motor skills supported motivationally in an intrinsic and ideatic way;
- To create creative-thinking habits;
- To develop capitalization capacities in own axiological system;
- To help the future artists define own personality, by reporting to artistic styles and the representatives of the national and universal culture.

The methodological demarche shall start with the presentation of the ideatic content of the repertoire, by emphasizing the characters' peculiarities to be performed and by closing with the structural spatial and temporal analysis of the selected musical part and activities.

It is recommended to use the analysis of the watched materials and plays/cartoons, for creating models, by reporting to which the children could

create own concept. It is advisable not to mechanically imitate the models, but rather to creatively assimilate them.

In the case of the repertoire created by the parent/educator, it is advisable that the approaching methods take into account the stated criteria, without becoming a coercive element, generator of inhibition in the creation process. In the situations when the child is the author of the “artistic creations”, the role of the parent/educator/teacher should exclusively be that of a leader critically objective in his observations *Table No. 1*.

Table No. 1. Skills and contents specific to the development of the preschool child

1. Operating with elements of specific language in approaching the artistic creations	
Specific skills	Contents
1.1. Associating reasons, musical topics with appropriate significances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The music text analyzed in the content of the work as a whole
1.2. Analyzing methods of expressing the language in music interpretation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language elements expressed through the form of movement, facial expression, gestures
2. Creative interpretation by using the art-specific language	
Specific competences	Contents
2.1. Customization of the interpretation according to given stylistic benchmarks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The stylistic specifics of the musical language (classic, modern, folkloric, etc.)
2.2. Identifying ways to facilitate communication, in groups of children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elements for practicing efficient communication, in groups of children (anticipation of the partners' movements, synchronization, etc.)
2.3. Customization of the interpretation depending on the dominants of own personality and the characteristics of the character.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Criteria for selecting the repertoire, for interpreting • Ways of diversifying own interpretative possibilities • Elementary game structures with musical-rhythmical movements.

In this order of ideas, the best suggestion is to create favourable conditions for the integration of all children in the art-specific activities, the parent/educator is suggesting the children amongst different musical, creation, literary activities, but it follows the same goal – they should form psychomotor skills characteristic to their age. Integrating musical creations in all the activities of the child and stimulating his/her creativity, talent shall allow them to explore and have trust in their artistic skills.

Testing the social – historic and culturally aesthetic atmosphere, in which the existence of the artistic field has evolved, as well as the process of developing certainties of recovering the values have imposed the introduction of current instruments of specific research, under a new optics of the artistic experience, organized in the course of time, and of deciphering the significance of the content or creation.

4. In **conclusion**, to guide the educators/grandparents/parents in the process of awareness and accumulation of artistic experience of the preschool children, the following stages are taken:

1. *Sub-sensorial stage* (the stage of sensorial-motor intelligence), which is characterized by the elementary perception of the artistic phenomenon with the emotional manifestation to artistic stimulators.

2. *Associative stage* is the stage when the child associates the character of music/the colours in painting/the voice intonations, etc. with the significances specific to those areas.

3. *The identifying/contemplative/appreciative stage*, the child identifies something beautiful from all the range of elements. He/she appreciates everything he/she has seen.

4. *The stage of the elementary artistic experience*. The child is handling well; he creatively operates with the acquired elements, being based on previous experience.

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