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Methods for diagnosing dysphonic children

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Abstract

The aim of the research was to identify dysphonic children or those who in some unfortunate circumstances were inhibited or self-conscious and thus emotionally distanced from music. This was achieved through the application of specific tests for the assessment of musical qualities. It is true that it is more difficult to correct than to prevent dysphonia, but it is not impossible. The school teachers have to know each child's level of music development by giving these tests and, in the case of dysphonic children, to work in a different manner, in order to allow each child's integration according to his or her possibilities

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1. Introduction

The main way of achieving music education in schools / kindergartens is voice (vocal) activity, namely learning songs. Achieving this goal requires skill, patience and tact in teaching, bearing in mind that in school all children have to sing. The teacher cannot and must not reject children who sincerely want to sing, but whose music hearing is uncertain or who lack the sense of rhythm. These children should not be permanently cast out from music activities, the teacher having a duty to find solutions for their recovery. One solution would be to create ensembles with those who sing out of tune, suffer from speech defects or who have no sense of rhythm, using percussion and wind instruments that can be learned by students with minimal effort.

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There are also situations in which the teacher or even the parent can cause small trauma on small children when they tell them, especially in public, that they lack skills; this is where the small mischief also arises in the classmates. Another common mistake in teaching is to catalogue a wrong intonation as out of tune. Oftentimes, some children reproduce other sounds than those of the song studied, but these sounds are part of the same tonality, and can sometimes be a variation of that same theme. Confusion of a wrong interpretation for an out of tune one and reproaching the child repeatedly create for him or her a sense of incapacity, which will lead to his or her demobilization, and with time, to the disappearance of the skills which were obvious until then (Lupu, 1988, p.59).

Based on the research conducted by experts it was concluded that children who have normal physiological hearing cannot be categorized as tone deaf, but they just fall into the category of unmusical (musically unskilled) or having doubtful musical hearing. Cataloguing a child as tone deaf leads to isolation, straining and inhibition of the respective child.

The recovery of the children with difficult music hearing is done by various methods, adapted to each individual with whom the teacher wants to work. Although telling a child that he or she has no skills is wrong, it influences the child, fuelling his or her apprehension and, with time, the child will become even unmusical, because "there is a great difference between the incapacity and the feeling of incapacity, between a deficiency and a feeling of deficiency! ... feelings are the ones that drive the action and influence the course of human connections"(Berge, 1972, p.139).

Music is not just entertainment, as it is sometimes superficially regarded, but it develops a series of psycho-intellectual processes, skills and abilities, such as logical thinking, memory, distributive attention, emotions, will, imagination, creativity, etc. The pedagogical trait of music is well known, as learning and practicing it represents a real therapy for the child's intellect.

2. The structure of the research

The research motivation was triggered by the finding that within music education, communication with every child can be done in several ways by exploiting both the social and the communicative function of music. I agree with the generally accepted theory that all children have musical skills, but they can be later more or less developed. Moreover, reiterating the concept of multiple intelligence proposed by Gardner (1983), Sloboda, Davidson & Howe (1995), I believe that natural musical skills are an organic component of each individual's intellectual structure. Transforming these skills into musical performance depends on the culture or on the attitude of the society.

The aim of the research was to identify dysphonic children or those who in some unfortunate circumstances were inhibited or self-conscious and thus emotionally distanced from music. It is true that it is more difficult to correct than to prevent dysphonia, but it is not impossible. The younger the child, the faster the recovery is, because the participation and cooperation will be without the apprehension and fear that occur with age. Starting from Brehmer's idea, who states in his work "Perception of songs and children's melodic talent" that any perception of melodic collection implies the existence of talent, and no musical activity is possible without it, I have applied a series of specific tests for the detection of melodic talent, which usually occurs under two forms:

- The responsive talent – the perception of sound successions in their relationships and relative to a common base, tonality
- Creative talent – creating songs

3. The target group. Characteristics of the investigated population

The research was conducted on a sample group made up of 90 children aged 8-9 years, in the second grade of Primary School. The sample group includes 59% girls and 41% boys. Almost half of the experimental group are students from families with middle level education - college or technical school, while the rest are students whose parents have graduated from short or long term university studies.

4. The research

Students were given the following tests:

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