

PRINCIPLES OF THE RECEPTION OF WORKS OF ART IN PRIMARY CLASSES

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Abstract

The author examines specific methods for developing the skills of art reception, starting from the specificity of the artwork and the act of reception. It has been established that the proper reception of artwork depends on the educable individual's ability to decode, understand, and interpret the specific language of the arts, and these activities require the application of specific methods of instruction and education. Artwork has a versatile impact on the receiver: it evokes emotions, feelings, inner experiences, and aesthetic pleasure; it conveys information about the external world; it suggests/provides ideas, communicating artistic truths about the world and even about the personality of the educable receiver, with artistic truth having diverse meanings that make the artwork accessible and appreciated at various levels of intellectual preparation and aesthetic experience. Moreover, reception is always accompanied by an evaluation carried out on a certain scale of values. Effective communication of the message can only occur when the repertoires used by the sender and receiver have sufficient common elements. The quality of communication also depends on the identity of the understood form and the transmitted form. This complex system of artistic activity of educable individuals is related to creativity and artistic language - indispensable terms in the artistic-instructive-educational process of students. Therefore, it is important in the context of formal education for the educational framework to consistently and continuously consider the development of these two components, employing specific methods of artistic-aesthetic education, which, by their nature, are also active and participative.

Keywords: language, creativity, active-participative methods, communication, student

1. INTRODUCTION

The rationale for artistic-aesthetic education is derived from the nature of the human being. Art is definitive of the human being, as stated by the French philosopher of Romanian origin, St. Lupasco [9].

Art is a specific form/type of knowledge [VI. Pâslaru, 11, 12], through which the expression of emotions, feelings, ideas, concepts, visions, beliefs, and attitudes takes place, all of considerable importance in the development of morally, artistically, and aesthetically educable beings. Moreover, communication and aesthetic education not only develop specific perceptive capacities related to art in children, but also the ability to mitigate artistic crises [S. Cristea, 3, p. 170].

In artistic-aesthetic education (AAE), the methodological dimension is definitive [12]. In the methodology of AAE, it is important not only to successfully select and combine methods but also procedures/techniques/forms and means. Even the way the teacher addresses questions, the organization of any activity to inform and train the student, all these must be correlated beforehand with the affective-cognitive processes and phenomena we intend to develop in the child.

While not everyone can be taught to create works of art, aesthetics and art pedagogy demonstrate that each individual is capable of learning to appreciate literature and art works, to a certain level, in their own way [13, p. 30]. Researchers in the field have shown that primary school years are beneficial for the organized pedagogical formation of artistic-aesthetic culture (AAC) elements, which should be developed through the decoding of artistic form values (artistic language) and the re-creation of the immanent value of the work (message).

Therefore, it is essential to correlate the structural-axiological elements of the work of art with the artistic-aesthetic culture elements of the child, formed and in the process of formation, and the

reception-interpretation of the work establishes a connection between creator and receiver, according to the principle of adapting the receptor's reception activity structure to the structure of the received work [N. Kuşaev, cited by Vl. Pâslaru, 12].

Artistic reception is always complex, involving *the life experiences, literary and aesthetic experiences of the receiver* [H.R. Jauss, cited by Vl. Pâslaru, 12], and *the values communicated by the received work*. At the same time, various *values of reception* come into play, such as updating existing knowledge, creating new connections, associations, formulating value judgments, and discovering/creating new meanings.

Decoding the message communicated by the work through the receiver's effort produces a state of well-being/pleasure (*a state of reading, singing, dramatic state*, etc.). A rudimentary level of AAC can cause boredom and dissatisfaction to the receiver. Each time, the receiver will appreciate the work of art through the prism of their personality, either reconstructing a message enriched with their own aesthetic values or diminished by the incapacity (perceptive, imaginative, intellectual, creative) to perceive the work adequately.

Before recreating the message communicated by the work of art and formulating arguments and opinions leading to the appreciation of the work, the primary school student receiver must be prepared for observation, then encouraged to express aesthetic emotions, experiences, and attitudes towards the phenomena of the work because the first reaction in artistic reception is of an affective nature, as the sensation justifies the image, followed by its appreciation through accessing intellectual factors.

The EU recommends forming eight key competencies in students, one of which is cultural competence [15]. However, some authors (e.g., Vl. Pâslaru, 11) consider, based on the definition of culture, that all types of competence are cultural in nature since they are formed by humans for humans. Within the context of general education, the term "*competence*" should be understood not only as an elementary building block of instruction and education but as a generic term for all values acquired through education: knowledge, abilities, skills, habits, attitudes, competencies, behaviors, character traits, representations, conceptions, and visions. The same terminology, the exegete argues, is recommended in the field of AAE, with the necessary specifications: artistic knowledge, aesthetic attitudes, artistic perception, artistic imagination, artistic thinking, artistic creation, etc.

Artistic-aesthetic competencies are syncretic by nature because literature and arts, as forms of knowledge, are of a syncretic nature. In didactic terms, this characteristic of the arts is manifested through the identification and valorization of inter-, intra-, and transdisciplinary aspects.

The multitude of principles that define artistic reception is synthesized by Vl. Pâslaru [12, p. 55- 117].

In primary school, students will continuously form and develop all the components of AAC, but *cultural sensitization and artistic expression* will predominate, including the *appreciation* of their own artistic experiences and phenomena. These two artistic-aesthetic manifestations involve the formation of aesthetic knowledge, elementary understanding of the importance of aesthetics in everyday life, the development of artistic-aesthetic skills (understanding and critical appreciation of literary and artistic works), personal expression through a variety of means, using their own artistic abilities, the development of attitudes (creative sphere), and the will to develop their own aesthetic values (participation in cultural life) [15].

The artistic-aesthetic education of primary school students will be achieved in an epistemic and methodological interaction with the formation and development of general culture.

A defining principle of AAE methodology states that the methods specific to this domain are inherently active and interactive since artistic reception (equated with artistic knowledge and AAE) engages the receiver in the re-creation of the meaning of the work and complements it with their own artistic-aesthetic values. Thus, there is no need to search for creative and interactive values within a type of knowledge (*artistic-aesthetic*) that is inherently creative and interactive. For these reasons, modern AAE methodology includes the student's activities of reception, comprehension, and interpretation [Vl. Pâslaru, 12; C. Şchiopu, 17].

AAE in primary school, more than at other ages, needs to be based on knowledge of the *artistic language*. Any knowledge is also communication, and every communication occurs through a specific language. The specific language of artistic communication is the artistic language (AL). Hence, another principle of arts education emerges: every element/value of the artistic message is exclusively conveyed to the recipient through certain elements of artistic language. In other words, in artistic knowledge and education, *the form creates the message*, and students can become cultured art recipients only by mastering the signs of art - its artistic language. Defining elements of artistic language are *imagination* and *suggestion*. Students will understand that in literature and art, when describing/presenting fragments of physical reality, the focus is not so much on these realities but on the emotional state provoked by the presentation and the ideas, thoughts we are led to have in connection with the presentation. And the teaching staff will know that the meaning found by the recipient in the artwork also depends on their intellectual and emotional condition, even on the interest that drives them to question the form concerning its meanings and significations.

It will also be accepted as a principle that any interpretation of the works by the student recipients must be considered a re-creation of the work, as the recipient/reader, as A. Manguel [10] demonstrates, has always been recognized as the second re-creating subject of the work, in the sense that literary and artistic works cannot exist outside recipients.

In their capacity as the second subject of the work, student recipients in primary classes begin the process of decoding the text of the work when they attribute meanings to the message of the work of art based on their life experiences, literary and aesthetic, representing their system of values.

The principle of prioritizing imagination will always be highlighted. Images convey information much more efficiently than common language because they are perceived primarily, and the recipient dedicates more time to them, playing the role of informing and mediating certain emotions. They attract attention through contrast, color, and compositions, whether more or less usual.

For G. Kleining, as quoted by C. Balaban, any object can be the subject of an image from the moment it awakens ideas, feelings, perspectives, or attitudes in the viewer. He argues that an image represents the totality of perceptions, expectations, ideas, and dynamic feelings - more or less structured - that a person or multiple individuals have towards an object [1, p. 24].

The image is defined as the reflection of an object in consciousness in the form of a sensation, perception, or representation and the production of an object through an optical stimulus; the plastic representation obtained through drawing, painting, sculpture, etc., the artistic reflection of reality with the help of words [ibid., p. 44]. However, it is crucial to always emphasize that the reflection in literary and artistic works does not produce mirror images but personalized images that synthesize the lithographic representation of the message with its added value in actu - *the value of the reader* [6, p. 53].

Another principle of artwork to be taken into consideration in its reception by primary school students is the *symbolism of art*. An image holds a symbolic charge when, as mentioned by M. Ghica, it can express more than its evident and immediate meaning. Each color, for instance, is associated with certain attributes or states, but sometimes the use of colors is done in a creative manner, manifesting the courage to go beyond conventions.

2. CONTENTS AND METHODS

Teachers need effective teaching strategies to ensure students' proper reception of literary and artistic works. The language that refers to the expressive use of forms, colors, sounds, movements, and words to communicate ideas, emotions, and experiences in a creative and aesthetic manner is called artistic language. Understanding the specific nature of artistic language is the key to correctly receiving the artistic message. Each element must be understood as a means of decoding, where decoding is always an act of appreciation.

Artistic language has the ability to provoke and influence the emotions and perceptions of the receiver, eliciting unique reactions and responses in each individual. It can be subjective and open to multiple interpretations. What an artist intends to communicate may be perceived differently by different people, depending on their experiences, cultural context, or other personal influences. This provides art with great freedom and the potential to stimulate imagination and critical thinking.

Receiving the artistic message by children is an interesting and important challenge, representing a personal and subjective experience. Therefore, the teacher will select and apply age-appropriate and developmentally suitable artistic works, captivating, relevant, and easily comprehensible for the children.

To stimulate the reception of the artistic message in children, the teacher can often provide interactive experiences, encouraging students to actively participate through questions, discussions, and art-related games.

The individual pace and *reception style* of each child will be taken into consideration, based on their individual needs and artistic experiences, interests, and aesthetic preferences. Children will be encouraged to use their imagination and creativity at all stages of reception: perceptive, comprehensive, interpretative (hermeneutic), and creative itself; to evaluate the received works according to the principles of literature and art.

The method of dramatization, skillfully applied in primary classes, helps students adequately receive the artistic message of literary works: to imagine and identify with the characters and events of the story, to develop empathy and better understand the narrative message of the work, to cultivate and appropriate the lexical and stylistic resources of the works, to develop critical thinking, to learn "beautiful expressions," to express their artistic inner experiences, to identify and experience expressive visual and auditory images, to consolidate correct grammatical forms, and to acquire clarity and precision in statements, thoughts, and idea elaboration, as well as to learn various types of poetic imagery (epithets, comparisons, metaphors, etc.).

Creative projects in which students can express their own thoughts and feelings through art, painting workshops, drawing, or collage, where children create their own works of art inspired by what they have perceived, will allow them to develop their artistic skills and approach the creative process in a more intimate way.

Accessibility to universal artistic values. Children should have access to art from various cultures and traditions. This will provide them with a global perspective and enable them to discover and appreciate the diversity of artistic messages. Knowledge and reception of art from other cultures can enrich children's understanding and perspective of the world, making the reception of artistic messages a process of discovery and exploration.

Correct reception is accompanied by careful *observation* of artworks and *identification* of artistic elements (colors, shapes, lines, composition, texture, contrasts, various artistic techniques). They can be guided to *discuss* what they see and describe their initial impressions and reactions.

Terminology. Introducing concepts and terms related to color theory, composition, perspective, symbolism, and texture not only shapes students' artistic language but also helps them describe and analyze artworks, effectively operating elements of the artistic language.

The artist is always an instrument and spokesperson of their era. Their work can only be partially understood in terms of their personal psychology. Conscious or unconscious, as specified by Aniela Jaffé, the artist gives form to the nature and values of their time, which, in turn, shape the artist [8, p. 336]. *Biographical information about the author* and the context in which the artwork was created complements the universe of the work, sparking discussions about artistic influences, the artist's vision, and historical or cultural events that may be relevant to understanding the work. Such information enhances the understanding and appreciation of the artistic message. Understanding the context in which an artwork was created can provide a deeper perspective on its message. Information about the history, culture, and social events of the time when the artwork was created helps students

understand the reasons and influences that underlie that work and how they relate to the artistic message conveyed.

Comparative study of artworks. The teaching framework can engage students in comparing and contrasting different works of art with the aim of identifying similarities and differences regarding style, technique, subject, or message. By analyzing multiple artworks, students can develop a broader understanding of the artistic language and recognize recurring themes or artistic choices.

Imagination development. Students can be encouraged to identify the story or message that the artist communicates through their work, understand the significance of images, symbols, and characters. This will encourage them to use their imagination and develop personal interpretations. Questions can guide them in exploring and understanding the artistic message, help them express their emotions or ideas evoked by the artwork, and encourage them to present their viewpoints. Different interpretations can be debated, and diverse perspectives can be explored. The exchange of ideas and different viewpoints can help students see things from various angles and better understand the diversity of artistic messages. Children may even create their own works of art inspired by the artworks they study. This will help deepen their understanding and develop their artistic skills.

The syncretism of artistic reception will be ensured by training students in EAE (Artistic and Aesthetic Education) in various art genres - paintings, sculptures, music, dance, theater, and literature - with the condition of focusing on a specific work, which can have multiple openings in terms of language and message towards other works.

The continuous nature of receiving artworks should be understood not only as uninterrupted activity but also as an interdisciplinary artistic-aesthetic activity that aims to achieve the same educational objectives.

Continuity will also be manifested in ensuring the systemic nature and completeness of learning the elements of artistic language within all school disciplines.

The component elements of the *EAE methodology* will be selected and structured based on criteria such as the nature of the object of knowledge (literary/musical/plastic/dramatic work, etc.), the reference objective, the level of general and specific artistic-aesthetic development (in each school discipline) of the students, the reference objectives to be addressed later (zone of proximal development), etc. [12].

The methods-procedures/techniques-forms-means of EAE (Education through Artistic Experience) will only be related to general methodologies specific to the concrete object of knowledge. Active-interactive techniques will not be explicitly sought, as the nature of the object of knowledge in EAE inherently requires active-interactive methodologies. Instead, the most suitable EAE methodologies for the specific object of knowledge and the particular class of students will be selected and structured. Therefore, in EAE for primary school students, and not only, methodologies specific to artistic-aesthetic knowledge will always be chosen over those that are merely "trendy" in scientific knowledge. Careful examination reveals that methodologies specific to artistic-aesthetic knowledge are more effective in achieving EAE objectives than those applied within scientific disciplines [VI. Pâslaru, 11, 12].

Furthermore, the excessive familiarity of modern children with IT and digital environments should not be prohibited and condemned but rather used with pedagogical discernment to enhance the quality of reception of literary and artistic works.

Theoretical modeling of EAE. Before embarking on *educational-didactic* design (a term advocated by VI. Pâslaru in the case of EAE disciplines, where educational activities predominate), it is recommended to theoretically model the actions of educational influence, such as, for example, in the case of the discipline *Language and Romanian Literature* (Grade IV, ed. 2014), from which activities for learning artistic languages specific to the arts included in the school curriculum have been selected:

Activity	Objective/Finality	Interactions	Methods/Procedures/Techniques Forms/Means
<p>Romanian Language and Literature:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participating in a role-playing game to step into the shoes of a character; Imagination games (e.g., Close your eyes - you are on the beach playing volleyball with friends, a storm is approaching, what do you do?); Inventing an alternative ending for a story; Imagining a continuation of a story scene; Using critical thinking methods to explore texts; Meetings with writers, initiating correspondence with a writer; Contests related to the content of the books read; Creating a reading journal containing key elements of a book presentation and/or drawings illustrating their imagination; Group creative writing exercises (generating ideas, selecting ideas, constructing a narrative thread, revising the text); Creating a giant book for the classmates from the preparatory class on a topic proposed by the little ones/teachers or the class. 	<p>Imaginative transfiguration</p> <p>Imaginative construction of action</p> <p>Development of artistic imagination</p> <p>Ibid.</p> <p>Development of critical thinking</p> <p>Development of colloquial communication</p> <p>Development of competitiveness</p> <p>Development of analytical thinking</p> <p>Development of creative thinking</p> <p>Development of cooperative abilities</p> <p>Development of compositional skills, graphic illustration, etc.</p>	<p>Theater education</p> <p>Film education</p> <p>Visual arts education</p> <p>Musical education</p> <p>Visual arts education</p> <p>Visual arts education</p>	<p>Role-playing game</p> <p>Imaginative development of the action</p> <p>Ibid. (same as above)</p>
<p>Visual Arts Education:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exhibition of portraits (collage/photo/drawing and verbal description). 		<p>Development of the ability to present one's work.</p>	<p>ELA(Literary and artistic education)</p>
<p><i>Musical education:</i></p>		<p>-</p>	<p>-</p>

<p><i>Interdisciplinary activities:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating a character portrait using multiple mediums (drawing/collage, rhythm/melody, pantomime, etc.); verbalizing and commenting on this description by the one who created it or by a classmate. • Narrating incidents using comic strips as a support. • Imagination exercise: We imagine... (e.g., entering a house's attic: what do we hear? what do we smell? what do we see?). • Oral presentation competition on a given topic (e.g., Christmas celebration, museum visit, a favorite character, watching a 3D movie) with a jury consisting of classmates. • Integrated projects exploring the connections between the real world and the imaginary world presented in the texts read. • Creating posters/graphic organizers to illustrate the relationship between literary or informational texts and personal experiences. • Message reformulation exercises from the perspective of different receivers/emitters. • Presenting a character from a story/film/TV series for children. • Written narratives based on questions: who, what, how, where, why did they do...? • Creating a comic strip combining drawings with written messages (individually/in pairs/in groups). • Designing posters to promote school events; poster design competition. 	Development of artistic language	ELA Visual Arts
	Development of artistic-aesthetic communication competence	ELA Visual Arts
	Development of perceptive sensations	ELA Music Education
	Development of skills for elaborating and presenting oral discourse	Visual Arts
	Development of imagination, thinking, and artistic creation	ELA Music Education Visual Arts
	Development of syncretic artistic thinking	ELA Music Education Visual Arts
	Development of syncretic artistic thinking	ELA Music Education Visual Arts
	Development of syncretic artistic thinking	ELA Music Education Visual Arts
	Development of communication competence	ELA Music Education Visual Arts
	Development of composition of thought and plastic arts	ELA Music Education Visual Arts
	Development of composition of thought and plastic arts	ELA

3. DISCUSSIONS

At primary level, artistic-aesthetic education is organized in a way that involves connections between several curriculum areas, with a maximum of 6 hours per week in total:

- Physical Education, Sports, and Health: Physical Education (P, grades I-IV); Play and Movement (grades III-IV) - also related to thematic area 5; Music and Movement (P, grades I-IV) - also related to thematic area 2.
- Arts: Play and Movement (grades III-IV) - also related to thematic area 4; Music and Movement (P, grades I-IV) - also related to thematic area 4; Visual Arts and Practical Skills (P, grades I-IV) - also related to thematic area 3.

- Technologies: Visual Arts and Practical Skills (P, grades I-IV) - also related to thematic area 2.

The artistic domain is also integrated within certain subjects such as *Romanian Language and Literature* or *History*. Artistic education could be further developed within a CDS (Curriculum Development Study) program, tailored to students' needs, considering that artistic and cultural activities are developed based on the school curriculum or outside of it, and such activities can be subject to evaluation within the Commission for Evaluation and Quality Assurance. Additionally, within the national program "*School Different*", activities from the artistic and cultural domain can also be addressed. There is also the opportunity to participate in experiential activities as part of international projects carried out in school, such as the *Erasmus+* programs, which are related to exposing students to local traditions and identity or cultural diversity in the European context.

Furthermore, the professional training of primary education teachers should focus on methodologies that sensitize and encourage cultural expression in students, ensuring a proper understanding of the artistic languages of literature and arts provided for artistic-aesthetic education (EAE), the syncretism of the arts, and the interaction between specific EAE methodologies and those of intellectual education (scientific disciplines).

Establishing a connection between formal, non-formal, and informal education at the level of applied curriculum could lead to the development of knowledge, skills, and attitudes in the key competency areas fostered through artistic education. The Ministries of Education and Culture, children's clubs and centers, public libraries, national or regional museums, and county cultural centers could jointly support artistic activities and initiatives for the development of national-level artistic and cultural education programs.

4. CONCLUSIONS

We cannot limit ourselves to simply waiting for changes in education; as subjects of history and participants in social processes and professional activities, we must become capable of designing changes ourselves. For this to become possible, education must be carried out with the spirit of alternative solutions. Artistic disciplines play an important role in education for change.

To enable understanding of the specific language of art, conditions must be created for direct and continuous contact with authentic works of art, even unconsciously, which will allow for selection and interpretation leading to the accumulation of aesthetic experience by the receiver.

Proper reception of a work of art depends on the human ability to decode, understand, and interpret the specific language of the arts. Therefore, methods that develop artistic reception skills must be employed.

Without the involvement of artistic domains and a new didactic approach to the teaching-learning-evaluation of the arts in formal education and beyond, an integrated artistic-aesthetic personality cannot be formed. One category of social competencies is communication competence, a key element for any type of success, which includes the use of artistic language. Without it, there can be no knowledge, learning, or connection.

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