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## ART AS A POTENTIAL FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING OF CHILDREN IN CHILD EDUCATION

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**Abstract:** The present research consists of approaching the importance of including Art and its different languages in Early Childhood Education, since it guarantees the potentialization of children's development and learning, by establishing internal and external connections, through the sensitive. Art, intertwined with education, is something that has been discussed for years, however, we still see stereotyped and mechanized productions in the classroom. This research comes as an attempt to break with these paradigms and demonstrate an education aimed at childhood, with different interactions, with the self, the other and the world around them, with freedom, curiosity, experiences and games, reaching, more effectively, children's development and meaningful learning.

**Keywords:** Early Childhood Education. Art. Development. Meaningful Learning.

## INTRODUCTION

Artistic expressions, such as drawing, dance, music, literature, theater, among others, are often not prioritized in the school environment, due to the overvaluation of some contents of "rational knowledge", ending up minimizing their importance. importance in child development, without realizing that the physical, mental and affective areas should not act separately, this means that the child cannot achieve a meaningful and effective learning if due attention is not given to the different ways the child experiences, perceives and knows. the world.

Critical performance in the world, self-knowledge, externalization of emotions, creativity, sensitivity, empathy, autonomy and recognition of differences, are some skills to be achieved in Early Childhood Education, and for them to make sense, the little ones need to establish external and internal connections, not linearly, but with comings and goings, with steps forward and others behind, in

a game of progressions and regressions, as Maldonado (1986) analyzes. Artistic manifestations strongly help in this aspect, because through them, children manipulate, position themselves, interact, create, establish relationships, in a variety of sensations, which guarantees security for them to fully develop.

In this sense, Howard Gardner (1996) presents human intelligence as a set of skills or "intelligences" that make up the mind, defending the view that art is highly interconnected to human development, since the child develops from of inner senses, presenting them as seeing, feeling and doing.

The various forms of artistic expression allow man to understand the context around him and relate to it, which can lead to new mental processes by provoking different ways of thinking and seeing everyday life. Art through language, interpretation, and representation of the world is a privileged form of human expression processes and an essential instrument for human development.

Specifically for Early Childhood Education, the National Curricular Reference was created, based on the Law of Directives and Bases for National Education (Law 9,394/96), in order to point out quality goals for educators, which contribute to the development of the child, with the objective of guaranteeing the preservation of childhood. This material presents, within the Knowledge of the World axis, themes and contents related to languages that should be taught and explored with children, including the importance of movement, music, visual arts, as means to build senses, sensations, feelings. and meaning to the learning process.

When the school assumes its role regarding the arts and their languages, be they visual arts, dance/movement, musical language, oral language, children have the possibility to experience what can now be systematized, studied and, above all,, expanded by educators. Bringing children closer to the universe of

creation, of symbolic representation, from an early age, turning these experiences into content, is an essential achievement of the school and its teachers. As Nascimento (2012, p. 192/193) emphasizes on this subject:

It seems to me that doing, knowing and expressing are essential verbs. It also seems to me that, in order to combine them well in pedagogical practice, a demanding conception of School is necessary, which allows the student to fully experience his internal and external environment, which seeks to communicate with everything that breathes and that can tell something about life.

Since the natural conditions for children to be artists are guaranteed, that is, they are already born with great potential intrinsic to the acts of being a child, the school needs to ensure that this potential is widely exercised in the conjugation of the three verbs mentioned above.

Considering the relevance that the arts and their languages have for the development of children and the relevant role of the Early Childhood Education school in this teaching and learning process, this research has the general objective of investigating the importance of art for the development and learning of children from the Child education. The specific objectives were outlined and intend to: demonstrate how some artistic manifestations can be worked in the classroom and investigate how art and interaction can enhance the entire process of children's development and learning.

Artistic languages can often go unnoticed and do not receive due value from the school community as a whole. We will highlight important aspects to break this paradigm, demonstrating how the arts provide moments of keen imagination, fantasy, discovery, exploration and adventure, which go far beyond simply providing an interesting moment for children.

## **METHODOLOGY**

We had in mind to use participant observation, which according to Moreira (2002, p. 52) “is conceptualized as a field strategy that combines at the same time active participation with the subjects, intensive observation in natural environments, informal open interviews and document analysis”.

However, due to the scenario found during the investigation period (pandemic and social isolation), in which schools were closed, it was not possible to apply this strategy, however, in the same vein, we opted for the exploratory means through interview as a collection instrument, which is also part of the qualitative research, supporting us in Richardson (1999) which highlights that the collection of data in a research can be carried out by the use of questionnaires, interviews, forms, among others.

In this way, we can have a greater proximity to the universe of the researched object of study, in order, through the methods and criteria, to offer information and guide the formulation of the study hypotheses.

The data collection instrument, as already mentioned, was a questionnaire, with 10 open questions, designed to significantly affirm our research. The research subjects will be called teachers A, B, C and D who have been working for more than five years in Early Childhood Education in a school located in the Higienópolis neighborhood, in São Paulo. The school was chosen for being a pioneer in Early Childhood Education, and for its commitment to educational excellence, which has provided a rich field of investigation, as well as for its values about childhood, where the child is seen as the protagonist of the process of learning and in a sensitive and loving way. The teachers were chosen due to their vast experience in Early Childhood Education, and the work they have been doing at the school, in addition to experiences

that can enrich and consolidate our research, bringing new perspectives and reflections. Below, we transcribe the questions used as research instruments:

- How many years have you been working in Early Childhood Education?
- Do you consider it important to include art in Early Childhood Education? Because?
- What do you consider art?
- Do you think it is more effective for art to be worked on as a 'specific subject' with the presence of a specialist/ atelierist or for the teacher to include it in the school's daily routine?
- How to work with art avoiding stereotyped patterns and reproduction? What is the relationship between initial and continuing education in this process?
- How is the process of choosing activities and methods to be applied in the classroom?
- What is the main challenge you face today to work with the different artistic manifestations at school?
- In your opinion, why are there still professionals who do not recognize the importance of art and its languages as essential for the development and learning of children in Early Childhood Education?
- Do you think that art can enhance student development and learning? Because?

## **THEORETICAL REFERENCE**

Starting from early childhood - the focus of this research - it can be seen that the young child, when he arrives at school, according to Cardoso (2013), already carries in his cognitive structure a repertoire of knowledge that will serve as an anchor for the new

knowledge acquired there. However, it is clear that most classrooms and school spaces do not have this sensitivity to see that prior knowledge is important for the construction of learning. Often, as a result of pressure from management, or even from parents, to comply with the reports and activities included in the calendar, educators end up not prioritizing this knowledge and experiences, making the classroom environment, which should be filled of sensitivity, experiences and interaction, in something automatic and empty of meaning.

In most schools, continues Cardoso (2013), there is an excess of activities that do not consider the child as a subject who thinks, speaks and feels. Activities that become a pile of paper that has no meaning for the child, and, incredible as it may seem, not even for those involved in the educational process, translating into mechanical and insensitive learning.

We have to be aware that all these attitudes mentioned above refer to a historical process, which has been reproduced for years, which leaves us with the obligation to study and deconstruct these paradigms in order to break with these practices and introduce innovations.

According to Cardoso (2013), the Brazilian educational system has undergone numerous historical changes. From the behavioral behaviorism of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, we moved on to humanism, constructivism and cognitivism. However, even with all these contributions in education, the scenario within the school environment continues to repeat itself, perhaps due to the force of demand for results that often leave aside some very important experiences for the development of children. Teachers sought and still seek a diversity of theories, models and methodologies, however, with ineffective results.

In the midst of so much research and

theories, in 1963, there was a glimpse of hope with the emergence of the theory of Meaningful Learning by David Ausubel, in a classical cognitive perspective, in its original proposal. Over the past fifty years, sensitive authors and teachers committed to education have researched, disseminated and implemented this approach focused on learning with meaning, as opposed to “decorebas”, or mechanical and repetitive memorization in schools. What ends up being reaffirmed in the words of Cardoso (2013, p. 02):

Meaningful Learning is characterized by the substantive (non-literal) and non-arbitrary incorporation of new knowledge into the learner’s cognitive structure through interaction with specifically relevant prior knowledge. In this theory, the child is not a blank slate, as John Locke (1632-1704) believed, on the contrary, it is argued that every child has prior knowledge in their cognitive structure that works as a kind of “anchor” for new knowledge., and in this way, meaning is given to it.

Ausubel’s theory of Meaningful Learning (1963), “anchor” knowledge, that is, pre-existing knowledge, becomes essential for the construction of new knowledge, as the interaction between the two makes learning more effective. accessible to the child. In this process, prior knowledge gains meaning, since, becoming more elaborate, it enriches with meanings, facilitating the learning of other concepts. According to Masini (2011, apud, CARDOSO, 2013, p. 03):

In implementing the process of meaningful learning, one must consider: (1) the relational process: (a) what the student already knows and is present in his cognitive structure with the new knowledge presented by the teacher; (b) of him who teaches with him who learns; (c) the teacher’s understanding with the student’s understanding; (d) teaching with learning and (2) making the school the ideal space for the use of the ability to perceive,

understand and reflect (attribute meanings), a space where the student learns to learn.

Teaching implies much more than offering formulas and loose sentences for children to memorize and take the test, or even much more than occupying time with loose and meaningless activities so that the teacher has something to fill in the evaluation reports. that do not mirror the reality experienced at school. The teaching and learning process based on perceiving, understanding and reflection, requires more approximation, interaction between teacher, student and object of knowledge, requires the desire for changes in wrong educational practices and permeated by the automatism of actions, in short, the desire for a new look that covers the real needs of the child in the process of learning with meaning.

Within the context of the arts, children express a lot of themselves in a sensitive and particular way. When we think about pedagogical actions that favor artistic languages, we have as a result a potentialization of student development and learning, since they open doors to a path that goes beyond a discipline in the school curriculum. Art provides new discoveries, new looks and great experiences through the sensitive, in a spontaneous and creative way.

In this way, their languages are extremely important in everyday school life, as they rescue the student’s freedom, creativity, imagination, observation and many other aspects that favor achieving a learning filled with meanings and senses.

When we think of the first artistic manifestations, we refer to prehistory. For a long time, human beings have used drawing to communicate, express their worldview and transmit knowledge – the so-called cave drawings. Over time, the evolution of tools and the development of writing, Art started to have another perspective and



began to represent aesthetics, through artistic expression. It should be noted that the origin of the word aesthetic comes from esthesia - aisthesis, a Greek word that means to feel oneself and the other in an integrated whole, the idea of the sensible. We realize, then, that the meaning of Art involves the being as a whole in a sensitive way.

Artistic languages go far beyond just assisting in the development of children's skills, they are important for reflection, appreciation, production during learning, as well as the ability to interpret, creativity, imagination, and affective and emotional aspects., in addition to their own rational intelligence and motor skills, as advocated by Barbosa (2018).

Undoubtedly, childhood is one of the most important phases of a person's life, as it is at this moment that the basis for all other learning is built. Thinking in this way, including Art in the child's life can collaborate in the development of skills that will contribute to creativity, citizenship, autonomy and critical thinking.

Art intertwined with education is something that has been discussed for years, but nowadays we already have official documents that guarantee these experiences, involving art, in the classroom, such as, for example, the fields of experiences, traces, sounds, colors and shapes, provided for by the National Common Curricular Base for Early Childhood Education, approved in 2017. The focus of this field is the interaction of children with materials and sounds that allow them to know different colors, shapes and textures in objects. Also as volume, intensity and frequency (low or high) of musical instruments or other materials that emit sounds, like a spoon hitting a pan. The document brings skills and abilities, exemplifying that the experiences of this field can be lived in different languages, such as

visual arts, music, theater and dance.

In agreement with Cardoso (2021), the languages of Art are strong allies in the educational process, which values for providing a refinement of the senses amidst the reality of anesthesia - contrary to esthesia - that is witnessed in the contemporary world, in the search for experiences that value the senses, experiencing the body in the child's early childhood to structure their knowledge of the world and of themselves, it is necessary to have an attentive look at these languages, as they are rich in the interaction between people and cultures and for their sensitivity. Second, Martins, Picosque and Guerra (2009, p.39):

Through the power of synthesis of the language of art, our sensitivity captures a form of feeling that symbolically nourishes us, expanding our repertoire of meanings. We acquire knowledge of what we did not know and, for that very reason, we transform our sensitive relationship with the world and the things of the world.

The stimulation of sensitivity in the child's educational process, through planned pedagogical proposals that optimize artistic expression, the appreciation of the senses, the diversity of materials, the exploration of movements, the planned spaces, the interaction of knowledge, provide the child with the learning opportunity, the formation of a perceptive subject and its insertion into the codes of the language of art.

Learning occurs through interactions in the field of experiences of the self, the other and the we, starting through relationships, which is strongly experienced in artistic manifestations. These interactions manage to make the child establish connections, favoring the discovery of new knowledge. Which consequently develops their perception and positions about everything around them:

If, at an early age, children are given the opportunity to discover a lot about their

world and to do so in a comfortable, exploratory way, they will accumulate an invaluable “capital of creativity” which they will draw on later in life. If, on the other hand, children are deprived of these discovery activities, pushed in only one direction, or burdened with the view that there is only one correct answer, or that correct answers must be offered by those in authority, the chances of they create themselves will be significantly reduced. (GARDNER, 1996, p. 28)

Gardner (1996) defends in his work “Minds that create”, the search for breaking the standards established by bourgeois civilization, which still has been influencing our way of expressing and manifesting Art, including the school environment. We, as educators, need to increasingly escape from these stereotyped patterns and mediate the child in his creative process, with freedom, curiosity and exploration.

Early Childhood Education is the foundation for the child in their development and learning process, and specifically when children have the opportunity to explore, handle, create, free from stereotypes.

When considering the statements described, we remember Cardoso (2013) who reports that awakening to perception through the arts and their languages provides us with a source of knowledge for life, since access to corporeality in the child’s learning process allows more sensitivity in their actions, interaction with friends, improvement of orality and motor skills, expressive communication, exploration of objects, facts that provide their integral development and, in this way, we can see art as a potentializer of this process.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Considering the interview carried out with the teachers, their experiences in the classroom, the actions and their ideals, it

was possible to analyze that Art really has the ability to enhance the development and learning of children in Early Childhood Education, which ended up ratifying all of our research.

Since, it is possible to observe in their answers many aspects that we analyzed and theorized throughout our study. When teacher B cites, for example, that “Art in Early Childhood Education has an important meaning for the development of children, in the most varied forms of contact with the world, and exploration is important and must be integrated into the routine of activities”, was exactly what Cardoso (2021) defended, when he stated that the languages of Art are strong allies in the educational process, when we value experiences that favor the senses, structuring interactions between the world and the child’s sensitivity.

Further on, teacher A also took a position saying that she “perceives art as integrated into the daily school routine, and the teacher is a great mediator of the interaction between the child and artistic experiences”, totally in agreement with Cardoso’s statements. (2021):

Art in Early Childhood Education was the protagonist in the search for sensitive knowledge to improve the perception of children and educators. The body’s contact with the artistic object, in a loose and stereotype-free way, activated sensitivity and reflection on a new knowledge, therefore, we intend to explore some artistic manifestations, practices of how they can be worked in the classroom, or in the school environment, escaping from stereotyped patterns and valuing the creative and unique process of each child, where they can freely express their experiences, detached from any established and historically constructed paradigm in artistic languages.

Teacher C, emphasizes that “art is to work the whole body, but for that, we need to guarantee the child’s right to express their particularities with the aesthetics that are

peculiar to them, and in all possible ways, being them, playing, exploring, doing playful activities, which significantly favors learning.” His statement reminded us of Cardoso (2013), when he states that:

The awakening to perception through the arts and their languages provides us with a source of knowledge for life, since access to corporeity in the child’s learning process allows more sensitivity in their actions, interaction with friends, improvement of orality and motor skills, expressive communication, exploration of objects, facts that provide their integral development and, in this way, we can see art as a potentializer of the development and learning process.

Professor D reported that “art needs to be worked on daily in the classroom, in an interdisciplinary way”, which is deeply defended by Barbosa, according to Matuoka (2018), who proposes that the teaching of the arts should not be placed as a discipline complementary, but as a learning tool for all subjects, that is, it needs to be experienced every day and in different ways.

Teacher B emphasizes that “the starting point for her educational action is the prior knowledge that students bring from their most varied experiences and, from that, presents new knowledge so that children feel respected in their ability to be and think.” This interaction with the object of knowledge in order to expand understanding and reflection through its guidelines and interventions, promotes meaning to the teaching and learning process.

The entire journey through this research filled us with hope, expanded our horizons for a more sensitive and respectful pedagogy for children and their childhood.

## **FINAL CONSIDERATIONS**

This research “Art as a potentiator of the development and learning of children in Early Childhood Education”, aimed to address

how the different artistic manifestations, intertwined in the pedagogical actions of the school day to day, effectively contribute to the integral development of children.. It consolidated the initial proposal, to demonstrate that we can have contact with the artistic object, in a loose and stereotype-free way, activating sensitivity and reflection on this proposal for Early Childhood Education.

The entire path taken resulted in a positive way, in considerations about how much we should be attentive to artistic manifestations, in order to re-signify the process of development and learning, in a sensitive and significant way. Art in Early Childhood Education is much more than providing pencil, paper and ink, rather, it is guaranteeing its manifestation in the most diverse languages, valuing childhood, the internal and external processes of child development, it is enabling creative experiences and ensuring discoveries., is to value the uniqueness of each child. Thinking about Art is thinking about life, in the most beautiful way of seeing and feeling.



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