

PART IV

EDUCATION

1. EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH ART EXPRESSIONS

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Abstract: *Aesthetic education forms and develops a mental quality of the individual, namely, general receptivity to the world and life. It can be said, however, that aesthetic education includes a multiplicity of meanings, formative and educative in relation to personality. All this has a profound echo in the whole personality, whether at the emotional or behavioral level. Art touches and contributes to creating prints from which the later emotional pleasure, taste, artistic judgment and discernment on human values will develop. Emotion refers not only to the aesthetics but involves more often, ethics, behavioral preferences in choosing one or another conduct. Emotions enrich the register of artistic self-expression and complements the temperamental and the character profile of a person. Here we analyze these relevant issues in an experiment conducted at the "Elena Cuza" Primary School of Iasi, Romania. We also present the conclusions of Art Intervention in school for these students. Art intervention in school can become an affective-emotional aim in educator-student relationship and may have important, long term evolutionary consequences, referring to the achievement of personal ideals and efficiency of educational activity.*

Key words: *emotion, behavior, art, aesthetic education, art intervention*

1. Introduction

Defining the personality we always find that affective dimension is one of the most important in its structure. Affective dimension gives us depth, sensitivity and adaptive ability. Emotional development starts from early ages, when the child begins to understand the facial expressions of emotions. This is why we accomplished our experimental investigation using drawings, which express the best images and reflections of facial emotional configurations. Aesthetic education is in essence, a complex process that develops aesthetic sensitivity, understood as the ability to recognize the meanings of aesthetic objects, especially art work and feel the emotion of sensory nature, affective and intellectual embodied in what aestheticians call "aesthetic joy." Aesthetic education can be thus, correlated with psychological and emotional development as we shall see in our analysis. Art offers the possibility of a better understanding, not only of artistic values but that of human values also. Being different from other forms of education (intellectual, moral and civic, religious, environmental, health etc.) aesthetic education involves developing sensitivity to the beauty of nature, society and art.

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Using art in school (art intervention) we can develop a special psychological state of children, namely, **general receptivity**, which is the ability to be sensitive to everything around, to play creatively and to understand the multiple aspects of this reality. As researcher N. Oprescu (1996, p. 379) notes, aesthetic education "*stimulate and cultivate students' creative abilities in all fields of activity. Therefore, some authors affirm the increasingly need for growing capacity to act, to taste, to appreciate and produce beautiful since infancy.*" We will not forget that art points the existential significance, it creates a bridge between exceptional emotions of one who possesses the ability to create and they, who contemplate the work of art and its messages of surface and depth. This meeting has the characteristics of a particular, empathetic process, full of associations and interpretations of the context, through contemplation and emotion, exhibited, explicit or latent, in the work of art. By that, art is a product but also a task and a process, it is at the confluence of the spectator, artist and curators, which validates "*the opportunity to talk about the psychology of contemplation or consumption of art and one of the values implied in the circulation of social art*" (Șchiopu, 1999, p. 39). Aesthetics is the analysis of evaluative judgments appreciation and operates especially with *beautiful - ugly* differentiations (Rusu & Olaru, 2015). Since esthetics is studying the value judgment, the artist and the viewer, and even the work as a whole, are not its objective, which means it aims to valuing only. Aesthetic education refers to a profound inner transformation process, whereas "*aesthetic pleasure, as Ursula Șchiopu says, determines complex feelings: excitement, delight, plucking or even suspension of this pain anxiety of living...*" (Șchiopu, 1999, p. 10).

2. Emotions and their importance in personal development

Emotions are the basic element of personal development as they are modelling the cognitive way, the behavior and the response we have to the world. Much better would be if this emotional understanding would start in early ages, in school or family. Emotions and feelings, constitute a whole universe where psychological experiences mark the personal development and influence the later adaptability of the individual to the world, to new or difficult situations. Early relationships with first caring person in life (the mother) leave a deep imprint in next evolution of the child. Later, the relationship with the educator, also influence the evolution of the child's consciousness.

Homo communicans of the XXI century, has much in common with computers, as cognitive theory wants to prove, but it is still a body endowed with affection. This orientation agrees that affection will disappear in time and operative thinking will become dominant. However, "there is no communication without emotions and without communication there is no social life" (Cosnier, 2002, p. 25) as Cosnier notes. We know today, following numerous studies that the signals of basic emotions are universal within the human species (Ekman, 1973), that every emotion is based on a specific physiological context, that a certain type of response causes specific reactions and emotional reactions show always consistency in their development (Frijda, 1994). Interpretation of

emotions in social interactions led to the conclusion that they are caused by certain "interests", which can be personal, relational or social.

It speaks a lot today about the expressive reactions of discharge (crying, laughter, gestures), which allow a *cathartic* and beneficial state. In these cases, the reaction itself is one that regulates the emotional state. But besides individual homeostasis, we can speak of a "social homeostasis" or an interindividual one (Cosnier, 2002). The two aspects, personal control and social control are closely related and external manifestation of emotional expression, being a result of the spontaneous tendency of expressing and controlling it. Those issues often occur simultaneously and not sequentially, response and control are inseparable. We can add here the word-element that can have two aspects of control: can be the control of the verbal expression or the verbal expression is itself an instrument of control. Cosnier believes that we can speak of a "coherent emotional reaction" because there is generally a *congruence* between emotional experience and its expression and *vice versa*. It implies a whole psychophysiological "default" which closely links the experience and expression.

Emotion have important functions in individual life and adaptation and this is why we can identify *functional* or *disfunctional emotions* (Frijda, 1994). Emotions might just be functional, not only because they concern the interests of the individual, but also because they could serve as elements of social control. Emotions belong to the gear that maintain the social interactions in shape and make this not only by the joy of affection but also, by the fear of manifestation of uncontrolled emotions. Among the so called functional emotions we can enumerate the following (Schwartz & Shaver, 1987 *apud* Cosnier, 2002, p. 34) as succesion and evolution: **1. Love** (aspiration, desire, passion, idolatry; affection, love, affection, attraction, compassion); **2. Joy** (stimulating, fun, happiness, joy, cheerfulness, joy, jubilation, choice, euphoria, pleasure).

Sadness, grief and nostalgia are not useful. However, the capacity that allows their emergence and manifestation is undoubtedly of a great value. Being aware of your sadness or fear is important. Being capable to express your feelings in an image is another level of personal experience and understanding. Among the disturbing, non-funçional emotions we enumerate: **1. Anger** (rebellion, jealousy, revulsion, hostility, hatred, rejection, frustration, irritation agitation, annoyance); **2. Sadness** (isolation, renunciation, doubt, disappointment, suffering, anxiety); **3. Fear** (pain, illness, death, loneliness).

Anger comes after frustration (among others) for any purpose that is frustrated, and the sadness of loss arise from any type of loss in question (attachment to a person, a possession, an ideal, self-esteem). Too much anger justify the self-protection against threats and engage the behavior in some inappropriate reactions against others. Philosopher N. Elias (1939, cited by Jensen, 2001, p. 123) launched the idea that "*the level of civilization consist actually in the manner in which society deals with emotions*". The socialization process conducted within social interactions is done by sending emotional codes. In contemporary society, the individual is placed in a gigantic emotional

effervescence. At the intra-psychic level we can say there is a correlation between affect and representation: representations are those that trigger emotions and emotions induce representations. Thus, we support the idea of cognitive level functioning and affective penetration in this operation. Controlling emotions can sometimes fail. Failure or insufficient efficacy or adaptive defense mechanisms, generates anxiety or anguish. If these states have an intensity too high or if becomes chronic, it reaches a state of mental disturbance called stress.

3. Aesthetic education and emotions

Aesthetic education is situated on two fronts: *reception* and *artistic creation*. In the reception are pursued several aspects: ***the sensory-perceptual training*** through direct contact with the artwork and modeling sensitivity through direct confrontation with the aesthetic phenomenon; ***cognitive training*** involves on the one hand, a set of information on the work and its creator, and developing the capacity of decoding and translating a work of art. ***Aesthetic pedagogy*** pursues two essential aspects in the formation of student's personality: ***education for art*** which means an education of artistic sensibility and ***education through art*** with broader meanings and aims to develop the whole personality. ***Education for art*** - involves also the formation of personal taste, expressing a value judgment, aesthetic preferences based on objective, concrete assessment; also combines the subjective, spontaneous reaction, to an artistic reality, with critical judgment. Thus, young people can reach the correct aesthetic judgments. Education through art is possible only in conditions of an adolescent sensitivity towards art objects and phenomena. This means the acquisition of specific symbols of art and human spirituality, becoming receptive to other social and human values (moral and civic coexistence and interpersonal communication), ultimately contributing to the building of their ideal in life, consistent with the values already proposed by the society (Rusu & Benescu, 2014).

Contemporary society has the role to integrate art values and artistic education also in its structure. The ways personality of young people and young artists develop are expected on what the society can offer to them (Rusu, 2015, 2016). Perceived from the point of view of school pedagogy, aesthetic education aims certain general objectives that are found in different stages in the educational process: *training and education of sensitivity for beauty* (by direct contact with objects and phenomena of aesthetic nature, art and social life); *the formation of the senses*, the modeling of glance (for symmetry, color, perspective), hearing (sound harmony); *aesthetic object perception and contemplation* which involves direct contact with the object - awakening aesthetic feelings and emotions, more exactly, the *emotional participation*. It is an act with powerful personal accents, each individual selecting from it as much as his/her capacity allows, conditioned by the level of culture and life experience; *formation of taste* and *aesthetic judgment*, configuring aesthetic attitudes. Education for beauty take place through the direct contact with beauty. To cultivate receptivity for beauty means "*feed the aesthetic and artistic trends*

by observing, production and interpretation of art work ... to develop perceptive skills: to listen, to look and read the complex art forms." (Neacșu, 1998, p. 167). *Value judgment* is the higher form of aesthetic judgment expressing deliberate appreciation to an aesthetic object, in terms of taste and aesthetic ideal, defined under an axiologically criteria. Unlike the *judgment of taste* (preference), *value judgment* expresses a theoretically opinion, guiding the subject to logical validity and axiological. Thus, the individual may explain *why* adhering to a certain literary, aesthetic creation, using value criteria. In the first stage, spontaneous aesthetic emotions dominate; in the second stage, they are motivated and stabilized through *reason*. The mixture of reason and aesthetic sense leads to the formation of discernment, which is the ability to appreciate the beauty in its fair value (Rusu, 2015). But, says Gh. Neacșu, "*you can not appreciate beauty, you can not never judge with the necessary objectivity, if it does not become a part of you, if you have not known and have not trembled before it.*" (Neacșu, 1998, p. 232). Aesthetic discernment requires a certain level of aesthetic culture and is achieved by a practical attitude. "*This requires, N. Oprescu write, in a chapter about aesthetic education, knowledge assessment criteria, as well as some elements of comparison.*" (Oprescu, 1996, p. 382).

Aesthetic education becomes also, an instrument for *developping creativity*, action by which exploring behaviors and non-sanctioned free expression are encouraged being considered the foundation of creativity. The game is the primary means of development of creative attitude, as it leads to the release of a pulsating energy, but also develop and operate with substitutes-symbols of the real objects. It gives freedom to imagine, to invent forms of expression and action in a continuous movement from subjective to objective, from real to fiction. Art and art education contribute essentially to developping the capacity of *social integration* and *environmental responsiveness*. Arts also offer to students the so-called "non-academic" benefits such as promoting *self-motivation, aesthetic awareness, cultural exposure, creativity, enhanced emotional expression* and *social harmony* and appreciation of *diversity*.

Centered on imaginary and the game, *aesthetic education* means also, communication which becomes authentic, released by stereotypes and clichés. It involves both *emotional, rational* and *motivational instances*. Spontaneity participation, increases the capacity of communication and social expansion of the group members. Aesthetic education is realized through a wide range of activities in the classroom and extra-curricular activities, such as circle-disciplines containing art (painting, drawing, music, dance, theater), organizing festivities, on the occasion of various historical events that both serve to deepen, extend and diversify the knowledge of history and patriotic education and aesthetic education; also, trips and visits to historical sites, the economic objectives are also aimed to knowing the natural beauty of our country. In a study by Judith Burton, Columbia University, it demonstrated that subjects such as math, science and language requires cognitive abilities and a complex creative "*specific to arts learning*" (Faison, 2000, p. 87).

In recent decades researchers are increasingly talking about art effects from a *psychologically* and *neurologically* point of view. Observations showed that artistic expression constantly engages more areas of the brain and also has profound effects upon the minds of students (Jensen, 2001). Arts promote understanding and cultural exchange. Promotes social skills that increase awareness and respect for others. They enhance perceptual and cognitive abilities. The study by Chapman, with more than 2,000 children, found that students who have completed the *curriculum* of arts showed results far superior in creative thinking, problem solving, in self-expression in risk-taking and level cooperation, compared to those who did not follow this curriculum (Chapman, 1998). Arts are always open to participation, there are no barriers of race, religion, culture, geographic area or socioeconomic levels. Engaging in artistic expression helps students to expand their thinking beyond certain imposed limits, beyond the rules of what is provable. Arts releases the mind from what is rigid and repeatable. Thus, young people will be much better prepared to find multiple solutions to various problems, facing a society affected by the economic crisis as the one we live in. These processes, taught by studying arts help to develop tolerance, to successfully cope with ambiguities and uncertainties present in everyday life and problems related to human existence. There is an universal need for words, music, dance and visual arts, to give expression to innate tendencies of the human spirit (Eisner, 1987).

The program "Art Intervention in School" is an experimental project, conducted since 2014-2015, at the "Elena Cuza" Primary School of Iasi, Romania. The aim was to address topics of knowledge (self-knowledge) through psychological drawing in extra-curricular activities. In the experiment participated a number of 110 pupils, aged between 9 and 11 years, and were summed 320 works made by them. Children's drawings focused on a range of emotional topics, among which the most important were: *portrait, positive emotions* (joy, enthusiasm, patriotism, surprise), *feelings about family and school, feelings for others and for nature, negative emotions* (anger, aggression, sadness, crying, illness and death).

4. Emotions representations

Expressing emotions through drawings is a way to knowlege and self-knowlege, is a way to understand the emotional universe of humans. Paul Ekman (1973) was the first researcher who studied the connection between emotion and facial expression, concluding that there is an universality in facial expression of human race regarding the basic emotions. For children at this age it is important to make the connection between the facial expression of an emotion and the capacity of coordinating his/her drawing with the purpose to express a distinct emotion. At this age children start to recognize the representation of an emotion and are able to make differences between "good" and "bad" emotions. They are aware that some emotions must be controlled, that they are socially sanctioned or that they are disturbing for himself or for others, as it is the case for anger, nervousness or aggressivity.

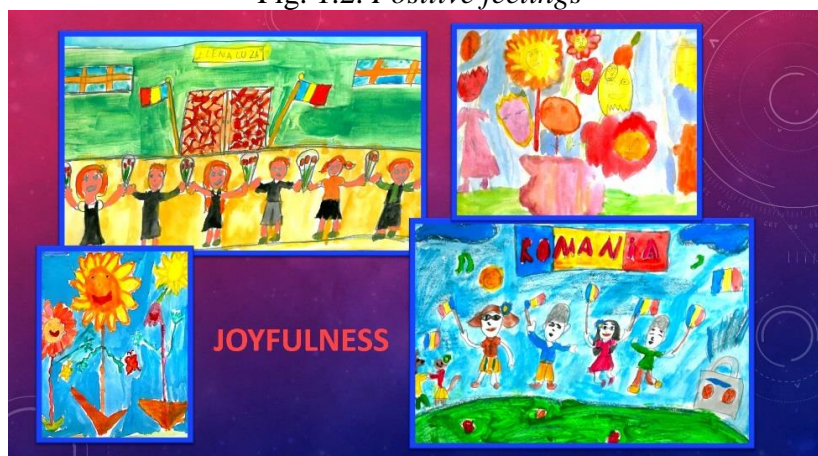
Children reflected in their drawings a large diversity of emotions expressed in an original and creative way. **Positive feelings** include not only the joy of the game, the integration of nature and happiness, empathetic connecting with the teacher (who provides love, protection, care, tenderness), family members (brothers sisters, cousins) and not the least, colleagues who they meet every day at school (Fig. 1.1.). Positive feelings toward school - the main theme in the experimental approach – was reflected in an overwhelming percentage (90%), in the drawings made by children on the subject.

Fig. 1.1. *Positive feelings*



But perhaps might not be otherwise, as long as the school always offers countless elements of joy that children can not ignore. A smaller part of the drawings (20%) emphasizes the feeling of exceptional joy to study, to absorb knowledge, to learn as many things as going to school or reading more.

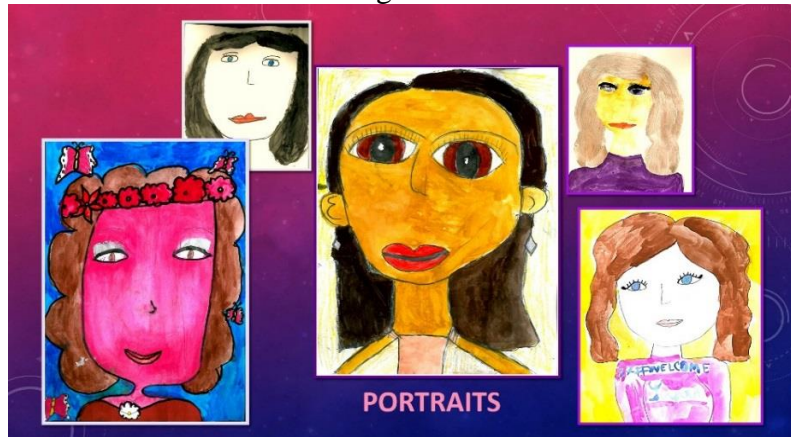
Fig. 1.2. *Positive feelings*



Portraiture provides a broad plateau of human typologies, painted on paper, as children perceive them. Therefore, we see happy faces, loving, gentle or harsh glances, joking, interrogators or concerned with the child's education. Shared positive feelings refers especially to dance or game events (Fig. 2). These pictures capture, however, the joy of reunion with colleagues, with teacher satisfaction to learn and to enjoy playing in the breaks. School means for children a collective demonstration of positive feelings (festivities dedicated to nature, school, Christian holidays). Not missing any of these patriotic sentiments, the idea of belonging to a people, a country, Romania (Fig. 1.2). Feelings towards nature are transfigured into a personification of the elements

(trees, flowers, clouds) that are humanized, expressing themselves different emotional feelings, emotions analogous to their own. *Hypotonic feelings and emotions*, with a *negative emotional connotations* are present in a significant proportion (40%) . *Crying*, without explaining necessarily the causes, it appears in various poses, like raindrops, the tears on the cheeks of children or parents, as leaves falling or the tears of clouds as a communion with "the sadness of nature itself " (Fig. 3.1, 3.2.).

Fig. 2. Portraits

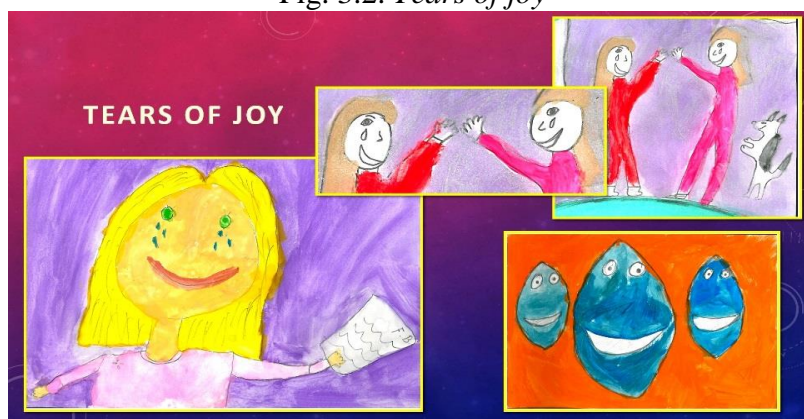


The sadness is reflected by the chosen dark colors (black, dark green, dark purple). Very interesting are the bivalent nuances notification of *tears of sadness* and *of joy*, reflecting a particular emotional development of some of the children (10%).

Fig. 3.1. Tears of sadness



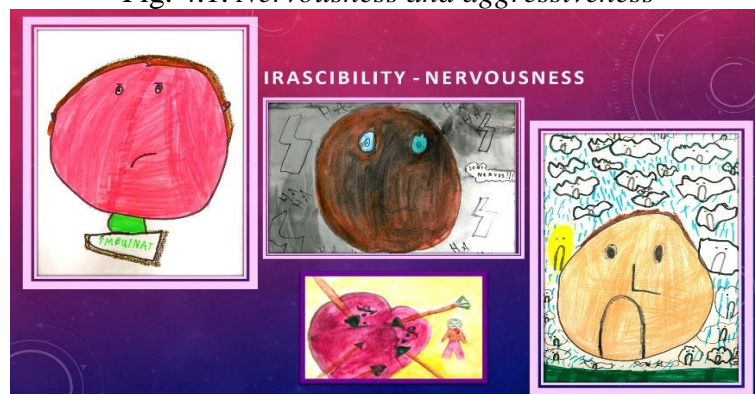
Fig. 3.2. Tears of joy



Very vivid and candid descriptions were found in the case of *anger*, *nervousness* and *aggressiveness* state (Fig. 4.1, 4.2., 4.3.). Bold strokes, colored

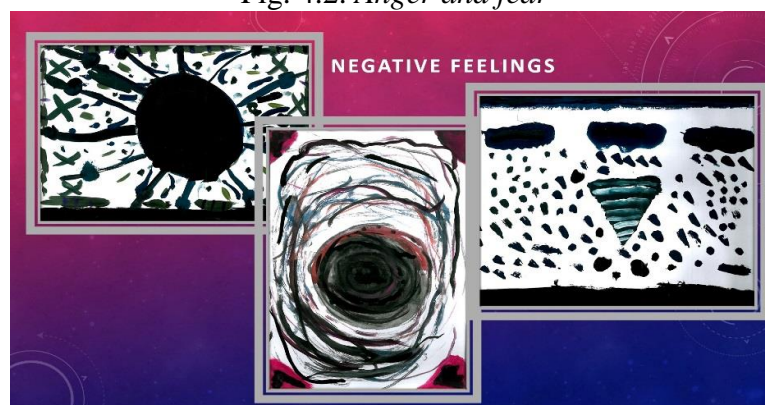
red or black, as extreme emotional-energy expressions, show us a clear understanding of negative, destructive nature of these types of events. Irritability is "accused" as a negative aspect of personality. We found negative emotions expressed in connection with *the death* or *illness* of a parent or grandparent. Having a fundamental impact on emotional life of children, the health of parents and grandparents is often reflected in their designs (30%). It was interesting to find a sense of self-blame (10%) in children of this age, which indicates some mistakes made in family or school education. Children mistakes should not lead to blame but to corrections and information assimilation (data or behaviors), to be used in different situations.

Fig. 4.1. *Nervousness and aggressiveness*



Attitudes and negative emotions appear in images directly accusational, when children feel they are blamed, by a superior entity (God), by nature itself, or by their parents (50%). We also find in the drawings *the death representation* (10%), which, for a child of this age is emotionally traumatic and is recommended that a counselor, psychologist, to intervene and discuss certain issues related to grief and loss or even about the "mystery of death".

Fig. 4.2. *Anger and fear*



5. Emotional development through art expressions

First of all, we can ask what is about the "emotional development"? Emotional intelligence (Goleman, 2001) is a concept close to emotional development and it will help us understand the results of our work with children. Emotional development refers to being aware of our own feeling, being able to regulate them in some way, but also to be empathic, to feel and share other's feelings, to be compassionate, sensitive and have good tolerance against frustration or loss.

Fig. 4.3. *Fear of death*



There is always a link between cognitive dimension of personality and its affectivity. In our experiment, cognitive refers to: *self-awareness*; child's ability to identify his/her *own emotions / emotional states*; *intellectual capacity* to realize an external expression, through a logical picture (a human face) of an emotion; *enriching psychological knowledge* of human emotions at an early age.

Affective dimension involved in our art intervention was relevant by following specific issues (Rusu, 2016):

1. inner strength *to live* and at the same time *to detach* from a particular emotion;
2. acquiring a variety of affective, emotional responses, a sensitivity amplification (*emotional granularity*), knowing that people with greater granularity and plasticity of self, will have more diverse emotional reactions and will adapt easier in life situations (Barrett, 2006, 2002);
3. develop *empathy*, the ability to recognize and understand and even feel the emotions of others;
4. *intellective skills* development in the understanding of interrelated issues, the realities of life. So we can talk about *affective* and *emotional maturation*.
5. Experiences in group, provide common feelings and diverse human emotions.

It was easy to observe that children who participated in the experiment became more cooperative, more active and also, the aggressive conduct or irritation reactions were visibly reduced, showing more tempered behavior. Interpersonal relationships have much benefited, as shown in the children's answers to a summary interview (Rusu, 2016). Emotional optimization that occurred during this experiment influenced positively (reported the same by the teachers and parents involved), the communication between parent and child, between teacher and student, situation where we are dealing with a better understanding of children's wishes or grievances in the educational process or even in their family life. The desire to draw again the various topics proposed, indicate the need for constant communication, solving conflicts and outpouring of tensions that inevitably accumulates, over time. Only when these voltages exceed the intensity of a normal life, where traumas and frustrations are seriously involved, is needed an intervention from school psychologist or school counselor. Otherwise, good communication, empathy, unconditional positive

condescending to children can help overcome relational difficulties faced by children daily.

We can say that the approach of emotions in children's drawings can become an expressive means of knowledge of pupils, of their emotional feelings as a result of the relational environment. The variety of feelings and emotions, affective nuances captured by children in images and colors shows that at the age between 9 and 11 years, children experience emotional feelings very diverse and intense, marking their later emotional personality profile, in general, but also their subsequent conduct. The children's drawings will help an educator (or psychologist, school counselor) to understand in which aspects of his/her personality we can work, what elements of his/her personality are affected, and certain measures of educational optimization can be taken. The drawing topics proposed has contributed to a noticeable relief and a better integration of students in the group. For children who reflected in their designs parental aggression, they can get in touch with family and discuss these issues that impressed and traumatized them. The benefit of expressing emotions through drawing is that it gives educators a means of higher knowledge of their students (which is part of their educational tasks) and can adapt his behavior in front of a personal profile marked by delicacy, emotional timidity or conversely, a low emotionality, without too much diversity in his/her manifestation. Intervention through art in school can become an affective-emotional target for the educator-student relationship and may have important evolutionary consequences in the long term, referring to the ideals of personal achievement and success in activity (Rusu, 2015, 2014b).

6. Conclusions

Expressing emotions through art (be it theater, dance, drawing, singing etc.) is a way to someone's subconsciousness, acting like a lever of catharsis and self-awareness. All these are active elements in being more sensitive, more emotional and more empathic, to develop a larger register of feelings and responses in emotional situations. This means also a greater capability of adaptation in difficult situations, a requisite of efficiency and success.

It is important that we educate children to learn diverse informations about structures, be they biological or social, hoping they will acquire some cognitive and practical abilities. It is important also, that children can get the possibility of *self-expression*, through art, through their emotions. Such expression and release of emotions improve feeling of wellbeing and contribute to redefining the *self image* in a more optimistic tone. Educating children has not only the purpose of just being smart in the sense of Gardner's IQ (1993) but is considering shaping individuals who are capable of self-knowledge and self-control, who have been developed emotional and inter-relational.

Acknowledgment

We address hereby, warm thanks to the collaborators from the "Elena Cuza" Primary School of Iasi, Romania, who made possible to achieve the practical

part of the experiment proposed by us. Special thanks to ladies teachers: Violeta Popa, Luminița Murariu și Carmen Viorica Diac.

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