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## The development of artistic giftedness: Master Class «At the Cross-road of the Past and Future»

*This article focuses on one of the most exciting issues of our time – giftedness. We consider a practical way to work with artistically gifted children in the “Southern Regional Center of Giftedness SFU.” The event took the form of an open lesson (integrated master-class) with the participation of students from Rostov-on-Don, clear explanation and demonstration of techniques, technologies and methods of work for teachers and lecturers of secondary (general), specialized and higher educational institutions of both ordinary and specialized type.*

**Keywords:** *artistic giftedness, visual abilities, writing skills, an integrated master-class, the direction of artistic and aesthetic development.*

Changes taking place in Russia in the 21st century, have given the chance to create a new system of education, not only oriented on the formation of a certain level of knowledge and skills but seeking to initiate the adaptive mechanisms that allow everyone to realize his or her potential abilities and achieve success according to his or her personal expectations and value orientations. The National Project “Our new School” says that it is necessary to create a special system to support already formed gifted students as well as general environment for developing abilities of each child, encouraging and identifying the achievements of gifted children. In turn, according to the accepted “continuing education”, this refers to adult learning throughout the whole life, and therefore opportunities for the development and implementation of abilities and creative activity at any age. Under the category adults fall both students (age group 21 years) and other adults. Thus, the learning environment should be the real space, which initiates personal development of a man, encourages him to develop his personal potential, and provides an opportunity to build his own system of relations with the world and others, contributing to the creative and intellectual self-development at any age.

Before the teaching science and practice there is a problem – the development of effective models for pedagogical incentive of potential opportunities of gifted children and adolescents, and adults adequate to the priority objectives of the educational policy of our state – development of a new generation human, oriented on the values of a civil society and prepared for a situation of competitive interaction in the market of intellectual and creative services, both on domestic and international levels.

According to I.V. Abakumova “The complexity of the problem of working with gifted children on the personality-oriented level, is that in general psychology, and differential psychology, and pedagogical psychology those factors are often absent which indicate the presence of personal component and determine the involvement



level of a child's personality" [1]. The issue of giftedness continues to be the focus of scientific and public interest. Activity of a capable and gifted student is oriented to appeal to the opportunities of social and educational environment. For this purpose, the problems of development and preservation of the creative potential of a society come to the forefront. Detection and support of gifted children, the implementation of new program content, the quality of general education, the introduction of new forms of work is an important task of the state.

More often we can observe the development of artistic giftedness. The creative way of artistically gifted children usually begins in special schools, clubs, and studios. Growing older, these children are making great achievements in the field of artistic creativity and performing skills in music, painting, sculpture, and theater. However, excellent results would not be possible if the ability of children had not been recognized and respected from an early age by adults. Even the children are paying a lot of time and energy to exercise and achieve excellence in their field. Artistic giftedness of a child appears in various fields of art. Creative growth of a young musician, artist, poet, and dancer shall have differences from each other. But the approach to the detection of giftedness and education of a child with extraordinary abilities is typical for all cases. In the study of children's artistic giftedness a great place is taken by the component approach, which was studied by scholars such as B.M. Teplov, B.S. Meilakh, V.I. Kiriyyenko, V.L. Drankov, A.A. Melik-Pashayev and others [4].

Currently, the prevailing view (A. Melik-Pashayev, Z.N. Novlyanskaya, A.A. Adaskina, A.B. Nikitina, etc.) is on the structural integrity of artistic giftedness. Artistic giftedness has universal and individual aspects. In practice, you cannot always draw a clear boundary between them. We can say that at an early age all children have a high potential in any field. Concerning artistic giftedness it can be noted that young artists produce works of art, and they already have artistic value. And what is important, at the same time the works remain childish, and carry the recognizable features of their author's age.

With regard to fine arts activity it is important to highlight the content of abilities which emerge and develop in it, their structure, conditions of development. Fine art is a reflection of the surrounding in the form of certain sensuously perceptible visual images. The aim of drawing affects the nature of its implementation. The created image can perform different functions, as it is created with a different purpose.

Significant role, with respect to artistic creativity, have psychological mechanisms such as age-related features, emotional state, needs, motivation, individual peculiarities, personality features of a child. An artistic image is a combination of a picture and expression, whether it is painting, literature or music that gives the activity an artistic and creative character, determines the specificity of orienting and executive actions of activities and determines the specificity of abilities for a given kind of activity.

To raise the level of artistic, visual abilities of schoolchildren in the process of studying visual techniques is possible under certain conditions: to use a variety of graphic techniques and materials; to use the tasks of different difficulty levels at the



lessons; to use pedagogical and psychological techniques aimed at the development of visual abilities of school children, creative thinking, imagination, visual skills, personality features; to use the diagnostic material, aimed at studying the development of visual abilities of schoolchildren.

We, the authors of this article, are more interested in the problem of children's artistic giftedness, as well as in their transition to the adulthood and therefore in adults' giftedness.

Each activity requires individuals to possess specific qualities that determine their suitability for it and provide some level of its successful implementation. In psychology, these individual psychological characteristics refer to the ability of a personality, what is more, they distinguish only those abilities that have a psychological nature, and are individually variable.

Capable people differ from incapable because they can master an activity quicker and achieve greater efficiency. Abilities act as a complex synthetic formation that includes not only psycho-physical functions and mental processes, but also the whole development of a personality. Though externally, the abilities appear in activity: in skills, abilities and knowledge of an individual, at the same time ability and activity are not identical to each other. Thus, a person may be well educated and technically prepared, but little capable to any activity. There are, for example, phenomenal counters – individuals who make a complex of calculations with extraordinary rapidity in their mind, while possessing a very average mathematical ability.

Abilities are only the possibility of developing certain knowledge, skills, and whether it will become a reality, depends on various conditions. For example, there is no guarantee that a child with extraordinary mathematical abilities will become a great mathematician. Without proper conditions (special education, creative teachers, the possibility of a family, etc.) the ability dies out, and does not develop.

In this paper we will focus on writing skills. Writing skills include a high level of aesthetic sense, the presence of striking visual images of memory, a sense of language, rich imagination, a deep interest in human psychology, the need for self-expression, etc. Writing skills are classified as special abilities, i.e., the "system of personality traits that help achieve good results in any field of activity" (L.D.Stolyarenko), in this case – in a literary work. The leading features of writing skills are peculiarities of creative imagination and thinking, bright, vivid images of memory, a sense of language, the development of aesthetic feelings. There are the following components of writing skills: poetic perception of reality, emotional sensibility, artistic observation, good imaginative and emotional memory, visual thinking and creative imagination, the richness of language providing the relative ease of processing of verbal images.

Writing skills usually include:

- 1) sharp impressionability;
- 2) emotional sympathy;
- 3) developed aesthetic sense (the selection of typical, significant, expressive impressions);



- 4) ease of formation of associations between words and images (auditory, visual, olfactory) ideas;
- 5) artistic observation as a property of an individual, professionally significant for a writer;
- 6) sensitivity to the rhythmization of the language material;
- 7) special organization of psychic life;
- 8) the ability to experience the impression caused by a word, stronger than an impression caused by the reality.

Artistic giftedness also includes musical direction – a harmonious combination of a bright personality and outstanding musical abilities. A brilliant ear for music, phenomenal memory, supple and well-coordinated body, incredible learning abilities and titanic working capacity are the “traditional symptoms” of a musical giftedness. According to another view, musical giftedness is believed to be, from the original meaning of the words, the God’s gift. There are three criteria for evaluating musical ability and giftedness [2].

*The first criterion* can be called cultural and historical. In every culture, in certain historical periods, there were musical requirements in accordance with age of a child. In one of the ethnic communities of Nigeria, for example, very young children were trained in singing, dancing and playing the drum, which together formed the basis of the musical culture of this community. The repertoire of the five-year-old “prodigies” consisted of hundreds of songs; children could easily perform difficult dance movements and possessed a complex of skills for playing the drums. Nevertheless, a small Nigerian prodigy was gifted from the position of a European observer but was perceived as an ordinary child in his own society.

*The second criterion – age-related.* If a child can easily and successfully do something that his fellows cannot do, most often he is called gifted. Perhaps someone will object that this criterion is not so much age-related, as typical for the whole generation. Since the living conditions change, the education system develops and as a result the average level of the new generation capabilities is higher than that of the previous one. However, the child’s giftedness appears against the background of ordinariness of other children who grow up in almost identical conditions. Creations of the outstanding figures of the past are a kind of standard, which future generations desire to achieve.

*The third criterion – absolute.* Sometimes the extraordinary ability of a child is so obvious that in combination with his bright personality it allows to talk about the unconditional or absolute giftedness. It causes the impression of some “maturity without maturation” a mysterious gift “be able to do sooner than to know” which strikes one in gifted children. [4,5]

In connection with the fact that the relevance of identifying and organizing work with gifted for the time being continues to be relevant, consequently it requires serious educational work among the leaders and teachers of the higher and general education for creating their scientific adequate and modern ideas about the nature of



giftedness in children, adolescents and adults, about the methods of identifying and ways of developing giftedness. This is primarily due to the fact that quite a long period the problem of giftedness was not being developed in our country.

On February 2, 2012 a group of authors: Zhanna Yuriyevna Kara, Candidate of Psychological Science, Associate Professor of General Psychology and Psychology of Development at the Faculty of Psychology of SFU; Lyudmila Valentinovna Kupriyanova, a teacher of the highest qualification category of the Russian language, literature and world culture at the municipal budgetary educational institution secondary school № 64, methodologist of the Department of Philology and Arts of the State budgetary educational institution of further professional education of the Rostov region, "Rostov Institute of Advanced Training and Professional Retraining of Educators"; Elena Vladimirovna Omelyanenko, Candidate of Pedagogical Sciences, senior lecturer of the Faculty of Fine Arts, PI SFU; Michael Adolfovich Fuksman, Candidate of Art Critic Science, a musicologist, an assistant professor of music theory and composition of the Rostov State Conservatory named after S. Rakhmaninov, conducted an integrated master-class "At the Cross-road of the Past and Future" devoted to creativity of the Futurist poet Velimir Khlebnikov, which is a part of an international art project "Inspired by Velimir" under which Don State Public Library organized the exhibition "Khlebnikov and Contemporary Art." The Art Exhibition became the very platform where the master class was conducted. The initiator of the project was the Federal State Academic Establishment of Higher Professional Education "SFU" carrying out the action in the framework of the "Southern Regional Center of Giftedness SFU" under the federal project "Development and implementation of the cooperation models for institutions of higher professional education and general education on realization of general education programs for senior school aimed at the development of giftedness among children and adolescents on the basis of the Center at the major university located in the Southern or the North Caucasian Federal District" in the section conducting events of artistic and aesthetic direction – art workshop, "How Beautiful this World is."

The event took the form of an open lesson (integrated master-class) with the participation of students from Rostov-on-Don (secondary school № 64), visual explanation and demonstration of techniques, technologies and methods of work for teachers and lecturers of secondary (general), specialized (Rostov Art College named after B.M. Grekov) and institutions of higher education and specialized type (Federal State Academic Establishment of Higher Professional Education "SFU").

Within the framework of the master class interesting work was done, where different trends of artistic and aesthetic development were considered: psychological, literary, artistic, graphic and musical aspects.

The master class was attended by:

–senior pupils and teachers of the Russian language and literature of the Municipal Budgetary Educational Establishment Secondary School № 64 Rostov-on-Don;



- Part-time students of the school for gifted children of the State budgetary educational institutions of further education for the children of the Rostov region, “Regional Center for Continuing Education for Children”
- Students of the Rostov Art College named after B.M. Grekov;
- Students, undergraduates, postgraduates and teachers of the Federal State Autonomous Institution of Higher Professional Education “Southern Federal University” (“SFU”);
- Students of the short-term courses of advanced training for teachers of the Russian language and literature of the Rostov region, students of the State budgetary educational institution of additional professional education of the Rostov region, “Rostov Institute of Training and Retraining for Educators” on the program “Spiritual and Moral Development and Education of Russian Citizens in the Process of Studying the Course “Fundamentals of Orthodox Culture”
- public access listeners.

The main objectives of the integrated master class were: spiritual and educational tasks and familiarization of the master class participants with the epoch of the “Silver Age” in the field of literature, fine arts and music in their integrated relationship to the perception, with the further opportunity to induce for the expression and development of certain personal abilities.

The Program of the Master Class “At the Cross-road of the Past and Future” included.

1. The review of the exhibition “Khlebnikov und Contemporary Art.”
2. A word about the “Silver Age” of Russian culture.
3. Theatrical presentation of the “Silver Age” poets.
4. Reading, analysis and interpretation of the poetry of Velimir Khlebnikov, in the context of the Russian literary futurism.
5. Acquaintance with the fragments of musical works (academic avant-garde), correlative with the work of Khlebnikov typologically (by way of artistic perception of reality).
6. Comment of art criticism on the presentation of works by Russian artists -futurists.
7. Creation of online art product (illustration) on the basis of read poems of Velimir Khlebnikov, and on the proposed theme “The Future is mine and Russia’s.”
8. Preparation and performance of “Choral” compositions on the poem by Velimir Khlebnikov, “The Spell by Laughter” (happenings).
9. Reflection of the master class.

In the master class “At the Cross-road of the Past and Future” we followed the two aspects of work with gifted children.

*1. Three laws for the development of high ability (giftedness) (V.S. Jurkewich):*

*1st Law:* The development of abilities occurs only in those activities in which the child receives positive emotions;

*2nd law:* for the development of abilities it is necessary to complicate the main activities of the child continually (such as education and extracurricular activities);



*3rd Law:* The activities to be developing (as the ability and personality of a child) must be of a significant value for a child (the inner motivation).

*2. Basic components of artistic giftedness:*

- a) fundamental principle of psychology – a special aesthetic or artistic person's attitude to the world;
- b) focus on the transformation of impressions into expressive art images;
- c) artistic imagination – the ability to implement this direction, to imagine the inner, emotional-value content, objectify it in expressive sensual images. [5]

In conclusion, the authors made some of the findings that, in conducting a thematic integrated master class, the proposed formed reality primarily affects the person as an integrity, causing his personal reaction and a certain setting, which form the basis for the subsequent behavior of the individual. It is assumed that the creator has precisely this peculiar integrally-personal response that is different from the reaction, occurring in the same conditions, with an ordinary person. An individual, who is in such a creative environment, is able to actively change his creative potential, to exercise and develop his individual abilities.

Thus, the authors submitted for consideration the relevant issues concerning giftedness and, in particular artistic giftedness.

In the "Southern Regional Center of Giftedness SFU" they plan, design and implement a variety of thematic workshops, trainings and seminars. There is interaction and cooperation of psychological and pedagogical staff of SFU Faculty of Psychology, Faculty of Fine Arts, Department of Philology and Arts the State budgetary educational institution of additional professional education of the Rostov region, "Rostov Institute of Training and Retraining for Educators" from one side and the executives and teaching staff of the system of higher and general education and representatives of the Southern Federal District and North Caucasian District, on the other side.

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