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Music and Movement Activities for Preschool Children as an Incentive to Foster Relationships and the Expression of Movement

Muzyka i aktywność ruchowa dzieci przedszkolnych
jako zachęta do budowania relacji
i ekspresji ruchowej

KEYWORDS ABSTRACT

educational activity,
movement expres-
sion, music and
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pre-schoolers, social
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ment of child

The contribution is divided into two parts, namely the theoretical and the practical sections. In the theoretical part we focus on the explanation and accounting for the importance of music and movement activities for pre-schoolers. In the theoretical part, we deal with fundamental movement skills and activities to promote relationships and movement expressions applicable in nursery schools with pre-schoolers. In the application part we introduce two educational activities that were selected and designed based on the theoretical background. We focus specifically on the promotion of relationships and movement expression in pre-schoolers. According to the results of various examinations, music and movement activities provide children with many opportunities for proper motor and musical development, the harmonious development of their personality, imagination, and they contribute to friendship reinforcement. Children can also express their emotions in music activities. Spontaneous expression of emotions releases tension in the muscles, and contributes to the subsequent cultivation of movement,

sense of rhythm and co-operation within a group. These activities are a significant part of children's lives from early childhood. However, it is important to use them in a holistic way, in the dimension of affectivity, cognition, socio-emotion, and creativity.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE ABSTRAKT

aktywność edukacyjna, ekspresja ruchowa, muzyka i aktywność ruchowa dziecka, przedszkolak, klimat społeczny, rozwój dziecka

Artykuł został podzielony na dwie części: teoretyczną i dotyczącą zastosowania owej teorii w praktyce. W teoretycznej części skupiamy się na wyjaśnianiu znaczenia muzyki i stosowania ruchu dla rozwoju i edukacji dziecka w wieku przedszkolnym. W części tej podkreśla się fundamentalne znaczenie umiejętności ruchowych dziecka i aktywności sprzyjających budowaniu relacji między dziećmi wyrażające się w ruchu dzieci, do jakiego dochodzi w przedszkolach. W części praktycznej zostały omówione przykładowe działalności edukacyjno-muzyczne zaprojektowane zgodnie z założeniami teoretycznymi, gdzie zaakcentowano głównie relacje między dziećmi przedszkolnymi obecne poprzez wyrażanie ruchu. Zgodnie z wynikami różnych badań działalność muzyczno-ruchowa u dzieci sprawia, że dostarczamy im wielu okazji do właściwego rozwoju motorycznego i muzycznego, zapewniamy harmonijny rozwój ich osobowości, budujemy wyobraźnię, a to wszystko przyczynia się do wzmocnienia relacji osobowych i przyjaźni między dziećmi. Dzieci również mogą wyrażać spontanicznie swoje uczucia poprzez działania muzyczne. Spontaniczna ekspresja emocji zawartych w ruchu przyczynia się także do rozwijania umiejętności muzycznych, rytmu i współpracy w grupie. Wszystkie opisywane skrótowo aktywności powinny być realizowane już we wczesnym dzieciństwie, zapewniając tym samym holistyczny rozwój dziecka w podejściu afektywnym, kognitywnym, socjoemocjonalnym i kreatywnym.

Introduction

At present, children make extensive use of advanced technology but they underestimate the value of human relationships. Even if they show their interest in songs, they usually listen to them via tablets, cell phones or other media, instead of singing them with peers or adults. The aforementioned excessive use of the latest technology can result in a negative impact on children's health because of their limited physical activity which often results in the emergence of disabilities and/or lifestyle diseases. For that reason, educators should be aware of an increased incidence of the importance of regular physical activity on music from pre-school age.

Music and movement activities provide children with many opportunities for proper motor and musical development, the harmonious development of their personality, imagination, and they contribute to friendship reinforcement. Children can also express their emotions in music activities. Spontaneous expression of emotions releases tension in muscles, and contributes to the subsequent cultivation of movement, sense of rhythm and co-operation within a group. These activities are a significant part of children's lives from their early childhood. However, it is important to use them in a holistic way, in the dimension of affectivity, cognition, socio-emotion, and creativity. In Slovak preschool education the following musical activities predominate: vocal intonation, music and movement activities, listening to music (music perception), instrumental, and music and drama. One of the main goals of Slovak pre-primary education, according to the National Educational Programme for Nursery Schools¹ is to achieve an adequate perceptual-motor level as the core level in the preparation for school education and life in society. In applying the objectives of pre-school education a teacher should take into account the developmental needs of children and systematically develop their perceptual-motor, socio-emotional and cognitive areas.

Among the aims of preschool education in Poland there are, among others², supporting children in developing abilities, building the system of child's values, forming the child's emotional resistance as well as accepting the stresses and failures in a calm way, developing social competences, creating the conditions allowing for the shared amusement and education of children with diversified physical and intellectual possibilities, taking care of children's health and physical fitness present, for example, in encouraging and creating the possibilities of participating in sports plays and games, introducing the children into the world of aesthetic values and developing the competences of expressing themselves through music, dance, singing, dramas and visual arts, supporting the children's curiosity, activeness and independence³.

The goal of theoretical part of our study is to highlight the importance of music and movement activities for the overall mental and physical health of pre-school children. We focus on two dimensions, namely good interpersonal relationships and cultivated movement expression. The goal of the application part is to design music and movement activities applicable in nursery schools that are oriented on the following areas: cultivation of movement expression and relationships in pre-schoolers.

¹ J. Hatrík et al., *Štátny vzdelávací program. Hudobná výchova. ISCED 1* [National educational programme: Music education], Bratislava 2009, www.statpedu.sk/files/documents/svp/1stzs/vzdelavacie_oblasti/hudobna_vychova_isced1.pdf (access: 22.03.2015), 2009.

² Aims have been limited only to these strictly corresponding with multi-sided development of a child through music.

³ "Journal of Laws", 2014, Pos. 803, p. 3.

Fundamental movement skills and activities in preschool age

Preschool age is the period of life between the fourth and sixth year of life. During this period a number of developmental changes occur. The changes mainly concern the physical structure of a child which includes height and weight as well as the physical activity of a child. According to the standard measurements, a child reaches one third of his or her final body length in the final weight gain of 2-3 kg. In the initial phase of the preschool age, a child's physique is reminiscent of that of toddlers: The head is quite large and the trunk is a cylinder shaped without narrowing in the waist. Symmetrical growth, and mainly the development of extremities, begins at the age of 5 to 6 years⁴.

Pre-schoolers acquire the basics of movement skills and improve them by repetition. It is useless to teach children a certain physical skill unless they are physically and mentally ready for it. 3 to 6 year old children start realising the capacities of their bodies and that enables them to control their muscle tension and breathing, to improve balance and orientation, and to realise their laterality. In this developmental period the ability is developed in children to use their bodies for achieving various goals⁵.

Movement skills in 5 to 6 year olds have certain particularities. Their response to movement is as fast as in 17 to 18 year adolescents and children who train regularly are even faster. They can control everyday kinesis and motion that relate to maintaining balance which develops co-ordination skills. Children are usually quite physically active and for that reason they often modify their physical activities. The occurrence of various emotions contributes to their physical and mental fatigue. Spontaneous games are often used in the development of their motor skills and motor progress supports the development of their nervous system. In this age is good to start with cultivation of their overall co-ordination skills: "(...) with the cultivation of their balance, recreation, rhythmic, orientation-kinaesthetic and differentiation skills"⁶, Many educators and scientists⁷ have developed movement skills in pre-schoolers. One of

⁴ J. Junger, *Telesný a pohybový rozvoj detí predškolského veku* [Physical and movement development of pre-school children], 1. Vydanie, Prešov 2000.

⁵ E. Bagínová, *Pohybové hry, aktivity a cvičenia detí predškolského veku* [Movement games, activities and exercises designated for pre-school age children], 1st ed., Bratislava 2013, p. 4.

⁶ N. Halmová, J. Šimonek, M. Veisová, *Pohyb hrou* [Movement through games], 1st ed., Bratislava 2002.

⁷ For examples: E. Baranová, *Hra a tvorivosť v hudobno-výchovnom procese* [Game and creativity in music educational process], Banská Bystrica 1997; E. Baranová, *Hudobno-pohybová výchova v predškolskom a mladšom školskom veku* [Music and movement education in pre-primary and younger school age], 1st ed., Banská Bystrica 2009; N. Halmová, J. Šimonek, M. Veisová, *Pohyb hrou* [Movement through games], op. cit.; J. Hubinák, *Pohybová aktivita a jej vplyv na držanie tela detí* [Movement activity and its impact on posture in children], Ružomberok 2011; M. Kružlicová, *Pohybové a relaxačné cvičenia* [Movement and relaxation exercises], Bratislava 2013.

them, J. Kasa⁸ distinguishes not only fitness and co-ordination movement skills, but also fitness-co-ordination, the so-called hybrid skills of which dance is the most suitable for pre-schoolers. At present, children have a tendency to be obese due to poor nutrition and lack of movement, and also have poor posture due to improper and long-lasting sitting in front of the television. However, children who dance in their leisure time can avoid health problems in childhood and usually have fewer health problems in adulthood⁹.

M. Kružlicová¹⁰ says that 3 to 4-year old pre-schoolers can handle the following movement activities: walking along a straight line; rotating their legs during walking upstairs; running with accommodated speed during the change of direction; jumping jacks to the distance of 25-30 cm; maintaining balance on one leg while balancing and riding a tricycle. 4 to 5 year old child can handle the following activities: standing on one leg; walking up the stairs while alternating feet; running upstairs and upward. 5 to 6 year old child can handle the following activities: walking with proper walking posture; crossing and avoiding obstacles; standing on one leg; alternated running and walking; jumping jacks; high jump run up; throwing a ball with either hand – on target and over a distance (with upper bend and dribbling with catching a ball).

Music and movement activities in pre-school education

Music fascinates children with its means of expression which evoke in them adequate movement responses accompanied by emotional experiences. Music and movement cultivates movement and, retrospectively, a child's musical abilities. In this process sensorimotor operations in their perception are reevaluated and the correct technique in music and movement activities is the means to elicit an aesthetic experience in children. This process of perception and experiencing music and movement activities has a physiological basis in the brain co-ordination of the areas responsible for anticipation and association of auditory and movement images¹¹.

Emotional responses can increase if children experience adequate aesthetical-educational activities with music and movement activities. An emotional response to music then evokes changes in pre-schoolers' structural, dynamic and character sphere of their nascent personality. They also stimulate activity in children, encourage their attention, creative skills affect their rational processes and can even have psychotherapeutic

⁸ J. Kasa, *Športová antropomotorika* [Sport Antropomotrics – Human Kinetics], Bratislava 2000.

⁹ J. Verešová, *Tanec a tanečné aktivity* [Dance and dance activities], 1st ed., Bratislava 2015.

¹⁰ M. Kružlicová, *Pohybové a relaxačné cvičenia* [Movement and relaxation exercises], Bratislava 2013.

¹¹ M. Kodejška, *Integratívni hudobní výchova detí predškolského veku* [Integrative music education for pre-school children], Praha 2002.

effects. F. Koukolík¹² believes that if an individual has contact with music from early childhood then certain changes in his or her brain are found. These changes are reflected in expanding and improving of neural systems in the brain which accommodate to outer conditions via interaction genetically conditioned by environmental potency. It means music activities can have an important role in this interaction.

One has to bear in mind that the purpose of any upbringing is the development of what is inside a human being “respective for each single individual the realization of their humanity which is provided to them at the moment of birth in form of their asleep predispositions and competences”¹³. According to S. Szuman, talents are the group of features of human beings which make it possible to update and to develop them as well as obtaining the defined type, degree and quality¹⁴. Being talented to him is these “mental features on whose basis (depending on their development and education) a particular person in a defined field does achieve the qualitative and quantitative results better or much better than the ones achieved by ordinary people, being raised in the same or similar conditions and educated and brought up in the defined field in the similar way”¹⁵. Talent, however, is – by the same author – the real competence that is possessing significantly distinctive features of extraordinary competences differentiating the individual from ordinarily talented and achieving in the musical activity and their domain the outstanding creative or re-creative results¹⁶.

According to E. Králová¹⁷ the purpose of a activity is related to the effort of educators to meet the different needs of children such as to satisfy children’s need to play, make experiments, engage in social interactions, imitation, recognition, experience emotional excitement, social identification, actualization and many others. Every activity is made by human beings with certain goals, for example to satisfy his/her needs or interests. The activity is created by the stimuli of a man’s development, to create a human and the changes that take place inside and outside human body. J. Linhart¹⁸ defines activity as the process which is controlled by the nervous system, in which a person acts in his environment and raises changes aimed at his or her own benefit or for the benefit of society.

¹² F. Koukolík, *Lidství* [Mankind], Praha 2010.

¹³ A. Brühlmeier, *Edukacja humanistyczna* [Humanistic Education], Kraków 2000, p. 215.

¹⁴ S. Szuman, *O sztuce i wychowaniu estetycznym* [About Art and Estetic Education], Warszawa 1962, p. 245.

¹⁵ Ibidem, p. 245.

¹⁶ Ibidem, p. 250; M. Kołodziejcki, *Koncepcja Edwina E. Gordona w powszechnej edukacji muzycznej* [Edwin E. Gordon Concept in General Music Education], Płock 2011, p. 72-75.

¹⁷ E. Králová, *Hudobné aktivity a kvalita života dieťaťa* [Music activities and quality of life of a child], Olomouc 2015.

¹⁸ J. Linhart, *Činnost a poznávání* [Activity and cognition], Prague 1976.

Music and physical motion in preschool education is significantly important in elementary education due to the developing musical competence and a series of components of this competence present in musical competences: tonal, rhythmical, tempo, meter, musical taste¹⁹ as well as musical kinaesthetic-motion, musical and motion intelligences²⁰. The models presented here from the theories of GTML²¹ and TMI²² argue for supporting the act of learning by practising tasks with combination of various intelligences (competences) but the quality of musical actions (creating, repeating, singing, playing the musical instruments, improvisation) does bring better results if the musical competences are developed through experiencing music and motion accenting the kinaesthetic-motion and motoric dimension of learning at the same time²³.

E. Králová²⁴ introduces five basic forms of music and movement education:

- Preparatory exercises (rhythmic-melodic), the sense of dynamism, movement training.
- Physical exercise.
- Dramatization of songs.
- Games with singing and with music.
- Dancing and dance games.

Musical activities are considered the basic tool which can be used at nursery schools to develop the musical skills of children. However, an irreplaceable component which is central and forms the primary environment of the development of musicality is a child's family. Every musical activity must be meaningful, achievable for children, for the most able of them it should be stimulating, and it should encourage and support weaker students as in younger school age there arise music experiences that remain in adulthood²⁵.

Music and movement activity in Polish preschool education constitutes an educational and developmental need and also an opportunity for

¹⁹ E.E. Gordon, *Learning Sequences in Music: A Contemporary Learning Theory*, Chicago 2007; E.E. Gordon, *Sekwencje uczenia się w muzyce. Umiejętności, zawartość, motywy*, Bydgoszcz 1999.

²⁰ H. Gardner, *Multiple Intelligences: The Theory in Practice*, Basic Books 1993; H. Gardner, *Inteligencje wielorakie. Teoria w praktyce*, Poznań 2002.

²¹ Gordon's Music Learning Theory by Edwin E. Gordon.

²² Theory of Multiple Intelligences by Howard Gardner.

²³ Compare: H. Gardner, *Multiple Intelligences: The Theory in Practice*, Basic Books 1993; H. Gardner, *Inteligencje wielorakie. Teoria w praktyce*, op. cit.; E.E. Gordon, *Umuzycznienie niemowląt i małych dzieci*, Kraków 1997; M. Kołodziejcki, *Inculturation of Child as Introduction to Musical Education in the Light of Edwin Elias Gordon Pedagogy Elements*, [in:] „Mūzikas Zintne Šodien: Pastavigais un Mainigais. Zinatnisko rakstu krajums VII”, Daugavpils 2015, p. 369-383.

²⁴ E. Králová, *Hudobné aktivity a kvalita života dieťaťa* [Music activities and quality of life of a child], op. cit., p. 124.

²⁵ J. Hatrík et al., *Štátny vzdelávací program. Hudobná výchova. ISCED 1* [National educational programme: Music education], op. cit.

pleasure for children. Through the co-relation of motion and music, the integration of various expressions of a small child's activeness is facilitated, primarily by combining the activities of mental and exploration (research), motoric, artistic and social (interpersonal) character. The important factors supporting the child's development must include enriching their emotions, the influence on the intellectual, social and motoric development and implementing to active creativity. Thanks to these educational efforts, the child perceives the environment much better, uses the verbal and non-verbal language as well as the language of music freely and spontaneously²⁶ and thus becomes more sensitive to culture and art. In the everyday contacts of a child with music the child begins to notice that music and motion are forms of expression and artistic communication and the cultural surrounding, folklore and traditions are closer to the child and thanks to that the child is able to learn and release pressures and emotions, to express themselves through motion with music and be integrated with other members of locality²⁷.

Through music and movement education all the musical skills, most often via integrated block teaching, are developed in children. Children experience music in their bodies, because the human body is the natural part of their mental and physical behaviour. Emotional exposure to music is mentioned also by F. Koukolík²⁸ who claims that "(...) emotions are the essential part of our musical experience (...). Music consists of dancing, singing, marching, games and work. The difference between joyful and sad music can be distinguished by 3-year old children. 6-year old children can recognise in music sadness, fear and also anger. Emotional experiencing of music is the result of learning. An emotional response to music is automatic, including accompanying vegetative changes."

²⁶ M. Kołodziejcki, *Muzyka i język – myślenie i audiacja. Kilka uwag o potrzebie budowania kompetencji audiacyjnej małego dziecka*, [in:] "Cieszyński Almanach Pedagogiczny", T. 3: *Konteksty językowe w edukacji, kulturze i sztuce*, Katowice 2014.

²⁷ See follow: U. Bissinger-Ćwierz, *Muzyczna pedagogika zabawy w pracy z grupą*, Lublin 2002; B. Gallen, C. Tupet, F. Simon, [tłum. Zieliński M.], *Zajęcia muzyczne w przedszkolu*, Warszawa 2001; K. Krasoń, G. Szafraniec, *Dwa światy. Ruch dyrektywny i niedyrektywny jako wizualizacja – odkrywanie – poznawanie* [Two worlds. Directive and non-directive motion as visualisation – discovering – learning], Kraków 2002; K. Lewandowska, *Muzykoterapia dziecięca* [Child musical therapy], Gdańsk 1996; R. Ławrowska, *Muzyka i ruch* [Music and motion], Warszawa 1988; B. Podolska, *Z muzyką w przedszkolu* [With music at kindergarten], Warszawa 1987; E. Skowrońska-Lebecka, *Dźwięk i gest* [Sound and gesture], Warszawa 1984; M. Kołodziejcki, *Extracurricular music and dance classes as a determining factor in the development of music aptitudes in younger students as shown in a longitudinal study*, [in:] „Muzikas Zinatne Šodien: Pastavigais un Mainigais: zinatnisko rakstu krajums IV”, Daugavpils 2012, p. 373-384.

²⁸ F. Koukolík, *Lidství* [Mankind], op. cit., p. 103.

Music and movement to promote relationships in pre-schoolers

Music and movement activities to support the correct regulation of the social atmosphere between children should be designed in such a way which enables children to use their creativity and cognition, and to develop their aesthetic feelings²⁹. J. Lašek³⁰ defines social climate as “(...) social, group phenomenon that is linked reciprocally to its creators. Climate which is created by them, also affects them.” The social climate of education contains social phenomena typical for the particular activity of a teacher. It is the complex containing the quality of interpersonal relationships, communication and interaction between a teacher and children, long-time social atonement and relatively stable ways of doing things. The climate is indirectly influenced by broader social phenomena, such as the social climate of the nursery school, children and teachers in it. I. Kovalčíková³¹ defines social climate as “(...) the part of internal psychosocial educational environment which has stable character. It contains the results of impact of external physical and psycho-educational environment.” Social climate consists of five dimensions which affect the relationships: satisfaction during education; tensions between children; competitiveness between children; difficulty learning and cohesion of a group. In the same nursery school then can exist various social climates in individual classes, from positive to negative ones.

A positive social climate is very important as the source of children's satisfaction or discontent. To children, movement is means of communication and music and movement activities can be aimed at movement games, physical release and blending with music. For aforementioned reasons the selected compositions should have distinctive rhythm so as they stimulate children to playing, singing and movement. That is why movement improvisation and imitation are frequently used with children. During games children should understand the beginning, course and ending of the activity, the rules can be alternated according to mutual agreement. This positively affects their behaviour, develops their communication skills within group, and also improves their self-esteem, mental and physical stability³². D. Koštrnová³³ believes that

²⁹ E. Baranová, *Hra a tvorivosť v hudobno-výchovnom procese* [Game and creativity in music educational process], Banská Bystrica 1997.

³⁰ J. Lašek, *Sociálne psychologické klíma školských tried a školy* [Social and psychological school and class climate], Hradec Králové 2001, p. 42.

³¹ I. Kovalčíková, *Výchovná dramatika a sociálne klíma školskej triedy* [Educational drama and social climate of a school class], Prešov 2001, p. 14.

³² E. Králová, *Hudobné aktivity a kvalita života dieťaťa* [Music activities and quality of life of a child], op. cit.

³³ D. Koštrnová, *Tvorba a rozvoj pozitívnej klímy v triede* [Design and development of positive climate in school class], 1st ed., Bratislava 2014.

children should have enough time for mutual communication. This can be achieved by using non-verbal communication such as facial expressions (eye contact, smile), gestures (friendly, receptive), and proxemics (movement in the classroom with peers with the respect for personal space zone).

Music and movement to promote movement expression in pre-schoolers

In nursery schools there can be used only elemental dancing movements in exercises, because through them children can experience musical activity in a holistic way. This helps them to remember the steps and various parts of a dance. Difficult motives can mean that children will focus only on the movement itself, while at the same time they will not experience the particular music activity³⁴.

In the movement cultivation of pre-schoolers it is possible to use so-called complex movement. It is the movement of body parts either alone or in combination with other parts of the body during which there is no sound. Complex movement develops music-related memory, musical skills, imagination and creativity and also intensifies experiencing music. It also serves to improve aesthetical movement and proper posture. Good posture is best achieved by rotating the shoulders up, down and back while standing firm. During the activity the movement in the lowest position becomes firm and the activity is ended. The next exercise should be stretching someone's neck by pulling it upwards, breathing in tense up muscles around the stomach and backside. Good posture needs to be checked always, not only during activities.

E. Baranová³⁵ divides movement on music from the aspect of source and content as follows:

- a) **I n t e r m s o f t h e s o u r c e**, three elementary categories of movement are included which can be achieved by simple variations, changing the intensity, posture and orientation: declamation (movement of the speech organs, saying the words in the accurate pace, rhythm and meter); tactile and acoustic movement (playing the body parts) and complex movements by any part of the body, including dancing.
- b) **F r o m t h e a s p e c t o f c o n t e n t** there are included songs. E. Baranová³⁶ distinguishes the four categories of movement: movement rhythmization (synchronous rhythm of music and movement, pulsation of accented duration); music and

³⁴ E. Baranová, *Hudobno-pohybová výchova v predškolskom a mladšom školskom veku* [Music and movement education in pre-primary and younger school age], 1st ed., Banská Bystrica 2009.

³⁵ Ibidem, p. 12-13.

³⁶ Ibidem.

movement game; (expressing the content of a song by imitating its movements); dance and its rules, only a few motives.

The musical basis of Slovak folk dances is usually vocal-instrumental. Dance songs were established in co-operation with dances and are similar to dances where dancers also sing, and their form is a song, for example musical accompaniment of choirs, girls' and women's round dances, various short songs accompanied by musical instruments. Instrumental music represents melodic and rhythmic basis of the majority of Slovak folk dances that existed in the form of a solo instrument or ensemble music³⁷.

By the proper selection of music a teacher tries to support and cultivate contact of pre-schoolers with music. When a child wants to change elemental movement into a dance, he or she needs to command movement skills. In these movement exercises a child's speech is also being developed³⁸.

Design of music and movement programme to promote relationships and movement expression in pre-schoolers

The objectives of the designed programme are rooted in the National Educational Programme for Pre-primary Schools in the Slovak Republic³⁹. It is possible to put it into practice at a nursery school with properly and clearly defined educational goals. Our programme is oriented on the development of relationships and the cultivation of movement expression.

We included in our music programme all musical activities (vocal, perception, rhythmical, instrumental, music and movement, music and drama) with an emphasis on the movement of children. During its design we respected the developmental needs and interests of a pre-school child. The activities were accommodated to class rules, as follows:

- Five rules for life:
 - *active listening,*
 - *mutual respect,*
 - *trust,*
 - *veracity,*
 - *and the best possible personal performance.*

³⁷ J. Verešová, *Tanec a tanečné aktivity* [Dance and dance activities], 1st ed., Bratislava 2015.

³⁸ E. Kulhánková, *Hudebně pohybová výchova* [Music and movement education], Praha 2000.

³⁹ Ministerstvo školstva SR. 2008. Štátny vzdelávací program pre predprimárne vzdelávanie v materských školách [The National Educational Programme for Pre-Primary Education]. National Institute for Education, Bratislava, the Slovak Republic, 99 p. Available at: <http://www.oecd.org/education/school/48705963.pdf> (access: 5.04.2014).

- Three rules in the classroom:
 - *Turtle rule: I walk slowly in the class because I do not want to hurt somebody.*
 - *Fish rule: I am not loud in the classroom where pupils work, turn down my voice to adequate level.*
 - *Broom rule: I tidy the classroom, and tidy away all the toys I played with.*

Music and movement activities to promote relationships

In everyday interactions children realise their social activities and relationships which they enter voluntarily. In relationships children satisfy their basic social needs while at the same time they experience positive emotions. Pre-school children first contact their peers depending on their momentary needs, emotional status and the attractiveness of the other person. Their short-time friendships deepen and that makes mutual relationships stronger and deeper, children. Children assert themselves, their opinions, ideas and empathy. In mutual relationships children try to manage their personal problems, try to include in social groups that offer them social and emotional support⁴⁰. In pre-school age there occurs so called trend of “a double” – which means that a child needs sharing his or her activity with the other person in a symmetric relationships based on equality, sex and appearance⁴¹.

The following music and movement activity “Let’s feel the dance” is designed with the objection to reinforce relationships of pre-schoolers – as the part of thematic block aimed at music and movement.

Activity no 1: Let’s feel the dance

Objectives: Children can apply the elements of the dance. The elements of the dance are foundational concepts and vocabulary that help students develop movement skills and understand dance as an artistic practice. The child can express the mood of the song in a naturally cultivated movement.

Tools: Piano, guitar, or CD M. Podhradská & R. Čanaky⁴² (2011) and an audio recording.

Organisation of children and setting: During music perception children may sit in a semicircle on the carpet, where there may be laid pillows and soft toys. During the dance and elementary movement on music, children gather around in the classroom so as they not to bump into their classmates.

⁴⁰ Z. Kolláriková, B. Pupala, *Predškolská a elementárna pedagogika* [Pre-school and elementary pedagogy], Praha 2001.

⁴¹ M. Vágnerová, *Vývojová psychologie: dětství a dospívání* [Developmental psychology: childhood and growing up], 2nd ed., Praha 2012.

⁴² M. Podhradská, R. Čanaky, *CD na diskotéce 1* [CD at the disco], Bratislava 2011.

Motivation:

a) Music perception – activities:

Children listen to their teacher singing them a song “Dance it, spin around” (fig. 1) under the accompaniment of a musical instrument (piano, guitar), or CD M. Podhradská & R. Čanaky⁴³.

b) Text of the song *Dance it, spin around* (fig. 1)

The interview with children about who likes dancing, favourite song and others.

tan - cuj, tan - cuj, vy - kru - caj vy - kru - caj, len mi
pec - ku ne - zru - caj, ne - zru - caj! Dob - ra pec - ka
na zi - mu, na zi - mu, ne ma ka - zdy pe - ri - nu, pe - ri - nu.
Tra - la - la - la. Tra - la - la - la. Tra - la
la - la. La - la - la, la - la - la. La - la - la - la.

Figure 1. Dance it, spin around (Slovak folk song)

The text of the song:

1. Dance it, spin around-o, around-o, but don't you knock my /: stove down-o :/
Folks who have no goose-quilts, nor gold-o, in winter time they /: sleep cold-o :/
/: Tra-la-la-la, tra-la-la-la, tra-la-la-la-, la-la-la,
la-la-la :/
2. Blouse I ha-I gave it-o, Gave it-o. Gypsy woman has it-o, has it-o. Gypsy woman,
/: rede me-o :/. Shall I soon my lad see-o, lad see-o. /: Tra-la-la-la, tra-la-la-la, tra-
-la-la-la-, la-la-la, la-la-la :/

⁴³ Ibidem.

Legend: goose-quilt – feather blanket

c) Rhythmical activities and dance walking

Children can spontaneously express the rhythm of a song “Dance it, spin around” (fig. 1) in a various ways when stepping into the ring. Teacher might explain the activity to children, demonstrate for them correct dance steps and explain safety rules so as let them know that they should not dance and move too close to their peers so as not to harm anybody. Children can walk in the ring, walk on tiptoes with their heads staying at one level. During rhythmic movement to music the focus might be on the aesthetics of walking.

Course of the activity – Dancing

At the very beginning of the activity the teacher should demonstrate the dance elements and then children may repeat them through the method of imitation. Children, in successive steps connect the dance elements with music. Finally they can add dance formation in the shape of a circle where the children may dance in triplets during the whole activity in the circle. The elements of dance may be practiced together with all children. The division in triplets can be optional, children should be allowed to find a friend or a teacher can recommend them members. The inspiration for a dance can be either the text or music of a song, while all members of each triplet prepare together the dancing elements. Each member should agree on the elements, as dancing is quite intimate activity.

Closing activity – Dancing game with the elements of improvisation

After the activity is over, a teacher can interview children at to how they felt during portraying (impersonating) various animals, persons and their moods; what they liked or did not like during the dancing activity. Children should be left time for the reflection of the activity, for example: Can you demonstrate the emotions of animals (a bear, a deer, a mouse and so on) or famous film/book heroes (“Sad rabbit in Africa”, joyous “Alice in wonderland”). Then children, after short explanation, demonstrate dancing or walking of their favourite animals and characters in various emotional attunement. According to Erskine⁴⁴, emotional attunement is a kinaesthetic and emotional sensing of the others knowing their rhythm, affect and experience by metaphorically being in

⁴⁴ R.G. Erskine, *Attunement and involvement: therapeutic responses to relational needs*, “International Journal of Psychotherapy”, Vol. 3, No. 3, 1998.

their skin and try to be empathic to create a two-three-person experience of unbroken feeling connectedness by providing a reciprocal affect or resonating response.

At the end of the activity children prepare their own dancing choreography in their threes based on the cards that they selected at random. In the cards there is the description of various moods, resp. everyday activities that children in triplets demonstrate in their choreography. The activities may consist of dancing to the following themes: 1. I on the way home from school. 2. Me on the way to school. 3. The end of a school year. 4. The night before the test. And many others. Rest of the class may accompany each triplet by singing and laying the song "Dance it, spin around". After each triplet finishes the activity, the rest of the class can guess what activity or mood they demonstrated. Children should get enough time to prepare for the activity, its demonstration, and music-movement riddle (conundrum).

Music and movement activities to promote expression

Music and movement activity is aimed at the cultivation of movement expression in pre-school children. It is conceived in the form of rhythmic exercises with elementary movement elements, such as playing the body parts. The movement can also be performed as the declamation of the text. During the activity teacher should co-ordinate the movement of children, develop their correct posture, sense of rhythm, elasticity, smoothness and fluency of motion which should be in harmony with the content of the text, meaningful movement expression, self-control, vocabulary development and increase their speech skill.

When designing the educational activity we oriented on the exercises that are suitable for physical, mental and social properties of pre-school children. We left out the ones with the risk of injury. For that reason children should wear comfortable clothes and shoes for the activity and teacher should prepare the room for the activity and the equipment.

During the educational activity a teacher should provide children with enough time so as they could feel the exercises and not to disturb them with stress. Each movement activity should be properly explained and demonstrated by a teacher. It is recommended to teach them two new educational activities per week. Then they can have a pleasant atmosphere in every lesson⁴⁵.

⁴⁵ J. Hřčka, *Držanie tela a jeho ovplyvnenie* [Posture and its correction], 3. Vydanie, Trnava 2015; J. Hubinák, *Pohybová aktivita a jej vplyv na držanie tela detí* [Movement activity and its impact on posture in children], Ružomberok 2011.

Activity no 2: Let's feel the water

Objectives: A child can, in a cultivated way, portray the part of the text of a song and match it with vocal expression.

Educational methods: Information and receptive method, reproductive method.

Tools: Notebook, the recordings of the sounds of water, piano, the pictures of water, the song "Raindrops" by M. Schneiderova⁴⁶.

Organisation of children and setting: Frontal lecture-style instruction, co-operative education.

Motivation

Children may sit in the circle with their legs crossed. According to J. Hřčka⁴⁷ this is a position where "(...) lower extremities are crossed, heels are as close as possible to the trunk, pelvis is understated, torso and head are pulled up, shoulders are next to each other". This sitting position is suitable to reach correct postural position. A teacher may acknowledge children with the theme and goal of educational activity. They talk about it, for example: *Can we see, feel and hear water? How many sounds of water can you think of?* Then they will listen to the recording with various sounds of water (raindrops, rain, storm, sea, river and others) and they can characterise and compare which sound is soft, quiet, or sharp, heavy, powerful (dynamics).

Then teacher can realise an exercise for vocal chords with children by spontaneous imitating falling raindrops of different size and intensity.

Course of the activity – Main part: Music perception and movement activities

Children can stay in a semicircle near the piano in the basic standing position. According to J. Šimonek⁴⁸ during this upright standing position "(...) the tips are slightly apart, body weight is transferred to forward, outer part of the feet, knees and thighs are put together and slightly angled out." This exercise is appropriate not only for it helps their posture, but also for it activates easy singing in children because of improved activation of the diaphragm.

Then they can repeat the song which they already know, "Raindrops" (fig. 2). However, the teacher should sing it first under piano/guitar accompaniment. After children revise the song, they can continue by playing elementary musical instruments – creat-

⁴⁶ M. Schneiderová, *Voda a hudba* [Water and music], 1st ed., Prešov 2003, p. 32.

⁴⁷ J. Hřčka, *Držanie tela a jeho ovplyvnenie* [Posture and its correction], op. cit., p. 55.

⁴⁸ J. Šimonek et al., *Metodika telesnej výchovy pre stredné odborné školy* [Methodology of physical education for secondary schools], 1st ed., Bratislava 2004, p. 64.

ing their own accompaniment. Finally they may continue by movement improvisation according to the text of the song. According to M. Schneiderová⁴⁹ (2003) this kind of activity cultivates vocal intonation and auditory analytic dispositions in children.

Živo Tibor Andrašovan

Daž - d'ó - vé kvap - ky, ne - zmoč - te nám háb - ky,
chod' - te do po - to - čia, kde plá - ten - ka mo - čia,
kde na dáž - dik vo - lá kaž - dý, de - ti ská - ču z mos - ta,
a - ni ty ne - o - staň. Tak!

Figure 2. Raindrops text by M. Schneiderová, music T. Andrašovan

The text of the song:

Raindrops, raindrops,
do not wet our clothes.
Go to the creek where
women rinse the canvas.

Where everyone calls
the rain and where
children jump from the bridge.
Do not stay alone – go!

Source: M. Schneiderová, *Voda a hudba* [Water and music], 1st ed., Prešov 2003, p. 32.

During this music and movement game, children can stand in the circle, hop and jump, expose their face to the rain, imitate catching the rain in their palms, walking under umbrellas, running away from the rain or storm and many others. The teacher

⁴⁹ M. Schneiderová, *Voda a hudba* [Water and music], 1st ed., Prešov 2003.

makes sure that they have strengthened and stretched their back muscles, abdominal muscles and foot muscles. He or she also observes that children do not turn to the side their hips too much. The correct walking habits help children avoid orthopaedic problems and spine curvature disorders. In the end of the activity children can perform jumping into the water, swimming and drowning.

Closing activity

At the end the teacher says a word of thanks for co-operation, asks children how they feel about the activity, what they liked the best and least. They can perform the animals that live in water – how they move, or people of various age, professions – how they walk in the rain, snow, how they swim in others.

Conclusion

The objectives of music and movement activities were designed in accordance with the National Educational Programme for Primary Schools in the Slovak Republic⁵⁰. In the two educational activities we focus on the specifics of preschool age, based on which we intent to promote the two dimensions of relationships and movement expression.

Movement itself serves to identify the best possible means of musical expression. Children are usually able to “discover” musical laws such as repetition, contrast, gradation, in functional types of music and dance – usually in the pieces expressing the mood of characters and situations. In the designed music and movement activities for pre-schoolers we used music perception, singing songs, games on the body parts, the elements of pantomime, or the types of walking, dancing and expressive speech.

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⁵⁰ Ministerstvo školstva SR. 2008. Štátny vzdelávací program pre predprimárne vzdelávanie v materských školách [The National Educational Programme for Pre-Primary Education], National Institute for Education, Bratislava, the Slovak Republic, 99 p. Available at: <http://www.oecd.org/education/school/48705963.pdf> (access: 5.04.2014).

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