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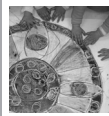
MUSIC, DANCING AND PUPPETS IN CHILD'S PLAY



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Music, Dancing and Puppets Under "One Umbrella" -Why?

Presenting music, dancing and puppet-theatre culture as a whole is part of an important method of interpersonal communication with art and through art.

This method has many supporters among pedagogues of all levels and from all over the world. According to a "classic" organisation of methods and didactics in Slovenia, this method remains in the background because it seems to lack in theoretical argumentation. However, it only seems to be so, as the subject is dealt with in numerous doctoral dissertations, master's theses and scientific books in Europe, both Americas and in Slovenia as well. "Classic" didactics experts tend to deny it because it intervenes in both fields: in scientifically researched and practically proven experience, which could never be proven by mere theorization of method and didactics experts.

During studies and in the curriculum for preschool and the first triad of primary school, each of the mentioned arts represents a separate subject. Although it is suggested that these subjects can be intertwined to some extent, the goals of individual art subjects must not get lost in the content, which children create in such a situation.

Contemporary theory and praxis prove the exact opposite: means of art are often intertwined, especially in scenic arts. This has to guide and support us in the implementation of the intertwining principle in praxis, together with the meaningful emancipation of art types, which should be given a more important position in contemporary preschool and primary school. Art types should not only be seen as forms of artistic expression, but also as an everyday form of communication between the preschool/primary school teacher and children. Only in this form, art can become a form of symbolic communication among children, which accelerates pro-social behaviour and reduces aggression. What is more, art has an important influence on holistic child development.

In preschool and especially in primary school, we are used to separating these art types, as they are separately mentioned in the new curriculum, according to the goals that have to be reached.

This time, the challenge is to connect musical content with dancing and performing.

Millions of options exist; only when we accept them as a challenge will everyday work in preschool become more varied, simpler, more convincing, more vital and art creativity will become intertwined with research, technique, sports and amusement...

The aim of each handbook is to guide the reader and to offer him an already tested positive model. However, this does not respect the most important principle of autonomous creativity of a teacher. If a favourable reader will accept it as a call for his/her own creativity in communicating with art and through art in everyday work, the goal will be reached: when expressing ourselves through art, we are not autocratically sending and receiving messages about our creative coexistence, which is what differentiates us from other beings on earth.

Introduction

Full Prof. Edi Majaron, spec.

Bogdana Borota

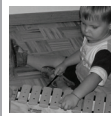
THE WORLD OF SOUNDS AND MUSIC

We are surrounded by worlds of diverse true and imaginary realities. One of them is the world of music, which is expressed in a specific language of its own symbol system. At first, it seems that music is self-sufficient in its perfection; however, it can seem meaningless the next moment, when it represents only a note on a paper. Therefore, music needs a mediator, who revives it over and over again and/or gives it a meaning here and now. Children also live in the safe world of "here and now" and they in particular can use music as help when connecting past and current events. A child might remember a song he sang to a friend for his birthday. With the help of this song, he will remember other interesting events, he and his friends created. Playing music is a creative process, in which the dimension of music is being spread to the fields of communication, social interaction and the field of harmonized and holistic development of an individual.

For a child at an early stage, music represents a way of communicating with the outside world and one of the possible ways of expressing his/her own emotions. Even babies use sound – voice modulation, to gain the attention of adults. If we respond to a child in "his/her" way, we help creating a sound environment, which the child experiences as pleasure. If we do not respond, the friendly



Researching of Sounds.
(foto: Ana Borota)



invitation of the child results in crying and represents a negative experience for the child.

Soon, movement and motor skills enable a new way of establishing relations with the outside world. Musical instruments are added to integrate music into movement. The sound emphasises auditory perception, which is integrated into processes of multi-sensual learning. Through personal experience and activities, the child realizes that the instrument is responding to his/her performing. A friendly bond is established between the child and the instrument. Together, they create sound events, which are accepted by the child as an element of every-day play. Children often have recourse to the world of sounds and music, especially when dealing with intense feelings of joy or sadness. These are the impulses, which often inspire children's creativity.

Created sound events are interesting for children, because they do not set limits to their imagination. With the help of music, they are safely guided to places that they would not dare to visit on their own. The trusting environment makes it easier for them to face those challenges that exceed their experiences.

Everyone, who is tracking child's development, knows that the contact with music, which we are directly performing, is of special importance for the child. This is mostly singing. A song therefore represents a magic wand, which takes the child into the world of adventures and the world of complicated social interactions with peers and adults. Some aspects of socialization develop in a natural way through group music activities, which are most often recognized as singing in a choir or playing instruments in smaller instrumentalizations. Young musicians have to learn how to adapt and how to cooperate with others. When playing roles, individualization takes place spontaneously, as every child takes over the task according to his/her capabilities and abilities. Everyone is content, because everyone is actively cooperating and creating common music, which finds a new dialogue partner in the listener.

Music is no loner; it loves the company of dancing, painting, theatre ... and people.

Expressing Experiences and Feelings in Music Through Movement

Adequately chosen and presented music stimulates the child's focusing of attention on a music event. For adults, it is often a challenge when and what kind of music to offer and how to notice that the child has perceived and experienced the abstract content of sound and is aware of it. This is a frequent question in the early stage of child development, when the child cannot put his experiences

into words or express them in the form of a creative achievement in or with music.

Experts believe that movement in the form of body language represents the primary communication of a child, which reveals the child's understanding of different music expressions and his/her expressing of feelings when listening to music as well as his/her need for establishing relationships with peers and adults. The natural combination of music and movement starts when the baby is held safe in mother's arms, when the child is listening to her singing, which is accompanied by rocking, caressing and touching. The natural communication between the mother and the child is replaced by "bug games" – games between an adult and a child; developed by Mira Voglar for Slovenian language. Our hand or fingers represent the bug, which can change into a mouse, a bear, rain drops, etc. They walk up the child's arms, legs, toys or tables, etc. By adequate voice modulation, colour of voice and facial expression we can re-create the words of the bug-game with the bug interpreting the content through movement. This game not only stimulates music development, but also the processes of socialization, emotional development and empathy.

Movement, which is not only a spontaneous music activity, is developed and monitored also in later periods of child development. Through movement, a child can more easily understand the dimensions of space and time, which are in music or sound space upgraded into musical elements – melody and musical rhythm. Through movement patterns, children can express that they have recognized changes in tempo, dynamics, the colour of sound and the same and different sound events.

The results of observing children's movement to music show regularly and frequently performed movement patterns:

- Low tones or low sounds are expressed with movement of the lower part of the body (legs),
- High tones and sounds are expressed with movement of the upper body parts (head, arms),
- Recognition of repeating sound patterns are expressed with repeating movement patterns,
- Loud music is expressed with intense and large movements,
- Silent music is expressed with slow and small movements,
- Sad feelings are expressed with a bent head, eyes, staring at the ground and arms hanging by the body,
- Feelings of joy and happiness are expressed with facial gestures, smile and arms, lifted above the head, which is often accompanied by a vocal respond (shouting, laughing...).

For movement, space is an important factor, which offers security



and the possibility of movement to a child. In a larger room, younger children feel unsafe and have difficulties focusing on sound events. Adults can offer security, when they move together with children around the room. The video shows that the boundaries were set by taping large flowers to the floor. Children have drawn the flowers by themselves and have therefore actively cooperated in the re-arrangement of the playroom.

The following chapter deals with musical games, which we have performed in preschool with three- and four-year-olds. Planned musical activity stimulates the child's:

- preservation of sensibility and developing of attention towards musical sounds,
- expressing experiences while listening to music and creating music pictures,
- recognizing of sound colours and
- developing of a basic instrument playing technique.

When moving around the room, new contacts with peers are established. Each new contact brings a new sound in the room, integrates with other sounds and accompanies sound events. These sound events can also be heard and experienced by those children, who are holding an instrument. It is important for a child to create a music picture together with his/her friends. This picture is changing in accordance with the movement dynamics in the room.

Musical Games

The group of four musical didactic games is built on the principles of process development and goal planning. When planning, we paid special attention to hints of individual children, which helped us

Arrange instruments
in a new form.
(foto: Ana Borota)



understand the possibilities of future musical activity planning. On purpose, we have used the same sound examples, so that repetition would make it easier for children to deepen their experiences and broaden their musical understanding.

The games take place in an imaginary meadow. The room has been prepared by children, who have drawn large flowers on paper and taped them to the ground. There are bees on the meadow, flying from one flower to another and gathering honey. Like us, the bees are sometimes fast or slow. This is what the music was about.

1. Listening to Music

Music recording: A. Vivaldi, Summer, 2nd mvt.

Children were lying on the floor in the form of a large flower and listening to calming music. This position enabled children to relax to music in their own way. Children had previous experience in this way of listening to music. However, this was the first composition which offers calming music with sound contrasts in the middle of calming music events. The composer created these contrasts by changing rhythmical structures. If the child pays attention to sound events, he/she is expected to react to these changes.

Results of child observation:

The video shows that children are relaxed and calm while listening to music. Most of the children react to a sudden change of sound. Excitement is expressed with movement of the body and vocal responds. One girl reacts in an interesting way – she lifts her head up with a surprised look, stops the previous activity and lies down in a couple of moments, so that she is a bit closer to the child next to her. A boy covers his ears when he hears an unexpected and loud contrast because he did not expect such explicit and dynamic contrasts.

After repeating the same sound example a couple of times, the attention of children is focused on the prediction of loud sound contrasts, which no longer scare and surprise them. Now, the children are being playful and dynamic. We can assume that the focusing of attention on sound and consequently the developing of sound understanding, which enables the child to anticipate explicit sound events, was successful.

2. Movement of Children While Listening to Calming and Lively Music

Music recordings (1): B. Bonsor, Cantilena and C. Orff, G. Keetman, Festive arrival.

Before this game, children have already recreated the movement of different feelings like joy, dullness, sadness... Before playing the musical game, we have talked with children about different feelings.



Listening to music.
(foto: Bogdana Borota)



We have also listened to the recording and have afterwards talked to the children about what they heard and what the music has told them about the events in the meadow. We made no suggestions about the way and the direction of movement. The goal was to recognise and to experience contrastive feelings in music and express them with the help of movement. Movement and the creativity of movement are children's achievements.

Results of child observation:

Children recognise the recording with claming music and respond to it with movement. Children's movement patterns can be divided into two groups. The movement in the first group illustrates concrete movement, which is not related to music and can be recognised as the imitation of bees – their flying, their gathering of honey and stopping on the flowers. Soon, children notice these movement patterns among them and are successfully copying them. In spite of that, this movement does not occur very often. Movement patterns from the second group appear as a thread and are a result of experiencing calming music content. Children walk equally, move fluently and often form a common direction of circular movement into right. Their facial expression reveals calmness. After carefully monitoring the movement as a whole, we can confirm the findings of experts, that imitation is an important learning method at this stage.

In the second part, children run from the bee house (fixed place in the playroom) as soon as they recognise fast and lively music. In comparison with the first part, the movement of children has changed. The directions of movement are different, confused and often diagonal – from one corner to another – which causes knocks and bumps. Our attention is drawn to the movement of legs. Children are running, jumping and tumbling. Sometimes we can notice jumping, which is in time with the musical beat. Children are moving very fast and are therefore probably lacking time to imitate each other. Movement is accompanied by vocal expression of joy and happiness. Children are laughing and shouting.

They are successfully following the rule to return to the bee house when the music stops. Observation of events after the end of the game has become interesting for future planning of activities. We have noticed that the mood of children has maintained the same for some time after the game. We have planned a new goal, which was realized in the next didactic game.

3. Musical Picture as a Result of Integrating Music Into Movement

In this game, children will be "gathering honey" by playing on the metalophone. Again, we are focusing on different moods, which are stimulated by contrastive sound examples. Children already know

both sound examples from previous games; the rules stay the same. The goal, however, has changed. We wish to encourage children to keep the experiences after the concentrated listening of music has ended. Then, they should express those experiences by integrating music into movement – playing instruments. They fly from one flower to another (from one metalophone plate to another) and gather honey (play on the metalophone).

Results of child observation:

Children recognise the recording. They re-live the calming music in the first part. We are surprised to notice that some children are playing on the metalophone stick as if it was a flute. They recognised the sound colour of the instrument, which is often played by the preschool teacher. None of the children recognised the piano, as they have not made any concrete experience with that instrument yet. These parallel results of the observation represent a basis for planning the next didactic game.

In the scope of the set goal, we noticed a calm movement of children among the flowers, which is in time with the music, while playing on the plates of the metalophone is mainly quick and bounded to 3 or 4 hits. After a while, an interesting sound picture is noticed, which is a consequence of group dynamics in playing and moving. Despite the calm walking, the playing of instruments is a result of repeating movements of a child, in which we can not see any special sensitivity for creating long and "calming" sounds. Controlling the instrument's echo is too demanding for them.

In the second part, when the lively music is the stimulation for creating a music picture, the results are the same. Children quickly move from one instrument to another, while the playing of instruments is also a consequence of repeated movements. Speed is seen as an obstacle, which negatively affects the technique of playing. In a rush, children often hit the metalophone with the handle or miss the metalophone plate completely. Children love the activity. Even those, holding the instruments, pay attention and are active, as they are carefully watching the one, who is playing.

It is difficult to determine if such musical didactic games have an important influence on the imagination and orientation in the sound space. However, there is no doubt that they are an important experience in recognising the movement of the body, the movement of sounds in space and learn the basics of the instrument playing technique.

4. Recognising Instrumental Colours of Sound

Considering the child's musical development, maturing process and his/her interests, this period is suitable for children to learn the basic techniques of instrument playing. Children know that percus-



sions are played by hitting on them with sticks, which have different sizes and forms. They know how to choose adequate sticks for playing metalophone, triangle or drums. Therefore, we use the new didactic game to stimulate further development through the process of goal-reaching. The children should develop the ability to recognise some sound colours of instruments.

Children direct the game by themselves. Three children behind a curtain are taking turns in playing the mentioned instruments. On the other side of the curtain, pairs of children (bees) have the same stick, which means that they will have to recognise the sound colour then find a flower with the same instrument and play it. Careful listening when to start and when to finish will determine a successful completion of the task. In the activity, recorded on the DVD, we experimentally added a two-voiced and even a three-voiced sound colour. The results were outstanding.

Results of child observation:

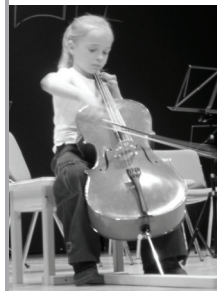
In this game – also because of adding new elements to the game – we have reached a high concentration of children as well as careful listening of those, who were playing and those, holding the instrument. They seem to have been some kind of judges, who were making sure that all players were fair at playing. In the mass of sounds, they were successful at recognizing adequate sound information, played on an instrument behind the curtain. It was interesting to observe a child when he first starts reacting to sounds, when he stops for a moment and checks if he is hearing correctly. We often notice that they turn their head to one side, as if they were trying to connect the ear directly to the sound information. In cases of false reaction, they remind each other and adjust to one another.

Observation results show that sound colours are adequately recognised and that reacting to certain colours is quick. Recognition of individual instruments in a two- or three-voice picture was unexpectedly good. For reaching such good results, it is important to include only those instruments in the game that the children know and have played on them before.

Musical Motive as a Sound Pattern

In everyday life, we notice and recognize numerous patterns. A tie is decorated with patterns, patterns are drawn on the facades of houses, we recognise animals by the patterns of their skin and we can hear patterns in music. Children are familiar with ostinato motives, which are often an accompaniment for the melody.

Patterns are also used in thinking principles, which are lately being examined by experts from the aspect of teaching strategies. Musical experts discovered that the figural form of musical thinking (until



Musical instruments grow with children. (foto: archives Music school Koper)

approximately six years of age) is leaning on the intuitive use of sound patterns, which the child anticipates in music and which he uses as appropriate. The result of the mentioned skills is the child's musical achievement – a newly invented song, which imitates the motive and the form of folksongs and children's songs. The songs invented by children are very often a combination of motives from songs they have learned and invented motives. Both cases are dealing with an important developmental stage of perceiving sound units, which the child threads one after another like threading elements when making a necklace.

The sound pattern can become a subject of child's play. Musical motive as a pattern is the main content of a musical didactic game that is represented on tape. The motive represents a rounded whole of a tone sequence, which is moving from the dominant to the tonic. The motive is taken from the context of the song the children can sing and given to children to dismantle it through playing, put it back together and return it to the song as an ostinato motive in the accompaniment. The principle of "unit – parts – unit" is an important principle of mastering sound patterns and a basis for developing formal ways of musical thinking, supported by knowledge about musical language.



I will play in your way.
(foto: Tea Hrovat)

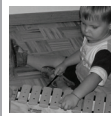
5. Creating a Sound Pattern

Children can sing the song Train from Bitenc. When singing, they are using their arms for imitating the circular spinning of the locomotive wheels. Individual sound plates of xylophone are placed on the floor in the form of a circle. Children will choose from these plates, so that the chosen plates will create a whole motive that appears at the beginning of the song. The goal of this musical didactic game is to find appropriate tone heights and to create an appropriate sequence, which was determined in advance.

Results of child observation:

All children are active in this game. They are singing the song and making circular movements. We can notice different levels of balance between the movement and the musical beat. The goal of the game is to improve the intonation and interpretation of the song. Together, children will reach the goal in the near future.

The results show that children have developed musical skills, which enable an analytical approach and the capability of re-creating the motive. On the basis of testing, children select appropriate sound plates and create a sequence. The game enables the strengthening of sound understanding and helps the children remember the motive. Repetition is used for the developing of singing skills and the mastering of consistent intonation. All children are active in



the game, while a high level of attention is focused at the recognition of adequate tone heights when compared to the tone-motive relations.

We have noticed that children were having difficulties playing the ostinato accompaniment. The difficulties were caused by constant playing of the motive on four sound plates, placed one after another. Before playing the song again, we rearranged the sound plates into a circle, which enabled a circular and uninterrupted playing of the sequence. We removed the barrier and the child no longer had to return from the end of the sequence to the beginning. Thereby we have managed to improve the balanced playing of the ostinato motive as accompaniment for the song that was sung.

6. Performing Ostinato Accompaniment

Children formed a locomotive with Orff's instruments. The locomotive had no wheels and was put together from sound plates, which created the previously mentioned motive. The goal of the activity is a balanced and harmonized playing of the ostinato motive and the singing of the song.

Results of child observation:

Mainly boys were actively putting the locomotive together. They had their own image of the locomotive in their minds. We have noticed that they paid more attention to details, like windows, chimney, bell, etc. They were interested in testing sonority of individual elements. They put the wheels together by creating an appropriate sequence of sound plates. During singing, children were carefully listening to the ostinato motive and moving – that shows that they felt the musical beat. For them, the activity was an interesting form of repeating and strengthening their knowledge, which is often connected to children's decreasing interest for partially mastered skills or contents.

According to the results, we can presume that this musical didactic game was appropriately planned and realized. Children have shown that they are interested in cooperating in such games. The game offers a basis for the implementation of cooperative learning, which has a positive effect on the processes of socialization, communication and the forming of self-perception.



Instruments for children.
(foto: Alja Jereb)

Vesna Geršak

CHILDREN'S EXPRESSION THROUGH MOVEMENT AND DANCING



Trust game.
(foto: Petra Plos)

If we observe healthy children when they are playing, we will notice that the children will move during the game. For every child, the need for movement and playing represents a primary need. It is typical for preschool children to include movement into playing and to physically discover the environment in such way. Children also use the movement of their body for communication and for expressing their feelings. At the entry into primary school, many teachers do not recognise a child's need for movement. Instead of using it for primary learning, they often limit children's movement.

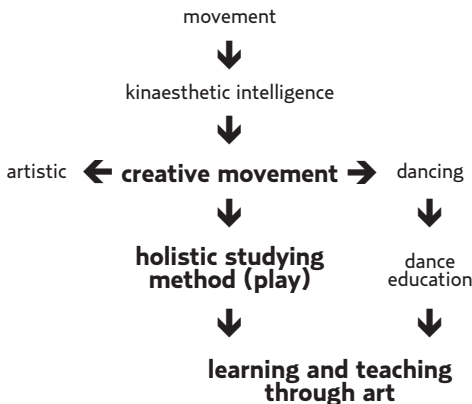
When Dr. Howard Gardner identified and described seven areas of intelligence in his book *Frames of Mind* (1983), he broadened our understanding of human intelligence beyond the verbal/linguistic and mathematical/logical spheres and brought us closer to a holistic approach to education. While bodily-kinaesthetic intelligence is recognized as one of four multiple intelligences, it is one of the most undervalued in our schools. We seem not to understand that learning in a physical language – a language that includes kinaesthetic activities, creative movement and dance – is wonderfully natural to most children (Griss, 1998).



Preschool and primary school teachers, who are aware of the importance of kinaesthetic learning and are using the method of playing, creative movement and dancing when working with children, have discovered many positive effects of this method. By using the movement-dancing activity, the children are more easily motivated for different learning contents. This approach also brings the more complicated and less understandable concepts and ideas closer to children. A noticeable progress is made when establishing interpersonal relations among children; the relation between the preschool/primary school teacher and the child is more genuine after using such methods. The playing and moving makes children feel pleasant; they are connected with positive emotions. Such climate contributes to better academic results and to a longer lasting knowledge.

Viktorija U., primary school teacher: "Several years ago, I discovered that words will not help me convince lively children to calm down and listen. I started moving with them."

Dragica P., primary school teacher: "...we are playing games that include movement and dancing, role playing, nursery rhymes, moving while listening to music, creating... After approximately one month of this kind of work, children became more open and tolerant towards one another, happier with themselves and their classmates, boys became friendlier to girls. Children are calmer, less impulsive and less aggressive, their feelings of belonging and empathy have grown."



Creative movement in classroom.
(foto: Sara Ančnik)

Expression through dancing and movement is of extreme importance for a child's physical, motor, intellectual, emotional and social development.

Dancing stimulates the development of general motor skills, mostly coordination of movement, orientation in time and space,

balance and speed, stamina and precision. It is important to emphasise that dancing has a positive effect on a child's self-esteem, on social and emotional relations in a group and on easier understanding of the world.

The method of creative movement is an approach where children use movement to express, form and create various educational contents (Kroflič, 1999). Movement creativity is expressed through playing. This method encourages the child to communicate, create, relax and learn with the help of various didactic movement-dancing games, social games, different kinds of relaxation and to learn about all subject fields through creative movement.

In its broadest meaning, dance education is education that includes dancing. It also represents a method of teaching and is connected with all educational fields in preschool and all learning contents in primary school (Kroflič, Gobec, 1995).

The implementation of the creative movement method or dancing education into preschool and primary school enables children to learn with a method of playing and to learn through art. Such activities provide a holistic development for a child.

Dance Education and Creative Movement in Preschool and Primary School

Alternative educational approaches, like the Waldorf School with eurhythmy and the Wambach convergent pedagogy with body expression to music, have been present for a longer time. However, the kinaesthetic learning in regular primary school classes is only gaining value.

More and more often, preschool and primary school teachers use the method of creative movement when working with children. They use it for motivation, explanation and strengthening of mathematical concepts, for easier understanding of the surrounding and for literacy instruction. Creative movement is already recognized as a method for teaching a language (mother tongue or foreign language). In the preschool curriculum, dancing is one of many artistic activity fields and is connected to music, theatre and fine arts...

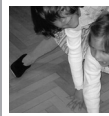
It would be sensible to implement more of the creative movement method into traditional lectures, as that would enable an easier inclusion of students with special needs and ensure progress of children, mainly in socio-emotional field, but also in cognitive and psycho-motor field.

However, we can not ignore the fact that at a certain developmental stage of a child, dancing is one of the most popular forms of fun, recreation and humour with the goal of relaxation. Preschool and primary school teachers, who can use that in order to make learning a fun activity, hold a key that opens many doors.

Slovenian language represents a field, where the use of creative movement is recommendable for literacy instruction, literature and language instruction as well as for language exercises. In this field, we can use role playing, dramatization with dancing, demonstration

When using holistic methods of teaching and learning, one of them being the creative movement and dancing method, children develop in physical, motor, intellectual, emotional and social field.

Holistic learning means understanding something with body and mind.



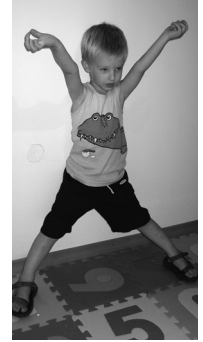
of a story through movement, experiencing different situations, practicing nonverbal communication, writing and making words or letters from various body parts, dealing with nouns and verbs through movement, moving with interjections (oh, au, joj), dealing with the alphabet and reading with the help of a game. Children also learn how to orientate themselves in space, which is extremely important for first literacy instruction lessons, when children are learning how to listen.

In **mathematics**, the method of creative movement is used with arithmetic and algebra, language and logic, geometry with measurements and data processing (learning and revising quantity concepts and mathematical operations; forming geometrical shapes or strait, curved, closed and open lines with our bodies; using dancing and movement games to learn about new terms (inside/outside), to show symmetry and units of measure and to dived ourselves into groups).

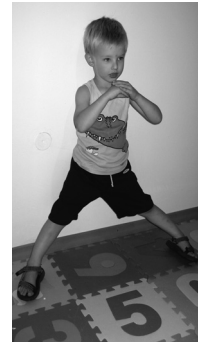
In the phase of early learning, movement enables children to get in touch with concrete phenomenon, which represents a basis for later abstraction. Children's need to move makes children learn about the environment, while the need to learn makes them move in the environment. When moving, they are gaining experience, which represent the basis for their knowledge. Without moving, children would lose one of the most basic ways of learning. Children internalise the knowledge they have gained with their own activity. Such knowledge is a firm basis for an upgrade, which includes new and more difficult ideas. This is of great importance for mathematics, where children, who did not automate and internalise their knowledge, have insurmountable difficulties in understanding and mastering new mathematical concepts.

In **nature and social studies** movement is used to demonstrate the changes in nature (phenomena like changing seasons, weather, growing of plants, movement of animals), to learn about the features of natural and built environment and the human body (making traffic signs, learning about human body, about energy, our environment, standing and running waters, imitating machines, learning about professions), to place ourselves into life in the past and into today's life (orientation in time and place, time sequence) and to strengthen our social relations (greeting games, getting-to-know each other games and social games).

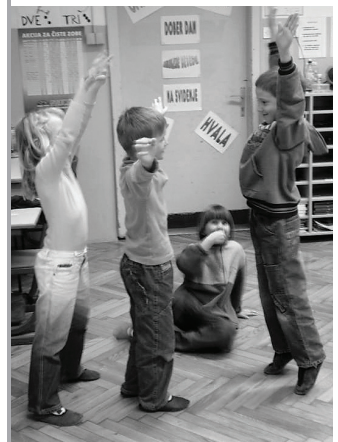
In **musical education** movement and dancing are introduced into all fields: performing, listening, creating and developing musical skills and musical knowledge (creative dancing games, expressing melody, tempo and rhythm through movement, accompaniment to musical contents, visualising music, listening to music and growing



I can not write letters X and A with pencil yet, but I can show them with my body.
(foto: Vesna Geršak)



From seed to plant.
(foto: Sara Ančnik)



into it, musical fairytales, sound mandalas, children's and folk dances, the work of musicians,...).

Besides rhythmical instruments and other sound sources (Orff's instruments, improvised instruments, instruments that children tie around various parts of their body and produce sound while moving), the movement to music can be made more interesting by adding various objects, puppets, masks and costumes.

Symmetry.
(foto: Sonja Žagar)



In **fine arts** teachers use less creative movement, but the method is welcome when acquiring space knowledge, orientation in space, forming and exploring of space, lines, mixing colours, moving to an artistic painting or mandala, forming clay, etc.

Among all school subjects, **physical education** is most strongly related to dancing and movement because it includes dancing and movement games, children's and folk dances, dances with requisites, expressive dancing, stretching with music, various relaxation exercises (visualisation, massage ...).

Dancing Encouragements

The most common encouragement for dancing is music. The rhythm takes over us and we respond with movement. However, like in other arts, we not only respond to what we hear or see, but also to our feelings and experiences.

If we are dancing to music that carries rhythmical encouragement for movement, we take up a subordinate role, we adapt to music or we reject the dancing encouragement.

The communication of a preschool teacher with children with the help of small instruments is priceless when compared to sound recordings on CDs.

Preschools and primary school should more often use instruments, suitable for the movement of children. However, music is only one of many encouragements for creative movement. Besides various fine arts encouragements, movement in costumes and masks, dancing dramatisation of a fairytale or a song and dancing caused by observing nature, there is dancing with requisites (ribbons, hoops, balloons, newspapers...). Requisites, used in a new and different way, stimulate the imagination of children and change their movement. Such experiences enrich the dancing expression of children.



We differentiate between external and internal encouragements for creative movement – internal ideas, which originate in previous experiences or imaginary images of an individual.

Dancing expression encourages children to use different parts of their body, move on the spot and in the space. With preschool children we work on basic dance elements like size, level, direction and speed... Primary school children can already use quality, force and other more complex elements.

When planning the activity, preschool and primary school teachers must pay attention to a balance in contents that enable intense "manly" movement. Beside soft "womanly" moves (dancing of butterflies, snowflakes ...) children must also experience movement, which stimulates a constructive use of energy (sharpness, determination, energy). Examples: the movement of grasshoppers, cocks, bumblebees ...

Relaxation Activities

Relaxation should not only be part of physical education; it should be used during various activities and stressful lectures with both: younger and older children. Even the youngest children in preschool enjoy massages and other relaxation activities. Body contact calms them down and gives them a feeling of safety. Silence is introduced to children with the help of games, which help them listen to themselves and to relax. It is of great importance that the youngest children get used to relaxation because they will need it in the fast and hectic life, full of impulses from the surrounding and television. Children are unintentionally included into harmful phenomena of the "hectic" life: oversaturated with impressions, noise, stress in school and at home, continuous competition... The environment, in which we live, often offers no possibilities for the "processing" of all impressions and experiences as they follow each other much too rapidly.

More and more children therefore develop a syndrome of nervous overstrain which was long typical only for adults. More and more preschool and primary teachers and parents find that children are aggressive, nervous, overstrained, not concentrated, unruly and do not sleep well.

The sooner children recognise that there are not only external impulses with its diversity, colourfulness and aggressiveness, but also their own inner world, the world of silence and peace that helps them process and define external impulses, that there is a world in which they can go to and from which they can gather new strengths, the sooner they will be able to explore the world independently and the easier they will protect themselves from the world's negative side.



Relaxation through body contact in classroom.
(foto: Biserka Novak)



Snake in the sun.
(foto: Petra Plos)



Relaxation education can contribute to the development of a child's creative capacity, which is why it is necessary to make it an element of today's education. Nowadays, relaxation education is an important and even a necessary alternative to that part of child's world, which is full of passive and superficial experiences. From an early stage, children must be given a chance to learn how to clearly express their feelings and how to recognise and respect the feelings of others. They must have opportunities to explore, improvise and use their imagination as they will need all of these later to solve their problems in a creative way. Therefore, children should get to know their body and their state of mind. They should develop a loving relationship to others and themselves.

Preschool and primary school teachers, who are implementing relaxation activities among other activities in preschool and primary school, claim that children are less shouting and less aggressive after relaxation. Relaxation exercises take children into the world of silence. They learn how to enjoy silence.

When moving creatively in a group, children can relax, feel pleasant, they cooperate and feel acknowledge. Nowadays, cooperative games, which include group work, physical and psychical activity, movement, communication, relaxation, focusing, body contact, spiritual and mental contact, interpersonal tolerance and cooperation, are acknowledged worldwide. They are also one of the basic methods for educating children about non-violent conflict solving and an element of affective education. The affective dimensions of learning are emotions, feelings and self-esteem.

With the implementation of relaxation exercises, the children develop intrapersonal intelligence. After exercises of cooperation and trust (massage, relaxation in groups of two or more) the intrapersonal intelligence develops into an interpersonal intelligence.

Today's hectic and stressful way of life, which is irrepressibly entering into the world of preschool and primary school students, the method of teaching through playing and creative movement brings a lot of freshness, activity, calmness and tolerance, all preliminary conditions for successful education, learning and teaching.

Video Analysis: Dancing-movement Activities

The chosen video recordings show dancing-movement activities that were implemented in preschool with children aged from 4 to 6 years. Activities include movement-dancing games, the use of requisites, relaxation games and a massage with the goal of social education and stimulation of capability development.

The second group of activities was filmed with children from 1st to 3rd grade of primary school that take part in the activity of interest:



Creative Movement. We filmed dancing expression with fabric and a movement-dancing game.

All filmed activities stimulate the development of capabilities with the goal of social education through movement.

Dance Education in Preschool

1. Donkey, Who is Riding You?

The goal of the game: social education (relations among children, touch), recognising the "rider" that sits on the "donkey".

The course of the game: The child who plays the role of a donkey squats on the floor in the middle of a circle and keeps his eyes closed. One child from the rest of the group (rider) sits on donkey's back and asks: "Donkey, who is riding you?" The child – donkey must find out who the rider is. Roles are switched.

Analysis: The tape shows the first level of this game – when the rider only stands next to the donkey and asks him/her: "Donkey, who is riding you?" Later, children should sit on the donkey, so that the donkey feels the weight of the "rider", his type of sitting (sits very easily, his feet are touching the ground...).

2. Horse Races

The goal of the game: stimulate anticipation, imagination and cooperation, especially for hyperactive children. Listening to a text and moving to it. Growing into a situation and expressing themselves through movement.

The course of the game: Children stand in a circle and carefully listen to a story the preschool teacher is telling. They express themselves through movement.

Analysis: The goal for older children can be recognizing of left and right. At the beginning of the game, children are told that they will be changing sides, so that they pay more attention to it. At this movement game, the preschool teacher observes the speed of children.

3. Dancing With Cloths

The goal of the game: stimulate creativity, imagination, sense of rhythm, strengthen interpersonal relationships, empathy, explore the requisite, dancing expression with an external encouragement (colourful cloths).

The course of the game: Children are given cloths of different colours. They dance to music and explore the possibilities of how to use the requisite.

Analysis: The preschool teacher observes in what way children are using the cloths – as a costume, a hat, a partner... Children play with cloths and explore what kind of movement the cloths enable.



Communication through dancing with fabric.
(foto: Biserka Novak)

They are following the music and using different dance elements (level, direction, path, the size of moves, force, speed...). The cloth is on the floor now and above them later – children are changing levels with cloths and not with their bodies. By imitating each other, they are learning about new ways to use the requisite, while teachers can encourage them to use different dancing elements.

4. Baking a Cake

The goal of the movement story: is relaxation, cooperation, stimulation of imagination, acquiring the feeling for a group, establishing contact with partners and the whole group. The goals of the game can change; therefore we should pay attention to different things:

- children learn how to control themselves, how strong they can press,
- the concentration during the game,
- discovering where they are ticklish, O
- discovering their own body and the body of their friends.

The course of the game: In groups of two, children massage each other and move to a story.

Analysis: Children learn how to wait their turn, when the teacher is lifting them. In this way, they make contact with their preschool teacher. This game includes all 3 levels. Besides that, children experience the game individually, in pairs and in groups. On tape, many children are included in the game; in such case it is advisable to form 2 groups.

5. Who is Missing?

The goal of the game: acquiring the feeling of a group, rhythm, getting to know each other, finding out who is missing.

The course of the game: Children move with rhythm and lay down on the teacher's sing. The teacher covers one of them with a sheet. Others have to find out, who is hiding under the sheet.

Analysis: The tape shows children who were guessing who is under the sheet. As the sheet is not large enough to cover the whole child, other children identified pieces that were not covered by the sheet (hair, shoes...) Children also noticed the difference in size, as some "heaps" was larger than others.

6. Boogie-woogie

The goal of the game: Connecting movement to singing, developing bodily coordination and group harmonisation.

The course of the game: Children are singing and dancing in a circle and using their body parts (arms, legs, shoulders, knees, elbows...).

Analysis: The movement of children's body parts to music was harmonised.



7. Dancing Cards

The goal of the game: Developing coordination and awareness of their body, stimulating creativity, developing their sense for rhythm. At this dancing game, children are performing isolated movement (moving separate parts of their body).

The course of the game: Children are given cards, on which a specific part of the body is marked. They move to music, using only the marked part of their body.

Analysis: Each of the children can have observers, who check which part of the body he/she is using. Later, they can switch roles.

The purpose of the game is to make sure, that children are not imitating the moves of others because everyone of them has to dance with a different body part.

8. Massage – Planting Strawberries

The goal of the game: relaxation and calming down with body contact, learning about the intensity of touch, getting used to a soft touch, self-control. Learning about the growth process.

The course of the game: The massage takes place in pairs. One of the children is lying on the floor; the other child kneels beside him/her and massages the other child with his/her hands. The preschool teacher is explaining how strawberries are planted and describes the whole process of growth (the process must be exact). The child that massages his/her friend moves with his hands according to the story. Children must get accustomed to soft touch.

Analysis: City children are usually not familiar with the process of planting. We must make sure that there is silence in the room, children should lie on a mattress, not on the floor.

The resting of masseur's hands or his upper body on the back of the other child after a massage is very pleasant.

Creative Movement in Primary School

1. Greeting a Friend

The goal of the game: Nonverbal greeting by clapping their hands, getting to know their schoolmates and encouraging the feeling of belonging.

The course of the game: Children move spontaneously around a room (run, walk, and dance) in different levels (standing or kneeling) and listen to the rhythm of the music. When they hear the sign, they meet someone from the group, greet hi/her with a friendly smile and a clap (or shake) hands. Then they continue with their movement until they meet the second or the third classmate.

Analysis: Children were moving around the room in harmony with



Massage - body contact.
(foto: Nataša Počkaj)

Dancing with fabric.
(foto: Biserka Novak)



the musical rhythm. They developed a relaxed nonverbal communication which included laughter – we can say they enjoyed the activity.

2. Dancing With Fabric – Theme: Stormy Sea

The goal of the game: Cooperation of children when developing the dancing choreography, stimulation of creativity, imagination, empathy, interpersonal relationships and spontaneous communication. Creative movement with the help of a requisite – fabric.

The course of the game: Students are divided into smaller groups or pairs. The theme is represented to them and we start playing music. We leave them some time for preparations and harmonisation. When the students are ready, they perform with their choreography in front of other schoolmates, who reward them at the end of the presentation by applauding.

Analysis: A group of children has taken a large part of the room and has used different levels and directions of dancing. Children paid regard to the theme and rhythm and have moved in harmony. When moving, they have considered the characteristics of fabric. The choreography had all the necessary parts (beginning, top and ending).

Dancing in nature.
(foto: Biserka Novak)





Edi Majaron

THE MAGIC POWER OF A PUPPET

Puppets originate from rituals. A puppet has kept three levels of stylization (visual, motor and acoustic), which simplify the puppet and make it quickly and easily recognisable.

When making a puppet, we are practicing several skills, while playing with it develops and establishes social correlations.

If we want to bring the puppet to life, we must give her our full attention, especially by looking at it; otherwise the puppet remains "dead". By doing so, our energy has been pointed at the puppet and we are establishing a less "threatening" communication through the puppet than in the usual "eye to eye" communication.

Therefore, a puppet can easily become a nondangerous mediator, helper and protection. When challenging a puppet, its animator is not exposed. He/she can express his/her point of view, thoughts and show his/her skills in all levels. A puppet dares to compare, compete, to participate in dialogs and cooperates in group work.

The meaning of the puppet is especially strong in nonverbal forms of communication. Because of clear stylization, the stimulation and suggestions of a puppet are understandable even for those with poor vocabulary knowledge. This is of great importance for young people, who are not verbally versed and are therefore often very sensitive and have difficulties cooperating in regular forms of verbal communication.

It is of no importance whether a puppet has been perfectly made, as long as everyone is able to make it by himself:

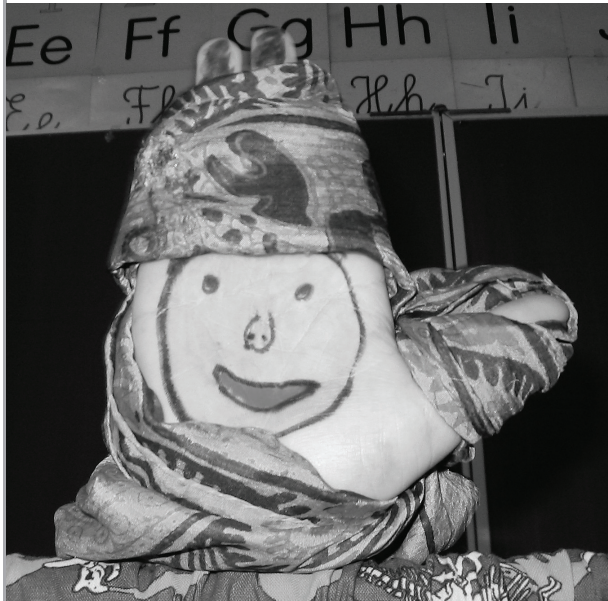
- this shows how good someone's motor skills are developed,
- the creative potential is proven,
- communication is established through the created "being",
- personal difficulties are often solved in a symbolic way.

Therefore it is important to know how to use many simple kinds of puppets, which can be easily and quickly made by children, as this has an important influence on positive self-perception. The metaphorical meaning of a puppet influences the way of symbolic thinking, while the puppet's magical powers represent the motivation for mastering different skills. A puppet also represents the possibility for expressing emotions and reveals and develops divergent thinking, which is an important element of creativity.



The magic og puppet.
(foto: Helena Korošec)

With imagination a hand
becomes a puppet.
(foto: Ivanka Svetec)



Helena Korošec

SPONTANEOUS CHILDREN'S PLAY AND THEATRE PLAY

Everyone working with children in theatre activities is aware that he/she is not raising future actors but using those activities to contribute to a better emotional, social and intellectual development of children, while teaching them to understand and to follow theatre plays.

One of the aims of confronting children with theatre activity is to establish a balance between the child's understanding of a purely nonobligatory play and his/her attitude towards theatre as a media. The whole mentor's activity is focused at developing the child's creativity and creating a relaxed and cooperative environment while working on a common project. The mentor uses play activities to help the children get to know the world, to understand it and change it in their own individual way. Children's play should be nurtured and build on. Furthermore, pure children's play, in which the child projects parts of his emotions and experiences, needs to be "used" and further developed. The focus is therefore not on the directing of a mentor according to his/her own ideas, but on adding theatre elements to children's play.



When a child is playing by himself or with peers, his/her main goal is to satisfy the need to play. He/she plays spontaneously and his/her play is not directed. We are dealing with a free activity, where the satisfaction of needs is not the goal, even if it occurs spontaneously. In socio-dramatic play, a child will play to become someone else, but without the goal to perform for an audience. At this point, an important element for playing theatre appears: being aware of the third person – the audience. A play must have a structure – dramaturgy and determined relations between the characters. The teacher does not set the mentioned elements on his/her own, but sets them accordingly to children's play. This is the only way to preserve the relaxed atmosphere, the creativity and directness; all elements that are present in children's play and cannot be replaced by any technique or theatre skills. M. Misailović explains the difference between children's play, a drama and a dramatised story:

- Children's play: the child represents himself – the play comes from the child.

- Drama play: the child imitates someone else or something else, the play comes from outside the child.

- Dramatised stories: the child puts himself in the place of other people and changes into people, animals or things according to the story, poem or a general text. The stimulation for playing is not spontaneous, but given from the outside. Dramatised stories develop child's skills of looking deeper into things, a broader adjustment, stronger empathy and good judgment. In such games, numerous external stimulations turn into a unique creation and thereby contribute to a child's holistic development.

However, in a dramatised play, a child must not necessarily play the role of persons, mentioned in the text. Contemporary approach towards child theatre stresses the exact opposite: in the first four years of primary school, children are not burdened by the text. Therefore, a problem, an event or a theme that stimulates a child to theatre play can also represent external stimulation. It can happen that the text is too restrictive for the children and does not give them the spontaneity and freedom, which is necessary in children's theatre. When working in such way, the child will add his/her individualism and his/her personal point of view to the external stimulation. We must not forget that everyone can play theatre, regardless of their intellectual or communication skills and talent. Spontaneous play is also not only a privilege of the talented, is it?

Even though a child is approaching theatre art by imitating and through symbolic play, he is not representing himself as an actor; he is only playing on stage. Child's play and the acting of a professional differ substantially in goal, process, content and in meaning.

Children's drama and dramatised play is not an activity of young professionals; however, it can mark the beginning of future acting skills.

Planning, practicing and playing are the main goals of professional puppet players, yet they only represent one set of goals when working with children in the scope of the curriculum. It is important to distinguish between puppet theatre and puppet activities in a form of creative drama, where the focus is not on the perfect show but on the growth and development of children – puppet players. Whenever the goal is education, the puppet becomes a medium for expressing understanding of the world, literature, nature and social relations... For a child during his theatre creativity, and especially for the teacher, the puppet is above all a medium for communication and personal interaction. The child's greatest motivation is to prepare a show, therefore the set goals are reached very quickly during the show preparations. The teacher however, focuses on the process, in which he/she constantly monitors and stimulates the children.

Emotions, thought and creativity in play with marionets. (foto: archives, Faculty of Education)



Creative puppet activity can be a successful method of learning and teaching for all fields of the curriculum. However, it is not only successful, but also necessary in contemporary education, which is not only striving for knowledge, but also for creative, relaxed children with plenty of ideas, skill and a desire for problem solving. D. Fontana (1996/97, in Kroflič, 1999) defines the creating of art as an inevitable element of a holistic "education for being" in comparison with the "education for knowing". She stresses, that education without such creativity is lacking in inner world experience and is reduced to dry and objective science. It is important to connect and intertwine the fields of art and basic subjects. Artistic activity is no longer a privilege of the talented and academically successful children; it is an advantage and help for everyone.

Children's theatre plays have an extraordinary psychological and pedagogical influence, yet drama and dramatised play can also have negative ethical and aesthetic consequences. Therefore, the role of the leader-mentor is of great importance, as he/she must professionally and delicately balance pedagogic and aesthetic elements of those plays. Drama and dramatised plays require a special discipline, which is better developed than the rules of ordinary games. On one hand, discipline means to follow a drama story that is being created, and to be aware of the audience for which we are performing. On the other hand, discipline can be understood as requirements of the mentor, who is directing the show or short scenes in the classroom, according to his logic and the pattern of professional shows. At this point, a child can suffer the greatest damage because he is no longer relaxed, is not playing and developing all his skills; he is merely



following the orders of the mentor – director. At this point, we have moved away from the essence of children’s theatre. We must not demand copying and imitating from a child, but his/her comprehension and experience of the world. Instead of encouraging perfection in the realization of the show, we must encourage inventiveness in a free and individual interpretation.

When a child is playing theatre, he/she always plays a role that represents people, objects, and animals, etc. The mentor should encourage the play with a text, an experience or a theme; the play can be improvised or discussed in advance. Therefore, such plays are very similar to symbolic plays. The difference between these and symbolic plays is that they have a relatively fixed drama composition and basic rules (symbolic play has no rules), which determine the sequence of the events in the play. The play is developing in a linear sequence according to basic events in the play. In dramatised play, children play a specific story, which is more or less played in the same way as the previous time. The story of the play is somehow set, but the performance is improvised in word and motion.

Preparing a Show

Projects that combine theatre, music, dancing, creative writing and visual arts represent the part of preschool and primary school that brings creativity, imagination and endless cooperation into the classroom. They usually take place in the scope of activities of interest and often as part of the curriculum and daily activities in the classroom. Teachers and children combine their strengths and pleasure with the help of different knowledge and skills, while they end their work with an important event – the show. In these projects, it is important to trust the children and their skills. A child should do research on his own and seek for answers and possible creative solutions by himself, while adults have to ensure a rich and encouraging environment and need to preserve and develop children’s ideas. Even when we are focusing on the show preparations, we must not forget that we are working with children instead of professionals. Therefore, we must maintain their ease, spontaneity and their joy for playing. A child must be given a chance to express his intimate world in the show and to communicate with the audience in a direct, individual and relaxed way. We must not forget how important the video camera is. With the help of the teacher, children can become successful cameramen or fitters already in the first triad of the nine-year primary school.



Show for the classmates.
(foto: Ivanka Svetec)

Puppet show with
paper puppets.
(foto: Majda Janjevski)



They can be completely trusted in this field, as they will soon become better than us. One can also feel the excitement, when the group is preparing to watch the videotape of the show. For children, watching themselves on television is uncommon and attractive. They can observe their own creativity, which will raise their self-esteem. When working with older children, teachers may decide to use a specific text. However, before dealing with a text, a lot of practice in improvisation and acting with different characters, themes and in different environment is required. The show must also include scene preparations, musical accompaniment and light effects, therefore children should be given a chance to prove their skills in this field as well. Music performers, scenographers, light technicians, puppet, scene and costume designers – let us discover and encourage their talent. When children take responsibility for specific elements of the show, they will gain additional knowledge and experience. Cooperation between the actors and the backstage team is another unforgettable experience.

With the help of creative drama, theatre art can be taught and/or learning can be motivated and expanded on other fields. Children learn how to take responsibility, make group decisions, work collaboratively, develop new interests and find new information. The theatre with its expressive elements therefore connects contents from various fields of the curriculum.

Analysis of Puppet Activity Recordings

1. Little Ones With Thumbs (22 – 29 months and 10 – 11 years)

We always carry the simplest kind of puppets with us. Two dots for eyes, a nose and a mouth on our palm and the puppet is done. And not only one puppet, but two. At the beginning, some children are just curiously looking at the puppets and getting familiar with them, while other children are already talking with the two new persons. The videotape shows that one boy is already creating a story and forming a dialog between the two puppets. Although his words are unclear, we can see that a story with two characters is present. This is the first step towards a child's personal creativity – a small puppet a child trusts and gradually uses it for communication with peers and the preschool teacher. His message is directed directly at the puppet and indirectly at the teacher.

The language of nonverbal communication is an encouragement for a child's speaking development and a bridge for creating new words and the developing of imagination.

Once the little ones have grown, the palm puppets take the role of a mediator in communication with adults. The children add a sock for a hat, a scarf for clothes and play the show for audience.



2. Puppets on Sticks (2 - 4 and 3 - 4 years)

When making puppets, the help of a preschool teacher is important for solving practical problems, while the children should be able to choose the material and form the puppet themselves. When dealing with younger children, one should not focus on the looks of the puppet but on the child's projection of emotions, experiences and the inclusion of his own ideas. Making their very own puppet enables children to establish a relationship with the character at the very beginning and design the puppet according to their own ideas. The child animates the puppet as soon as it receives the first image. For a child, a small newspaper ball on a stick is already stimulating enough to animate the puppet in the room, besides the table or in a playing centre... The child is not thinking about a stage or a screen, the puppet becomes alive immediately and spontaneous playing can begin. This game is a step towards creating a show and performing in front of peers. The performance is important for the development of a child's self-esteem and creativity.

3. Finger Puppets (4 years)

Children love to play with already manufactured puppets in the puppet centre and will lively and emotionally play with them in spontaneous puppet shows.

A dynamic play is taking place, in which two children are playing constantly, while others occasionally join in. The teacher observes the game and does not interrupt it.

4. We Were Looking for the Dark and We Chased Away the Fear (4 - 4.5 years)

Puppet play and drama play were the basis for a holistic project dealing with fear, which was being implemented in preschool for 3 months. In the story about the chicken Chick, a small chicken looking for its mother, children faced different emotions: joy, sadness, fear and anger. They were sensitively guided in research, creating, self-expressing, putting themselves in the role of different characters and creating the show.

Who would have thought that children at the age of three and four are capable of something like this? They, as the youngest group in preschool, prepared a "real show" with musical accompaniment for older friends from other groups. Of course, the children had stage fright and were not as relaxed as when they were playing spontaneously in the centres. However, the support and encouragement of an adult during preparations and the performance helped the children to raise their self-esteem and to realize that they can do it. One can feel that something important is about to happen, the puppet players are excited and playful, while the viewers are curiously following the play. It is important to mention that the show

In kindergarden with my little friend Bine.
(foto: Helena Korošec)





We were looking for the dark and we chased away the fear.
(foto: Anita Slakonja)

has been repeated several times, so that all children could be in the play. Each of them has found something for himself in spontaneous or guided activities.

However, the show did not start or end with the puppet. According to the videotape, the whole room was one large theatre full of creativity. The ancient theatre of shadows still works like magic for today's children. What is more, it offers them many kinds of expressions and reveals numerous new signs of communication.

Children need an acceptable way to express their emotions. The perfect way for this is playing with puppets. The puppet, a child's alter ego, expresses fears, frustrations and conflicts, which the child can live out through puppet scenes and can therefore more easily cope with them. The puppet of the bogeyman can even chase away the fears that sneak into children's rooms at night.

5. Billy, That is My Nose! (3 – 4 years)

How can 3 to 4 year olds learn a foreign language? Billy is teacher's indispensable assistant during lessons of English. Children easily remember English words and quickly learn English poems while playing. The tape shows that children are fully engrossed in the expectation of Billy to peak out of the sack. Sleepy head! They are calling "Wake up Billy" in English. Billy does not understand Slovene.

The teacher is in the background, but is aware of the fact that the puppet is making it easier for her to establish a contact with children. The puppet increases their motivation. All the children are cooperating, everyone wishes the frog would touch him, give him a kiss or hug him. Billy is their favourite puppet that connects the whole group. He is their friend, confidant and the one that occasionally does silly things and makes the teacher angry. In this way, children are not only learning English, they also realize that nobody really knows all the words of their language. Their insecurity when searching for words and pronouncing them disappears completely. Nobody can imagine English lessons without Billy, not even the teacher.

6. Hop in the Pot! (6 – 7 years)

Teacher and children have successfully connected the curricular subject nature with a puppet play. The subject about a vegetable garden has stimulated them to prepare a "vegetable theatre". During lessons, children have individually or in groups prepared short scenes, which they have acted out for each other. The actors improvise the story as they go along and are "their own directors". The poor pot is already so hungry that he is completely weakened. Even the ladle cannot help him. Luckily, the colourful garden company is there to help him. Paprika, leek, potato, tomato and carrot cannot decide who should be the first one to jump in the pot. Each of them



thinks it is the most important ingredient and wants to be the first to jump in. Finally, they reach an agreement and the pot is full...

During the play, they have revised the subject matter and the song they sang in music lesson, besides that they have developed imagination, creativity and the manner of speaking spontaneously. They have also been developing their skills of cooperation.

7. Table Theatre – Shows With Toys

(4 – 5 years, 6 – 7 years, 10 – 11 years)

With little imagination, stuffed animals can become alive in a real puppet show. The videotape shows three different groups playing with them: the youngest – 4 to 5 years – 1st class of primary school – 6 to 7 years – and 10 to 11 year-olds in the last group.

The first show is a reconstruction of the story about Tacek Pacek.

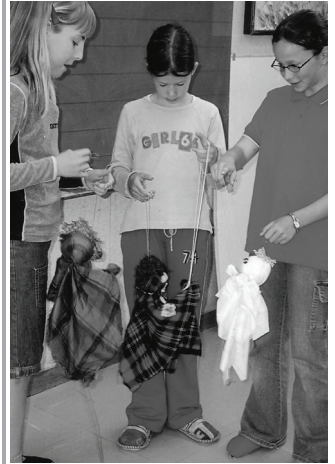
Children are eager to organise the playing space by themselves. Fabric of different colours marks different locations. Children choose toys by themselves and the game is spontaneously developing into a structured play – performing for the audience. The toys are excellently animated in the table theatre, where the puppet is the animator's (child's) playing partner. The communication between children is exceptional. They have divided roles and discussed the course of the story by themselves. Throughout the whole play, the girl that took the leading role has led and directed other players, she has even corrected them ("No, you must throw them all..." or "No, it is not your turn..."). The girl has in some way taken the role of the director. The tape also shows a girl, who is usually pretty shy. While playing with a puppet, she has completely relaxed and has been overwhelmed by imagination and playing. This shows that a puppet represents protection for a shy child and enables him to join a group more easily. All children have cooperated in the play; they have been reaching agreements and creating the story together. The audience has been carefully watching the show.

Later on, a show with a beginning, a twist and an ending takes place on the classroom stage. The boys are taking the plot for the story from their imagination. A rabbit and an elephant would like to play together, but how? One is quicker and the other one heavier. What kind of ending would be expected in reality and what is possible in the show?

Fourth-graders are playing a story that represents a current topic in their everyday life – being in love. Likes and dislikes, responses and complications. This is a show with a conflict, which is solved in favour of both characters.

8. A Frog in Love (5 – 6 years)

For introduction and motivation, the teacher has prepared a dialog between a frog in love and a duck. Each of them tells the story from

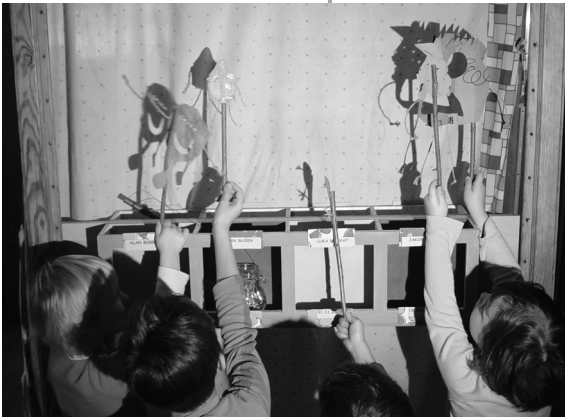


Group is preparing a show.
(foto: Karmen Kandare)

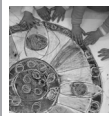
its point of view. The frog likes to perform and brags in front of the children. The duck, however, is shy and hides in the bag. The puppets draw the attention of children, who stop playing and come to the teacher, who then reads the whole story. Afterwards, children can play with both puppets. Using the puppets – the girls identify with the duck – the children are talking with the teacher. Surprisingly, a girl, who rarely cooperates in communication, is relaxed and is fluently speaking as the duck. She got emotionally attached to the duck and is not letting go of it.

Children have eagerly made their own puppets from paper bags and have later recreated the story. Three girls have grown into the story they are playing. All the time, one of them guides the course of the story. The scene is improvised as they go along, they organise different scenes (the duck's home, the puddle) and change their roles during the play. Another interesting play is the show of a boy, who is having difficulties speaking in Slovenian. He has animated two puppets at the same time, has expressed himself easily and has together with his co-player changed the story several times. The motivation for the play was very strong and the concentration very long. Even after the audience has left, their play continued. The boy's play proves that expressing oneself through art enables easier and faster inclusion of children with different cultural background. Surpassing language communication enables easier and quality cooperation among children.

They also performed for younger children in preschool, who have afterwards expressed the wish to do a puppet show as well.



Fear, anger, joy and sadness
in shadow play.
(foto: Anita Slakonja)



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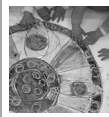
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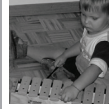
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About the Authors

Bogdana Borota, born in 1962, is a music pedagogue. After working as music teacher in primary and music schools she becomes a senior lecturer at the Faculty of Education Koper, University of Primorska. Her research and work attention are focused on preschool education, music creativity and ICT. As lecturer she participates in the music and pedagogic conference.



Vesna Geršak, born in 1972, spent several years implementing the method of creative movement as a class teacher in primary school. She was the coordinator of the EU Comenius project in the Primary School Spodnja Idrija, where her experiences have been upgraded and widened also in Sweden, Portugal and Great Britain.



In 2003, she got employed by the Faculty of Education Koper at the University of Primorska and by the Faculty of Education at the University of Ljubljana as an Assistant Lecturer for the field of dancing expression. She lectures at departments for Nursery Education, Class Teaching and Special and Rehabilitation Education.

Her field of research is creative movement as a holistic method of teaching and learning in preschool and primary school. She is finishing a Master's Degree on this topic at the Faculty of Sports, University of Ljubljana. Her bibliography lists several scientific and professional articles and conference articles. She also works as a choreographer for dancing groups and was granted international recognition in this field.

Helena Korošec was born in Ljubljana in 1969. She worked as a teacher in primary school for several years. All this time she was trying to find different creative ways how to use puppets and drama as a teaching tool, and as a learning medium.



She is now teaching Puppetry and Drama as a higher lecturer at the Faculty of Education, University of Ljubljana and University of Primorska.

She leads puppetry and creative drama workshops for primary school and preschool teachers in Slovenia and abroad. She is author of 'Joy of Creative Drama Workshops in Schools' (a handbook for teachers) and editor of 'The Puppet from Kindergarten to School' (collections about using puppets in preschool and primary school).

In 2004 she defended a Master's degree entitled 'Symbolic play with puppets – the way of communication in the class' at Faculty of Education, University of Ljubljana.

She writes articles focusing on using puppets in education and on influence of puppet's play on child's development. She is a periodic member of the international UNIMA commission "Puppets in Education". She works on doctoral dissertation focusing on 'Creative Puppetry in Education focusing on child's emotional, social and intellectual development'.



Edvard Edi Majaron, born 1940 in Ljubljana, Slovenia. After studies at The Academy for Music Ljubljana he had finished postgraduate study of violoncello and puppetry at AMU in Prague.

He worked as freelance puppet-director and musician–cellist. In 1979 – 84 he was artistic manager in Puppet theatre Ljubljana and later founded a new puppet group Freyer Teater.

He directed over 80 shows in different professional puppet theatres in Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia&Herzegovina, Poland, Byelorussia, Italy...His directions on texts of Aristophanes and Shakespeare until contemporary authors for adults and for children are recognisable through engaged message to the contemporary audience, using different kinds of puppets, supposed to alive actor in metaphorical function. Great number of them was presented at important international festivals. He founded the International puppet festival LUTKE in Ljubljana and was a member of Executive Committee UNIMA from 1980 until 2000, collaborating especially in Commissions for Professional training and Research.

From 1991 he teaches as full professor for Puppetry students of different departments at the University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Education, as so as at the University of Primorska in Koper/Capodistria and at the Art Academy in Osijek/Croatia. He holds workshops "Communication by puppets" for pre-school teachers and primary school teachers in Slovenia, Croatia and Italy. As a member of the international UNIMA commission "Puppets in Education" he is a messenger for the new position of arts in educational process as the most important didactic principle. Beside, he had lectures and workshops "Importance of the Theatre and Puppets" at the universities in Bari (Italy) and Oulu (Finland). He writes articles on the Aesthetics of Puppet Art, History of Puppetry in Slovenia and on the Inclusion of the Puppets in schooling, printed in periodic and books, i.e.:

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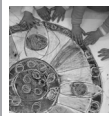
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MUSIC, DANCING AND PUPPETS IN CHILD'S PLAY

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Because of the traditional subject division (from preschool on) of individual arts and academic fields and today's general productivity orientation, the present handbook is a brave challenge for the creative linkage of contents and experts from artistic as well as academic fields.

(Assoc. Prof. Dr. Breda Kroflič, Ph. D.)

The authors represent individual types of art in the aspect of the child's developmental characteristics and needs; at the same time they emphasize the importance of the synthesis of different art types, which would broaden the horizon of the child's artistic experiences, influence the child's holistic development and creativity orientation. .

(Full Prof. Dr. Breda Oblak, Ph.D.)

... means of art are often intertwined, especially in scenic arts. This has to guide and support us in the implementation of the intertwining principle in praxis, together with the meaningful emancipation of art types, which should be given a more important position in contemporary preschool and primary school. Art types should not only be seen as forms of artistic expression, but also as an everyday form of communication between the preschool/primary school teacher and children.

(Full Prof. Edi Majaron, spec.)



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