Abstract

The interest in the issue of creativity and its stimulation was crystallized from the direct interaction with school-age children, as a music teacher during the classes conducted and during the national and international competitions of the kind. 30 children who possess scenical performances were selected in the experimental group. The results revealed that the creative potential of the child can be stimulated by a pedagogical model based on the involvement of the motivational-attitudinal factors of the child, as factors with resonance for creativity. The solutions we suggest can also be applied to the small artists studying classical music, folk, jazz etc.

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Keywords: creativity; music education; pedagogical model; performance in music;

1. Introduction

Creativity has been addressed over time, from several points of view: as a creative product, as a creative process and as a creative potential of personality. Many psychologists have supported, over time, the idea that all humans are, to a certain extent, creative in a potential way. (Potolea, 1989). By creativity, psychologists and teachers have understood primarily children’s potential to conduct games and activities that stimulate the imagination, the intelligence, the insight. The children’s creative potential can be translated as spontaneity, freedom of expression, curiosity, dispositions and skills in certain areas. By encouraging and properly guiding these qualities, one can result in a creative personality. This initial sense of creativity is considered fundamental, representing the first level,
psychological and educational, in describing and explaining the characteristic notes of the creativity concept. (Bădulescu, 1998). In another train of thoughts, creativity becomes a creative potential, an amount of characteristics or psychological Creativity has been addressed over time, from several points of view: as a creative product, as a creative process and as a creative potential of personality. Many psychologists have supported, over time, the idea teachers have understood primarily children's potential to conduct games and activities that stimulate the imagination, the intelligence, the insight. The children’s creative potential can be translated as spontaneity, freedom of expression, curiosity, dispositions and skills in certain areas. By encouraging and properly guiding these qualities, one can result factors for future creative performances. All the virtual conditions existent within humans, but not necessarily used, which could contribute to the success of the creative act, make up a person’s potential creativity, unlike the creative faculty, which involves the real, actual possibility to create (Stoica, 1983). In conclusion, creativity, in the that all humans are, to a certain extent, creative in a potential way. (Potolea, 1989). By creativity, psychologists and light of the explanatory theories, is revealed as a very complex trait of personality, being the expression of the bio-psycho-socio-cultural structure of the human personality and creativity and is, in fact, human’s potential condition, but also the value given to this virtuality.

I. Taylor (Geissler, 1977) makes finer distinctions and distinguishes five steps (levels) of creativity: expressive, productive - corresponding to the psychological creativity, inventive - corresponds to those capable of inventions, innovative - corresponds to the creativity manifested by the great representatives of art and science, emerging - corresponds to the creativity embodied in works of genius. Expressive creativity is the most easily noticed in childhood, being a child’s possibility of expression and achievement of a product naturally and spontaneously (music, drawing, storytelling, stage interpretation). This type of creativity is manifested mainly in musical interpretation. The music teaching programmes based on improvisation and sound exploration achieve to improve the ability of children’s creative thinking in music, according to the results of the studies of Fung (1997) and Koutsoupidou and Hargreaves (2009).

2. Research motivation

The interest in the issue of creativity and its stimulation was crystallized from the direct interaction with school-age children, as a music teacher during the classes conducted and during the national and international competitions of the kind. From experience, we noticed that few teachers are concerned with stimulating the children’s creative potential, either due to the lack of courage towards accepting the child’s spontaneity or due to insufficient knowledge and training in this direction. In the past three years, we have attended many times as a mentor teacher or evaluator teacher in a jury at numerous pop music competitions for children and we have noticed that many times, a child interprets the same song in different competitions and, in addition, sings in the same manner, without coming with something new or transmitting any artistic emotion.

Observing and analysing the children’s performances and interviewing them after the contest, we noticed that there are two categories of children:

- Children performing mechanically, without conveying the message of the song or artistic emotion, because that is how they were instructed by the teacher; these children can repeat the song several times in the same way, with the same interpretation and choreography;
- Children who bring new elements with every interpretation, who involve emotionally and convey the message of the song every time they perform artistically.

We often asked why children’s creativity and freedom of expression is not encouraged and why so often they desire to create “robots” that could reproduce the feelings of other people. What is the teacher’s role in guiding these children? What should do to give the children the opportunity to express themselves creatively and to express their feelings?

3. Objectives

For the real musical development of the children, the teachers should not limit themselves to help the children memorize and reproduce musical works in an intuitive way, turning them into robots that have no ability to express
themselves but in the way they were taught. The purpose of this paper is to present a Pedagogical model of artistic creativity stimulation in children who have achieved performance, justified by the results obtained in Music festivals and contests. The creative potential of the child can be stimulated by a pedagogical model based on the involvement of the motivational-attitudinal factors of the child, as factors with resonance for creativity. The solutions we suggest can also be applied to the small artists studying classical music, folk, jazz etc.

4. Participants

The sample group studied included 30 children aged between 7 and 15, out of which 18 are part of our work group and the other 12 work with other teachers. The children were divided into two work groups, as follows: 15 children between 7 and 10 years of age and 15 children between 11 and 14 years of age.

The sample group included a small number of children, because it has to be taken into account that very few of those who take up singing lessons participate in contests and manage to achieve outstanding performances in this field. This is also due to the fact that musical training is necessary for a longer period of time and it requires effort from the child, but also financial support from the parents.

5. Results

The research was conducted during one school year, both work groups were scheduled two weekly sessions, excluding the vacation periods and the holidays. There were three stages:

The first step, meant to get to know the work group, consisted of a questionnaire given to all children.

The second step included the work sessions

The third step, meant to draw up the conclusions, was based on direct observation and application of a questionnaire in which we resumed questions 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 from the initial questionnaire. This step will be interpreted in a future paper.

The questions that are part of the questionnaire are:

How long have you been studying music?
How long have you been participating to singing contests?
How many awards (1st, 2nd or 3rd prize or trophies) have you got so far?
How long does it take you to learn a song, if you study daily?
How many songs do you have in your repertoire?
Does the teacher show you how to sing in an expressive way or do you choose your own manner to interpret it?
In your opinion, what is the most important aspect appreciated by the jury in a contest?
Do you try to make no changes to the way you interpret a song or do you try to bring something new? (7-10 years: Yes – 66,7%, No - 33,3%; 11-14 years: Yes - 13,3%, No – 86,7%).
Do you make your own choreography for the song chosen? (7-10 years: Yes - 26,7%, No - 73,3%; 11-14 years: Yes - 66,7%, No - 33,3%).
Would you like to have a musical career? (7-10 years: Yes - 93,4%, No - 6,6%; 11-14 years: Yes - 46,7%, No - 53,4%).

The results of the questionnaire are found in Figure 1 and Figure 2 below:
The work sessions were conducted both individually and in groups. During the individual classes, children have been explained and they have practiced elements of vocal technique, phrasing, interpretation, but also the musical elements necessary for properly learning a song.

During the collective classes, children have been introduced to the solfeggio technique and they have been taught music theory concepts useful for deciphering musical scores. Then there have been rehearsals, where in turn, children have been part of a jury evaluating the performance of their peers. Personal observations have been also required on how the child in the jury would have chosen to interpret the song.

Another experiment was learning the same song by all children in the age group 7-10 and then its individual interpretation by each child in front of others.

In order to develop creativity we have done group exercises, as follows:

b.1. A verse is sung and a new melody has to be improvised for the chorus, using the same text. Each child had to improvise, in turn, the melody for a line. Then they invented the melody for the verse and kept the chorus. The results were surprising, because we have seen a great response and emulation capacity in the children, who have shown real creative skills.

b.2. Rhythmic accompaniments are done for various songs using Orff instruments: bells, small drums, triangle etc. This exercise has been conducted in small groups of 5 children. It has been conducted as follows: we have gathered a group of four children who have done rhythmic accompaniments using various instruments. While a child was singing, the rhythmic accompaniment was done first by one child, and then by two, three or four children, eventually resulting in a simultaneous interpretation by all five children. The roles were then reversed, each child being the soloist. This exercise was also useful because if in the beginning the children were hesitant about using the instruments, believing they did not know how to mark the rhythm, after preparatory exercises, they have shown a particular interest, competing to achieve many different rhythms. The children in the age group 11-14 did a lot better in this test, marking rhythm by complex formulas, in contretemps or syncopated.

b.3. Regarding the interpretation, the children were asked to express through drawing or by verbalizing their feelings while listening to songs. The soloist child was in turn asked what he or she wanted to express through that
song. Again, each child was in turn a soloist, and the others formed the analysis group. Finally, the obtained data were correlated and if the group did not understand the message correctly, that meant that the soloist failed to properly convey the message. The result was surprising, because the child understood more easily the mistake and could correct himself of herself, without the intervention of the teacher to indicate what was to be done.

From the correlation of data obtained through the questionnaire with the data obtained by direct observation of children's behaviour during the hours of preparation, the rehearsals or contests to which they participated, I noticed the following:

The richer stage experience children have, the greater ease they show in expressing themselves and in conveying the artistic message of the song;

In the initiation, support and completion of the creative act, both cognitive factors are involved, such as: intelligence, thought, imagination, memory and non-cognitive factors - motivational, attitudinal, emotional, and volitional.

The more awards in competitions the children have, the more confident they are in their artistic potential, they show creative spirit in interpretation and greater self-confidence;

95% of children who had their first stage performances showed a high degree of shyness and were, as they admitted, nervous;

The children aged 11-14 who have been studying music for at least three years are more creative, because they hold a good vocal technique, they can master their voice without too much effort, being able to use their energy in communicating with the public;

As a result of the performance evaluation in shows and competitions conducted in the group, watching videos or even through children’s observations and opinions, we noticed a desire to improve the results, many children expressing the idea that "next time it will be much better and we will strive to be much better ";

Two of the beginners children aged 7 to 10, gave up attending classes and group rehearsals because they thought they could not rise to the level of those who had already received awards and, in addition to that, they felt that they could not master their nerves in front of an audience;

Regarding self-assessment, I noticed that among the children aged 7 to 10, 78% could correctly estimate their performance, and the remaining 12% were unable to evaluate their interpretation, being under the impression that their performance was very good. Regarding the children aged 11 to 14, the percentage of those who could self-assess correctly increased to 92%;

**Recommendations for stage preparation:**

During the sessions, the relaxed and joyful atmosphere was very important, children behaving as naturally as they could, as if they were playing. Without realizing, in this way the child is prepared for stage performance.

All the efforts of the children who chose to participate in these training sessions and, why not, to pursue a music career, are completed with stage performances before the public, which involves mental concentration on the program that they had to perform on the stage.

My recommendations for the teacher who prepares children for a recital in front of a public are:

Achieving the assimilation of the repertoire that the child has presented and securing it by means of more repetitions;

Prevention of monotony in study, which can occur due to systematic repetition of the same learning processes;

Providing a relaxed working and repetition environment for a more favourable mood;

Keeping the level of understanding, according to the age and personality traits of the children;

Selecting songs from the repertoire according to the child's vocal range;

The children should be encouraged to express the message of the song as they feel it, not to imitate other interpretations;

Avoid new clarifications before the contest, because they can create a state of uncertainty, which should be avoided;

On the day of the contest, children must be rested, in order to have maximum tonus on stage and a high efficiency;

On the day of the contest, the teacher should behave towards the students as in the previous days, and even if he/she is nervous, he/she should not show that, as the children may lose their confidence and their courage;
The child should be encouraged and congratulated after the stage performance, regardless if the interpretation was according to his/her expectations or not;

The artistic performance evaluation of the child will be done the following days, drawing up an action plan to correct any possible errors, both coming from the student or from the teacher;

6. Conclusion

Educating individual and group creativity should be a major goal in music training, and it is appropriate to be made since childhood. For this reason, it can generally be concluded that alternative music programmes based on rich activities to develop musical creativity has achieved their goals according to the results of the current study and the studies stated above. I have noticed creative potential in school age children, manifested in the music activities. As I have shown, a continuous and organized action is needed for the development of creativity, to stimulate and activate the creative potential, related to: knowledge of its specificity and its level of development, of the age and individual particularities of the child and of the determinative relations, where creativity is involved. The experimental analysis of the qualitative and quantitative results demonstrate the effectiveness of the pedagogical model developed. The didactic strategy that allows the activation and the stimulation of the creative potential uses questioning, exploration and discovery and it favours the child's sensitivity to the problems and the development of divergent thinking. The pleasant, positive emotional experiences, triggered by the adults’ use of emotional motivation, by their approval, as well as a learning environment organised on centres of interest, stimulate the creative behaviour of the child. The behaviour of the teacher is also very important, who must organise the educational space favourable to creativity stimulation, to participate, with the children, to the learning of the concept, to encourage the child’s initiative and curiosity in music interpretation, to help children build a positive self-image.

References