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# The Role of Arts Education in Educational Environments

O roli edukacji artystycznej  
w środowiskach wychowawczych

## ABSTRACT

The aim of the article is to present the values of art education, which implements most teacher-animator. The article has a theoretical character and was based on the analysis of the literature on the subject. The author focuses on the importance of music and emphasises the value of playing music together not only at school, but also in the domestic and local environment. She presents various tasks of a music teacher, who, apart from conveying the musical values, has an important pedagogical role both at school and in the area of their residence.

## ABSTRAKT

Celem artykułu jest przybliżenie walorów edukacji artystycznej, którą najczęściej popularyzuje nauczyciel-animator. Artykuł ma charakter teoretyczny i powstał na podstawie analizy literatury przedmiotu. Autorka skupia uwagę na znaczeniu muzyki, podkreśla walory wspólnego muzykowania nie tylko w szkole, ale także w środowisku rodzinnym i lokalnym. Wskazuje różne zadania nauczyciela muzyki, który oprócz artystycznych wartości pełni ważną rolę wychowawczą zarówno w szkole, jak i w regionie.

## KEYWORDS

teacher, animator,  
playing music versus  
education, educational  
environments

## SŁOWA KLUCZOWE

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## Introduction

The article contemplates the socio-musical competence of the teacher in different educational and cultural environments. Nowadays, the teacher is perceived as an organiser and creator of versatile educational and social activities for students. Teachers, especially those in the field of music, seem to hold the most complete set of cooperation possibilities in various areas and many collectivities.

## The social dimension of music

Music, like no other element in the fields of art, has a significant role in shaping attitudes and developing creative imagination, creating spontaneity, satisfying the needs of communication with others. It also performs a vast array of other socially important functions—it integrates, educates, builds the community, conveys nonverbal statements, and provides entertainment introducing particular meaning or effect.

Antonina Kłoskowska observes that music—seen as the product of human activity—constitutes one of the basic dimensions of symbolic culture.<sup>1</sup> Bogumiła Mika adds that it also has a communicational and interactive value.<sup>2</sup>

When trying to explain the social dimension of music, or, in a broader sense, culture, one should quote Clifford Geertz, according to whom culture is “an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life.”<sup>3</sup> Music brings with it extensive knowledge (as well as musical memory), passed on from one generation to the other, which helps individuals and groups manage in musical, and other, situations. Music provides

<sup>1</sup> *Encyklopedia kultury polskiej XX wieku*, vol. 1: *Pojęcia i problemy wiedzy o kulturze*, ed. A. Kłoskowska, Wrocław 1991, pp. 30–50.

<sup>2</sup> B. Mika, *Muzyka jako znak w kontekście analizy paradygmatycznej*, Lublin 2007, p. 13.

<sup>3</sup> As cited in W. Griswold, *Cultures and Societies in a Changing World*, Thousand Oaks (CA) 2013, p. 164, DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781452240534>.

a ground for people to understand one another, exchange certain content, express various emotional states, etc.<sup>4</sup> One may frequently meet with the opinion that music is one of the most universal languages in the world.

## What is musicking?

Playing music is a fundamental activity in the field of music practice. It may be analysed from an individual and a group perspective. Its essence is primarily action, the activity of a person involved in making music. Musicking is an amateur, hobbyist activity presented in informal settings, outside the concert halls or other public places. There are three types of playing music situations: (1) family, (2) party, (3) spontaneous.

Interest in the “playing music” category has appeared in scientific literature (especially English) in the last decades of the XX century and at the beginning of the XXI century. According to David J. Elliott, the character of music is created by three intertwining elements: (1) the performer, (2) an action, something performed, (3) the context in which the performer acts.<sup>5</sup> This musical “action”—music making—is identified by Elliott with musicking, he also suggests using these two terms interchangeably.

According to Christopher Small, author of the book *Musicking* (1998), *musicking* means any activity in which one is trying to take part in a musical event. According to his own definition, “To music is to take part, in any capacity, in a musical performance, whether by performing, by listening, by rehearsing or practicing, by providing material for performance (what is called composing), or by dancing.”<sup>6</sup> As far as the Polish perspective is concerned, Small’s approach has cognitive value from the point of view of its analysis, but it refers more to “taking part in culture.”

<sup>4</sup> See E.A. Zwolińska, *Spoleczne znaczenie muzyki*, Bydgoszcz 2015, pp. 58–61.

<sup>5</sup> D.J. Elliott, *Music Matters: A Philosophy of Music Education*, Oxford – New York 1995, p. 39.

<sup>6</sup> Ch. Small, *Musicking: The Meanings of Performing and Listening*, Middletown (CT) 1998, p. 9.

## The enjoyableness of musicking

Musicking contributes to the mental and intellectual development of an individual, it brings happiness to those who spend time with each other due to taking action together, it binds families, helps cultivate relationships, contributes to the understanding of what it means to be responsible for another person, produces empathy, gives joy from collaborative achievement of a goal, makes it possible to find each member of the team the kind of musical activity which would build their self-esteem.

Musicking persons easily notice sound phenomena, putting them into the form of musical tasks, they develop their personality, musical memory, concentration and sensitivity. Musicking is a perfect way of overcoming stress, forgetting about everyday problems, etc.

A music band is a group which performs collective work requiring joint musical effort, generating positive synergy. This group is often characterised by shared musical passion, the possession of musical skills, and the will of reaching the goal intended. The members of the group are also connected by a common system of values and principles, mutual support, and collective responsibility. Such aspects as a given band's members' good cooperation, relevant activity, and exchange of experiences should also be indicated. Those musicking in a band show such characteristics as knowledge, experience, musical skills, involvement in the achievement of an endeavour (task), motivation, a common goal/task, an open and honest way of exchanging information, thoughts, and artistic idea.

According to R. Meredith Belbin's theory, the characteristic of a good team is that it includes all of the roles he described. Each member of the band represents a different set of qualities and behaviours, which has a positive influence on the effectiveness of the team work. Belbin names, among many other, the following roles: practical organiser (dutiful, practical, has organisational skills), natural leader (self-confident, disciplined, focused on various goals), man of action (very dynamic, challenging), generator of ideas (unconventional, individualist, genius), man of communication (communicative, extrovert, enthusiastic, ready to face challenges), judge (cautious, down-to-earth), team person (gentle, sensitive, animates the "team spirit"), perfectionist (diligent, organised), specialist

(self-reliant, has the ability to hierarchise goals and consistently accomplish them).<sup>7</sup>

## The essence of the educational-musical environments' synergy

As Anna Przecławaska and Wiesław Theiss state, the educational environment is not only that which takes place in the immediate surroundings of a person, but also that which, through communication, reaches them indirectly, as well as in the form of the results of political or economic activity.<sup>8</sup> It may happen in a natural or institutionalised manner. In view of this division, we may distinguish certain groups of educational environments:

- (1) natural education institutions, which include family, peer group, neighbourhood, local community;
- (2) direct/intentional education institutions, such as all kinds of schools, educational care centres, care and special education centres, children and youth organisations, churches;
- (3) indirect education institutions, which may include cultural, sport, leisure, tourism, and holiday institutions, foundations, associations, political parties, and the mass media, which continue having more and more influence on education.<sup>9</sup>

There are many different interactions between an individual and the environment in which they function, and the interaction is always a two-way one: man shapes the environment, transforms it, but also reacts in an active manner to its influence, coming to perfection in activity and through activity.

There may be different forms of musicking performed in different educational environments. It could be a choir, a vocal ensemble, a vocal-instrumental group, a music band, or a music theatre. Another idea might be active participation in "live" music concerts with professional musicians, recording an album together, activity in music

<sup>7</sup> See R.M. Belbin, *Twoja rola w zespole*, transl. A. Sawicka-Chrapkiewicz, Gdańsk 2003.

<sup>8</sup> As cited in M. Winiarski, "Środowisko wychowawcze," in: *Encyklopedia pedagogiczna XXI wieku*, vol. 6, ed. E. Różycka, Warszawa 2007, p. 430.

<sup>9</sup> W. Sroczyński, *Pedagogika środowiskowa*, Warszawa, 2006, pp. 64–70; B. Janiszewska, "Środowisko wychowawcze," in: *Pedagogika*, ed. W. Ciechaniewicz, Warszawa 2008, pp. 129–133.

clubs, and taking part in festivals (preschool, school, regional, national, or international ones). Another interesting suggestion are ensembles which combine music and dancing: folk bands, modern bands, etc. People are increasingly being encouraged to get involved in music workshops, where they can learn to sing, play, dance, improvise, or compose. Together with the promotion of a healthy lifestyle, people are offered relaxation meetings with music or educational-therapeutic trainings. The musical reality at school and outside of it brings in a lot of value and improves the developmental potential of students. Lidia Kataryńczuk-Mania and Anita Jatczak share their experience telling more about “The school parade,” the participants of which include: the student community, teachers, parents, and the residents of a small town.<sup>10</sup>

### The educational-musical process illustrated by the case of musicking families

An intriguing way of making music together are gatherings of musicking families or generations (e.g., at parties, festivals, music cabarets, etc.). In musicology, the term “home concert” (Ger. – *Hausmusik*) denotes amateur performance activity done out of passion, presented in informal conditions, outside of concert halls or other public places. Its goal is not making music for the audience, but primarily for oneself and for, as well as with, the closest environment. In contrast to public music performances, taking on the form of concerts, special appearances, recitals, or presentations, home concerts take place without the participation of large groups of recipients and are not held in public sites. They may be both in the form of a solo (individual singing or performance of a piece on any instrument by one person, usually with no audience involved) and a band (a group of people gathers in one place at the same time with the view to “experience music” together—to sing, play the instruments, or compose new pieces). In both cases the presentation style (one side performs—the other one listens) may transform into

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<sup>10</sup> L. Kataryńczuk-Mania, A. Jatczak, “(Nie)codzienność muzyczna w szkole,” in: *(Nie)codzienność wychowawcza i dydaktyczna nauczyciela w szkole*, ed. E. Kobyłecka, Zielona Góra 2016, pp. 69–71.

musicking together, when each person present grabs an instrument and begins playing it.

The repertoire presented during family musicking is adjusted to the number and kinds of instruments which we have at our disposal, to the performing family members' skill level, and to their number as well. The pieces are usually chosen based on the opinion of all the family members playing in the band, though large groups tend to include some kind of a leader (conductor) who organises the whole process of joint creativity.

Individual and group musicking has greater impact than listening to music during a live concert or with the use of modern audio or video players. When playing an instrument or getting involved in performing a particular song, one holds an active position—creating music with their body and by means of it.

Musicking develops one's personality, cultivates attention, memory, focus, the skill of observing sound phenomena and putting them into musical entities. Its crucial advantage is the fact that it enables finding each, even the least talented, member of the band such a kind of musical activity which lies within the limits of their abilities, providing them with the feeling of total value and success.<sup>11</sup> While musicking together, the participants develop their sense of responsibility, as each person leads their own part and is in charge of their performance. Thanks to music, one may realise what it means to build and cultivate harmonious relationships with others. Children become joint participants of what their parents are doing, and parents—of what the children are involved in. Finally, all of them together begin to understand and feel what it means to be responsible for the totality and the net result.

### The teacher's role and tasks. The teacher in the face of some challenges

It should be stressed that socio-cultural animation gives support to both small and large groups or communities. It is a perfect way to activate individuals to take part in social life. The teacher is

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<sup>11</sup> M. Przychodzińska-Kaciczak, *Polskie koncepcje powszechnego wychowania muzycznego. Tradycje – współczesność*, Warszawa 1987, p. 173.

a pedagogue, a great mediator between the cultural values and the community at school, outside of school, and in the local environment. Children, youth, and adults as well learn from the teacher how to get to know culture, how to cherish it, and how to behave towards others.

The social competencies which a teacher should have are the following: “the ability to shape one’s own independent development and participate in the professional and social life in a responsible manner, considering the moral context of one’s own actions.”<sup>12</sup>

These are complex skills which condition the effectiveness of emotional regulation and managing in different social circumstances (incl. perceiving others, their intentions and experiences, understanding and evaluating social situations). Social competencies positively correlate between the mental state, satisfaction with life, willingness to come to help, dealing with stress, and embracing social support.

The effective results of skilful cooperation include: conflicts solving, negotiation, mediation, and the ability to manage time, as well as professional, excellent work technique.

Focusing on multiple tasks, the teacher creates a variety of effective grounds for interaction with art, arranges games and leisure, integrates the local community, carries out educational-cultural projects, and obtains funds from the sponsors.

It is also vital for the teacher to have cultural competencies which concern a set of characteristics, abilities in the scope of recognising, learning the cultural content. The interpretation of cultural property and conscious appreciation of the importance of expressing ideas and experiences through music, dance, literature, theatrical plays, and visual art should be taught from the youngest age possible.

In preschool centres, children are introduced to learning social values and norms which have their source in the group, family, and social environment. At school, special attention is paid to socio-cultural competencies by pointing to the world of values, commitment, patriotism, solidarity, and regard for the traditions through the presentation of model behaviour and ways of building social bonds.

The teacher as a musical educator, possessing professional musical and psychological-pedagogical knowledge, arranges

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<sup>12</sup> *Słownik podstawowych terminów dotyczących krajowego systemu kwalifikacji*, ed. S. Sławiński, Warszawa 2014, p. 54.



aesthetic-pedagogical situations combined with the participants' experience, modifies the surroundings, activates, and aims at personal development with the sense of subjectivity of those taking part in the process.<sup>13</sup> As an organiser and artist, the teacher should possess skills that are generally associated with the musical character of the profession. Apart from practical skills, they should competently organise time, speak, sing, and move correctly, capably play an instrument (preferably the piano) or several instruments, use music recordings, improvise, make use of interludes. A teacher who is an animator of artistic culture knows marketing and management in musical culture, popularises it, and is an animator of movement and dance.

Thanks to music, and with its aid, the process of creating and preserving the chronicles of generations is taking place. It is a means of preserving and passing on a local dialect, customs, traditions, behaviours, songs, dances, and people's experiences over the course of history. Regional education can be a successful medium of values, as it enables contact with cultural property. The results of any activity in this area depend to a large extent on the teacher as the transmitter of cultural content. The care for preserving the heritage of the regional culture testifies to the respect towards one's own culture and leads to an unwavering sense of belonging, one's own roots.<sup>14</sup>

Mirosław Kisiel claims that "a teacher who adopts the attitude of an animator of musical phenomena, is at the same time a cultural guardian who perceives and supports the musical development of a child in the context of the elements of education and environment."<sup>15</sup> Producing an artistic program and working on it requires a lot of effort, patience, passion, interest, experience, and also the preparation of artistic facilities, such as the venue, instruments, or outfits. The involvement in a social manner on the part of parents (e.g., sewing costumes, organising transport to the festival, etc.) and local authorities (renting a venue for free, etc.) may often be observed. As Zofia

<sup>13</sup> See L. Kataryńczuk-Mania, *Nauczyciel edukacji muzycznej we współczesnej rzeczywistości kulturalnej*, Zielona Góra 2010; *Edukacja artystyczna – nowe wyzwania*, ed. L. Kataryńczuk-Mania, Zielona Góra – Skarbona 2016.

<sup>14</sup> L. Kataryńczuk-Mania, *Nauczyciel edukacji muzycznej we współczesnej rzeczywistości kulturalnej*, op. cit., p. 145.

<sup>15</sup> M. Kisiel, *Muzyka w zintegrowanej edukacji wczesnoszkolnej. Studium metodyczno-badawcze*, Katowice 2005, p. 130.

Konaszkiewicz states, “a modern, well-educated music teacher should fulfil three roles — an educational, a pedagogical, and a therapeutic one.”<sup>16</sup>

## Conclusion

Music as one of the precious arts is an important factor leading to changes in the attitude towards the world and people, it stimulates the sensing of beauty, eliminates the feeling of loneliness and alienation, creates an atmosphere of acceptance and tolerance. It is an essential information carrier, it conveys meanings important for people. A crucial role in its promotion is played by the music teacher. The teacher is not only a populariser, but more and more frequently an organiser, animator of cultural events, promotor, and therapist, who often turns out to be the only specialist promoting artistic and educational life in the local environment.

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<sup>16</sup> Z. Konaszkiewicz, “Wiadomości, wiedza, mądrość w kształceniu i pracy nauczyciela muzyki,” in: *Zadania edukacji artystycznej w XXI wieku*, ed. Z. Randońska, Olsztyn 2012, p. 35.

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