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Research paper

Problems of the Topical Field "Art" in Modern School

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Abstract

The paper presents key factors of the "Art" topical area within school education in modern Russian Federation. The "Art" topical area is central to the entire process of molding a creative, harmoniously developed personality. Teaching musical, artistic, spiritual, and moral components is essential for high-quality education. The authors of the paper have reasonably substantiated the need for the active introduction of art to school curricula. The authors also manifested the importance of revealing students' creative potential and the development of their constructive skills. Of much importance is the fact that specific ways of improving the quality of school musical and artistic education emerge from the research results.

Keywords: *artistic creativity, harmoniously developed personality, musical and artistic development of a school student, school education, the "Art" topical area.*

1. Introduction

There is much evidence that the modern concept of modernizing school education in Russia aims at fostering a harmoniously developed personality of a student. Another important educational goal is familiarizing a student with productive artistic and creative activity. This primarily concerns the expansion of the system of views on the basic principles, goals, objectives, and main directions of teaching the topical area of "Art". The topical area focuses on education as a means of social training of schoolchildren not only for understanding art but also for the development of a harmonious creative personality generally. A human being, as a person, is a biological, and social creature. The rational goal of a being is the spiritual perfection of an individual. Evidence suggests that one of the types of thinking activity relates to the ability to easily generate ideas, to choose the optimal options for solving problems, to critically analyze one's own and other people's thoughts, to transfer acquired information from one area of knowledge to another. All these abilities emerge from creativity. Regarding creativity, of primary importance here is the uniqueness of its result. The demand for development and need for creativity stem from the need to provide students with a qualitative level of personal development, to introduce them to genuine art. These goals ignite in students the necessary creative states which bring up their individuality. Consequently, the developed emotional sphere expands the boundaries of emotional experiences accessible to a child. It also ensures adequate interaction of emotions with reality, and this opens not only the possibility of a conscious awareness of oneself, but also the surrounding world, one's own needs, goals, and abilities.

Undoubtedly, one of the characteristic features of emotions is that they reflect the actual needs at a given moment (their magnitudes and qualities) and brain evaluation of the possibility of satisfying these needs based on genetic and acquired experience. There is a comparison of information about the means (time, energy, etc.) predictively necessary to achieve this goal and the means available to a human being [1, p. 216]. The focus of the mind and genuine feelings, knowledge, and artistic and creative skills – all these qualities stem from the school education of a child. Obviously, these features will protect a growing up a person from primitivism, they will not allow him to be shielded from the outside world by headphones, develop the ability and need for live communication and independent artistic thinking.

There is a growing body of literature which supports the idea that the most important property of art is its emotional infection, "... By influencing people's feelings, art deepens and directs feelings. It teaches a true emotional reaction to things, events, actions. It helps to love the worthy and to hate everything that belittles a person. It forms sympathies and antipathies. And all these things are important not only for people's artistic activities and their understanding of art but, primarily, for the life itself in any of its spheres. Art in this respect develops not only artistic but also universal abilities of people, applicable in any sphere [2, pp. 13-14]. Therefore, the introduction of a schoolchild to art tools results in a necessary development of his spiritually unique personality, the development of his creativity, independence, constructive activities, innovations, the flexibility of thinking. Art helps a young person get an aesthetic experience, gives an impetus to the development of his creative nature.

Interestingly, the history of aesthetic thought has known a lot of art concepts. It was ancient Egyptians who already mentioned the moral functions of art. The Pythagoreans pointed out the educational effect of music. Numerous theories of art that were arising at different times and in different cultures, despite their uniqueness, emphasized the importance of artistical creativity, both for society and for a person. It is generally believed that the theory of art education and instruction stemmed from the works of the representatives of the Renaissance in the writings of Leon Batista Alberti, Leonardo da Vinci, Albrecht Durer. For example, Alberti

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in his treatise "On Painting" in 1435 regarded painting as one of the noblest arts, capable of developing and exaltingly affecting a human being: "painting contains such a divine power, it not only makes the absent seem present but, moreover, it makes the dead seem alive after the passage of centuries so that we recognize them, experiencing great astonishment in front of the artist and acquiring great pleasure" [3].

Later representatives of the Enlightenment (Voltaire, J.-J. Rousseau, D. Diderot, and others) substantiated the idea of the mass attraction of people to art, the use of all its means to improve the social conditions of life, the triumph of justice and equality. Naturally, ideas about the topical area of "Art" as an obligatory part of general education emerged both in Europe and in Russia. One of the most important contributors to this process was a Swiss teacher Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746-1827).

What strikes as important is that in Russia, art teaching became an integral part of the primary school from the second half of the 19th century. The turn of the 19th and 20th centuries resulted in a significant increase in the interest in the artistic and aesthetic education of children. Finally, Russian society turned to art as an educational field. The significant phenomenon was the unification of efforts to introduce art education in the educational environment by the great masters of arts, D.B. Kabalevskii and B.M. Nemenskii. Each historical epoch introduced its own corrections into the balance of understanding of the dualistic essence of art – the scientific substantiation of its positions and the emotional-spiritual principle [4: p. 141].

As far as the extremely important problem of educational resources and the educational significance of music is concerned, the outstanding Russian philosopher Aleksei Fedorovich Losev has noted that it is the art of coming into being. According to A.F. Losev, music establishes the art of the emergence of something qualitatively new in the process of personality development, i.e., the melodic movement of music directly reproduces the movement of the soul [5, p. 171]. This means that if music as such cannot instill in a student honesty, responsibility, or decency, then it is able to bring up in him the emotions of all these qualities, the emotions of heroism, energy, strength, endurance, tenderness, humanity, setting the tone for the entire emotional sphere of the child. Musical creativity in all its forms is the most complex kind of human activity that leads to a serious restructuring and change of all the mental functions of a man for the better. As an instrument of upbringing and improving the personality, musical activity has no equal in impact magnitude. Therefore, a child who receives permanent sensory stimulation of the brain in the process of musical training turns out to be more developed, intelligent, socialized in comparison with his peers not included in the musical activity. Music contributes to the development of verbal memory, mental skills (it changes the way of thinking, and does not present ready-made knowledge), the ability to find alternative solutions and to anticipate the consequences of their actions, which is important for any activity. One of our findings is the idea that domestic and foreign scientific research on the introduction of art to educational system vividly confirms the need for the formation of artistic culture in younger generation: "Narrowly focused programs in which there are no art objects or they receive insufficient attention, where art is limited and manifests itself sporadically, have negative effect on the development of cognitive competence and cognitive skills, as well as the development of the personality and his relation to life in general" [6, p. 37].

However, despite the acknowledged fact of the favorable impact of art on stimulating brain activities and the development of children's personalities, the problem of content quality of the topical area of "Art" in modern school education remains relevant. The real embodiment of the modern concept of the topical area of "Art" in school education aims at the turn of the vector of instructional influence towards the artistic and creative development of a student. This goal will allow him not to launch a ready-made mechanism of cognition, but to provide the ability to cognize, generalize and identify the essential, that is, its value significance for a human being.

One of our important findings is a set of important steps to make art education better. They are as follows:

1. The shift of the topical field of "Art" from the category of extra school subject to the top priority fundamental subject central to the entire school educational process. The development of the ability of artistic comprehension of the world is dominant that entails the development of the other abilities of a child.
2. The development of qualitatively new methodological approaches to the creative development and artistic education of a schoolchild, ensuring his ability to master the high level of the complexity of learning. This process results in realizing the fact that the world of high art requires comprehension in contrast to the world of consumption, that all the best and valuable artistic things belong to high, serious art.
3. Making the learning process on the "Art" subject alive, creatively productive, where the term "living" is understood as a student's acquisition of his own creative experience, and not the knowledge of it. The term "creative-productive" implies the cocreative character of the relationship between a teacher and a student. During the process teachers and students are developing the subtlety of observation, the sensibility of attention, receptivity, sensitivity, imagination, fantasy. With the active cocreative character of a schoolchild, all the "layers" of his spiritual world are actualized and developed: emotions and intellectual abilities, the depth and vastness of knowledge, moral experience, value orientations.
4. The need to conduct art lessons not only by primary and senior class teachers, but by real experts in the corresponding art form, since teachers of creative activities not only broadcast their knowledge about the creative experience but directly attach them to the creative process, make students gain their own personal experience of creativity. Skilful art experts, unlike mediocre art workers, organize creative mutual communication of a student with art and this artistic intercommunication acts here as a form of development, as a factor of culture, as a spiritual occupation, as a means of education [7, p. 75].

In 2003, the famous Russian film director A.N. Sokurov skillfully said, "Art is a long-established world with its achievements and conquered tops. The main thing is to stay on top and not to fall. The meaning of art is that it urges persistently, and if necessary, obsessively repeat the same thing all the time. But this requires a lot of perseverance. Because art really has no other task, rather than the obsessed repetition of the same themes to the new generations of people who come to life. This repetition gives rise to the possibility of life. With each generation, art and culture should conduct such preventive and constructive work – again create everything in the mind of a new person. This is the main task for any human society" [8].

And then at any time, a person entering life will have a deep, rather than a superficial perception of the world.

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