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Intermediální umělecké projekty v profesní přípravě učitelů primárního a preprimárního vzdělávání

Intermedia Art Projects in Vocational Training of Primary and Pre-primary Education Teachers

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Abstract

Vocational training of future teachers of primary and pre-primary education strives to prepare future teachers to succeed in pedagogical practice as best they can. That is why they should have the opportunity to connect theory and reflected practical experience, not only within pedagogical practices. One of the possibilities is intermediate artistic projects offered to students of the Faculty of Education, Masaryk University, Brno, within didactic preparation and independent disciplines. They provide students with additional knowledge, help to gain experience, and emotional experience. Implemented intermediate projects are also a source of valuable research data. Their analysis revealed essential conclusions that can improve the training of future teachers.

Keywords: Teacher training. Intermedia projects. Experience. Reflection.

Introduction

Vocational training within the study programmes Teacher Training for Kindergartens and Teacher Training for Primary Schools have certain specifics. One of them is that students do not specialise in only one field. The pre-primary and primary education teacher should be competent to implement the learning objectives given to him by the curricular documents, which cover all disciplines included in the educational areas. The results of their professional training include various institutions (primarily pedagogical faculties) and their workplaces. The knowledge and skills that students acquire at these workplaces are, in a sense, isolated. It is assumed that the connection of specific field knowledge and experience within didactic and psychological fields will occur within the didactic training. Another opportunity should be in the continuous teaching practice of students. Individual pedagogical faculties have a differently structured study for the named study programmes; therefore, it is essential to examine their functionality and look for a possible space for possible innovation, which, for example, will support an integrative approach in the named levels of education.

The concept of pre-primary and primary education and vocational training

As already indicated, vocational training must be designed so that graduates of the study programmes Teacher Training for Kindergartens (Bachelor degree), Preschool Pedagogy (Master degree) and Teacher Training for Primary Schools (Master degree) can succeed in practice and be competent at a given level to implement educational goals with children. They should be equipped with professional field knowledge skills and transform the curriculum into teaching methods to meet the expected goals. These are given by valid curricular documents (Educational Framework), which also introduce us to the concept of education in general.

One of the principles common to pre-primary and primary education is the need to learn in context. Education should be directed to acquiring the necessary competencies, which should be obtained and developed in close connection with the content of the given educational areas. That also applies to education through Art education and Music education, which are part of pre-school and primary levels and are integrated into the educational areas of the Framework Educational Programme for Preschool Education (FEP PE) and the Framework Educational Programme for Basic Education (FEP BE). As curricular documents support content integration, it offers opportunities to integrate such projects into vocational training. Thus, students can actively learn about the connection (integration) of educational content at the level of topics, thematic areas, or educational fields. As the FEP BE (2021, p. 15) says, the super-subject approach to education should be strengthened.

That is also made possible by individual educational areas; in the case of Music and Art education, it is the curriculum of the educational areas of Art and Culture. In its introductory description, we can read that "at the first stage of basic education, pupils become acquainted through the means of expression and the language of music and fine arts, but also dramatic and literary arts. They learn to work creatively with them, to use them as a means of self-expression. They get to know the laws of creation, get acquainted with selected works of art, learn to understand and interpret the statements communicated by the work of art due to their experience" (FEP BE, 2021, p. 87). They need to be able to see specific content behind the subject matter and realise that Art education, in this sense, offers something more than just relaxation or the creation of pleasing decorations. The curriculum that this area of education represents is defined in a very general way, which gives teachers some freedom in decision-making. Still, the text is incomprehensible and difficult to grasp for many Art teachers at primary and pre-primary levels. This fact is already confirmed by the conclusions of research devoted to the functional dictionary of primary education teachers by Hazuková (2005). Recent research by Janík et al., (2011), Štěpánková (2016, 2020), Šobáňová (2012, 2016), Uhl Skřivanová & Tauberová (2014) and Sztablová (2016) also shows that the problem persists.

In the case of Music education, the situation is similar. Although children are surrounded by music, they often accept it passively, just as a sound background. The Music education process should enable children to have active and creative contact with music, contribute to their overall personality formation and develop their musicality, musical abilities, skills, and habits. It should also stimulate their comprehensive musical activity within the activity concept of elementary Music education. Music education at the primary level and music activities at kindergarten should develop children's musical abilities and practice their musical skills to listen to music, perform, and create even though it is only in its elementary form. In practice, however, there is an insufficient grasp or even understanding of the activity concept of Music education, where predominately more passive forms of teaching with a one-sided focus of lessons is used, such as "mere" singing, passive listening and others, up to theoretically focused classes. In pre-school education, in some cases, musical moments and activities tend to be self-serving; without the active expression of the children themselves, there is not enough space for their expression through experience, feelings and thoughts.

Therefore, it is essential to acquaint students with examples of good practice and allow them to experience a DIFFERENT Art education or Music education than the ones they met as pupils of primary education, unfortunately, sometimes met during their teaching practice experience as part of their university studies. For example, one will be built on an interdisciplinary approach with integrative overlaps into other fields. Vocational gathered experience and emotional gained experience linked to theory can have other positive consequences for the quality of vocational training and, therefore, teaching education. They can offer a way to understand the curricular documents, their terminology, educational goals. They also provide an opportunity for self-knowledge and changes in self-esteem, which is diverse in the case of artistic disciplines.

Intermedia projects – an opportunity for change

If we think about interdisciplinary projects, we can find inspiration in art. Prehistoric rituals used various artistic expressions. The term Intermediality was first used in the early nineteenth century by the poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge, which was taken over from him in the 1960s by Dick Higgins, who continued to work with the term. Intermediality examines the interrelationships of different media, and by combining them, completely new work is created, the parts of which can no longer be separated. An example can be happening (event, chance), which does not primarily lead to creating a permanent work but has the nature of an event documented by, for example, a recording, statement, script, photograph, video (Baleka, 2002, p. 124). Musical improvisations and dramatic expression can also be a part of action forms of expression, which is

documented by some happenings by John Cage (1912–1992), Allan Kaprow (1927–2006), Milan Knižák (1940) and others.

Intermedia projects offer creators to experience something new unusual; through creation, they can learn that it is possible to connect all means of artistic expression. The connection of artistic, musical, and dramatic activities strengthens the effects of perception, especially emotional expression. Intermedia projects thus support a holistic perception of the world enable the creators of self-expression, a unique response to the stimuli of the inner and outer world. These characteristics align with the concept of Art education, which we call Artephiletics. It has been outlined in Art pedagogy since the 1990s. The theory of Artephiletics is connected with the personality of Jan Slavík, with whom he theoretically defined this concept (1997).

The main principles of Artephiletics are reflective dialogue, educational motives and the connection between exploring the world with self-knowledge. As Slavík (2011) states, the educational process should include an expressive and reflective component. In the expressive part, the content is constructed through their own creation: to express what they want and need, to own satisfaction, as best they can; to express oneself communicatively and impressively (social or communicative dimension of creation), to combine cultural demands (taste, aesthetic, stylistic and artistic needs) in a given way of expression with the possibilities of the material of creation (cultural dimension of creative work). In the reflective component, we should gain an insight into the subject of the work in its personal, social and cultural dimension (it is about understanding something and communicating about it. According to Stehlíková Babyrádová (2016, p. 37), emotional expressions are associated with various types of expression – for example, means of expression of body language, facial expressions, gestural hand movements and others. The dynamic expression in drawing and painting is expressed primarily by the exaggeration of shape and colour and the spontaneously shaped manuscript. Therefore, the emotional expression should allow the creator to describe an intense experience. It is a musical, artistic, dramatic experience. Their reflections bring various forms of cognition. Thus, Music education also offers space for applying different activating educational methods and principles, e.g., using Musicophiletics overlap.

As with Artephiletics, this is a relatively "new" specific approach, the goal of which is personal development through musical art. In lessons drawn up with the Musicophiletics approach, there is a creative, experiential and reflective conception of music and artistic, musical activities. Combining expression and reflection distinguishes itself from commonly drawn up Music lessons. Musicophiletics works primarily with pleasant experiences from music and owns artistic creation; it aims at self-knowledge, getting to know others and the world in the context of art and culture, where the basis is the use of sound, music and the human relationship to them. "Musicophiletics

aims at cognition and self-knowledge through reflective dialogue" (Friedlová et al., 2020, p. 11).

In contrast to music therapy, this is not a therapeutic or diagnostic intention; it is a concept of reflective, feedback knowledge of oneself through experiences with a strong tendency to positively tune the overall experience (Holzer & Drlíčková 2012). We can observe similar tendencies in Drama education, where drama skills are also developing through Dramaphiletics. Its activities use some principles of drama therapy. They are based on the content of dramatic art, using its means, such as improvisation, role entry, interpretation and simulation. It serves personal development and achieves psychological and pedagogical goals (Valenta, 2007).

For the practice of art objects, it is essential to keep in mind that emotional experience is a selective part of the situation and that individual people may have different experiences from the same situation. The actors of the creative process should have the opportunity to comment and reflect on them (Slavíková, Slavík & Eliášová, 2019). Future teachers must be acquainted with these tendencies in Art education through theory and have the opportunity to experience them themselves, to have reflected experiences that will become the starting point for cognition and their professional development.

Conditions for the implementation of intermediate projects

Therefore, we can look for an answer to whether there are conditions in the professional training of teachers for kindergartens and the first stage of primary school, how to implement integrated units. The didactics of Art education is included in the study plan of Primary School Teacher Training in the seventh and eighth terms; in these terms, students also train in the didactics of Music education. At the same time, continuous pedagogical practices take place in faculty training schools. This enables functional cooperation of workplaces in vocational teaching training and the creation of joint projects. The situation is different in pre-school education. Didactic subjects meet within the bachelor's study only in the fourth term, including the discipline Reflected Practice for Art Projects and Reflected Practice for Didactics of Music Education. Only the Didactics of Music education reflects musical activities that students can implement in continuous pedagogical practice in the fifth term.

A new challenge is the inclusion of Artephiletics into pre-school education within the master's form of study; while teaching the didactics, teachers from the Department of Art Education, Music Education, and Drama Education participate. Intermedia projects can thus implement the intentions described in the curricular documents. They can offer students an experiential form of education, provide stimuli for new teaching strategies, and provide arguments and the defence of education in pre-primary and primary education.

Experts are still trying to justify the benefits of aesthetic education. They understand them, for example, as an essential space for the development of social and emotional learning. In the *Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning*, this is defined as a process in which individuals acquire skills, attitudes, and values to achieve social and emotional competencies (2017). Professional publications show (Durlak et al., 2011; Hawkins et al., 2008; Greenberg et al., 2017) that they can significantly contribute to a student's school success, shape their moral values and attitudes, but also satisfied and responsible behaviour towards society and the environment in which they live. The development of social and emotional learning is supported by some educational strategies, such as Service-learning, based on experiential learning. Students do not accept knowledge passively but teach each other and active approach. The concept proposed by Taylor (2002) relates this form of learning to responsible individual behaviour. At the same time, it contributes to the participation of students in improving the social and environmental situation (Mikošková, 2021). This strategy builds on similar principles to the proposed intermedia projects that have taken place in the pre-primary and primary education training. It also benefits from the experiences and research of the authors of the text from the project "*Improving the quality of pupils' education, development of key competencies, areas of education and literacy*". This research sought answers to questions concerning the contribution of Music and Art education to the development of expected competencies, mainly social and civic competencies (Stadlerová, Taylor & Tomanová, 2019). It has thus been confirmed that Art education does not have to contribute only to the development of visual literacy or digital competence.

Activity-oriented Music education also offers opportunities for the development of various competencies. It is, therefore, necessary to offer such content that not only develops the musical potential of children but also teaches them to master playing musical instruments, cultivate vocal skills or acquire field knowledge. It is possible to express oneself non-verbally or to perceive, experience, or interpret the emotional expression by musical means. We also understand this as a challenge for vocational training and the subsequent transformation of Music education into pre-primary and primary education (Taylor, 2019, 2021; Jiříčková, 2021). Musicophiletics, Artephiletics and Dramaphiletics overlaps are one of the ways to achieve interconnected principles in a modern holistic approach in pre-primary and primary education. Ways to acquire this have also become the goal of research. The following text will present its partial result.

Intentions and partial results of the research survey

The research took place in the autumn term of 2021 (the research group consisted of nineteen students in the first year of the master's degree programme in Preschool pedagogy in a combined form of study). These were

practising teachers who had at least one year of experience in kindergarten; the group members did not know each other very well. Didactics teachers of Art, Music and Drama education took part in the block teaching of the subject. The lessons took place in their presence, so they had the opportunity to get to know their colleagues' concepts, actively participate in activities, or monitor their progress. The source of research data thus became field notes on the course of observation activities and written records of student reflections and individual interviews conducted during the examination period within the review of individual creative activities. The research was qualitatively focused, looking for answers to the questions: *How will the intermedia concept of teaching affect group relationships? How do the offered activities motivate students to authentic self-expression? How do they experience the creative process, and what does it bring them? How did the creation contribute to their self-knowledge? Did the intermedia projects bring changes in the students' relationship to the individual fields?*

The data analysis revealed categories that we will try to interpret and illustrate with specific statements of students. The first can be described as social interaction. In all intermedia projects, students had the opportunity to cooperate, consult, exchange new experiences, share experiences, etc. The first meeting brought many interesting situations and students' reactions who met their classmates for the first time. The pandemic affected the vocational training of many and the associated distance learning and online communication involving their social contacts. That is why an activity was included in which each member of the group was to meet the others, make eye contact, shake hands with the other and say their name three times. The activity was received with different feelings; it caused some students to worry that they were leaving their comfort zone, they were insecure, even for some, the activity was unpleasant. Others, however, stated that they overcame their initial fears and ultimately that it was an enriching event for them, the beginning of a new relationship. The involvement of teachers also contributed to overcoming the initial uncertainty of the students, thus "breaking the ice" (K.V.). There were also reactions that the handshake associated with other manifestations of nonverbal communication was not pleasant for some; the students perceived them as an intervention in their personal space.

Social interactions were also accompanied by creative activities on which students could collaborate. They show how sensitive they react to verbal and non-verbal expressions, how they are suddenly able to perceive the restlessness and insecurity of the other, to establish an effort to empathise with their experience. The following statement confirms these facts: "It was very interesting to focus back on the individual meetings and their course. Perceive dominance or submissive, touch the other, watch their expression (whether they liked it or not). Such micro-conversations took place with some girls" (L.H.). The students also benefited from this experience in the field of art; they noticed how the work affects, for example, the harmony of the gesture,

the choice of instrument, material and its application. As part of their artistic creation, the students also realised what the creator is experiencing when intervening in their work. They can be motivated by trying to help another or by assigning an art task. In the case where, for example, they were to create a collage serving self-presentation, they also had the opportunity to subsequently complete a colleague's work to tell them artistically what makes it interesting to them. However, the students did not make much use of this possibility, as it said, "We did not want to interfere in the works of others and thus disrupt their integrity (...), but at the same time we evaluated that we (some) would like to see someone write a message to us or they drew something, and thus gave us feedback on how they perceive us personally" (D.S.). Through this activity, there was self-knowledge and getting to know others. Although the students were always able to comment on the course of the activity after the end of the activity, many experiences were commented on only in their individual written reflections, which they processed with a certain time interval and "safe".

Another category can be described as a course of reflection. For many students, it was not easy to talk about their feelings in front of others at first. Over time, there was a change, as evidenced by the following statement: "Gradually, I began to take it as something that strengthened me and where I could improve, so such reflections became more pleasant for me, also because I gained more confidence in the team of classmates and teachers" (J.P.). It is also clear from the statements that the students sensitively accept how the mediation of experiences took place: "It suited me that during the subsequent reflections we were all equal. No one took on the role of teacher or moderator. Everyone was given as much space to express their thoughts as they needed, they were in no hurry, I was not under pressure, and I knew that no one would evaluate or comment on my opinion" (K.S.). The feeling of security was strengthened by the discussion in the circle, which "reduces social distance, promotes equality between all involved, more draws everyone into the game" (J.K.).

Sometimes there were also expressions of low confidence in the reflections, for example, when it came to musical improvisations or art. Students are often referred to as "specialists", so it is essential to motivate them with a broader range of creative tools and allow them to choose what and how they will create. Satisfaction from other professional activities will then be beneficial not only for their self-evaluation but subsequently also for the quality of the activities they offer in kindergarten. The choice is essential even in the case of the expected communication; the students knew about the possibility of not performing if they had no need or the situation was not pleasant for them. There was also a comment on the time possibilities of intermediate projects. The time limit and the effort of the teachers to offer students the broadest possible range of creative options could also bring

unpleasant feelings: Of course, I was again very nervous about the presentation of our work to others" (Z.L.).

The more the students positively evaluated the individual task, which was motivated by the theme of light. They appreciated the opportunity to find their way of self-expression; many activities became an opportunity to share creative experiences with family members and friends who could be involved in the creative process. The opportunity to create in the chosen space and time was also crucial for them. Individual projects were also reflected, which enriched the creator themselves and brought them impulses to think and introspect.

Feedback was also crucial for intermedia project leaders. It brought stimuli to design or change their content to guide students not to feel controlled or manipulated. The final evaluations also highlight the connection between theory and practice; the students appreciated the beneficial diverse range of activities and the effort to lead them sensitively. Thus, intermedia projects can become effective vocational training, not only for pre-primary education. The artistic experience brought about by music, art or drama cannot be accompanied by indifference, but it should appeal to a person somehow. The evaluation shows that the students were not indifferent to the intermedia projects, and we can state that they enriched them with new knowledge and experience.

Conclusion

The training of future teachers is a complex but also open process. It brings challenges for the changes that will result from examining the current situation and moving towards more functional models. It is impossible to prepare a finished teacher, but it is possible to shape their professional competencies, so they succeed when they enter the pedagogical practice and actively contribute to changes in education. However, professional expertise and a positive attitude for children are not enough. In the case of artistic disciplines, the situation's complexity is also influenced by the position of education in pre-primary and primary education. More importantly is the quality of the teacher, who is an expert in the goals of education and the means of their fulfilment. Kindergarten and primary school education should make use of the curriculum of all educational areas, including those based on art and culture. It is not just a matter of educating only artistic dispositions and the individual's knowledge and skills. They can also bring something extra – such as what "phyletic" principles offer. If we allow students to be part of intermedia projects, we will accept them as co-creators who want to enjoy their course and have the need to reflect, understand and know the implemented activities; we can all contribute to qualitative changes in their professional training through experiential learning.

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