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Intersections of Dramatic Arts and Music Education

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Prešov**INTERSECTIONS OF DRAMATIC ARTS AND MUSIC EDUCATION**

Key words: *dramatic education, creative drama, cross-curricular relations, intersection of dramatic art education and music education*

Introduction

Education and training in the sense of creative and humanistic approach progressively finds its way to the school teaching. Cross-curricular relations are important not only for the better understanding of the curriculum itself, but also for its attractiveness to students and for the creation of deeper relation towards the subject. Thus it is important to create the possibility to include unconventional, innovative and activating methods in the school teaching¹.

Within the context of undergraduate students' practice at Prešov University of Prešov there is taught the course Dramatic Education as an optional course. The course focuses on the theoretical aspect, but also on the practical exercises (block tuition), where students can apply the methods of dramatic education, innovative methods and cross-curricular relations directly in practical outcomes. Very rich experience is obtained from the interconnection of dramatic education with music education. During the school teaching the future teachers keep to the goals of dramatic art education and music education mentioned in binding documents valid for the education in the Slovak Republic. The interconnections between these two subjects are reached by means of a game, drama games and creative games.

1 Music Education and its Definition

In dramatic education and music education there are several common objectives that enable to use the cross-curricular relations within the frame of different subjects in school teaching practice. These objectives are defined in the State educational programmes ISCED 1 and ISCED 2.

¹ J. Poráčová, *Možnosti tvorivej výučby v súčasnej škole*, [in:] *Zborník príspevkov z medzinárodnej vedeckej konferencie – Integrácia teórie a praxe didaktiky*, Košice 2010, p. 121-124.

1.1 State Educational Programme ISCED 1

Music education in elementary schools is the activating and experiential subject where pupils, on the basis of playful activities, learn to orientate in the field of music. It awakens in them an interest in elementary music-making and, step by step, also the interest in further education within the field of music and arts, for example Schools of Art.

In the primary education pupils naturally and fluently establish and strengthen their innate and natural abilities and their tendency to playfulness and spontaneity, and finally their ability to holistic perception of images – models of the outside world.

Music should be to pupils at the same time a game and the subject of their experimentation, the source of discovery approaches to music cognition, by realisation of music activities understood in a comprehensive way, with the goal to broadly engage students in the process of music educational process.

Well known *system of musical activities* is extended to musical dramatic activities that are of integrative character. The system connects in itself musical activities and experiences, skills and knowledge from literary, dramatic, ethical, art and physical education on the basis of experiential learning. Musical activities represent the diverse forms of pupils' contact with music itself and give them the possibility to combine music with the word, movement, and playing elementary musical instruments. They represent the basic means of how to develop comprehensive and musical abilities of pupils. Musical activities cannot be perceived as isolated ones, but should be mutually supplemented and supported by other activities, methods and techniques².

1.2 State Educational Programme ISCED 2

Activity and thematic basis of the music education curriculum encourages the combination of music with the expressions of another arts, such as poetry, pieces of art and movement expression, and it has cultural-aesthetical nature.

Individual kinds of activities are mutually conditioned and in their effects their relations are supported by the other types of art, with the culture of other nations, history, cultural life of the society, it cultivates pupils, educates future attentive listeners and lovers of music art and it cultivates their tastes and styles. Mutual interactions of activity based, creative and discovery principle of music education, creates the condition for music education to be a source of pleasure, positive life stimulant and a part of pupils lives with adequate music fulfilment³.

2 Intersections of Dramatic Education and Music Education

From the point of view of preparation of young people to creative activity it is important to:

² www.minedu.sk [accessed on: 01/05/2015].

³ Ibidem.

- direct education toward creativity which encourages and stimulates phantasy⁴,
- enable pupils and young students to lead their feelings, desires and imaginativeness in the balance with the ability and possibility of their realisation.

Among the tools that develop creative features belong the methods, activities and techniques that stimulate musical and dramatic creativity within the scope of musical and dramatic education⁵.

2.1 Methods and Techniques of Dramatic Education

In pregradual preparation of the future teachers of dramatic education there are used the following methods and techniques:

- *Method of a pure game* – undergraduate students learn how to express in a pure game, in the role of action, and in various levels of role play various movements of their bodies, their attitudes and positions in the space and relationships to various persons within the space.
- *Sounded pantomime* – there is engaged movement, by means of which a character is depicted, under the accompaniment of sound. This method is often used in musical-dramatic compositions. Pantomimic etude is often accompanied with sound effects by means of which participants try to express real people, animals, things, and try to create the experience by integration of sound, movement and certain story/plot in common situations from daily life.
- *Dance drama* – is often used especially by the undergraduate students of the course Dramatic Education who at the same time study the course Music Education. By dance there is meant “movement” motivated or stimulated by music. It can be improvised movement that is parallel with music or inspired by music. The goal of the activity is to encourage experience in creation the relation between music and movement.
- *Live – motionless images* – the live image is built on the activity of undergraduate students who improvise their movement on sounding music. “Stronza” – stopping the motion is reached by agreed signal, for example the sound of certain musical instrument.

Within the scope of intersections of the courses Dramatic Education and Music Education the following methods and activities are suggested to be utilised:

- *Extralinguistic game* – in the activity there is used the technique of background sound coulisse and the technique of sound dialogue. By means of this game the undergraduate students can be more aware of their voice possibilities, they learn how to command sound creation technique, while sound dialogue is a dialogue composed from sounds.

⁴ T. Roháčová, *Možnosti zapojenia niektorých kognitívnych funkcií do učebného procesu*, [in:] *Križovatky na cestách k učiteľstvu – recenzovaný zborník z medzinárodnej vedeckej konferencie*, Prešov 2013.

⁵ J. Hudáková, *Hudobno-dramatický projekt študentov hudobného umenia ako inšpirácia pre prácu učiteľa hudobnej výchovy na základnej škole*, [in:] *Teorie a praxe hudební výchovy III. Zborník příspěvků z konference studentů doktorandských a magisterských studií a pedagogův hudobného vzdelávania zemi V4 v r. 2013*, Praha 2014.

- *Singing and musical expression* – especially singing accompanied by musical instruments or other sound effects, is used in this technique. By means of music and singing the atmosphere of dramatic action is created, the dramatization of a story is supported and so on.
- *Work with props* – by the activity the percipient's experience from listening to music is deepened. The method enables the implementation of cross-curricular relations with the subject Art Education.
- *Improvisation* – the technique is most often used in the school teaching of the subject Dramatic Education and it belongs to the most favourite ones. It is a play without scenario and it is a main source of action based learning. The authentic situations are created which are solved in an original way by the undergraduate students. The rules can be created during the play and nothing is revealed beforehand. In the dramatic education the technique of improvisation is applied from the psychological and pedagogic aspect, not from the theatrical one, because students are being prepared for life not stage in the course.
- *Interpretation* – belongs to the most favourite techniques of undergraduate students, because they can depict a task, song, composition, and literary text based on imitation. By means of this technique students can acquire the image of reality.
- *Game in a role* – is an educational method that leads to the fulfilment of educational goals by means of inducing, starting playing and reflexion of fictive situation with educational and valuable content. Undergraduate students play a game in which they represent, by their behaviour and deeds fictive objects, persons or themselves. The method is considered to be the main initial principle and core of dramatic education methods.
- *Teacher in a role* – the activity connects dramatic education and music education and enables to create and realise musical and dramatic compositions. I, as a teacher, am becoming a part of the actions, games, plays, and activities realised, while I take on myself certain type of a role, and become the part of a play.
- *The association circle* – the technique is used mainly in the end of activities that is realised with participants. It is a basic spatial formation from musical-drama activities and games. The association circle has several advantages for every participant, while I, as a teacher, become a part and a member of a group. Communication within the circle is realised and there is a friendly and safe atmosphere.

The means of dramatic education enable pupils (participants) to know their own social context, enable them to express their own experience and emotions, come across with musical, literary, artistic reality and experience it, gain new experience and skills and utilise them within the scope of cross-curricular relations of drama methods and facilities within education of other school subjects such as Literature, History, Civic Education and so on.

Kopčáková⁶ mentions the following “[...] how to educate pupils ‘to music’ and ‘by music’ by means of interconnectedness music – word, music – artistic character/symbol, music – theatre e. t. c., when we do not have the basis for particular arts [...]”.

⁶ S. Kopčáková, *Recepcia hudby u vysokoškolákov a jej projekcia do iných druhov umenia v procese pedagogickej interpretácie hudby*, [in:] *Kultúra – Umenie – Vzdelávanie. Zborník z medzinárodnej vedeckej konferencie 3-4.6.2009 Banská Bystrica*, Banská Bystrica 2009. CD elektronický

2.2 Activities in the Subject Dramatic Education

The innovative educational methods which are used within the scope of future drama education teachers, are aimed at students and their activation in school teaching. By means of adequate activating methods it is required to evoke the interest of undergraduate students in the teaching profession, in the subject field they study and to prepare them for demanding work with a group of pupils. During active and activating education, the majority of activities is realised by students, the teacher is “only” a facilitator, advisor and observer who shows pupils a way and directs them to reach educational goals, while s/he leaves it open to students to choose the one which is reasonable according to them. Active school teaching is characterised by high tempo of work⁷ and thus it is important for a teacher to be able to create and sustain positive class atmosphere in the classroom with humour and individual support to pupils.

During aforementioned methods, to which dramatic education belongs, pupils or young students do not sit in a classroom in a passive way, they can move and think in a loud voice, ask for advice their classmates or a teacher, or use various ways to reach the educational goal or obtain information. They can use the internet or other authentic sources. Such school teaching is joyful for pupils, despite the other classical methods⁸.

Creative drama has a wide use and thus we should not restrict its methods only to certain group of plays and improvisations. Provazník⁹ says that arts in education cannot be regarded by teachers and pupils as something marginal or useless. Arts is an excellent tool to learn about the world, the acquisition of knowledge is in a qualitative way different from the other fields, but of the same importance. Thus schools should provide an unbiased picture of the whole field of art to their pupils. In the school subject Dramatic arts education we work with smaller groups of students where the practical part of the subject is preceded by a theoretical introduction to the problem. Students continually prepare simple isolated dramatic plays and etudes that are utilised in the practical part of the subject and at the same time we use cross-curricular relations. We often use background music in etudes and dramatic plays.

Regarding dramatic arts education and music education the favourite activity is chiefly listening to pleasant music (we prefer classical music modified for listening), while pupils sit in a comfortable way and work in a small groups randomly created, for example by choosing a card with the number of a group. Each group can have a big sheet of paper, glue and coloured threads, to its disposal. After pupils finish listening to a certain composition, each group creates pictures and their own images con-

zborník príspevkov, p. 1-14. Citation, p. 4: “We know that music is the most convenient and frequent integrator of artistic syntheses, it results from its complexity. The creativity and integration are the basic principles of contemporary music education. However, how to educate pupils ‘to music’ and ‘by music’ by means of interconnectedness of music and word, music and artistic character/symbol, music and theatre etc., when we do not have the basis for particular arts [...]”.

⁷ E. Odlerová, P. Szabó, *Tvorba osobnej kariéry. Personal career creation*, “Vedecké práce MTF STU v Bratislave so sídlom v Trnave. Research papers Faculty of Materials Science and Technology Slovak University of Technology in Trnava”, no. 22 (2007), p. 109-116.

⁸ M. Sillberman, K. Lawsonová, *101 metod pro aktivní výcvik a vyučování: Osvědčené způsoby efektivního vyučování*, Praha 1997.

⁹ J. Provazník, *Souhrný materiál o stavu tvořivé dramatiky*, „Tvořivá dramatika” 2012, vol. 23, no. 1.

nected with the mood of a particular composition so as they finally create one picture on their sheet of paper, while each member of a group is supposed to take turns in self-creation. Then each group presents their “picture” and each member of a group comments on it. Activities can vary in many ways, or pupils can continue in them in a slightly different variations. Pupils or young students can, for example, create a story, or a poem that they perform by using words or in a non-verbal way: by movement, drawing, dancing and so on. They can also create different variations of the story in which participants play various characters, positive or negative, real or imagery and so on. These activities are usually popular with pupils and young students at elementary and middle schools, because together they can create not only stories, but the group dynamics is originated based on positive relationships, natural communication and cooperation; pupils learn how to express their emotions, accept the other fellow-students, be emphatic and so on. After they finish each activity, they can express their emotions, opinions and react to the methods and techniques of school teaching, and to the activities utilised during classes.

2.2 Development of group dynamics – Prometheus

Together with the students we chose curriculum for secondary schools – dramatic text Prometheus – and we divided the class in three groups which completed many various tasks and did miscellaneous activities during two weeks. The first group examined for example the environment in which the story was set and the landscape. The second group carefully studied the characters and their relationships. The third group studied the significant personalities of musical, theatrical and drama world who had lived in particular places, and worked in particular historical periods, while students gathered as much information as possible about them. After two weeks every group met and shared mutually the things and procedures they prepared to accomplish and perform their tasks. The first group draw and created environment in which the story took part, the students also chose suitable music for the environment. The second group created characters from various materials, fabrics and so on, which the students characterised by the choice of music, or the passage from the text, for each individual character. The third group prepared at a big sheet of paper the gallery of significant personalities who lived and worked in certain periods, with photographs and pictures and the students also chose music that characterised these personalities. Then the students of all three groups portrayed the dramatic text using the methods and techniques of drama education (hot chair, alley and so on). In the end we shared the emotions during co-operation, opinions on techniques and methods used in the process. It was important not to learn the texts, but the emphasis was on the durability of knowledge via experience. We talked about musical choices, and it was interesting to observe students in the process of recognizing the characters via music, environment and so on.

During drama education we, together with students, act out – perform, various historical events, political topics, problem behaviour, themes suggested by students or a teacher.

3 Research

3.1 Research Aim and Sample

In the contribution we present the research results which verify the attitudes of students and teachers to dramatic education. We verified whether the teachers use the methods of drama education in their school teaching, whether students find these methods interesting and we summarised the most frequent disadvantages that prevent teachers from the use of drama education methods in schools. In the research we used quantitative method of anonymous questionnaire which we distributed to two groups of respondents. 120 participants took part in the research. One group consisted of secondary students from 1st to 4th classes of pedagogical and social academies and pupils of 9th grade of middle school. The second group consisted of the teachers of secondary pedagogical and social academies and middle schools.

3.2 Research Results

In the paper we include only the most significant research results. We asked the respondents (teachers) what was, according to them, the main obstacle which prevented the teachers to use the methods of drama education during their school lessons. Then we asked the students and pupils what, in their opinion, prevents their teachers to use games during school lessons.

I found out that respondents' answers were quite contradictory. Students think that their teachers do not want to use games during school lessons and the teachers answered that during the game their students are very noisy and it prevents them from learning. 40% of the respondents interviewed, complained that the frequency of noise was quite unbearable. They chose this fact and mentioned it in "open question". 34% of the interviewed teachers answered that they have only a few, respectively no information of how to use dramatic play in school lessons. Students think that their teachers do not use the methods of drama education, and if they do so, it is just a rare application.

By open question we found out what is, according to the teachers and students, the difference between the lessons with drama methods and techniques, and between classical methods. The students and teachers could express their emotions from the lessons taught by means of drama methods and techniques. We were again surprised that the teachers saw the disadvantage in the noise during their lessons. For them it was quite hard to manage the noise in classes, what might relate to the prevailing classical methods or appropriate authority of the teacher in the classroom. Pupils preferred experiential lessons, because they did not mind the noise and they appreciated the relaxing atmosphere of drama education lessons.

The frequency of drama education in Slovak schools is quite low, despite the fact that the majority of respondents graduated from pedagogical and social academies. Students would welcome an increase in experiential, creative hours and they thought that games should be included in school lessons. All the respondents "students" would welcome more games in schools, more creative ideas, and they think this would be changed by a new teachers approach to the school teaching. Students think

that their teachers want to be passive and they do not want to create new activities for their students. There is a very interesting opinion that pupils appreciate the use of drama method and consider it very interesting.

We were interested in the opinion of teachers and students whether drama education and its methods are suitable for school teaching in all types and grades of schools. Students answered “yes”, but the half of the teachers thought that drama education is not suitable if the educational goal is the acquisition of knowledge. The majority of them consider it to be more appropriate for after-school activities. 40% of teachers thought that drama education belongs to school teaching. Only 10% of teachers did not answer the question. The students expressed by their answers that they consider the methods of drama education to be more effective than classical methods and they liked relaxed class climate during lessons, better communication and possibility to work in groups. These lessons were more attractive for them and the teachers said they observed less conflicts during the experimental lessons. Some teachers asked us about the books where they could find the inspiration for their own lessons, as they thought that the methods of drama education could enrich the school teaching.

Conclusion

The significance of drama education lies mainly in the involvement of the whole student personality in the learning process, their body, mind and imagination.

The task of the teacher is to:

- a) activate pupils to think,
- b) help them to be creative, and finally
- c) facilitate students to express their inner pictures and imagination.

The attractiveness of drama education lies mainly in the fact that all the participants of educational process, the teachers and pupils are active, they make and create various “plays” and tasks together, not only listen and read about them. The dancers should dance, the teachers of drawing should draw and the drama education teachers should play and perform¹⁰.

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¹⁰ E. Brhelová, V. Rodriguezová, *Otázka jako klíč k příběhu. Zpráva ze semináře kanadského lektora Davida Boothe v rámci 16. celostátní dílny Dramatická výchova ve škole 2010 v Jičíně*, “Tvořivá dramatika” 2010, vol. 22, no. 1.

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Summary

INTERSECTIONS OF DRAMATIC ARTS AND MUSIC EDUCATION

The contribution focuses on the possibilities of applying the elements of music education within the theory and practice of drama education in the education of undergraduate students – the future elementary and secondary school teachers. Implementation of music education to the subject of Drama education in the study programme ‘Teaching comprehensive subjects’ allows the participants:

- a) learn how to use the aforementioned educational art subjects as the possibility to create a positive atmosphere in the classroom by creative education;
- b) activate students in educational process.

The theoretical part of the paper is illustrated by the examples from the educational practice compiled by the authoresses.

Key words: *dramatic education, creative drama, cross-curricular relations, intersection of dramatic education and music education*