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Art-based Help Approach in Social Learning Activities

POVZETEK – *Pristop pomoči z umetnostjo obsega širok spekter dejavnosti, ki jih strokovni delavci v vzgoji in izobraževanju lahko uporabijo pri socialnem učenju otrok in mladostnikov: likovne dejavnosti, dramatizacijo, glasbene dejavnosti, plesno-gibalne dejavnosti, besedno umetnost. Pristop je v akcijski raziskavi Plavčakove (2020) izkazan kot učinkovit pri socialnem učenju učencev z lažjo motnjo v duševnem razvoju s pridruženimi težavami, še posebej s pomočjo dejavnosti z lutko, likovnih dejavnosti in iger vlog. Viri drugih raziskav učinkovitost pristopa razširjajo na otroke in mlade v različnih stiskah ali z različnimi težavami. Pristop namreč posameznikom omogoča nove možnosti izražanja sebe, deluje sproščujoče, prinaša zadovoljstvo s seboj in v skupini, omogoča priložnosti sodelovanja in druženja, spodbudno vpliva na razvoj možganov, zabava, spodbuja domišljijo, deluje terapevtsko, izboljša občutke varnosti, komunikacijo, sposobnost empatije idr. Vse našteto direktno ali posredno vpliva na razvijanje socialne kompetence, zato je pristop priporočljiv za uporabo pri vseh deležnikih, ki imajo težave v socialnih spretnostih. Prispevek poda predlog, da se načrt pomoči in podpore s socialnim učenjem oblikuje in izvaja timsko, lahko tudi v sodelovanju z zunanjimi sodelavci.*

ABSTRACT – *The art-based help approach encompasses a wide range of activities that education professionals can use in the social learning of children and adolescents: fine arts activities, dramatisation, music activities, dance and movement activities, word art. The action research study by Plavčak (2020) has shown the approach to be effective in social learning for students with mild intellectual disabilities and associated difficulties, especially through puppet activities, fine arts activities and role-play. Other research sources extend the effectiveness of the approach to children and young people with different needs or difficulties. The approach offers individuals new ways of expressing themselves; it is relaxing; brings satisfaction with themselves and with the group; provides opportunities for cooperation and socialising; stimulates brain development; is fun; stimulates the imagination; is therapeutic; improves the sense of security, communication, empathy, etc. All of the above have a direct or indirect impact on the development of social competence and the approach is therefore recommended to be used by all who have difficulties with social skills. The paper proposes that the design and implementation of social learning support should be carried out in a team, possibly in collaboration with external collaborators.*

1 Introduction

In this paper, we present the art-based help approach which, along with other approaches, was applied in the action research (AR) of the author's PhD thesis (Plavčak, 2020). Different approaches were used to promote the social skills of students with mild intellectual disabilities (MID) and associated difficulties during special education social learning activities (SLAs) within an adapted programme with a lower educational standard (APLES).

In the literature review, we present the results of other research studies and practitioners' experiences regarding the integrity and effectiveness of the art-based help approach. In the methodological part we confirm them with the results of the AR. We added a new qualitative analysis of the implementation of the SLAs in each research group of students in order to identify the frequency and effectiveness of the art-based activities.

This article provides a framework for studies that will introduce the art-based help approach in social learning for children and adolescents with various difficulties, and for practitioners who will use it in their educational work.

We present the following activities of the art-based help approach:
- □ fine arts activities,
- □ dramatisation,
- □ music activities,
- □ dance/movement activities and
- □ word art.

Fine arts activities

Losinski et al. (2016) advise that when working with children with behavioural difficulties, art activities should be part of their individualised plan, so that they are carried out in a collaborative way. Also, an 'art break' should be implemented during lessons. As far as possible, children should be allowed to be spontaneous and make their own choices when drawing.

Mynarikova (2012) draws on the findings of the AR, in which she implemented an art-based programme, including fine arts activities, for eight weeks with a group of 25 fifth-grade students. Her workshops helped the students to express those thoughts that they otherwise did not dare to put into words. They also made progress in the areas of self-confidence, expressing their identity, being more satisfied with the classroom climate, improving their sense of security, etc.

Dramatisation

In the area of dramatisation, we outline role-plays, puppetry and social games.

Humar et al. (2017/18) make suggestions for social training workshops for persons with mental health problems. These include many role-plays to help participants to get to know each other, relax, communicate more easily, reduce social distance, etc.

Building on inclusion theory, Vitalaki et al. (2018) conducted an AR for primary school pupils that also used role-plays. The results were encouraging, with the pupils showing progress in their socio-emotional development, including the area of self-awareness.

Novak (2021) included 233 adolescents aged between 12 and 16 in a study. 84 adolescents in the sample participated in theatre games. They differed from the other adolescents in the sample in that they rated themselves higher on their communication

skills, integration and functioning in a peer group, ability to follow the rules and norms of society, etc.

Bernier and O'Hara (2005) consider the puppet to be an extraordinary tool and motivator for persons with special needs, as it brings new energy and a new medium to which the child can express his or her feelings without feeling guilty. According to Majaron (2000), the child trains his/her manual dexterity and artistic sensitivity by making the puppet, and overcomes any shyness in playing with it.

Aiswarya and Hameed (2021) showed that 16 children with moderate intellectual disabilities (aged 12 to 14) in an experimental group improved their language expression skills.

Andromeda and Hardianti (2019) performed a puppet show three times for 9 students who bullied their peers with disabilities, demonstrating appropriate behaviour. At the end of the experiment, these students were less inclined to bully their disabled classmates than before.

Korošec and Batistič Zorec (2021, p. 28) claim that "daily use of puppets is one factor that greatly contributes to the social development of children" and advise teachers to "follow a process-oriented and development approach, and use the puppet according to the principles of creative drama".

An example of a social game is "Body Language". In the game students with MID were identifying their body language by trying out different facial expressions, postures, etc. The use of this social game has shown positive changes in the area of cooperation, the ability to observe, etc. (Plavčak, 2014).

Plummer (2008) notes that these games are non-competitive, which is extremely important for those children with social development problems who find it more difficult to overcome defeat.

When introducing social games, it is essential that the teacher first observes the students, analyses their characteristics and draws up a plan of work (e.g., objectives, location). They can be carried out by the class teacher, the counsellor, or alternately by both; it is advisable for them to work together and discuss their experiences and observations of their work and of the students' progress. The games are also analysed after the actual performance with the students themselves, so they can reflect on their experience (Dokmanac, 2018).

Pogorevc Merčnik (2014, p. 111) established that "it is possible that students learn constructive forms of behaviour, which include managing social skills through social games, as these are activities that enable the individual to be acquainted with the experience of another individual and to learn how a particular inappropriate behaviour affects another person. Such empirical experiences encourage students to behave in a way that ensures other students their well-being. This is the behaviour which we call tolerant, friendly, humane, and which we want students to use in class".

Music activities

Kuzma (2004) introduced music activities to a 9-year-old boy with special needs over a period of nine months – in one-on-one work and when he was included in a group.

At the end of the intervention, the boy showed better concentration and the related mastery of multiplication tables, as well as better study habits, learning performance, etc.

Zanjkovič (2012) implemented music activities together with social games weekly in music education at a primary school with APLES, with 7 pupils (combined 1st, 2nd and 3rd grade sections). The pupils interacted well with each other, which improved contact making and friendship building.

Even in the case of more severe mental problems, the results are favourable. This was shown, for example, in a study by Mulej Legat (2016), in which a sample of 8 adolescents aged 16–25 with severe intellectual disabilities was played music from different musical eras over a period of 10 months. The music had a mostly positive effect, which could be seen in the emotions of the adolescents: e.g., they became calmer and had fewer stereotypical hand movements.

Dance/movement activities

To illustrate and give examples of dance and movement activities, we would like to cite the following games: Donkey, Who's Riding You, Dancing with Headscarves, Baking a Nut Roll, etc. (Schmidt, 2002).

Erdeš (2017) included in her case study a girl aged 8 and a half with developmental difficulties, with whom she conducted dance workshops individually and in a group. The girl made progress in her motor skills, was more accepted by her peers than before, and found it easier to cooperate and make friends.

Also, children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) were found to benefit from these activities. Meyer LeFeber (2009) considers that movement is the key to the world for these children, as they have typical self-stimulatory behaviour, etc. She found good results in two case studies of two girls with ASD: the 3-year-old girl started to express herself verbally after the introduction of dance therapy, while the 11-year-old girl started to actively participate in the group with spontaneous movements.

Zadnik (2021, p. 60) notes that "dance/movement activity has always had its therapeutic effects". She found that "BFDs [Bach Flower Dances] can be an alternative approach to supporting the learning process in any subject area". Bach Flower Dances are "circle dances, based on the Latvian folk-dance tradition, danced to Latvian or world folk music…" (Geng, 1999, as cited in Zadnik, 2021, p. 61).

Word art

In this paper, we will describe word art in terms of the use of social fairy tales and therapeutic writing.

Fairy tales offer many opportunities to interact with children, socialise, strengthen group relationships, etc. (Rutar, 2008).

Practitioners can choose fairy tales that relate to children's life stories so that they can identify with them more easily. For example, Rogač (2005) wrote a fairy tale in

which the main character is deaf, and Akerman (2009) wrote a story about Isabella, the princess who stammered.

Fairy tales can also have the effect of relaxing children, giving them hope, etc. Rutar (2008) explains that the therapeutic effect of a fairy tale occurs when it helps a child to cope with emotional distress or problems.

Klobučar (2011) has compiled a list of social fairy tales that teachers can use as a tool for teaching special education social skills (SESSs) in primary schools with APLES.

A study by Jelovčan et al. (2020, p. 34) showed that "the kind of activities that combine movement, sound and imaginative content from a fairy tale are of paramount importance for multi-layered experiences". The findings are important because children in such integrating activities experience positive feelings, playfulness, etc.

Ažman (2009) pointed out that therapeutic writing is a remarkable form of self-healing for depression and traumatic events. She explained that this type of writing can be done as writing for oneself, writing to others, or writing for the public.

To give you an idea of the types of support available for children with special needs, here are two examples. The first is a boy with Asperger's Syndrome who wrote stories about himself under the guidance of a clinical psychologist (Schmidt et al., 2017). The second is 15-year-old Christopher Boon who wrote a detective story about a murdered dog in a neighbour's yard under the guidance of a teacher (Haddon, 2004). Both cases involved expressing oneself through writing and refining events that had a significant impact on the development of the individual.

However, writing is not a leisure activity that all students would choose. For example, Poženel and Žgur (2018, p. 48) conclude that students with MID "mainly choose sport activities, the media or games because these activities are not exhausting and students do not need to think too much in order to perform them".

Therefore, if writing becomes therapeutic, it must come from an individual's area of strength.

2 Research questions and methods

Research questions

In this paper, we present the AR (Plavčak, 2020) in terms of the research question as to which approaches have been found to be effective in promoting the social skills of students in primary schools with APLES, and focus on the use and effectiveness of the art-based help approach with additional research questions:

☐ Has an art-based activity been used in each research group? YES/NO

If YES:

☐ In how many lessons (out of a total of 35 lessons) was each art-based activity used at least once during the lesson?

☐ At the end of the survey, was each art-based activity rated as one of the most effective activities?

□ Has a particular art-based activity been used outside the classroom (e.g., in individual interviews)?

□ For the particular art-based activities, we have taken into account the activities presented in the theoretical part of this paper.

Participants

The sample included 3 research groups of students in a primary school with APLES: a combined class of grades 1 to 3 (Group AA), a combined class of grades 4 to 5 (Group AB), and grade 4 (Group AC). A total of 12 students, 6 girls and 6 boys, aged 7–14, were included.

All students were diagnosed with MID and had other associated problems or disorders. In the following we list those disorders that were observed throughout the AR and indicate in parentheses the number of students in whom they occurred: fragile X chromosome (1); ASD or a presumption of ASD (1); hearing and vision impairments (1); intensive emotional and behavioural problems (11); intensive learning problems (5); concentration and attention disorders (with or without hyperactivity) (6); speech difficulties (3); Down syndrome (1); physical development difficulties (1); a presumption of moderate intellectual disability (7). Thus, almost all students had co-occurring emotional and behavioural problems, while half had concentration and attention disorders (with or without hyperactivity) and a presumption of moderate intellectual disability.

On average, the students in the sample had 3 problems or disorders associated with MID. Only one student had no associated problems or disorders, while two students had 5 or 6 associated problems or disorders.

Procedure

The AR (Plavčak, 2020) was carried out in the school year 2013/14. According to the curriculum, we carried out the SLA for 1 hour/week, a total of 35 weeks in the school year.

We initially set the action steps according to the special education SLA curriculum, and then adapted the approaches to the students and the observations of all involved.

The approaches used to promote children's social skills included: counselling; the puppetry approach; fine arts activities; role-plays; social and cooperative games; learning sheets; visual presentations of emotional and social problem solving; emotion recognition thumbnails; e-materials; students' self-presentations; dance and movement activities, relaxation activities, etc.

We collected the data in an action diary, which included the participants' consent, the recording of lessons, reflections and evaluations of each action step, etc.

We qualitatively and interpretively analysed each group at the level of the group and of each individual in it. We compared the social skills of each student before and after the study, as well as the group dynamics. This resulted in 3 group case studies and 12 student case studies.

In order to answer the new research questions in this paper, we have carried out a new qualitative analysis of the records of the implementation of the special education SLA for each research group separately.

3 Results

The results of the AR (Plavčak, 2020) showed that 9 out of 12 students made at least minimal progress in their social skills with the help of the implemented approaches. The 3 students who did not, however, maintained their development level. Positive changes were achieved in collaboration with parents and teachers. The most effective approaches were: puppetry, fine arts activities, individual counselling, games (board games, cooperative games, social games), and teaching strategies for understanding each other, appropriate behaviour and values. The art-based help approach is represented by puppetry, fine arts activities, social games and cooperative games (role-plays are included under cooperative games).

The new qualitative data analysis provides a deeper and more concrete insight into the results. We re-analysed the records of the special education SLA by reviewing all the SLA lessons in all the research groups and answering the research questions. We present the results for the first three research questions in a comparative table, and then provide further explanatory notes. The answer to the fourth question will be descriptive.

For all groups, role-plays proved to be one of the most effective approaches, as well as the puppetry approach.

The younger students (Group AA) showed that they needed more fine arts activities (drawing, painting, crafting, etc.) to express themselves, while social games were effective in Group AB. We interpret that as younger students needing more methods for expressing themselves, while social games are a suitable method for conflict resolution, which was typical in Group AB.

Group AC excelled in puppetry skills, which helped the students to overcome their negative self-image, as they were all negatively evaluated at the end of the school year.

Social fairy tales proved to be effective for both Group AA and Group AC. As described above, in Group AB we dealt mainly with interpersonal relationships and thus had our own life situations to act out. In Groups AA and AC, there were no such situations (or the students were at a too low development level for this approach) and so we chose general social themes from social fairy tales.

The music enriched the movement activities greatly or simply served as a background when the students were drawing.

We did not use therapeutic writing because the students did not show an interest in writing.

It can be concluded that we chose activities based on the students' strengths, and then continued to discover and build on these strengths.

Table 1

Responses to the research questions on the use of particular art-based activities in each research group

Art-based activity	(1) Was the art-based activity used? (2) In how many lessons was the art-based activity used at least once during a social learning lesson? (3) Was the art-based activity rated as one of the most effective approaches at the end of the research?		
Art-based activity	*Group AA*	*Group AB*	*Group AC*
Fine arts activities	(1) YES (2) In 12 lessons. (3) YES	(1) NO	(1) NO
Role-plays as acting out life situations	(1) YES (2) In 5 lessons. (3) YES	(1) YES (2) In 3 lessons. (3) YES	(1) YES (2) In 2 lessons. (3) YES
Role-plays as theatre performances	(1) NO	(1) NO	(1) NO
Social interactions with a puppet	(1) YES (2) In 6 lessons. (3) YES	(1) YES (2) In 2 lessons. (3) YES	(1) YES (2) In 2 lessons. (3) YES
Puppet shows	(1) NO	(1) NO	(1) YES (2) In 2 lessons. (3) YES
Social games	(1) YES (2) In 6 lessons. (3) NO	(1) YES (2) In 3 lessons. (3) YES	(1) YES (2) In 6 lessons. (3) NO
Music activities	(1) YES (2) In 2 lessons. (3) NO	(1) YES (1) In 1 lesson. (3) NO	(1) YES (2) In 3 lessons. (3) NO
Dance/movement activities	(1) YES (2) In 2 lessons. (3) YES	(1) YES (2) In 2 lessons. (3) NO	(1) YES (2) In 3 lessons. (3) YES
Social fairy tales	(1) YES (2) In 3 lessons. (3) NO	(1) YES (2) In 4 lessons. (3) NO	(1) YES (2) In 7 lessons. (3) YES
Therapeutic writing	(1) NO	(1) NO	(1) NO

Note: The AR included all art-based activities, with the exception of theatre performances and therapeutic writing.

To the fourth research question of whether the activity of the art-based approach was used outside the classroom, the following answers can be extracted from the analysis of the SLA scenarios:

□   Student 4 (Group AA) was in the puppetry club;
□   Student 8 (Group AB) was in the choir;

☐ Student 9 (Group AB) expressed herself in a one-on-one interview by drawing;

☐ Students 10, 11 and 12 (the entire Group AC) took part in the puppetry club.

The data shows that the puppetry club was the most represented outside the special education SLA. Every student who attended the puppetry club showed positive changes in self-esteem and self-confidence. It is also evident that we used the expression of the self through drawing in the case of Student 9, who was characterised by a general lack of attendance and a general unresponsiveness to invitations to participate. The drawing facilitated the counselling conversation with her.

4 Discussion

Plavčak's research (2020) is in line with other studies that have found a positive impact of an art-based help approach on children with special needs, e.g., Aiswarya and Hameed (2021). Although some activities of this approach were more effective than others, each activity contributed to the final result.

A further analysis of the holistic art-based help approach in this article enriches Plavčak's research (2020) by finding that, in addition to the characteristics of the students, their age and the problems they are dealing with at the time also play a role in the choice of approaches. Indeed, Group AB showed the most problems related to the period of adolescence, while Group AC showed problems with the learning requirements. In both cases, the puppet proved to be an extraordinary medium for establishing a trusting relationship and resolving problems, according to Rutar (2008).

We interpret the limitation of the research as the fact that approaches were introduced into the groups that the author had either learnt about or that were based on the author's own strengths. If we could design and carry out the activities in a team, the approaches would be expected to be more varied and even more tailored to the students. Mulej Legat (2016) invited an outside performer to her experimental group to play classical music for the students. We think this is a good suggestion for further research. At some points in the SLA process, however, external collaborators did become involved in the process of supporting the students and chose their own activities; in Group AC, the fine arts activity was carried out by a voluntary association (this is not marked in the comparison table because it was not the author's choice to implement this approach). This activity is a good example of integrating the environment into the classroom. However, the integration of the students into the environment is evident at the point where students perform a puppet show in an institution outside the school.

A brief analysis of the associated problems in the research sample showed that almost all the students had associated emotional and behavioural problems, and we think that SLA should include more dance/movement activities, as well as more music activities. As Meyer LeFeber (2009) has written, movement is the key to the world for these students. So, there is an additional argument for future research to appoint a team of diverse professionals as the research implementers.

5 Conclusion

The present results provide guidance for practitioners to take an art-based help approach when working with children with social skills deficits. Although the study is based on a sample of children with MID and associated difficulties, we are aware that these children are not the only ones with these difficulties. Every child or adolescent who is in some distress needs help and support approaches.

In an era of inclusive schools, some children with special needs are included in mainstream primary schools and receive extra specialist support; we pay particular attention to these children. Times of uncertainty (e.g., the COVID-19 epidemic, price increases) and the digital society can exacerbate certain types of distress, whether in the real or the virtual world. In the educational process, professionals are in contact with students for several hours each day, so they can discuss thoroughly as a professional team any unusual observations they may have about students, and together develop a support plan. The art-based help approach, which has been shown to be comprehensive and effective in the study by Plavčak (2020), can serve as a guiding principle for them.

The paper concludes that social learning should also include approaches that have not been shown to be the most effective in Plavčak's research study (2020), such as dance and music activities. The effectiveness of approaches may be reflected differently in different groups; the key message is that support plans should be designed by a team, as this can lead to a diversity of approaches and thus to greater opportunities to develop social learning in students. Opportunities to involve collaborators from the school environment in social learning, or to involve students in the environment, should not be overlooked.

Dr. Darja Plavčak

Pristop pomoči z umetnostjo pri dejavnostih socialnega učenja

Pristop pomoči z umetnostjo je celovit pristop socialnega učenja, saj obsega naslednje dejavnosti: likovne dejavnosti, dramatizacijo, glasbene dejavnosti, plesno-gibalne dejavnosti in besedno umetnost. Vsaka izmed njih ponuja številne možnosti, da se pri posameznikih spodbujajo spretnosti komunikacije, sposobnost empatije, izražanje sebe, občutki varnosti idr. Vse našteto direktno ali posredno vpliva na razvoj socialne kompetence, ki je v socialnem razvoju ključna, še posebej za osebe s posebnimi potrebami.

Likovne dejavnosti so medij, preko katerega lahko posamezniki ustvarjalno in lažje izražajo svoje misli in čustva. Mynarikova (2012) je v svoji akcijski raziskavi pri skupini petošolcev ugotovila, da so s pomočjo likovnih in drugih dejavnosti (uporabila je kombinacijo pristopov) učenci postali bolj samozavestni, lažje so izražali svojo identiteto, bolj so bili zadovoljni z razredno klimo itd. Losinski idr. (2016) svetujejo, naj bodo likovne dejavnosti del individualiziranega programa za učence z vedenjskimi težavami, in sicer v sodelovanju z učencem. Prav tako naj bo v pouk integriran "likovni odmor". Kolikor je le mogoče, naj bodo učenci spontani pri ustvarjanju in sami izbirajo motive za risanje.

Na podoben način z dramatizacijo pridobimo nove priložnosti izražanja in socialne interakcije, preko katerih se širi socialni prostor. V dramatizacijo lahko umeščamo lutkovni pristop, igre vlog in socialne igre. Vse tri dejavnosti preko spontanega ali načrtovanega scenarija ponujajo možnosti prečiščevanja dogodkov, problemov, konfliktov ipd., s čimer udeleženci premagajo različne zadržke, npr. sramežljivost, nemotiviranost. Raziskave (npr. Andromeda in Hardianti, 2019; Dokmanac, 2018) so pokazale, da deležniki teh dejavnosti pridobijo boljše socialne spretnosti, npr. se naučijo primernejšega vedenja. Andromeda in Hardianti (2019) sta izvedla lutkovne predstave na temo ustrahovanja vrstnikov, preko katerih sta dosegla, da so učenci manj ustrahovali svoje vrstnike s posebnimi potrebami. Tudi vsakodnevna uporaba lutk pri pedagoškem delu pomembno vpliva na socialni razvoj otrok (Korošec in Batistič Zorec, 2021). Bernier in O'Hara (2005) menita, da je lutka za otroke s posebnimi potrebami motivacijsko sredstvo in orodje, preko katerega lahko izrazijo svoja čustva, ne da bi ob tem čutili krivdo. Raznolike vloge se lahko preigravajo tudi med posamezniki samimi. Učinkovitost uporabe iger vlog pri socialnem treningu so na primer izkazali Humar idr. (2017/18). Pojasnjujejo, da igre vlog udeležencem pomagajo, da se medsebojno spoznavajo, sprostijo, lažje komunicirajo itd. Vitalaki idr. (2018) k temu dodajajo, da se izboljša področje samozavedanja. Kot nadgradnja vsega naštetega so socialne igre, ki posameznikom preko strukturiranega in ciljno zasnovanega scenarija omogočajo uvid v področje čustvovanja ali na področje socialno in življenjsko pomembnih veščin. Primer socialne igre je igra "govorica telesa", preko katere udeleženci po navodilih vodje spoznavajo različne čustvene izraze na obrazu in držo telesa tako, da jo sami preizkusijo in reflektirajo. Pri učencih z lažjo motnjo v duševnem razvoju je to igro preizkusila Plavčakova (2014), s katero je pri učencih dosegla boljše medsebojno sodelovanje, boljše zmožnosti opazovanja idr. Tovrstne igre niso tekmovalne, kar je zelo dobrodošlo pri učencih, ki bi težje premagovali poraz (Plummer, 2008). Poudarjamo, da je treba po izvedbi socialne igre skupaj z udeleženci izvesti analizo, kaj so med igro doživeli. Če jo izvajamo skupaj s sodelavcem (ali izmenjaje), pa si moramo izmenjati izkušnje in opažanja, da tako bolj kakovostno spremljamo napredek udeležencev (Dokmanac, 2018).

Glasbene dejavnosti so lahko integrirane med druge aktivnosti, kot ozadje, lahko pa so uvedene samostojno. V vsakem primeru na posameznike vplivajo sproščujoče, blagodejno in terapevtsko. Avtorica Mulej Legat (2016) je pri mladostnikih s težko motnjo v duševnem razvoju s predvajanjem glasbe ob različnih aktivnostih, v obdobju 10 mesecev, dosegla izjemne učinke: učenci so bili bolj umirjeni, manj je bilo stereotipnih gibov z rokami itd. Zanjkovičeva (2012) je združila glasbene dejavnosti in socialne igre pri izvajanju glasbene umetnosti v prilagojenem vzgojno-izobraževalnem programu z nižjim izobrazbenim standardom. Učenci (7 učencev v kombiniranem oddelku 1., 2. in 3. razreda) so lažje vstopali v medsebojno interakcijo, izboljšal se je očesni stik med njimi, izboljšali so se tudi prijateljski odnosi.

S plesno-gibalno dejavnostjo, ki je pogosto izvajana v kombinaciji z glasbo, lahko dosegamo dobre rezultate v motoričnem razvoju, med deležniki pa se zmanjša socialna distanca, ki omogoča lažje sklepanje prijateljstev. Pri deklici z motnjo avtističnega spektra (MAS) so dosegli tudi pričetek besednega izražanja (Meyer LeFeber, 2009). Da je plesno-gibalna dejavnost vselej terapevtska, meni Zadnik (2021). Tovrstne dejavnosti so lahko zelo različne. Schmidt (2002) podaja primer naslednjih plesnih ali gibalnih iger: osliček, kdo te jaha, konjske dirke, ples z rutami, pečenje potičke, kdo manjka,

bugi-vugi idr. Zadnik (2021) opiše izkušnjo z izvajanjem t. i. Bachovih cvetnih plesov in ugotavlja, da je lahko tovrsten ples v podporo učnemu procesu.

V okviru besedne umetnosti orišemo socialne pravljice in terapevtsko pisanje. Socialne pravljice dosežejo terapevtski učinek, ko otroku pomagajo razreševati stiske in probleme (Rutar, 2008). Primer socialne pravljice je Izabela – pravljica o princeski, ki je jecljala, ki bi jo lahko uporabili pri delu z otrokom, ki ima tovrstno lastno življenjsko izkušnjo (Akerman, 2009). Terapevtsko pisanje lahko uvedemo pri posameznikih, ki se radi ukvarjajo s pisanjem in jim to področje predstavlja kreativno polje, preko katerega razčiščujejo svoje življenjske situacije (npr. Haddon, 2004).

Med preučevanjem raziskave Plavčakove (2020) smo si med drugim zastavili vprašanje o učinkovitosti pristopov spodbujanja socialnih spretnosti, ki smo jih uporabili v akcijski raziskavi (AR) v šolskem letu 2013/14 pri specialnopedagoški dejavnosti socialno učenje (SOU) pri učencih z lažjo motnjo v duševnem razvoju (LMDR) in s pridruženimi težavami, ki so vključeni v osnovno šolo s prilagojenim programom z nižjim izobrazbenim standardom (PPNIS). Med pristopi je bil uveden tudi pristop pomoči z umetnostjo. Uporabili smo vse v teoretičnem delu predstavljene dejavnosti (vsaj v eni izmed raziskovalnih skupin), razen terapevtskega pisanja in gledaliških iger. Pristop se je izkazal kot učinkovit predvsem pri likovnih dejavnostih, igrah vlog, socialnih igrah in dejavnostih z lutko (preigravanje problemskih situacij ali lutkovne predstave, ki so jih odigrali učenci sami).

V vzorec so bile vključene tri raziskovalne skupine učencev: skupina AA (kombinirani oddelek, 1.–3. razred), skupina AB (kombinirani oddelek, 4.–5. razred) in skupina AC (5. razred). Vsi učenci so bili otroci z LMDR, pridružene pa so imeli tudi druge težave ali motnje. Skoraj vsi učenci so imeli pridružene čustvene in vedenjske težave, polovica učencev pa tudi motnje pozornosti in koncentracije (s hiperaktivnostjo ali brez nje) in domnevo na zmerno motnjo v duševnem razvoju. V povprečju so se pri enem učencu sopojavljale 3 pridružene težave ali motnje (le ena učenka ni imela pridruženih težav, pri dveh učencih pa se jih je sopojavljalo celo 5 ali 6). Učenci so bili stari od 7 do 14 let.

Z dodatno kvalitativno analizo potekov izvedb socialnega učenja v sklopu tega članka smo ugotavljali, katere posamezne dejavnosti pristopa pomoči z umetnostjo so bile uporabljene v posamezni raziskovalni skupini, pri kolikšnem številu ur in ali so se izkazale za učinkovite ter ali so se uporabljale tudi izven učilnice. Iz primerjalne preglednice izpisanih podatkov ugotavljamo, da smo likovni pristop uporabili pri 12 urah v skupini AA; ocenili smo, da je ta pristop primeren za učence (glede na njihovo starost, interese, vedenje in na druge značilnosti v razvoju). Igre vlog smo uporabili v vseh raziskovalnih skupinah (v povprečju pri vsaki 3. uri) in so se pri vseh izkazale za učinkovite, saj so doprinesle k primernejšim vedenjskim strategijam. Socialne igre smo prav tako izvedli v vseh raziskovalnih skupinah (v povprečju pri vsaki 5. uri) in z njimi dosegli pozitiven učinek na komunikacijo, motivacijo idr. Najbolj izstopajoč je rezultat pri lutkovnem pristopu, saj smo dejavnosti z lutko izvajali pri vsaki skupini, v povprečju 3 ure, vendar največ v skupini AA (6 ur). Interpretiramo, da smo jih pri mlajših učencih uporabljali pogosteje, ker so potrebovali več interakcij z lutko – kot medijem, ki omogoča izražanje lastnih misli in potreb. Izven učilnice je bil lutkovni pristop uporabljen največkrat, in sicer pri 4 učencih (celotna skupina AC in ena učenka iz skupine AA), ki so bili vključeni v lutkovni krožek. Ena učenka je bila vključena v pevski zbor (glasbene dejavnosti), ena učenka pa je preko risbe (likovna dejavnost) izrazila svoje težave in

nam olajšala svetovalni pogovor z njo. Sklepna ugotovitev dodatne analize podatkov je, da so se sicer ene dejavnosti v zaključnem delu procesa izkazale za bolj učinkovite kot druge, vendar pa je bila na poti do cilja vsaka pomembna.

Pristop pomoči z umetnostjo se je izkazal kot celosten in učinkovit, daje pa še več možnosti, če se v procesu pomoči in podpore učencem s socialnimi primanjkljaji obliku- je in izvaja timsko. Na ta način se lahko uporabijo različna znanja in močna področja izvajalcev, ki so lahko tudi zunanji sodelavci. V raziskavi Plavčakove (2020) niso bile dovolj zastopane plesno-gibalne dejavnosti in glasbene dejavnosti, ki so se v drugih raziskavah izkazale kot zelo učinkovite, kar pomeni, da bi s timom v podobni raziskavi predvidoma lahko prišli do še boljših rezultatov (v tej raziskavi je doseglo pozitivne spremembe sicer 9 od 12 učencev, vendar smo kot pozitivno spremembo upoštevali zelo majhne napredke in celo dopolnitev diagnostike ali preusmeritev v lažji program).

Praktike usmerjamo, da tovrstnih pristopov pomoči z umetnostjo ne potrebujejo le otroci s posebnimi potrebami, ampak vsi učenci, ki so v raznolikih stiskah. V aktualnem času okrevanja po epidemiji covida-19 in v času drugih negotovosti (npr. požari zaradi podnebnih sprememb, podražitve) je treba biti še posebej pozoren na čustvovanja in vedenja otrok in pravočasno odreagirati. Najbolje je, če so tovrstni pristopi del vsa- kodnevne prakse vzgojno-izobraževalnih institucij in je njihovo delovanje pravzaprav preventivno.

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