

5. STUDY OF ARTS TEACHERS' VISION ON SUPPORTING "ARTISTIC TALENT"

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Abstract: *The purpose of this study is to find out the arts teachers' opinion regarding the three issues related to the strategies aimed to support pupils with artistic talent: what is? who supports? how do they support? the artistic talent. Three goals lead us to this aim: to sketch the profile of the pupils with artistic talent, depending on their conduct and needs; the identification of the activities to support these special children; the identification of the extent to which different institutions get involved in supporting the pupils with artistic talent. To achieve these goals, we used the opinion poll as a research method and the created instrument was represented by a five-item questionnaire - four of them requiring open answers and one for closed answers. A total of 29 teachers of visual arts and music education, theoretical and interpretive, were selected for this study. The obtained results brought us close to the image that the teachers have on the artistic talent phenomenon. According to the teachers, the artistic talent is visible if we pay attention to four fields: creativity, passion, harnessing talent, specific skills. Meeting the needs (material, emotional support, socialization with peers, recognition of their talent) can be sources of shaping the educational strategies to support pupils with artistic talent by the main responsible institutions – the Ministry of Education, inspectorates, schools, NGOs.*

Key words: *artistic talent, vision of teachers, talented students, educational strategies*

1. Defining the artistic talent in theoretical models of understanding giftedness

The relevance of the theoretical models starts with their usefulness to science and society, usefulness that they prove to have in time. Some theoretical models of understanding giftedness and talent may support the definition of artistic talent. The analysis of the dedicated literature in the field of excellence focused on understanding the phenomenon of giftedness and talent allowed us to synthesize a work definition of the concept "talent in the artistic field": we consider that it can be understood as a manifestation of superior endowment in different areas of the artistic field, as excellence demonstrated by extraordinary performances for this field and potential of excellence demonstrated by the results obtained in different forms of assessment (Anghel, 2016).

Here are some examples of theoretical models that have helped us in formulating the above work definition. In Feldhusen's list of talents, the artistic and creative talent occupies a distinct place. In this model, the concept of talent is approached simplistically as a component of superior endowment. Even the author reviewed the theoretical option for the significance of the concepts of talent and superior endowment and adopted for talent the meaning inspired by Gagne, that of positive transformation through educational intervention of remarkable aptitudinal endowment. (Feldhusen, 2005).

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According to Tanenbaum's appreciation, the artistic talent is part of the "surplus talents" list and will be found in the remarkable results of the musicians, painters, actors who are meant to beautify the world. Tanenbaum creates the portrait of giftedness at the centre of a five-pointed star and claims that each of the five elements (superior general intelligence, exceptional specific skills, non-intellectual features, support from the environment, chance) will be present at different degrees in the different areas of talent.

Which is the perfect combination to portray the talent in the artistic field? It is a question open to further investigation, especially since the importance of social responsibility was added to this, Tanenbaum stressing that "it is essential for the gifted to learn that great character has to serve as the mediator of great accomplishments, otherwise, the brilliant mind can become the most destructive force in the world." (Tanenbaum, 2000, p. 447).

Renzulli's model on artistic talent finds its place in the list of fields of manifestation of superior endowment. Moreover, because the model is intended to be one with a fast application in practice, the author generates a tool to identify those with potential talent and develops more profiles in this regard, including several that correspond to the artistic field (Renzulli, 1986, 1999). For Gagne the educational interventions - regardless of their nature, formal or non-formal - on innate aptitudes and especially of those particular to arts will lead to performance, the only one that can demonstrate the presence of the artistic talent (Gagne, 2009, 2004).

We appreciate Munich's models on giftedness (Heller, 1992, 2001; Ziegler & Perleth, 1997; Perleth, 2001) as very generous in the sense that it can be the starting points in the study of giftedness and talent, regardless the area of its manifestation and regardless of the age of those to be included in the study. Excerpt from the dynamic ability-achievement model we can follow the evolution of the artistic talent from childhood to youth and further on until its transformation into expertise at adulthood.

Sternberg, also Renzulli or Tanenbaum address giftedness from the perspective of social contribution. The role of the artists is special; they must promote beauty in a manner in which the value achieved in millennia of existence of humanity transcends the present, corrupted by false values, easy to understand by the audience, in a hurry every time. Sternberg's theory applied to the educational environment could help professional growth of many persons with performance potential in the areas of this field. (Sternberg & Grigorenco, 2003).

2. Research Methodology

The aim of this study is to find out the opinion of arts teachers with at least didactic grade II, related to the strategies aimed to support pupils with artistic talent. Four goals lead us to this intention: to sketch the profile of the pupils with artistic talent, depending on their conduct and needs; to identify the activities to support these special children; to identify the extent to which different institutions get involved in supporting the pupils with artistic talent and the

means they engage; identifying the needs of the teachers who work with pupils talented in the arts.

In order to achieve these goals, we used the opinion poll as a research method and the originally created instrument was represented by a five-item questionnaire (four of them requiring for open answers and one for closed answers by ticking the selected choice on a Likert scale from 1-5). The sample consists of 29 subjects, teachers with II didactic grade, who practice at gymnasium schools, theoretical high schools or arts schools in Moldavia, 12 of them being visual arts teachers and 17 music teachers. The sampling was carried out randomly through voluntary participation of these teachers to the present study.

3. Results

The results will be presented following the analysis of each item in order to demonstrate the accomplishment of each of the three goals. We obtained the sketch of portrait of the pupils with artistic talent, thus reaching the first objective of the study, starting from two indicators: the behaviours that indicate the presence of artistic talent at pupils and the specific needs of pupils with artistic talent. Asked to enumerate *five behaviours that indicate the presence of artistic talent* in pupils, the teachers have added besides the specific skills needed to achieve high performance in the arts field other aspects which were grouped into three categories: creativity, passion, involvement in their own development.

Even if the first item requested the identification of the behaviours that describe talent in art, some of the teachers of the two groups, visual arts and music, also provided examples of specific skills as: confidence, sense of colour, sense of proportion, analyses natural structures, melodic hearing (correctly receives, stores quickly plays correctly), feel the rhythm, feel the music, specific physiological skills (strong voice, hand conformation), etc. However, to all the talented children in arts there are some aspects required in order to prove their creativity such as: imagination, originality, spontaneity, fantasy, thus the creativity area has received over 30 nominations from teachers. The passion area is even more intensely regarded as describing talented children in arts; a total number of 50 nominations of the behaviours in this category serve as proof of this fact. These children show interest in art, desire to know more in the artistic field, devote time and are more involved in artistic activities than other colleagues. These features are specific to the artistic potential.

Table no. 1: Behaviours which indicate that a student is talented in arts

Dimensions	Behaviours	Frequency
Creativity zone	creativity	9
	imagination/ fantasy/ improvisation	7
	originality	4
	innovation	2
	attention to details	2

Passion zone	passion (desire to sing, the joy of singing and music, responsiveness, draws much)	14
	interest in arts	13
	passion (curiosity, give time, hobby, working extra)	9
	sensitivity	9
	desire for knowledge (life artists, new work techniques)	9
	motivation / conscientiously	6
Self-promotion zone	monetize their work (competitions, shows, exhibitions, etc.)	5

The gift that became talent is demonstrated when these children participate with their works in public spaces to be recognized as valuable. Even if only 5 of the teachers nominated self-promoting as behaviour of the artistic talent, at the next item, in which are investigated the needs of gifted children, 9 of teachers identified the need for social affirmation and recognition of talent at the pupils who stand out in the artistic field. In the list of needs of their pupils, the teachers identify among the first places the need of material support (20 nominations), the need for emotional support, empathy and acceptance from others (15 nominations), the need for knowledge (12 nominations), the need for socializing with peers (11 nominations).

In order to achieve the second objective – *identifying the activities to support pupils with artistic talent* - we used two items: the first requires the enumeration of the ways in which the needs of talented pupils in arts can be meet, and the second to identify some possible activities with education character meant to support pupils with artistic talent. The results of the third item, “*which are in your opinion the ways through which the needs of the talented pupils can be satisfied?*” are correlated with those from the previous item. Therefore, the needs for material support are answered with: supplying the materials for work and professional musical instruments (15), arranging classrooms suitable for the specific of the artistic activity (8), sponsoring participation in competitions (6), the granting of scholarships (3).

The need for knowledge will be answered with: involvement of children in circles with small groups, creative (7), monitoring of the individual activity (3), direct contact with as many artistic activities (3), exchange of experiences (2); the need for support will be answered with: selection of teachers to lead them to success (3) to encourage them and have confidence in them (11), family counselling (11). The educational activities identified by the teachers that are directed towards pupils with artistic talent, are numerous and require the involvement of the school, of the family, of the economic institutions and, of course, of the interested pupils. Thus, to the item number four - *What are the possible educational activities (formal or non-formal) to support pupils with talent in arts field?* the teachers answered:

- competitive activities: competitions and olympiads (23 nominations);
- promoting activities: exhibitions, recitals, concerts (16 nominations);

- formative and educational activities such as thematic camps, workshops, master classes, circles, activities in centres of excellence (14 nominations);
- social activities: meetings with artists (11 nominations) and exchange experiences with other pupils (2 nominations).

To achieve the third objective - *Identify the extent to which different institutions get involved in supporting pupils with artistic talent* - we formulated the fifth item, where teachers were asked to rate from 1-5 the extent to which institutions get involved in supporting pupils with talent in the artistic field. The results indicate the perception of a high degree of involvement from the Children's Palace (96 points), an average degree of involvement from NGOs (89 points) and the school (81 points), a low degree of involvement from the Ministry of Education (59 points), the County Inspectorates (53 points) and municipalities (54 points), while the maximum score for each could've been 130 points.

4. Conclusions

The identification, cultivation and promotion of talents, aspects perceived unitary and coherently addressed through institutional educational strategies, could be the source of personal and later professional fulfilment of a special population of pupils, such as pupils with artistic talent. With professional achievements and becoming creators of art, they will be those who will make our life richer through beauty.

To research the nature of their talent, the training needs and then intervene in order to support them in manners that are scientifically argued, becomes a duty. This paper is a very small step in this direction and part of a personal path of research. On this occasion, we have had a preview on how teachers see their own talented pupils, their perception regarding the needs of the pupils and on possible ways of intervention.

The list of educational activities, both formal and non-formal, proposed by teachers in order to support pupils with artistic talent proves to have multiple alternatives in this regard. They may be available to school institutions but involve building and implementing several extensive educational strategies that require motivation in finding human and material resources.

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