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11. ARTISTIC EDUCATION, A PROMOTER FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF SCHOOL CREATIVITY FROM THE INTER-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

Eugenia Maria Paşca[278]

Abstract: *The main aims of artistic education are almost similar in all European countries. Almost all countries mention "artistic skills, knowledge and understanding", "critical appreciation", "cultural heritage", "individual expression/identity", "cultural diversity" and "creativity" as objectives. However, "arts and permanent learning/interest" are mentioned only in 15 curricula. The various initiatives and recommendations for the development of artistic and cultural education in European countries are based on information on the establishment of national organizations and networks to promote artistic education and the development of partnerships between schools, artistic/cultural organizations and artists. Cultural identity as well as the development of creativity are a priority through such approaches.*
Key words: *artistic education, creativity, inter-culturality*

1. Introduction

In the current context, of rapid changes and fierce and accelerated competition that influence our lives, stimulate our environment, impose new determinations upon us, challenge us to rethink the economic and social systems and structures, between national identity and globalization, we make efforts in order to adapt our society to the demands of the world of tomorrow. We live in a world based on competition and efficiency, whose strength lies in knowledge. Within the global competition frame, the European Union has proposed as the creation of a knowledge-based society as a pivotal goal. A fundamental element is creativity. Today more than ever, creativity is a fundamental condition of the quality of education, one of the essential performance requirements.

Creativity is that feature of thought that uses inventively experience and the gathered knowledge, offering original solutions and ideas. It makes possible the creation of real or purely mental products, constituting a progress in the social plan. The main component of creativity is imagination, but the creation of real value also implies motivation, the desire to carry out something new, something special. And since nowadays novelty is not easily achieved, another component is will, the perseverance in doing many attempts and examinations. Creative thinking is particularly complex and it is based on a number of factors that allow combinations, transformations, implications, relationships, identitifications or evaluations. In addition to intelligence quotient, an important role in creativity is the one played by heredity, intellectual abilities, skills, character, socio-cultural environment, training and investigation sustained effort.

[278] Profesor PhD., "George Enescu" National University of Arts from Iaşi, Romania, email: eugenia_maria_pasca@yahoo.com

The cultivation of innovative thinking has become an important task of contemporary schools. Stimulating the creativity of young people can be achieved through a tireless and elevated theoretical and practical training; by stimulating the initiative and independent work, the scientific critical spirit; by stimulating the independent documentation and experimentation activity; through receptivity to the new and passion for science in accordance with one's abilities. The teacher's attitude and his/her relationship with the students are particularly important. These involve important changes, both in the mentality of teachers, and in the education and training methods. First of all, the climate must be changed in order to eliminate the cultural and emotional blockages, powerful in the past time schools. Distinguished and democratic relations between students and teachers are required, fact which does not mean lowering the latter's social status; then, the teaching method must require the students' participation and initiative – we are referring to those active methods, unfortunately underused in the Romanian school.

2. Discussions

Creativity is the engine of innovation and the key factor of personal, occupational, entrepreneurial and social development and of the well-being of all individuals within a society. In December 2008, **the European Parliament** and the **Council of the European Union** adopted the decision to designate 2009 as the year of creativity and innovation, starting from the premise that Europe "needs to enhance its creativity and innovation capacity for social and economic reasons in order to respond in an effectively to the development of a knowledge-based society: the innovative capacity is closely linked to creativity as a personal trait and, to be fully exploited, it must be widely disseminated among the people".

The specific objective is to highlight, inter alia, the following **factors that can be of help in promoting creativity and innovation capacity:**

a) Creating an environment favorable to innovation and adaptability in an ever changing world; all innovation forms, including the social and entrepreneurial ones, must be taken into account;

b) Highlighting the opening toward cultural diversity as a means of encouraging intercultural communication and promoting a stronger connection between the arts, as well as with schools and universities;

c) Stimulating aesthetic sensitivity, emotional development, creative thinking and intuition in all children of the earliest age, including pre-school education;

d) Raising awareness regarding the importance of creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship for personal development, for economic and employment growth, as well as encouraging an entrepreneurial mentality, especially among the young, through cooperation with the business environment;

e) Promoting the education of basic and advanced skills favorable to technological innovation in the mathematical, scientific and technological fields;

f) Encouraging openness by change, creativity and problem-solving in innovation-friendly skills that can be applied to various professional and social contexts;
g) Enhancing access to a range of creative expression forms through formal education and non-formal and informal activities for the youth;
h) Raising public awareness, both inside and outside the labor market, regarding the importance of creativity, knowledge and flexibility in an age of technological change and rapid global integration for a prosperous and satisfying life, as well as providing the means enabling citizens to improve their employment opportunities in all areas where creativity and innovation capacity play an important role;
i) Promoting design as a creative activity that significantly contributes to innovation, as well as to the acquisition of innovation and design management skills, including basic notions of intellectual property protection;
j) Developing creativity and innovative capacity in public and private organizations through training and encouraging them to make better use of the creative potential of both employees and customers.

The measures that must be taken in order to achieve the objectives set out above include the following national, regional or local activities, linked to the objectives of the European Year:
a) Conferences, events, and initiatives to promote debate and raise awareness of the importance of creativity innovation;
b) Information and promotion campaigns to disseminate key messages;
c) Identifying good practice examples and disseminating information on promoting innovation creativity;
d) Conducting surveys and studies at community or national level. (http://eur-lex.europa.eu/en/dossier www.create2009.europa.eu).

3. Results

There are many aspects of creativity depending on the creation field, but a definition would include the ability to combine knowledge from previously disparate domains, to take existing objects or ideas and to combine them in different ways for new purposes. Thus, a simple definition of creativity is: “the action of combining previously uncombined elements”. In terms of types of creativity, other categories have been proposed: *scientific creativity*, *artistic creativity* and *conceptual creativity. Scientific creativity,* in the simplest terms, involves the discovery of scientific truths. *Artistic creativity* is the ability to render things appreciated for their aesthetic beauty; only individuals with visual and tactile predisposition for art have it. *Conceptual creativity* involves creating solutions in the form of unique relevant concepts for existing and emerging issues. In this sense, creativity is the mental process that involves generating new ideas or concepts, or new associations of existing ideas, knowledge or concepts (Moles, 1957).

Despite the large number of research on creativity, we cannot yet speak of a consensus concerning its definition. The phenomenon is explicable if we take

into account the fact that each author emphasizes a certain creativity dimension. Here are some definitions that illustrate this fact: “Creativity is the ability to shape experience in new and different forms, the ability to perceive the environment in a plastic manner, and to communicate the unique resulting experience to others” (Taylor, 1959); “Creativity is the process of modeling ideas or hypotheses, of testing these ideas and of communicating the results” (Torrance, 1962); “Creativity is the optimal interaction between attitudes and aptitudes that generates the new” (Popescu-Neveanu, 1978); “Creativity is a complex of psychic skills and qualities that, under favorable conditions, generates new and valuable products for society” (Roşca, 1981); “Creativity is the ability to imagine answers to problems, to develop original and indedited solutions” (Limbos, 1988).

The factors that can determine individual creativity can be:

- *Imagination,* a psychic function essential to the creation process and which is a synthesis process of reactions, of new psychic phenomena.
- *Aptitude,* thus the hereditary factor bears a more or less important influence.
- *Knowledge acquired through work* has an essential role. Experience can be direct – when we directly observe phenomena or talk with specialists in the field or indirect, by reading or listening to lessons, conferences. In both situations, the variety of information is particularly important.

a. *Intelligence* – thinking also influences creation. It facilitates the analysis and the establishment of new relationships and it especially contributes to the critical appreciation of the created products. However, the correlation coefficients between intelligence and creativity tests are not too great. High levels of creativity require at least a medium intelligence level. Conversely, a high intelligence level (especially of critical thinking) may coincide with poor creative possibilities.

b. *Creation* also involves certain character traits:

- an adequate *motivation,* interest, aspiration to discover or create something new;
- a strong will, perseverance in order to overcome the great difficulties that stand in the way of obtaining valuable, original products.

c. Society greatly influences creative activities by:

- *Social requirements* (the impetuous technology development in our century has stemmed from the requirements of the modern production continuous progress);
- Any discovery and any theory are thought from the *current state of science*, *technique* or *art;*
- Predecessors, artists’ or scholars’ teachers deeply influence the students’ creation (at least in its initial stage);
- *Society can sometimes be a brake* for the knowledge development (the Inquisition or the fascist, Stalinist, communist dictatorship).

There are also many obstacles in the way of stimulating the creative impulse, that we call **creativity blockages**. These could be:

a. *Social blockages. Conformism* is one of them: people’s desire that all citizens behave and think in the usual way. Those with unusual ideas are looked at with

suspicion and even disapproval, which is a deterrent to innovative thinking. Then, there is mistrust *in fantasy* and an exaggerated appreciation of the strictly logical reasoning and critical judgment.
b. *Methodological blockages.* There is a resistance to change, *a rigidity of the previous algorithms.*
c. Another blockage is *premature criticism.*
d. *Creative blockages:* the fear of not making mistakes, of embarrassing ourselves or the rush to accept the first idea (because the solution rarely appears from the beginning). Another error is rapid discouragement, since innovation work is difficult and it requires long-term efforts.

In 1963, Mooney published a conceptual model that integrates four identifying and analyzing creativity perspectives, which later became a reference framework for several research activities:
• The creation process;
• The person (the creative personality);
• The creation product;
• The emerging environment of creation.

The creation process cannot be analyzed separately from the *creative person (personality).* The characteristics (features) considered to be typical of creative people (according to Torrance, 1962) are: brave in belief, curios, inquisitive, independent in thought, intuitive, concerned about the given tasks, not accepting things based only of what he/she is being told, idealist, willing to take risks, while other scholars complement the variety of these character traits with: spirit of adventure, perseverance, inclination to research, openness toward new experiences, leadership spirit, discipline and ability to order one's activity, intrinsic motivation, focus on the task, independent achievement, competitiveness, need for intimacy, good social presence, tolerance to ambiguity, multiple interests, valorisation of originality and creativity, unconventional behavior, need of "peak experiences". One of the surest indices of creativity is the *product* or the *creative performance.* The most common criteria suited to judge that a product is creative are: *novelty, uniqueness, originality, value,* and *social utility.*

The emerging environment of creation or the *creation context* (Amabile, 1996) is the fourth component of the creation structure model. The social factors intervene as creativity supporters or inhibitors. Concerning children's creativity, T. Amabile believes that the social environment (family and school) can have a significant impact on motivation (and, therefore, on creativity), and that it is much easier for parents and teachers to improve the environment of a child than to modify his/her personality or to appreciably enhnce his/her talent resources. Most of the highly creative children come from families who encourage this behavior. Thus, parents who stimulate children's independence, who are not overly protective or authoritarian, who encourage children to state their own opinions have more creative children than those whose relations with their children are cold, domineering and who tend to limit their freedom. However, a certain degree of negative state (Runco, 2014), of frustration, of conflict, is

important in motivating a person in order to obtain creative results. Some authors define creativity as the ability or skill to produce something new and valuable. For others, creativity is not a skill or ability, but a process through which the product is made. There are some authors for whom creativity is any new problem solving. For more and more, creativity involves making a new and valuable product for society.

The interdisciplinary and inter-cultural approach, in a metaphorical sense, can be compared to the "art of weaving": the teacher weaves and combines information and skills into a soft and very tight fabric. The interdisciplinary and inter-cultural perspective offers the possibility of individualizing contents and making them available by creating conceptual connections between different curricular areas. Only with the activity content and work rhythm differentiation can the instruction personalization process begin. Individualizing education means taking into account the self-educative resources of each child. Given that the content of the activity carried out by each child (individual) is the same for everyone else, without being nuanced to adapt to each person's possibilities, genuine individualized training is not achieved.

Probably the solution to be applied is not total interdisciplinarity, nor the study of the subjects designed in a traditional manner, a combination of the two formulas, made according to the exigencies of the contemporary sciences and the different social activities, as well as to the psychological exigencies of different ages, seems to be more realistic. Each teacher can be a "creator" of teaching and stimulating his/her students' creativity ideas. The creative teacher's motto should be: "with a minimum effort on the part of the students to achieve maximum results". The modern professor should play a double role:

• the role of the one at the desk –who must receive the information;

• the role of the person who has to provide education, to transmit the information.

Creative learning and cultivation of creativity in students is not only necessary but also fully possible. The human being is naturally endowed with the predisposition to create, which, through education, can become an effective creative capacity. Christiane Kutik (2016), an experienced parent counselor, author of pedagogical works well-known in Germany, writes in her book, *Playing Makes Children Strong:* "Children will build tomorrow's future the way they play today. If we encourage children to play freely, autonomously and creatively, the future will be full of imagination and creativity".

Generally, due to the analytical curriculum, students are assaulted with theoretical art knowledge which, in reality, sometimes surpasses the actual moment of their mental and physical development. In our society, the pressure to be successful has reached even the little ones. Long before going to school, today's child already has a calendar with deadlines filled in by parents who invest money, time and effort in early learning programs for their children. Of course, the parents' intention is to offer as early as possible what is best for their children. But what is really the best thing for the child? In order to discover what is essential in the first years of life, we must focus our attention on the baby and

perceive it as it is. We will find amazing things. Paying more attention, we cannot overlook the children's need to move, the impulse to imitate adults and their unrestrained curiosity, as well as the joy of discovering on their own interesting things in the universe that surrounds them. This observation is essential because, in this way, we become aware of the child and the child's needs, not of what we, adults, want him/her to achieve.

Considering the fact that artistic education has been shown so many times to have a great contribution to shaping children's personality, to cultivating skills and abilities to know reality, learning through artistic emotions to admire beauty, to acquire a civilized and sensitive attitude in the relationship with the others, we consider that this discipline is indispensable in both schools and kindergartens, along with the other educational disciplines. In the artistic education of children (pre-school and school children) it is very important to take into account what is innate and natural in psychology, namely the fact that, in their life, art is intertwined with playing. Therefore, this depends to a great extent on the pedagogical mastery of each of us.

A revision, strengthening and re-orientation of artistic education as a position in the educational curricula, by including other artistic disciplines alongside musical and plastic education – dancing, theater – are necessary for a more complete view on beauty (Paşca, 2006). Ensuring equal and appropriate material conditions, regardless of school, locality, is one of the conditions for the student's artistic education to be at the most optimal level. It is good for these subjects to be studied until the end of high school and the extra-curricular artistic activity conditions to be real. For this, a thorough and modern teacher training is required, especially by promoting artistic interdisciplinarity. Love and respect for beauty is built from the early years, from the pre-school age and we, as teachers, have the obligation to develop the aesthetic taste, the interest for an aesthetic quality of human existence, the skill to include beauty in the sense of stimulating artistic creation. The fundamental aims pursued by specialists – teachers and researchers – have been and remained the improvement of art contributions to the aesthetic and ethical education of children, the development of their sensitivity, creativity and intelligence; in other words, the harmonious shaping and developing of children's personality.

The arts are an indispensable component of an interactive pedagogy that valorizes students' inclinations and creativity. The inclusion of artistic achievements of different cultures proposes a universal openness of knowledge and creative models. **The creative teacher** provides the students with the opportunity to express their opinion in an unauthoritative atmosphere, promoting an open, friendly, flexible, positive, and receptive attitude, appreciates the students' good ideas and does not mock their failures. The teacher allows the student to express his/her curiosity, indecision, and interest in sharing information. The creative working climate is facilitated by the fact that the teacher always deals with students' questions with interest, respecting the opinions of others, constantly strengthens the students' conviction that they come up with valuable ideas, training them in the assessment process,

communicating them the evaluation criteria, and offering them the necessary time to practice their own skills.

4. Conclusions

In conclusion, as prerequisites for performance in education, creativity and innovation capacity have an important role, and the goals that contemporary school should consider may be the following ones:

a) To support all creativity forms, including the artistic one, within the curricula of the general and vocational pre-university education cycles;

b) To create a context that enables young people to acquire the skills to express their own personality, necessary throughout their lives;

c) To promote cultural diversity as a creativity and innovation source;

d) To encourage the use of ICT as a means of one's personality creative expression;

e) To contribute to the shaping of a more entrepreneurial spirit;

f) To raise awareness regarding the perception of innovation as a way to promote sustainable development;

g) To bring to public attention of national, regional and local strategies based on creativity and innovation.

Excellence and essential skills, especially those related to entrepreneurship, creativity and learning techniques, must be developed in all systems and at all education and training levels. School has a major contribution to facilitating the innovation process. High-quality education and professional training, for example, can help promote innovation in the workplace. There is much to be done in order to educate the creative spirit in school; there is a need to change the thinking frame and the working style in the class, crystallized in centuries of traditional education, too less concerned with this aspect of the student's personality, which nowadays becomes increasingly important. The teacher's creativity is very important in the education process, at all levels.

In the desire to become a creative teacher, one must use modern education methods and to invent educational games in order to achieve and interactive approach to artistic education. For this purpose, the learning process has to be transformed into a journey in which arts, in a relaxing and entertaining manner, shall help the acquiring of a lot of information belonging to other disciplines. Music, visual arts, theater and choreography are very motivating. It is impossible to see no reaction from the students. All these elements work together to make learning a true knowledge adventure, an adventure where students want to actively participate in trying to discover new things by themselves, becoming real investigators. Involved in this adventure, even the shyest students feel encouraged, communicate more easily, and participate with pleasure in the learning process. The supreme goal of the teacher should be that of awakening each student's desire to actively participate in the learning process. Classes should become real shows in which each student has to play a role, bigger or smaller, but very important and without which the show would not be complete. Thus, each student would give his/her best to learn the role in order to interpret it as well as possible. The more actively a child participates in

the learning process, the greater his/her competence in life will be. From the way a child behaves in the learning process, we can guess how he/she will perform his/her tasks in life as future adult.

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