#50 PAPER 66 -
EDUCATION FOR MUSIC & MOTION - AS PER THE DIDACTIC DISCOURSE FOR PRIMARY EDUCATION. FOCUS GROUP ANALYSIS.

Mihaela Suditu
Petroleum-Gas University of Ploiesti, Bd. Bucuresti, nr. 39, Ploiesti, 100680, Romania

Abstract
On the premise that the psychological development also means sensitivity, vibrating to the sound of music, our study aims to bring into the spotlight the way primary school teachers are involved in formulating and implementing musical education activities, thus contributing to children's cultural enrichment, to the development of musical sensitivity, to stimulating the artistic sense, to developing their taste for beauty, to enriching their general culture. Focus group analysis, carried out on a sample consisting of teachers with extensive educational expertise, mentors for students training to become teachers, shows us a number of realities, issues that we believe need to be resolved quickly. In the conclusions of our micro-research, we came up with solutions meant to improve this situation.

Keywords: musical education, education for movement, focus group

1. THE AESTHETIC DIMENSION OF DEVELOPING PERSONALITY IN YOUNG PUPILS: SUPPORT IDEAS

Art education develops balance, grows the taste for beauty - sensing and understanding beauty - sensing hues, colors, in order to develop sensitivity, for the harmonious development of the personality of young school children in general. Our plea to achieve quality music education since pre-school and a primary school is supported by some arguments:
- music surrounds us and through the ideas and emotions it transmits expresses messages with high impact on emotion, motivation, will, knowledge and self-understanding.
- music supports various activities within children's scope of interest, impels them, stimulates them and gives them a boost toward fulfilling their interests;
- listening to and, moreover, understanding music generates a harmonious development of children's personality and creates all premises necessary for their aesthetic education, the development of their sensitivity for beauty, for tenderness.
- through musical education the efforts to increase awareness of music support the sensory development of the children, their intellectual development, development of imagination, stimulation of melodic auditory memory, stimulation of attention and some characteristics of it: focus, selectivity etc.
- music and movement contribute to shaping groups of children, to the formation of groups and to strengthen the friendships in adolescence, contribute to triggering emotional states that generate motivation, balance, positive energy (Ionescu, 1978, 1983; Munteanu, 1999; Moga, 2011).

It is important to get children to vibrate to the sound of music and only then, on friendly terms, to foster knowledge of music symbols. Pre-primary and primary education teachers will have to take into account the fact that music notation is just a way, a means of expression of musical language. For this reason, it would not be recommended that familiarizing children with this type of annotation turn into dry learning tasks, and away from the message of music, and, in any case, external to child's motivation. Music awareness begins in general when singing by ear. We are at the beginning of musical education, namely during the period prior to notation, intuitive in nature and oral. For this stage, practical musical activities are predominant, musical games and, as mentioned earlier, singing by ear. Of course, all the above, are attuned in rhythm, in the simplicity of the melodic line, in text, in dynamism, to the psychological features of pre-primary and primary school children and to the specificity of children's interests at this age. The added value increases significantly if we add instrumental

* Corresponding author. E-mail address: msuditu@yahoo.com
accompaniment to singing, musical instruments being a component that holds the interest, attention and motivation of children for music and movement (Serfezi, 1979).

A natural continuity of this moment is provided by the stage of musical annotation. That is a time when the repertoire chosen by primary school teachers - in agreement with school syllabus - includes a lot of good songs and musical games close to the life of children and linked to their immediate interests: songs inspired by nature, the specificity of seasons, events and famous holidays, songs belonging to children folklore, elements of rhythmic movement, etc.

Children's joy of coming closer to music is (also) the consequence of the joy and excitement expressed by teachers in front of the beauty, complexity and variety of music, explained as image of human experience. By melody and rhythm, music helps stimulate emotion and expressing emotional statuses, stimulates thinking, reflection, inner harmony and balance.

2. MUSIC AND MOVEMENT, CURRICULAR NEWS

Starting with 2013, together with the New Curriculum, the syllabus for preparatory grade, first grade and second grade is hereby approved by order of the Minister, bringing a few remarkable news. First of all, the discipline shall be called Music & Motion and enters, as specified and in the Syllabus Presentation Notice, the category of subjects with integrated approach. The reasons for which authorities decided an integrated approach are set out in the presentation of the school curriculum and assume that this approach is the most appropriate path given the psychological peculiarities of young school age, offering flexibility, providing suitable context for learning and ensuring the stimulation of children's interest in the subjects in question. Up to third grade, the discipline is allocated 2 hours per week, whereas in third and fourth grade the discipline shall have one hour per week.

General skills (therefore the acquirement that we intend to make throughout the whole primary education stage) for the preparatory grade, first grade and second grade are as follows (after School Syllabus Appendix no. 2 to The National Education Ministry Order no. 3418/19.03.2013):
1. Learning children songs and simple elements of musical language.
2. Interpretation of children songs with age specific means.
3. Expression of ideas, feelings and experiences through music and movement, individually or in groups

(see www.edu.ro).

Examining the curriculum and analyzing general and specific skills proposed in the respective school document, to which we associate learning - recognition contents, differentiation, learning sounds, learning songs with relatively simple rhythmic and melodic formulas, individual singing, group singing, free manifestation through music, associating music with appropriate movements, dancing, keeping the pace, musical auditions etc. - (see School Syllabus, www.edu.ro) we notice that preparatory grade, first grade and second grade match, as it is natural, the “stage of musical pre-notation”, stage in which children are taught to sing by ear consciously and without experiencing any difficulties. Of course, the rhythm, harmony, simplicity of the melodic line make all the difference to achieving this goal. To all these, we add the choice of teaching methods and active, dynamic teaching practices that focus, in particular, on:
(a)”developing a sense for rhythm;
(b) progressive acquisition of notes in the C major range and their corresponding sounds, correctly sung;
(c) tuning and harmonization of children's voices;
(d) learning to sing correctly and expressively” (see School Syllabus, www.edu.ro).

The upper primary grades (third grade and fourth grade) correspond, however, to the “stage of musical annotation”. It is the upper stage of awareness of sound duration, pitch and strokes. Very important to note, is the care and didactic tact with which teachers must ensure transition from one stage to the next, so as to really support the process of achieving education for music and movement. More specifically, the clunky and totally unknown world of graphic signs and musical symbols, of sol-faing, must be made accessible through interactive teaching methods and, in any case, "on the basis of oral - intuitive support that is well consolidated" (see Ana Motora Ionescu, p. 10). Correlation of pitch and values of sounds with appropriate notation is going to be carried out in an attractive, dynamic, updated manner, by listening to simple musical auditions, by analyzing the melodic lines used in famous films or cartoons children love, through exercises and games of sensing pitch and associating it with the corresponding musical note, of recognizing the values of notes (whole note, half note, quarter note, eighth note, sixteenth note).

In a spiraling motion, which complies with the direction of human development, the syllabus allows successive buildup, enriched experiences, added value and developments that places children within the space of manifesting reactions, emotions, feelings, in the space of attitudinal and powered dimensions rounding the
training of their personality. Music education must be understood as a source of expressing thoughts, states, as a means of stimulating sensory processes, thinking, memory (musical memory), attention (selectivity, duration) and creativity. The interdisciplinary nature is highlighted in school documents by proposing multiple activities that aim, in fact, theoretically and practically towards disciplines within the field of music.

3. EDUCATION FOR MUSIC AND MOVEMENT, OPINIONS OF PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS - FOCUS GROUP ELEMENTS

3.1. Participants

In this study, we have included a number of 15 teachers from Ploiesti (primary school teachers, teacher certification level I and II, with seniority in education, methodologists, teaching practice mentors. Also, for the purpose of this small study I have taken into consideration application schools for university and for the pedagogic high school.

Instruments

In the following, we are interested in learning the opinion of teachers with experience in primary school teaching with regard to the way in which they address this discipline, its importance, the time they allocate to the preparation of these activities, the strategies they use, such as motivation strategies for young school children.

To do this, we've organized discussions with experimented primary and pre-primary education teachers, mentors of teaching practice in application schools for university as well as for the pedagogical high school.

Here's what some the discussed themes/landmark points are:

1. The importance of musical education in the economy of other school disciplines in/for the training of young school pupils (a few personal considerations), the numbers of allocated hours
2. The interest of primary school teachers for music and movement activities: preparation of materials, listening to musical selections, participating together with the students at concerts, etc.
3. Design and support musical education lessons: strengths and weaknesses
4. Proposal for an optional on this theme?
5. Students' attitude toward this discipline.
6. Your didactic attitude towards this school discipline.
7. Other comments …

4. ANALYSES, COMMENTS

Our discussions with teachers can be synthesized in some ideas, such as:

- Unanimously, teachers accept and recognize that musical and movement education represents important component elements in devising a harmonious, balanced, exquisite personality.

- At the same time, we can notice that none of the teachers participating in the focus group has been thinking about, has not proposed or has not made an optional course at school decision which deals with topics that affect music education or music and movement, integrated.

- We learn from the focus group interview, that sometimes, it happens that teachers modify the schedule known by students and instead, they engage in other activities. Most of the times, it's Mathematics!

- Teachers, part of them, are experiencing actual difficulties in supporting these lessons because they lack good ear for music, or they do not have a nice voice, as a result of difficulties in reading musical notes, because of difficulties sol-faing or a lack of knowledge of music theory, knowledge which appears predominantly in third and fourth grade textbooks, and that must be correctly understood first by the teacher and only then explained to students.

- In general, these activities are well appreciated by pupils, children are open, receptive and enthusiastic but there are students who feel apprehensive because they do not have a well-developed musical hearing, because they don't get to learn how to sol-fa, etc.

- They are talking about the necessity that these hours be assigned to specialized teachers rather than primary school teachers, who sometimes feel overwhelmed by the requirements and rigors of this discipline and resort to supplanting this discipline with something else as an ultimate solution.

5. CONCLUSIONS

We should not forget the sad fact that, sometimes, children are deprived of this side of education because the hours actually dedicated to singing, music, dancing and rhythmical movement are replaced, by the direct
decision of the primary education teacher, with hours of solving exercises and problems, making calculations or grammatical analyses. Those children are not taught how to listen to music, to understand what they hear, to transfer ideas from musical works in their thinking and feeling and thus enrich their souls. Also, they don't understand the musical language and their reaction to music will be transferred from the attitude of their teacher. We emphasize that this discipline is part of the compulsory subjects, and the school curricula that specifies the skills and the types of activities by which they are achieved, must be complied with. This is an imperative, not a desideratum. We also emphasize that the situation is not generalized, there are only special cases, however, not very few. It is, nonetheless, unacceptable.

We believe that it is necessary, in the ongoing development/ training of primary school teachers to (also) guide them towards courses covering topics that match this important dimension in the education of children: ways/strategies for teaching and learning music, challenges in musical education, current issues, therapy through music seen as a source of developing creativity, etc. Also, we believe that universities, the inspectorate, the Teaching Staff Resource Center should show real concern for these problems, as in making course offers that would round the training of primary teachers on these dimensions of education as well.

6. REFERENCES


*** National Education Ministry Order no. 3418/19.03.2013.

*** National Education Ministry Order no. 5003/02.12.2014.