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Tvorivá hudobná činnosť dieťaťa v primárnom vzdelávaní

Musical Creative Activity of a Child of Early School Education

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Abstract

The article presents considerations showing the child's musical creative activity located in the space of early school education. The paper highlights artistic activities undertaken during creative music workshops carried out in integration with selected art areas. The efforts made by the verification studies led to the results that confirm the effectiveness of the assumptions made.

Keywords: Music. Creative activity. Child. Early school education.

Introduction

Musical creative activity is seen as an interesting phenomenon in the process of pupil's growth and the activities of the early school education teacher. It is based on discovery, emotions, surprise through the use of various methods and forms of work, situational surprise and causal effect, as well as building unexpected relationships between the subjects, and creates a unique climate for musical educational activities in a space characterised by the idea of art integration. Even though many educators recognize the need for its implementation and its undeniable benefits, they often see it as an inaccessible field for gathering educational and research experience. The purpose of the article is to show the thoughts put into the chosen issues and to disseminate the results obtained. By exploring the problem of creative activity, a model was devised, which creates a convenient situation where the pupil and the teacher remain in musical dialogue, fostering the formation of interactive relationships. It also documents the progress in the development in this area of the early school education pupils studied

Early school education as a space for creative musical activity

The active practice of music, listening to it, as well as attempts to create it, contain significant potential for pedagogical and artistic impact. The theme

of education and upbringing in the spirit of artistic values, promoted in early school education, is an expression of the teacher's and pupil's desire to interact with the beauty of art through the perception and interpretation of musical works in a direct, active form of communication (Uchyla-Zroski, 2008, s. 24). The essence of this strategy is the language and musical speech used in the child's dialogue with the teacher. Music is able to integrate the spaces of cognition in many ways through its symbolic and acoustic expression as well as its peculiar poetics and specific metaphysical dimension. Due to its multiple qualities, music requires an intentional form of communication. These include, on the one hand, various forms of active music making, and on the other hand, audio-visual projections, sound computer simulations, and broadcasts and concerts with the direct participation of the child as an audience and performer (Kisiel, 2015, s. 12). The value of musical expression emphasised in the pedagogy of the young child refers to the struggles in the area of integration of arts and integrated education strategy. It allows the pupil not only to interact with the world of values, but also to experience different phenomena in the process of proactive actions and amateur creation (Krauze-Sikorska, 2005, s. 31). Through imitative and creative expression as well as perception, initiated by multiple activities, the child becomes emotionally involved and undertakes independent thinking. Thus, their need for activity is satisfied, giving them an outlet for excess tension. A schoolchild caught in awe, wonder or interested in something, trying to grasp novelties from the surrounding world seems to be particularly creative (Frołowicz, 2012, s. 56). In order to achieve the desired effect, the pupil needs a guide, an activity organiser and a facilitator who will direct their actions and offer discreet assistance in finding individual solutions. A sensitive, creative and thoughtful educator, with good musical and methodological training, is able to create a favourable educational climate in this area when entering into a dialogue with the pupil and their peers. This will be necessary for the formation of the learners' activity, allowing the schoolchildren to reveal clear symptoms of pro-music behaviour.

According to Christopher Small, ensemble music-making can take multiple forms of cooperation: singing together, playing musical instruments, listening to music, dancing, searching for sounds, or any kind of activity in the area of various musical creations (Small, 1998, p. 9). In practice, they can provide undeniable benefits to a child's all-round development. The musical activity initiated at school promotes the development of the child/pupil's auditory and imaginative abilities also at the stage of early years education (Running, 2008, p. 41). It is worth remembering that efficiently implemented music education determines whether a pupil will seek their own path to understanding music and their own interpretations, or whether they will only imitate and duplicate the musical patterns and fashions learned or promoted. The interests aroused in a child determine, over time, the direction of their further development, and the individual abilities unleashed in this way model their personality (Kataryńczuk-Mania at al., 2019, s. 195).

The creative activity involves self-exploration or discovery and then combining known factors into a new whole. In this perception, the creativity is directly related to changing reality, as most often the need for creativity stems from social sources. The creativity is an attitude characterised by openness to experience. It is the ability to think outside the box, leading to original and meaningful solutions. Edward Nęcka (1998, s. 115) sees creativity as an individual trait consisting of the ability to produce new ideas. Developing creativity requires mastering both skills and becoming aware of one's own strategies for action, and going beyond these strategies as well as prevailing patterns of thinking. The creativity in music, in the case of children's work, manifests itself in the individual's ability to experiment, to create new pieces and/or unlimited combinations of them using a variety of means of expression, regardless of their flare for music. This phenomenon is fostered by a child's way of perceiving reality, untouched by routine, which is fresh and open, oriented to the search for what is new, original, surprising, unusual, alternative, experimental and unobvious — and thus, precisely the art that seeks and experiments, allowing one to absorb the achievements of culture without overwhelming one's creation with ready-made patterns.

The research in the field of psychopedagogy and pedagogy of creativity, cited by Krzysztof J. Szmidski (2013, s. 27), indicates that the stimulation of creative activity develops the following traits in pupils: sensory sensitivity, ingenuity, fluency, flexibility and originality of thinking, open-mindedness, the ability to discover, formulate and solve problems, as well as independence in the expression of judgements and intrinsic task motivation. The greatest ability to reveal the expected behaviour in the area of creative activity and susceptibility to stimulation of this type of disposition is shown precisely by children aged 6–10 years, at the level of early education.

The development of the creative abilities of children learning music as part of early school education classes largely depends on the expressive actions of the teacher, their sensitivity, reflection and sincerity of the dialogue conducted (Craft, 2000, p. 3). The process of teaching and learning can bring positive results only when the music educator treats the child as a subject and partner in artistic activities, who actively and multisensorially perceives the stimuli coming from the immediate environment. A sensitive teacher's attitude stimulates the individual to think creatively and actively participate in the class, while by posing questions, which are a start to divergent problem solving, the teacher can provide an opportunity to try something new and original (Spychiger, 1993, p. 360).

The currently functioning *Core Curriculum* emphasises in its recommendations the value of creative expression articulating specific recommendations for experimentation with rhythm, voice, sound and movement, vocal expression, in playing a musical instrument, and for introductory notation at the early education stage (Dz. U., 2017, s. 6 – 45).

The theoretical assumptions cited in this section of the paper stress the relevance of comprehensive and holistic musical stimulation as an effective way in the process of developing the child's creative activity in integrated education strategy. The verification of the assumptions presented was possible during the initiated research and application activities, which were supported by an appropriate strategy in the exploratory project.

Model of empirical cognition of the creative activity by study subjects

The concept presented outlines a model for the exploration carried. It was conducted within the framework of initiated academic projects, which resulted in master's theses and culminated in a doctoral dissertation. The main objective of the study was to find out: *how the purposefully organised activities in the area of various musical activities, characterised by music-making in the broadest sense, determine the development of the creative attitude and creative activity of the early-school pupils studied.*

The entire effort was based on a music workshop programme, where the teacher and pupil remained in dialogue. The initiated music-making was based on the activities of joint rhythmic recitation, singing, playing professional and unconventional percussion instruments, listening to music, movement with music and dance, or organising unusual forms of task performance, integrated with selected areas of art.

Early-school education teachers and pupils, who had a creative interaction, and conducted a musical dialogue, were the subjects of the study. In this regard, reference was made to the strategy of multilateral and multisensory education, carried out in the framework of arts integration. The designed research was complementary in nature, meaning that it was an exploration embedded in both qualitative and quantitative strategies.

Table 1: Diagram of the pedagogical experiment in the framework of creative activity of the pupils in grades 1–3

Pre-test	Experimental factor	Post-test
<p>Assessment of the Level of Creative Potential and Creative Activity of early-school pupils (in Polish: OPTPiKA)</p>	<p>Music workshops in the framework of art integration</p> <p>music-making</p> <p>musical dialogue between the teacher and pupil</p> <p>observation of study subjects' activities,</p> <p>interview, conversation with selected pupils.</p>	<p>Assessment of the Level of Creative Potential and Creative Activity of pupils in grades 1–3 (in Polish: OPTPiKA)</p> <p>Analysis products of pupils' work (drawings, text records, teacher's class records, video recording – clips from the classes, photos)</p>

Source: own work.

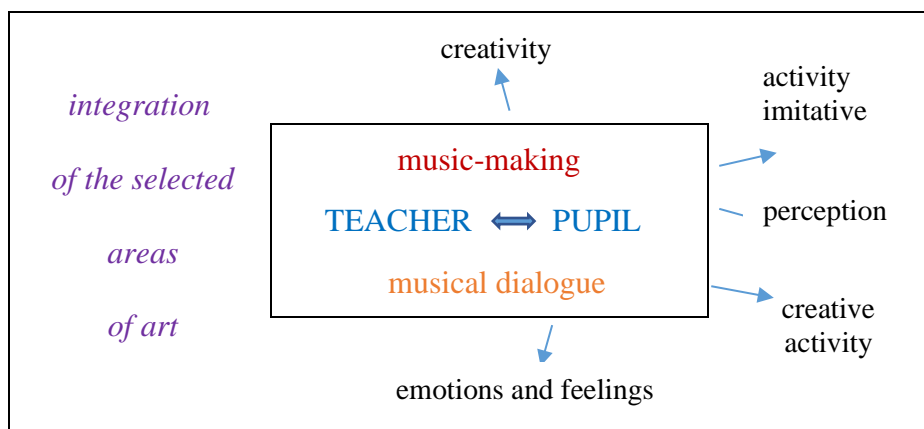
The designed research was complementary in nature, meaning that it was an exploration embedded in both qualitative and quantitative strategies. Treated as independent, but complementary and enriching, it provided a picture of the slice of educational reality studied. For this purpose, the method of experimentation was used, and, in detail, its variety, pedagogical individualising experiment (Kataryńczuk-Mania at al., 2018, s. 84). The exploration was carried out in a three-year cycle at selected educational institutions (elementary schools), in the Silesian Voivodeship. The indicators of the dependent variable (changes in the level of creative activity) were recorded using the test called the Assessment of Level of Creative Potential and Creative Activity of pupils (in Polish: OPTPiKA), pupil activity observation sheets for early grade pupils, analysis of the study subjects' creations (artwork, video recordings, photos documenting their activity) and an interview. These tools were developed for the purpose of this research. A division into the experimental and control groups was used for the exploration.

The result of scientific and application research was the development of effective educational activities and forms of work in terms of stimulating the creative activity of pupils in the early grades.

Active and creative music-making in early school education

The art workshop idea was based on music making in the perspective of a dialogue aimed at the teacher and the youngest elementary school pupils. Focused on the child's creative activities in integrated classes, the project used inspiring areas of art to create a space for developing the child's inventive attitude and creative activity. Due to the inestimable benefits and underestimated educational values of music in the field of children's creativity, the workshop programme emphasised the educational, formative qualities in theoretical and practical aspects. It encouraged the teacher to conduct a dialogue with the pupil using active forms of music-making. It introduced and suggested ways to achieve the planned goals in individual and group work and prompted reflection on the practical implementation of inspiring musical activities in didactic and educational work. The programme's goal was to apply the following innovative activities in the three-year education cycle: forms, content and methods of teaching and learning music, as well as the designated model of work with selected didactic resources and materials.

Figure 1: Musical teacher and pupil in dialogue to stimulate creative activity in the space of art integration



Source: own work.

The creative activity in the prepared concept was a stimulus that motivated the pupil to act and experience, and thus could have a positive impact on the formation and enrichment of their personality. The specific objectives were aimed at: developing sensitivity to music and its beauty and the ability to understand musical language, developing creativity in music-making, singing, satisfying the need for creative activity, acquiring skills through action, improving the ability to interact in a group of peers and creativity. The above goals were set to be achieved through the use of active teaching methods. The

dominant elements were: creative play, improvisation, free action in a climate of security, which positively motivated the child to create and play music, stimulated and directed activity and enhanced the experience.

The task of the teacher implementing the project was to counteract the children's various difficulties through personal example and support (Budniak, at al., 2020). It was also important to direct the child's own work to various activities that should give pleasure to the child. The repertoire was adapted as much as possible to the perceptual and performance capabilities of the schoolchildren. The music-making as a process included: ensemble singing (songs, melodeclamation, chants) and rhythmic recitation (rap, rhymes, rhythmic recitations), playing musical instruments (*body percussion*, sound illustrations on a given theme and spontaneously, soundtracks to artwork, situations and events, playing a string harmonic, chromatic bells and coloured instruments), music and movement improvisations, dances (folk, integration, in a sitting position, using the "Tuputan" method), painting, drawing to music, creative transformation of melody and rhythm, theatricalisation of musical events, preparation of musical broadcasts (anniversary, biographical, patriotic and occasional), discovering emotions in music, expressing one's own feelings, playing a game with musical symbols called "Muzogramy", creation of quasi scores, and musical stories and tales, and preparation of an artistic portfolio (Slyk, Kisiel, 2022).

Presentation of the results and discussion of the obtained results

By conducting an exploration aimed at learning about the creative activity of early-school pupils, characterised by music-making conducted in educational dialogue, multidimensional data was obtained. The results achieved through the use of the OPTPiKA¹ test in the initial research indicated an equal level of musical creative activity of study subjects from the control and experimental groups.

Over time, this assessment has changed showing that the development of the creative attitude and creativity of the pupils participating in the creative music workshops, was dynamic. Noticeable progress in the study was noted after the first grade. The generalised data indicated a clear difference between the studied groups, in favour of the experimental group. The child's creative activity and expressiveness is a unique pedagogical phenomenon that is difficult to measure and that is subject to many factors (emotions, mood, impressions, experiences or distractions). That is why other steps were taken to describe the situations resulting from the observations and the interview conducted.

¹ The OPTPiKA test is designed for pupils in the grades 1–3 and includes instructions for activities undertaken in the area of creative musical activity (singing, playing instruments, listening to music, moving with music and creating).

By talking to selected pupils in the experimental group, it was possible to develop cautious conclusions. The openness and ease of the interviewees in the face-to-face contact between the interviewer and the respondent was noticed. The survey revealed individuals of strong character who declared that they are willing to take risks in any situation without hesitation or are willing to offer selfless help to others. Based on the conversations held, one could get the impression that shy and reticent pupils gained more confidence and belief in their potentials. They showed willingness to present themselves before a wider audience on their own initiative. The bond formed among the musicians enabled them to cooperate with each other and made them more willing to support each other in difficult situations. The subjects revealed a greater awareness of building a sense of responsibility for the artistic product being prepared. They appreciated the involvement and musical competence of both their peers and teacher in their narratives.

The interview results recorded in the third grade highlighted the attitudes toward music classes of respondents from both groups. When categorising their preferred forms of musical activity, the pupils in the control group indicated that they most often wanted to listen to music, sing and dance, but were not necessarily inclined to engage in creating music. The opposite result was obtained in the experimental group; these respondents, on the other hand, believed that they would like to spend the most time creating music, experiencing the possibility of transforming, inventing, modifying and individualising it. Undoubtedly, the impetus for action was provided by their music workshop programme, which included: heuristic song teaching, improvised music for poems and artwork, created sound illustrations for natural phenomena, creation of accompaniment for songs and playing alongside music recordings, and well as preparing and conducting art events. The friendly and relaxed atmosphere of the classes and the framework of the musical dialogue were also rather important.

The observations carried out during the workshop activities revealed the expected changes, which were already noted in the experimental group after the first grade. During this period, the study subjects manifested their commitment and willingness to undertake activities in the designated areas of musical expression performed in the broad dimension of art integration, marking their own activity. A significant number of pupils revealed their artistic commitment and willingness to exhibit their skills in front of others, especially during public appearances. Unfortunately, there were individuals who assumed that music was of no interest to them, although they tried, under the influence of the group, to join in and perform the tasks assigned, especially where musical activity occurred together with art, dance, literature or drama. The development of the pupils' creative attitudes and creativity in the control group grew gently and gradually, and stagnated at certain points. The untapped layers of creative artistic activity gradually quieted over time. Here, conversely to the experimental group, only individuals revealed an interest in music, while the

rest (a significant portion of the group), showed discouragement with this type of activity. This phenomenon intensified in the third grade, when the respondents exhibited a strong curiosity about other areas of cognition: mathematics, nature science, reading or sports. During this period, it was also noted that these pupils showed less courage, were prone to abandon creative efforts, and the fear of possible failure prevented them from taking risks, for example, when performing in public or performing a musical task without prior preparation.

Based on the detailed analyses of the collected empirical material, it can be concluded that the subjects' enthusiasm for music-making in the control group wore off over time, and only singing and listening to music remained the preferred form of musical activity. These were probably the only forms of non-creative activity that very often accompanied the pupils in their subsequent educational activities. In the experimental class, the study subjects were engaged in a variety of children's music-making activities. The pupils enjoyed playing musical instruments, dancing, repeating and creating musical events. The creative expression became over time a source of joy and satisfaction for these pupils and a field for the fulfilment of their individual needs. The attitude of the teacher, who joined in the activities, was also very important. Acting as conductor, performer, and music coach, the teacher positively motivated the pupils to make music, and took care not only of organising the activities, but also of promoting children's presentations. The teacher also documented the achievements of the music-makers and popularised their activities at school and in the family environment.

Conclusions

Based on the analysis of the accumulated literature, conducted research and the author's own experience, it is worth pointing out that the research undertaken on the child's creative activity shows great educational value. It should be continued by looking for new solutions. However, when touching different educational spaces, it is necessary to use available and intentionally created diagnostic techniques. The developed strategy of educational and musical activities brings tangible benefits in the area of music popularisation among pupils, expected reactions to social situations, improvement of artistic predispositions and creations in the selected forms of activity immersed in the space of multisensory sensations resulting from the connectivity and interpenetration of art. Thus, it creates an impetus for innovative activities in the field of music teaching at school. Keeping in mind that a dialogue of subject and a climate conducive to creation become essential in this process.

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