

The formative function of music education in achieving educational excellence

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Abstract: *Expression for the most subtle feelings and ideas, the sounds language is a language of intelligence and sensibility, a multiple potential meanings component of the human being. It develops the imagination, the creativity, the intelligence and sensibility and contributes to the development of social interpersonal relationships as a predictor for success having a determinant role in the accomplishment of school performance, the development of personality and character. The musical activities give an intellectual and emotional support to the individual in exploring and understanding of the human universe, determining him to communicate and respond to challenges, to control his feelings and respond to creative experiments that involve cooperation, concentration and discipline. The educational system may lead to the formation of a homogeneous and complex human personality, which will meet the challenges of the continuously changing contemporary world, only through a harmonious and balanced distribution of the studied scholar disciplines during the school period, where the artistic education plays a complementary but determining role. The main objective of the educational act, with a determining role in the formation of the human personality must be the development of multiple intelligences.*

Key-words: *Education, training, art, communication, performance*

1. Introduction

The contemporary education, at all levels, goes through a deep crisis; the absenteeism, the lack of interest and school abandonment represent phenomena that worry the educational system and the community society at the same time. The low level of school preparation and the mediocrity reflect in the doubtful professional quality of graduates from all educational levels. The evaluation standards have dropped, the superficiality is a common phenomenon, and the formalism tends to overwhelm us.

We are glad to see that in the Romanian educational system we have exceptionally good pupils, students and teachers, with extraordinary, admirable accomplishments, performances obtained in all areas of activity. At the same time,

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we have to admit the fact that the majority of graduates from all levels have a minimal professional training and a superficial social culture while the educational system has no coherence, depth, stability or fluency.

On the other hand, the personal cultural level, the personality and character as a performance of the intelligence, are not considered and appreciated as fundamental values of the community and therefore not assessed to their true value. As a result, the unprecedented exodus of the young people of performance, that leave Romania, settling in territories that offer professional and existential satisfactions, has reached alarming proportions. In the institutional and political plan, solutions and efficient models are in search, a permanent restructuration is in course, but they do not rely on a long-term viable strategy- at the temporal dimension of a generation. These are usually projects and programs resulting from the desire to change at any price, promoted by the ones responsible with political and managerial tasks in the system, at all institutional preparation levels.

The managerial systems and conceptions overwhelm us, be they of import or artificial creations, which have no relevance to the overall of the problems in the Romanian educational system and no efficiency in the training of solid professional characters and personalities.

The contemporary socio-cultural life situates in a confused and imbalanced state, and the last terrorist events at the end of 2015 prove how fragile our everyday existence is. The beginning of the twenty first century has started with the unbelievable progress of the virtual technology where all types of communication and at all levels seem to be limitless and the access to information of any kind is possible from any corner of the planet.

The situation in itself offers satisfactions, at a closer look on the phenomenon we must draw attention over the fact that the intelligence and intellectual culture levels of the great majority of people accessing information, sometimes with great responsibility degree, situates way under the level of technological culture accessed, thus jeopardising the balance and welfare of the human community. In other words, between the level of development of the virtual technology and the educational profile promoted by the educational system is a big offset. More worrying is the fact that this phenomenon of imbalance is not a characteristic of the Romanian society only, but of all countries, with the exception of the northern countries.

2. Formative dimensions of the human personality

The globalization phenomenon of the human community at the beginning of the twenty first century imposes the drawing of an educational profile and of a model of human personality that corresponds to the objectives and aspirations of the multicultural social system of the new community structure.

According to the directives promoted by the European Union, the four

dimensions, objectives of the personality of the community individual consist of: **the knowledge** (to know), **the skills** (to be able to put in practice their own knowledge), **communication** (to connect) and **personality** (to be). The art language and aesthetic education integrate in the communication dimension.

Rationally speaking, the concrete ways to implement an efficient political and managerial thinking at European as well as at each country level, should promote development programs of balanced growth in all directions of human personality formation. Unfortunately, in the majority of the countries, for the solving and the settlement of situations of short-term social nature, the managerial programs of the socio-political systems are discriminatory, paying an exaggerated attention to the technological and economic development in the disadvantage of aesthetic education and personality formation.

The unilateral hypertrophy of the technical and scientific intellect in the human life, without the complementary assimilation of an aesthetic education, generator of emotional immersions, may lead to the dehumanizing of the human personality. *Homo intellectualis* and *homo economicus* experience sometimes a feeling of frustration regarding the level of their personal cultural knowledge and ignorance.

It is obvious that taking decisions regarding the macro structural orientation of the society is realised by the human agent, whose personality, culture and intelligence situates sometimes beneath the level of the contemporary technological development. Exponents of the social community, the politicians have the duty to think and act with intelligence and responsibility towards their own citizens, setting up a long term healthy socio-educative politics departing from the historical experience and the concrete reality.

An educational system based predominantly on the accumulation of information and less on creativity and development of practical skills, generates a passive individual.

He takes over the information mechanically without the capacity of intellectual selection and practical application and consequently the decisions taken may be negative. More and more lately, the finality of preparing an education cycle gives birth to an individual that cannot find his place in the society. The most serious thing is that the low degree of the individual's preparation exposes him to the manipulation of a restricted community.

Under the present circumstances when the information technique offers the possibility to all social categories to get in touch with the most diverse knowledge, in a short time, the problem of knowledge accumulation is not a priority of the education system. The school must form characters and individual personalities with creative intelligence, capable of analysing, selecting and taking of right decisions, positively connecting inside the socio-cultural community, at the micro and macro structural level. The social imbalances, generators of conflicts, as well as the superficiality in the technical-productive activity, are the result of the lack of

personality and the absence of socio-cultural communication both at the decisional persons as well as at the simple citizens. In this respect, we have to consider the fact that we “decide and think under the influence of feelings”, as Daniel Goleman, psychologist at Harvard, suggests (Goleman 2001, 10).

3. Music, a language of intelligence and sensibility

As a semantic signification, the term “intelligence” comes from the Latin *intelligere*, which means to connect, to organise, or from *interlegere*, which presupposes the establishing of relationships through relationships.

The inter-human communication is realised through two types of languages: scientific and artistic.

Elements of language, specific for the different arts are *the sound* (music), *the word* (theatre, literature, and poetry), *the gesture* (choreography), *the point, the line and the colour* (graphics and painting), *the plans and volumes* (sculpture, architecture).

In **Leonardo da Vinci’s** writings, as well as **Immanuel Kant’s**, they consider the phenomenon of knowledge as an absolute and total interconnection between intelligence and sensibility. One of the objectives of education with a decisive role in the formation of personality and character is the multiple and complex development of the human intelligence.

Howard Gardner, a psychologist who formulated the theory of multiple intelligences, has set out in his book, *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences* (Gardner 2006, 17), insisting that intelligence should not be conceived as a one-dimensional educational-formative construction, but as a multi-dimensional one. This theory relies on a series of seven independent intelligences that allow the individual to understand his “transformations and modifications of the individual perceptions” and “to recreate aspects of their own experiences” (Gardner 2006, 173).

In *The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*, Gardner defines the seven forms of the human intelligence this way: linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, musical, corporal kinaesthetic, interpersonal and extra personal. None of them should have priority over the others. What surprises is the fact that the musical intelligence is present in all seven types described by Gardner (Oarcea 2014, 3).

The statement that the musical language has the capacity to induce clarity in the individual intelligence, determining him to understand what the spoken language and the rational thinking could not reveal, is very interesting.

Inconsensus with the above statements, two complementary directions define the human intelligence: *the cerebral thinking*, **IQ** (intelligence quotient) that defines the spiritual capacity of the individual to adjust to the new requirements and conditions of life. *The emotional immersion* **EQ** (emotional intelligence) defines the personal capacity of efficient management of the own emotions in relation with the personal objectives.

Although **EQ** is a concept promoted in 1990 by psychologists Peter Salovey and John Meyer (Goleman 2001, 14), its attributes can be recognised in Socrates's well-known statement (470-399 B.C.) "Know thyself" or the biblical writings "Do as you would be done by" and "Love thy neighbour as thyself".

EQ, the individual emotional reactions, as an effect of the artistic languages approach, reveal the intellectual abilities and student's creativity, influencing the learning capacity and the ability to realize products in real life situations-and implicitly success, personally and professionally.

The emotional intelligence is a complementary product of **the musical intelligence** – a concept defined by the sensibility degree that the individual has through the contact with the musical language and reflects through the ability **to perceive** (as a music lover), **to understand** (as music critic), **to operate** with musical language elements (as music composer) and **to express** (as music interpreter).

4. Why is music so necessary in education?

Inside the education system, the musical education can appear as an element of the whole, along with the other school subjects, in the formation of student in relation with the intellectual and cultural environment, or strictly as specialised inside the vocational training. Here it may have a priority objective, pursuing the deepening and the broadening of the knowledge and professional development horizon of a musical talent.

The methods of approach of study of any educational discipline must correspond to the school programme, to the communication language, as well as the perception and understanding level specific to any age stage. The approach for musical education, in general, takes place by practical interpretation, and the music theory and music history knowledge must have a complementary role in the understanding of the played musical language (Noubel 1989, 2). Without neglecting the music grammar learning, of the solfeggio in the study of a musical creation, a very important and priority factor in musical education is the emotional immersion of the individual vibration through the song, and the collective immersive fascination in a concert. The concert scene represents a mirage and the music a privilege for the ones that practice it.

4.1. What can music represent for a teenager?

- the desire for self-expression, of non-verbal communication of different experiences

- willingness for cultivation, an attempt to shape their lives through music.
- discovery of a composer in line with his own experiences;
- the refuge where he attempts inner contemplation, self-understanding;

The aesthetic education is an important and necessary component of the educational system, especially in adolescence, when young people go through a time of deep biologic transformations and tempestuous searches in the shaping of their personality, as they are excessively preoccupied with beauty as a self-immersion method. Adolescence is a time that promotes frames of behaviour and forms life principles, a time when young people search originality, a time when music is one of the common languages of expression because it produces a background of inexpressible interior highs.

Unfortunately, the artistic education of young people is one of the weak spots of the education system. The teacher mastery is a necessity in the contemporary pedagogy, and the working techniques and the study method must bring to the foreground the creativity, given the fact that every individual is a unique being and every community has its own syntality.

The artistic matrix exists in every human being, in variable proportions; the duty of the maestro teacher is to know how to highlight it.

To know how to capitalize the knowledge background and the emotional sensibility of a student group and to develop it in accordance with the objectives of the education discipline is not only a challenge but also a necessity in realising school performance. This is why; a fundamental music education is the most beautiful gift that the music teachers can offer to the students and pupils life.

4.2. Music education – a solution for preventing the disengagement and school dropout

One of the deep problems that contemporary education system confronts with is disengagement, the absenteeism and school dropout. The causes are multiple and they concern both the gap between the student's preparation level and the imposed evaluation standards, as well as the fact that a big part of the pupils and students do not find themselves in the school environment, do not find their identity, they feel strange, oppressed, marginalised....

The arts, as well as the elements of education can prevent the disengagement and can play an important key-role in maintaining the pupils and students in school, until graduation.

The statistics highlight the fact that the education institutions with the higher graduation rates and the smaller school dropout have in common the followings:

- powerful and well-developed school programmes and artistic education;

- more arts teachers and more spaces dedicated to arts where students/pupils may express themselves;
- more partnerships with cultural institutions and opportunities for the young people to visit a museum, to attend a performance, or a thematic excursion.

Complementary for the formative role of school education, the education institutions must have the role of social medium/collective, with an optimal climate where every young person can find their place and affirm their personality.

The arts can constitute a way of revival and equilibrium for many young people whose personality is in process or whose existence has suffered psychological traumas or failure (Chailley 1968, 8-9).

Amongst the potential opportunities offered to students/pupils to engage in the arts field, we enumerate:

- choral, dance and theatre assemblies,
- workshops and personal expositions of art works,
- literary sets and/or publications of original literary pieces,
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All these programmes and opportunities are powerful motivating factors in the prevention of disengagement and school dropout.

Elisabeth Guy-Kummer, in the article *Chant et chant choral* (Guy-Kummer 1988, 22) was asking herself, rhetorically, the question: why do people gather to sing in chorus, since always? The answers are obvious and easy to guess:

- joining a chorus comes from the desire to express oneself through the voice/song or to learn how to sing in order to discover the music.
- because the song is a natural phenomenon, constructive, dynamic, because the song is performed with the entire body, heart and soul.
- the singing is synonymous with well-being, with health, because the music brings joy, harmony and mental balance.
- the need to communicate and the run from solitude justifies there fudge inside a community.

Similar answers are valid for the need of young people to engage in assemblies that have as target the dance/body movement, theatre/ cinema, plastic arts or literature.

The artistic exercise, through the engagement of young people in cultural programmes, is one of the modalities of intellectual and emotional engagement of an individual to manifest his creativity. The benefits of the artistic exercise in personality and character shaping, are multiple, complex and of long term, because the artistic exercise:

- can catalyse the intellectual openness of the young person to the surrounding world;

- can become a privileged means of social and cultural integration, constituting an ideal space for learning the team work;
- can mobilize the creative capacities of the individual for quality work;
- can generate the awakening of taste and of interest towards other ways of knowledge, and the aesthetic culture is in many cases the only way of accessing the scientific knowledge;
- harnesses the wealth and diversity of persons and cultures, favouring the mutual respect and social tolerance;
- leads to the development of a positive social behaviour of a citizen open towards the others, without reticence and individualistic mentalities;
- allows for the development of intelligence, of means of communication and artistic expression capacities;

4.3. The virtues of music/arts in achieving educational excellence

The music touches everyone, from childhood to the adult age-because it is the poetry of our hearts, is our universal language that offers multiple ways of self-expression and creativity. The music is the most sincere way of expression of the human kind, where creativity is the most direct form of communication of the composers and interpreters, who through the sound language express thoughts, emotions and original compositions (Dautremer 1969, 20).

The students that attend the music education courses or are involved in education programmes and artistic practice have higher levels of professional success in the study than their fellow non-musical colleagues do, because:

- the music offers unique and distinct ways of learning-it promotes a large number of thought capacities, contributing to the preparation of students for a career and a profession;
- the music is a major source of joy, consolation, emotion and sensibility- it makes the everyday life more vivid and interesting;
- the music is a therapeutic force- it has the capacity to revive and calm energies, influencing the human beings state of mind;
- the music is a social binder-encourages the team work and the cohesion, favouring discipline, commitment and involvement;
- the music is a patrimony thesaurus- offers the possibility of understanding one's own cultural identity, as well as of other cultures from the past and the present;
- the music is a torch that lights the way for our students in the social understanding culture and of the beauty-develops intelligence and is a predictor of success.

According to Bloom's taxonomy, creativity is the highest stage of the cognitive scale, and the arts teach the young people that:

- problems may have more than one solution and that the questions may have more than one answer;
- there are many ways of seeing and interpreting the world;
- the limits of our language do not define the limits of our knowledge.
- with the help of the arts, the young people learn to say what they cannot utter in words.

5. Conclusion

Unfortunately, the position of the arts in the school curricula of the young people represents the adult's point of view about the way in which they appreciate the artistic education. That is why, the professional cultural associations, bring to the attention of the political decisional factors the importance of artistic education in the educational system and the role that the artistic education can play in the human personality shaping and the social community balance.

As community members, in charge with the mission of generating productive citizens, the music educators can generate real human beings, endowed with the ability of feeling compassion, of critical thinking, able to embrace different cultures and creating original compositions. This is why I am always intrigued when the value and the necessity of musical education are in question.

Is important for each student/pupil to have access to a quality music education and for each student to have the possibility to create-is the responsibility of our educational institutions to offer this opportunity.

How will the young people respond to the challenges of our contemporary society if they have not assimilated models of artistic thought from ancestral human experience? What will their criteria of evaluation be? Which will their priorities be?

The history of human kind has proved that the civilisations remain in history for their arts and their philosophy. Excellence in education imposes high competence programs where an important contribution is allotted to the artistic education.

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