

RELEVANT EXPERIENCES OF VISUAL ARTS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

EXPERIÊNCIAS SIGNIFICATIVAS EM ARTES VISUAIS NA EDUCAÇÃO INFANTIL

EXPERIENCIAS SIGNIFICATIVAS EN ARTES VISUALES EN EDUCACIÓN INFANTIL

Simone Aparecida MARTINS¹
Maria de Fatima da Silva Costa Garcia de MATTOS²

ABSTRACT: This study investigated the relevance of aesthetics experiences in the education of teachers working in Early Childhood Education, in the south of the State of Minas Gerais. We reflected on the need and importance of teaching through significant aesthetics experiences guided by creative imagination, sensitivity, education of the gaze, child protagonism, child authorial production and the relationship of art in education as a vital expression for children in formation of visual and plastic languages. A qualitative research was carried out with a focus group of eight female professors. To collect the data, and the result was analyzed using Content Analysis. The results obtained proved the gap between contemporary theory and methodologies, in relation to current practices. It was found that the teacher needs to experience aesthetic experiences in order to expand the look beyond the stereotype and enable children to exercise their creative potential with freedom of expression and imagination.

KEYWORDS: Visual arts. Child education. Teacher education.

RESUMO: Este estudo investigou a relevância das experiências estéticas na formação do professor atuante na Educação Infantil, no sul do estado de Minas Gerais. Refletimos sobre a necessidade e a importância do ensino por meio de experiências estéticas significativas pautadas pela imaginação criadora, a sensibilidade, a educação do olhar, o protagonismo infantil e a relação da arte na educação como expressão vital para a criança na formação das linguagens plástica e visual. A pesquisa de abordagem qualitativa utilizou a técnica do grupo focal com oito professoras, sobre o qual os dados coletados foram analisados por meio da Análise de Conteúdo. Os resultados obtidos comprovaram o descompasso existente entre a teoria e as metodologias contemporâneas, em relação às práticas vigentes. Constatou-se que o professor necessita vivenciar experiências estéticas a fim de ampliar o olhar para além do estereótipo, e possibilitar que as crianças exercitem o potencial criativo com liberdade de expressão e imaginação.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Artes visuais. Educação infantil. Formação de professor.

¹ University Center of the Guaxupé Educational Foundation (UNIFEG), Guaxupé – MG – Brazil. Professor of the Pedagogy Course. Master's in Education (CUML). ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6614-4811>. E-mail: symonimuzamba@yahoo.com.br

² Moura Lacerda University Center (CUML), Ribeirão Preto – SP – Brazil. Professor and Researcher at the Postgraduate Program in Education (PPGE). Doctorate in Arts (ECA/USP). ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6275-8595>. E-mail: mffmattos@gmail.com

RESUMEN: Este estudio investigó la relevancia de las experiencias estéticas en la formación del profesor activo en la Educación Infantil, en el sur del Estado de Minas Gerais. Reflexionamos sobre la necesidad y la importancia de la enseñanza a través de experiencias estéticas significativas guiadas por la imaginación creativa, la sensibilidad, la educación de la mirada, el protagonismo infantil, la producción autoral infantil y la relación del arte en la educación como expresión vital para los niños en formación de lenguajes visuales y plásticos. La investigación con enfoque cualitativo utilizó la técnica de grupos focales con ocho profesores, sobre lo cual, de los datos recolectados se analizaron a través del Análisis de Contenido. Los resultados obtenidos evidenciaron la brecha entre la teoría y las metodologías contemporáneas, en relación con las prácticas actuales. Se encontró que el docente necesita experimentar experiencias estéticas para ampliar la mirada más allá del estereotipo y permitir que los niños ejerzan su potencial creativo con libertad de expresión e imaginación.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Artes visuales. Educación infantil. Formación del profesor.

Introduction

In an education model focused on concrete results and cognitive development, which tries to separate reason and emotion, it seems strange to use the word sensitivity. Duarte Junior (2012) shows that, in a sense, we are living in a rationalist civilization, in which it is intended to separate reason from feelings and emotions. For this author, in the school environment, the separation between reason and emotion should not only be maintained, but also encouraged. “Within its walls the student must penetrate, stripping himself of any and all emotionality. His life, his experiences do not count” (DUARTE JUNIOR, 2012, p. 32, our translation).

Education through Art, a doctoral thesis by Herbert Read (1942), presents a wide range of educational concepts and discusses problems in art and human education. For him, although it seems evident that in a democratic society the objective of education should be the promotion of individual growth, several problems arise when we start to consider which methods to adopt for this purpose (READ, 2016). Thus, the author believes, it is a complex adjustment to align subjective feelings and emotions to the objective world.

The education of aesthetic sensitivity is of fundamental importance. It is a form of education of which only rudimentary traces are found in educational systems of the past, and which only appears very accidentally and arbitrarily in educational practice today. It should be clear from the outset that what I have in mind is not just “artistic education” as such, which would more properly be called visual or plastic education: the theory to be presented encompasses all modes of self-expression, literary and poetic (verbal), as well as musical or audible, and constitutes an integral approach to reality that should be called aesthetic education – the education of the senses in which the conscience and, ultimately, the individual's intelligence and judgment are based (READ, 2016, p. 8, authors' highlights, our translation).

Education through, proposed by the author, dialogues with the concept of integral development of the human being, which values feelings and emotions. By emphasizing the educational value of art for education, he defines that we should start by establishing the concept of arts as arising from an organic process of human evolution. For Buoro (2000), reflecting on the role of the creative imagination is trying to understand how creative processes transform humanity. When traversing the history and evolution of the human species, it is unthinkable to conceive all achievements, whether in the field of art or science, without highlighting the role of imaginative and creative processes.

Ana Mae Barbosa (2010, p. 12, our translation) argues:

It is an experience with the empirical world, with culture and society personalized by the process of generating meaning. [...] This dubiousness of art makes it valuable in education. In art there is no right or wrong, but the more or less adequate, the more or less significant, the more or less inventive.

For the child, art is a form of communication and expression. Vygotski (2009), when talking about the creative imagination, says that the first points of support that the child finds for what will be his/her future creation are what he sees and what he hears, accumulating learning instruments that will later be used in constructions of your fantasy. Thus, they are called by what interests them, by a moving curiosity.

Read (2016) says that perceptions result in images, sensations in feelings, and these are elementary materials to build our concept of the world and our behavior in the world. In this way, we understand that the meaning of education is to assist children in this process of learning and human development, as this development is directly related to the diversity of experiences, they have the opportunity to experience. Experiences that depend on the social, family and school context in which she is inserted.

According to Iavelberg (2017), the school is a unique opportunity for contact with art in the early years of Basic Education (nursery and pre-school). For the author, in the school space, children can create, learn and develop their art through experiences planned by teachers, through the choices they make from the materials offered and through interaction with their peers. Each child is a powerful universe of expression, as indicated by the discussion undertaken by the author, who then offers some starting points for the teacher to create poetic actions and moments of interaction. "It is necessary to understand the importance of encouraging children's autonomy and investigation, through the promotion of their creative protagonism, supporting them in the arts, in other areas of school education and in life" (IAVELBERG, 2017, p. 35, our translation).

Pedagogical practices in visual arts in early childhood

The one who teaches art in Child Education in most public schools in the south of Minas Gerais is the generalist teacher, graduated in the Teaching or Pedagogy courses. According to Barbosa (2017, p. 17, our translation), “until today, the difficulty of defining what is important to learn to teach art and what should be the preparation of teachers to carry out the complex interrelationship between Art and Pedagogy remains”. In fact, for Martins, Picosque and Guerra (2009, p. 11, our translation), “a series of deviations has compromised the teaching of art. It is still common for these classes to be confused with leisure, therapy, rest from 'serious' classes, the time to decorate the school, the parties, celebrate a certain civic date [...]”.

At the end of the 1980s, there was a time when the teaching and learning of art considered that art is learned with art, that is, based on the assumption that it is necessary to know the social, historical and cultural production of the arts to understand and make art at school. This proposal was systematized by professor Ana Mae Barbosa (1988) and initially called Triangular Methodology.

In the early 1990s, the aforementioned researcher, concerned with the democratization of art knowledge linked to a decontextualized education, realized the need to investigate the historical process of teaching to consciously intervene in it. She presented a theoretical-methodological position that became known as Triangular Proposal or Triangular Approach, which intended to improve the teaching of art, based on an integrative pedagogical work.

In this sense, convinced of this thought, we affirm that, for a meaningful learning to take place in artistic languages, we need a correct appreciation of history and contextualized artistic making from early childhood.

For Barbosa (2014, p. 118, our translation),

[...] it is important to repeat that postmodern art teaching, which implies context and interpretive analysis, integrated to plastic work, is not a reaction against the achievements of modernism, but an expansion of the principles of individual expression that marked modernization of art education.

Thus, it means maintaining the expressive achievements of modernism and expanding the possibilities of teaching art and its conceptualization as a culture.

When the student observes works of art and is encouraged and not obliged to choose one of them as a plastic work support, their individual expression takes place in the same way as it is organized when the stimulating support is the landscape they see or the chair of their bedroom. [...] The important thing is that the teacher does not demand faithful representation, as the work observed is an interpretive support and not a model for students to copy. Thus, we will

be at the same time preserving free expression, an important achievement of modernism, and becoming contemporary (BARBOSA, 2014, p. 118, our translation).

The Research

We carried out this research during the master's degree in Education at the Postgraduate Program *Strictu Senso* at Moura Lacerda University Center, in 2018, with the purpose of investigating the relevance of aesthetic experiences in art in initial education. In other words, we intended to investigate the need and importance of teaching Visual Arts through significant actions, guided by creative imagination, sensitivity, education of the look, child protagonism, authorial production and the relationship of art in education as vital expression for the child in the formation of plastic and visual languages.

Methodologically, we adopted a qualitative approach using the focus group technique. We invited some public-school teachers from a small town in the south of Minas Gerais to collaborate with the research, and we were able to analyze the contributions of eight teachers about the artistic knowledge present in the initial formation of the pedagogue, as well as their pedagogical practices in visual arts in a classroom in Early Childhood Education.

During the focus group meetings, we wanted to experience Meira's (2009) statement and, first, we proposed to the teachers to explore the meaning and sensation of the aesthetic experience in front of the artwork.

The aesthetic experience places cognition in permanent deconstruction and reconstruction, due to its vulnerability to events, states of mind, relations with culture, multiple knowledge coming from the body and abstractions, in addition to what the mind elaborates from landscapes of the body, from memory and fiction. [...] an aesthetic experience involves the experiences and sensitive and cognitive transformations that a subject elaborates from these experiences (MEIRA, 2009, p. 32, our translation)

In recent decades, studies and, consequently, data on child development have expanded. There is an urgent need to review and adapt the educational process of children in Early Childhood Education to favor real possibilities for learning and development. Regarding artistic languages, they cease to be an end but become a means, respecting and valuing the experience of this stage with all its symbolic nuances. According to Barbosa (2014, p. 5, our translation),

if we want an education that is not only intellectual, but, above all, humanizing, the need for art is even more important to develop perception and imagination, to capture the surrounding reality and develop the creative capacity necessary to modify this reality.

Furthermore, it is necessary to re-signify the “artistic” activities, since, from being complementary, we now perceive them as central in the development of this phase of Early Childhood Education. Based on their daily experience, they enrich their imagination and perception, providing children with the opportunity to build meaning through movement, language and images. Ostetto (2011, p. 4, our translation) points out that, “in general, in the educational field, we take a different path and walk supported by pedagogical certainties, a safe haven of rules and ways of doing with fear of the unknown, of what we cannot control, from the field of affection, fantasy and sensibility”.

Perhaps it is this inability to deal with the field of uncertainties, discoveries, questions about being plural, the main reason for the difficulty of schools and day care centers to deal with the poetics of life present in the child's language. It is preferable to walk through familiar terrain, to follow models, to establish rules and limits for creation, to demand perfection seen by the adult's gaze, to launch out in search of new proposals, imagination and experimentation.

Pictorial language: the child's expression

Since prehistory, human beings have created visual forms and used symbols to represent their way of being and living. The images drawn in caves are the first references to the existence of man.

The symbolic function is the center of the children's teaching and learning process, as they build signs for the objects they deal with, for their actions and their concepts. Languages, verbal, written and pictorial are fundamental in the representation of the symbolic system, in early childhood as a source of expression, communication and integral development of the child. Barbosa (2010, p. 99, our translation) says that “among the arts, the visual, having the image as raw material, make it possible to visualize who we are, where we are and how we feel”.

Working with images and artistic and aesthetic creation processes mobilizes knowledge and complex operations in the handling of fantasy and formative repertoires. “The expressive element that distinguishes painting from other artistic languages is color. The one who paints imagines, in terms of colors, transparencies, opacities operating with the materials used to represent a light effect” (CUNHA, 2014, p. 65). It is worth remembering that young children do not draw or paint for the purpose of being artists, but rather to express themselves and communicate. Drawing and painting are experiences that children live and tell about

themselves, about their thoughts and fantasies when they create symbols for representation. For Dewey (2010, p. 92-93, our translation),

[...] art, therefore, prefigures itself in the very processes of living. [...] The existence of art is concrete proof of what has just been stated in abstract terms. It is proof that man uses the materials and energies of nature with the intention of extending his own life. [...] Art is living and concrete proof that man is capable of re-establishing, consciously and, therefore, at the level of meaning, the union between need, impulse and action, which is characteristic of the living being.

There are many questions like the ones we've already mentioned about the importance of pictorial language in the child's development in the visual arts that need to be related to the teacher's artistic and aesthetic knowledge. He must research and know the art and continually improve himself to provide possibilities for meaningful experiences that consider the needs of children.

The focus group

Focus group is the name of a qualitative research technique in which the researcher gathers a group of people, the target audience of his investigation, to collect data for his research – it is a methodology used for a long time. In the 1970s, the use of discussion groups as a source of information was common in particular areas, such as communication research. According to Gatti (2005), there was a kind of rediscovery of focus groups in the early 1980s, when the concern with adapting this technique for use in scientific investigation grew.

According to Powel and Single (1996 *apud* GATTI, 2005, p. 7, our translation), a focus group “is a group of people selected and brought together by researchers to discuss and comment on a topic, which is the object of research, based on their personal experience”. According to Iervolino and Pelicioni (2001, p. 115, our translation), “as a qualitative research technique, the focus group obtains data from group meetings, with people who represent the object of study”. For the authors mentioned above, the essence of the focus group consists precisely in the interaction between the participants and the researcher, which aims to collect data from the discussion focused on specific and directive topics.

This technique is due to the different ways of working with groups, such as observation and interview. As described by Bernadette Gatti (2005, p. 9, our translation),

the research with focus groups aims to capture, from the exchanges carried out in the group, concepts, feelings, attitudes, beliefs, experiences and reactions, processes and cognitive, emotional, ideological, representational and

collective contents. The focus group allows for the emergence of a multiplicity of points of view and emotional processes, through the interaction context created, allowing the capture of meanings that could be difficult to manifest in other ways.

The author adds that the option for the focus group has to be integrated into the body of the research and its objectives, considering the theoretical framework used and the one still intended. For Gatti (2005, p. 9, our translation), “the emphasis is on interaction within the group and not on questions and answers between moderator and group members”.

The subjects and the scenario

Initially, the Municipal Department of Education was asked to authorize the activity of forming a focus group with some teachers and, only after that, the teachers and the school were communicated. The institution set a date and time for these professionals to participate in the weekly module. At the time of the invitation, the objective of the research and the meeting was explained so that we could have volunteer participants. According to Gatti (2005, p. 13, our translation), “the invitation must be motivating, so that those who join the work are sensitized both to the process and to the general theme to be addressed, that is, the focus group activity must be attractive to the participants”.

At first, all the teachers showed the desire to participate, as it is an interesting topic, but justified that they were not available because of other commitments. On that day, 12 teachers made their names available to the researchers. In the opinion of several authors, when we aim to address issues in greater depth, the focus group cannot be large or too small, the variant being between 6 and 12 people. In this sense, the enrollment number of teachers was within the desired range. Overall, they thanked and were flattered that the school was chosen over so many others. For Gatti (2005, p. 13, our translation), “participation in a focus group process can also provide a moment of development for the participants, both in communicational aspects, as well as in cognitive and affective ones”.

The scenario chosen for the research was a municipal public school for Early Childhood Education located in a city in the south of Minas Gerais, where I have been teaching since 2008 and from which I am currently away because I occupy the position of Secretary of Education of the Municipality of Muzambinho (MG). The study subjects were eight teachers from this institution working in Early Childhood Education, with groups aged between 3 and 6 years, and the other four declined the invitation. The focus group allowed us to better understand the level of knowledge of teachers obtained in the Teaching and Pedagogy courses in this region and

their continuing education, with regard to the arts area, as well as their practices in the classroom.

The focus group participants are identified by their initial name, age, education and amount of experience in Early Childhood Education classes.

Table 1 – Focus group participants

Name initial	Age	Formation	Time of experience
C.	28	Pedagogy	5 years
E.	33	Pedagogy	6 years
F.	62	Teaching	32 years
V.	53	Teaching	32 years
Eu.	42	Teaching	22 years
M.I.	64	Teaching	36 years
R.	55	Teaching	20 years
G.	40	Teaching	2 years

Source: Devised by the authors

In order to find subsidies to identify how the knowledge in art acquired by the teacher in their initial formation contributed to a creative and sensitive practice that considered the expressive potential of children, we constituted a Focus Group and applied a questionnaire with semi-structured questions to the teachers. In the first meeting with the participants, we clarify the research objectives and the action, according to the Focus Group technique.

The focus group moderator is not always the researcher, but in this case the master's student/researcher was the moderator, despite following the principle of non-directivity, that is, not expressing their opinions and not inferring judgments about the participants' opinions. Gatti (2005, p. 9, our translation) states that the moderator “should make referrals on the topic and make interventions that facilitate exchanges, as well as seek to maintain the group's work objectives”. The moderator's role is to create conditions for the discussion to flow so that participants can express their points of view, analyze, criticize and, in this way, open perspectives within the theme they were invited to discuss.

Thus, we presented the research proposal and divided the meetings into five with 60 minutes each. The first two were dedicated to reading, debate and reflection on the selected texts, the third and fourth meetings to reflect on the practice of visual arts with experimentation of materials, and the fifth to the narratives of the proposals developed with the Child Education

classes and mapping the ideas and what each member of the group learned. In this research, art emerges as an invitation to revisit conceptions and practices with a new look, discovering possibilities and engenders in these pedagogical actions in activities with visual arts in early childhood.

We proposed the text *Concepções e práticas artísticas na escola* (Conceptions and artistic practices at school), by Celia Maria de Castro Almeida (2012), which initially presents the question: “What are the arts for at school?”. From this question, we started reading and reflecting with the group. We did an exercise in looking for art classes in memory. After a short silence and exchange of glances, typical of the initial insecurity, the teachers gradually realized that the proposed question was not about the concepts of right or wrong, but about interpretations and understanding of the meanings attributed to art in Early Childhood Education. From that point on, the answers came naturally, in a dialogic environment with a lot of exchange.

C: For baggage expansion, it's...

V: Develop creativity too...

C: Reading the world, expression...

F: Self-knowledge.

G: Feeling.

A: Well, I'm suspicious to say (laughs), but I think that everything we do if it involves art, we get it much, much easier.

F: It's more pleasant...

A: Yes, it is more pleasurable. Ih... but I think what blurs it is people thinking they need to be an artist to teach art, so that leaves a lot to be desired.

M.I: I think it develops perception, right! From different ways of thinking.
(VERBAL INFORMATION)³

Almeida's (2012) text, offered to the focus group team, shows that, in the opinion of many teachers, the arts have a utilitarian, merely instrumental character, and clarifies in a footnote that the article is based on records of observations, interviews and questionnaires collected in their research on the conceptions and practices of teachers who work in Child Education and in Elementary and Middle stages, not being, therefore, fictional data, but examples of what really happens in the teaching of art in some schools. According to Tourinho (2012, p. 32, our translation), “an understanding of these elements (meanings, processes, functions and values) in relation to art and its teaching, in a given society, is essential to critically assess the reasons why we find so many misunderstandings”.

³ Verbal manifestations obtained at the first focus group meeting held on 8 May 2018.

When comparing the speeches of the teachers in the focus group participating in this research with those of the teachers mentioned in the reference text (ALMEIDA, 2012), we realize that there is a difference, as they did not relate the importance of art to a mere utilitarianism and activities. However, we noticed a contradiction, presented earlier, when the researched teachers were led by the text to reflect on “why are these activities important and should be included in the school curriculum?”. We also asked: “Is it okay for you to argue about the importance of art in Early Childhood Education?”. Silence took over the room, there was an exchange of looks and almost a consensus when they said they did not clearly know the answer.

R: No... I think ninety percent of us don't know.

F: Ah...I think ninety-nine percent won't know.

Eu: Why?

F: I think that... because it's something like that... Many times you do it because you're there to do it. You do it the best way you can. I don't have a deep knowledge of art, I didn't have it in my formation. I try, I read, I study, I try to enrich it, but to say that this is this way, because of this and that, I don't know, it's very difficult.

R: We portray our learning, because in reality we know how to do the techniques.

E: We stay just in the techniques. (VERBAL INFORMATION)⁴

Starting from the premise that we teach what we know, that is, a prior knowledge acquired, we perceive in the teachers' statements the repetition of modular teaching through the differentiation of techniques, that is, a reproduction of the initial formation they had in graduation.

At the end of this phase of the focus group, we observed that all participants showed great interest and presented relevant questions about the practice of visual arts, specifically, reporting the difficulty found in working with meaningful painting proposals with children in the age group in which they work, that is, in early childhood.

In the next step, we discuss the text *Leitura e releitura* (Reading and re-reading) , by Analice Dutra Pillar (2012), chosen because it is an updated theoretical reference in the reflection on the recurrent practices of re-reading works of art in schools in general. Pillar (2012) presents a detailed study on image reading and exemplifies the differences between copying and rereading, which we consider essential for the formation of teachers in the arts area. During this meeting, we presented the image of a child with various colors and focused on its creative action – as a trigger for possible readings and interpretations on the theme that

⁴ Verbal manifestations obtained at the second focus group meeting held on 22 May 2018.

we were going to address. Our objective was to raise reflections and other possible readings about children's imagination, the freedom to create and children's authorial production in the school environment, as well as confronting them with the mutilating practices of the creative process existing in Child Education schools. We ended with the following question: "What reading do you make of this image?". The following comments emerged:

C: That she has autonomy to take what she wants, to create, you see that she is very comfortable creating, which is an environment that provides this type of activity, because if she didn't, she wouldn't have this attitude of mixing the paints, taking other things, because they have other things. You see that she is focused, it seems that the environment favors these types of proposals.

V: Quite free, right...

G: That's it... trying to express herself, right... (VERBAL INFORMATION, our translation)⁵

In other words, we can say that teacher C., when reading the image, pointed out the child's autonomy as a reference for freedom of expression and body movement: "*She is comfortable creating*". She referred to an environment that provides this type of activity and favors the creation process with different materials, highlighting the child's concentration as a fact that revealed her interest in the proposal. This made us reflect on the environment of our child schools: what are the possibilities for experience and creation, freedom and authorial expression there? As a mediator, I posed a new question to the group: "Does the image raise any concerns in you?":

V: Ah... because one can't do this in a classroom... (VERBAL INFORMATION)⁶

The way the teacher spoke and her expression of disappointment caused laughter from the entire group. When we return to the question, the other teachers took a stand.

F: Because if we work out there on the mural and it gets dirty, we have to clean it. It has to be with pen and rub it with alcohol to clean.

V: Yeah, we have to clean, you know...

E: The mother will complain that the clothes are dirty.

C: I think the mother is the least of the problems, I think the worst thing is that we can't provide these moments.

M.I: You see... mothers have a lot of influence, they have power...

C: Oh, we have 20 students, you don't have a helper, so you'll have to help each child, until they learn... then there's a program to follow. Then... (VERBAL INFORMATION, our translation)⁷

⁵ Verbal manifestations obtained in the second meeting of the focus group that took place on 22 May 2018.

⁶ Individual verbal manifestation of a teacher occurred on 22 May 2018.

⁷ Verbal manifestations obtained in the second meeting of the focus group that took place on 22 May 2018.

We observed that the image caused some concerns in the group, revealing some anxieties. About this, we find in Pillar (2014, p. 10, our translation) that “each person's gaze is impregnated with previous experiences, associations, memories, fantasies, interpretations, etc. What is seen is not the real data, but what is possible to capture and interpret about what is seen, what is significant to us”. It should be noted here that most public schools in the southern region of Minas, including the one in question, do not have a room or studio for the realization of artistic workshops, which may indicate an obstacle for this type of creative activity to occur more freely.

Ending this discussion, we share another anguish raised by the teachers, the famous practice of re-reading. After all, “the teaching of art, reading and re-reading has been a widespread practice, often without understanding what is involved in these dimensions of art knowledge” (PILLAR, 2014, p. 7, our translation).

This recurrent practice in the classroom was a misappropriation of the Triangular Approach by teachers, as we can see in the words of Barbosa (2014, p. 28, our translation):

Since the first edition [of the book] I have not even talked about re-reading it once. This word appeared in editions prior to this one, only in the captions of the images produced. To demonstrate my repudiation of the idea that I prescribe re-reading, I have replaced the word for interpretation in this edition.

Pillar (2014, p. 14, our translation) explains, quite clearly, this didactic misunderstanding between re-reading and copying:

In the name of the Triangular Proposal, many teachers are working on rereading as a copy. They put up a work of art for the students to copy. What do you want with this? Learn the shapes, the way the artist organized the composition? What is our objective with this activity? The mimeographed sheets are criticized for coloring and the artwork is given to copy. There is a great distance between re-reading and copying. Copying is about technical improvement, without transformation, without interpretation, without creation. In the re-reading, there is transformation, interpretation, creation based on a reference, a visual text that can be explicit or implicit in the final work. Here what is sought is the creation and not the reproduction of an image.

Finally, after discussing the text, we took the opportunity to carry out an activity that explored the materiality of various supports, textures, paints and brushes, recalling Cunha's comment (2014, p. 15): “One of the ways in which the adult breaks with their crystallized forms is to rescue their own expressive process, returning to play with materials, not being afraid to show their own formal, spatial and coloristic discoveries [...]”.

Figure 1 – Focus group experimentation activity



Source: Researcher's archive

It is expected of the teacher that conceptual knowledge is articulated with practical knowledge, so that he/she can perform it with greater skill in the classroom. In art education, it is essential that the teacher lives the arts activity. Dewey (2010, p. 126, our translation) comments that “art denotes a process of making or creating” and, for him, “the aesthetic experience, in its strict sense, is seen as inherently linked to the experience of creating”.

Data obtained from activities carried out after the focus group

For a broader understanding of the process carried out during the focus group meetings, we delivered a questionnaire to the teachers to retrieve what was experienced and invite them to create a proposal for a visual arts activity for their classes. At our last meeting, the teachers/participants brought the result performed by the children, describing not only the action performed but also the perceptions obtained by them, and we selected some for analysis in the light of the theoretical framework proposed by the research, Almeida (2012), Barbosa (2014), Buoro (2000), Cunha (2014), Dewey (2010), Iavelberg (2017), Pillar (2014).

The M.I. (1st period, 4 years) planned a proposal for which she selected some artists and images and suggested a collective exploration. Thus, she led the children's eyes to some characteristics, such as color, shapes, known elements, similarities and differences between the paintings.

Figure 2 – Cat Family.



Source: Aldemir Martins (2003)

Figure 3 – The rooster



Source: Aldemir Martins (1997)

At this point, we could state that the teacher, first, acted through a curatorship, by selecting the images she took to the class, choosing those that, as she said, "*would be most knowledgeable to them*", and then as a mediator, to the to instigate thought, perception and interpretation of the given works.

M.I.: I took some works, I tried to bring what was in their midst, and they love animals. I presented it to them, tried to read with them, what they were seeing, which images they identified, the colors, the shapes, if the rooster they knew was the same, if our sun was red, because they always use yellow or orange. After reading, exploring the image, I let them be free to paint. I left the images

available, there were children who went to look, others not. I tried to arrange different material, I had cardboard that I got from the graphic's leftovers... No one chose the normal paper sheet, I set large brushes... I left the material free for them to use, there was a pen, there was a brush, colored glue, ink. I had to stay in charge of this corner, such was the desperation of the children to carry out the activity, they love to work with paint. They got up from their corner to stand and see what the other was doing, so... it was a lot of curiosity, they mixed a lot of color, I helped with the procedures, such as using brushes, cleaning, I came home with my hands full of ink (VERBAL INFORMATION)⁸

The use of the artists' work appears as a trigger, as a generating source for other images. Mainly in Child Education, we consider it extremely important for children to have space to experience art at school. Having the opportunity to make, create, experiment with processes, explore materials and be able to express themselves

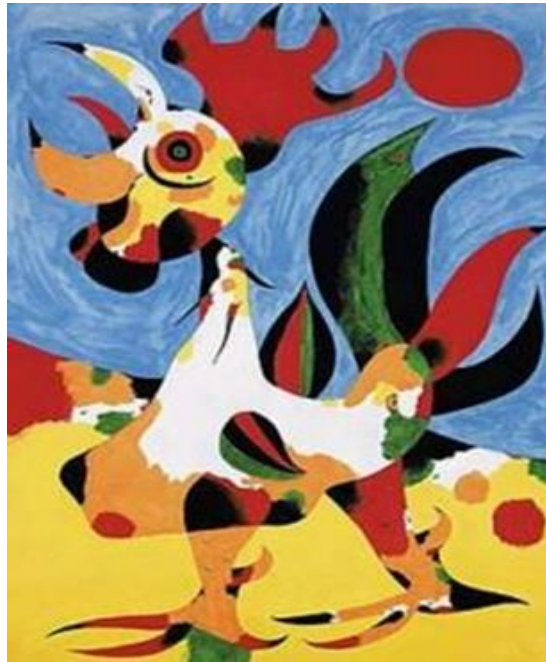
Figure 4 – Red sun



Source: Juan Miró (1950)

⁸ Verbal statement by the teacher at the last focus group meeting held on 3 July 2018.

Figure 5 – The rooster



Source: Juan Miró (1939)

For the child, the aesthetic experience is associated with practice, that is, with an artistic experience that can be transformative. In this way, the creative and expressive potential gains relevant meaning as it is associated with the cultural experience and its action will be articulated through activities that demand the five senses and the materiality that is available to it, as we can see in the drawings of the students below.

Figure 6 – Students drawings



Source: Researcher's archive

Figure 7 – Students' drawing



Source: Researcher's archive

Figure 8 – Students' drawing



Source: Researcher's archive

Figure 9 – Students' drawing



Source: Researcher's archive

Observing the paintings made by the children, we can see that there are elements of the triggering images, such as the sun in the work *Red Sun*, by Juan Miró (1950), and the three cats in *Family of Cats*, by Aldemir Martins (2003). However, the students' paintings are not the same as the works and they are not the same among them, which denotes that they were free to create and express their desires about what they wanted to represent. Here we can see the child as the author and producer of his work, as well as observe the growth of teacher M.I. when reporting on the relevance of the focus group in their practice.

M.I.: I like and always liked arts, but it's the part that I have the most difficulty... I had, right? From working with my students, I thought that something had to come out, it had to have a shape, so it was very important because I learned that no, it can have a shape if they want to shape it, otherwise they can just mix the colors, even because there is abstract painting, they need to create. For me, it was clear when I went to work with painting, I didn't know. Another thing... materials I didn't know, and didn't know I could use, and I'm sure that from now on my work will be better and I would like to study more, because I think we just started, there's a lot thing to learn. The texts we find, material we find, but the exchange of experiences is not in the texts, listening to the other, practicing, seeing how the other did it, we learn a little from each one, without noticing we are learning. (VERBAL INFORMATION)⁹

Within this context of the focus group, the teacher presented her perceptions and what was relevant to her as a person and to her exercise in the classroom: “*This space for discussion was very important, because, throughout our practice, we are moving away from the academic world, and as much as we have access to continuing education, it is not specifically focused on art, which is a comprehensive field that needs to be studied*” (verbal information, our translation). The teacher referred to things that were dormant, to a knowledge that was kept and needed to be rescued – each person has a repertoire that, sometimes, is lost in a corner of memory. The exercise of looking inside and recognizing yourself as a producer of culture is essential for teacher education, especially when you are a teacher in Early Childhood Education with the mission of working the Art content with children and the different senses that pedagogical actions and peer interactions can signal that learning context.

Faced with such responsibility, it is necessary to form a network of cultural investment in teacher training, in collaborative work, so that we can create partnerships to learn and literally do what we do together.

⁹ Verbal statement by the teacher at the last focus group meeting held on 3 July 2018.

Conclusion

At the end, the research revealed herself as an indication of the need to reflect on the aesthetic formation of the pedagogue teacher who works in Early Childhood Education, and who is responsible for knowledge in the arts in the classroom.

We observe that it is imperative to change the stereotyped look of the adult/teacher towards the visual arts in Child Education, enabling children to express themselves and develop critical and aesthetic sense, autonomy, sensitivity and creative imagination, in addition to their authorial expression. The artistic and aesthetic experience, when significant for the child, enhances its uniqueness and constitutes its subjectivity, expanding its cultural repertoire.

In the end, we hope that art, in all its languages and manifestations, can awaken the power of being who we are, that it is always present in school and in life, teaching us to look at the world, and that the teacher be the guide that guides the child's gaze in search of his own wonder.

REFERENCES

- ALMEIDA, C. M. C. Concepções e práticas artísticas na escola. *In*: FERREIRA, S. (org.). **O Ensino das Artes**: construindo caminhos. 10 ed. Campinas: Papirus, 2012.
- BARBOSA, A. M. (org.). **Arte/educação contemporânea**. Consonâncias internacionais. 3. ed. São Paulo: Cortez, 2010.
- BARBOSA, A. M. **A imagem no ensino da arte**. 9. ed. São Paulo: Perspectiva, 2014.
- BARBOSA, A. M. *Arte/educação é arte e pedagogia*. *In*: LIMA, S. P. F. **Arte e pedagogia**: a margem faz parte do rio. São Paulo: Porto de Ideias, 2017
- BUORO, A. B. **O olhar em construção, uma experiência de ensino e aprendizagem da arte na escola**. São Paulo: Cortez, 2000.
- CUNHA, S. R. V. (org.). **As artes no universo infantil**. Porto Alegre: Mediação, 2014.
- DEWEY, J. **Arte como experiência**. São Paulo: Martins Fontes, 2010.
- DUARTE JUNIOR., J. F. **Por que arte- educação?** 22. ed. Campinas: Papirus, 2012.
- GATTI, B. A. **Grupo focal na pesquisa em ciências sociais e humanas**. Brasília: Líber Livro, 2005.
- IABELBERG, R. *Arte, infância, formação docente e cultura na escola*. *In*: CUNHA, S. R. V.; CARVALHO, R. S. (org.). **Arte contemporânea e educação infantil**: crianças observando, descobrindo e criando. Porto Alegre: Mediação, 2017.

IERVOLINO, A. S.; PELICIONI, M. C. F. A utilização do grupo focal como metodologia qualitativa na promoção da saúde. **Rev. Esc. Enf. USP**, São Paulo, v. 35, n. 2, p. 115-121, jun. 2001.

MARTINS, A. (Obra) O Galo. 1997. Available: http://obviousmag.org/pintores-brasileiros/aldemir_martins/aldemir-martins-e-a-renovacao-da-arte-cearense.html#:~:text=. Access: 10 Aug. 2020.

MARTINS, A. (Obra) Os Gatos, 2003. Available: http://obviousmag.org/pintores-brasileiros/aldemir_martins/aldemir-martins-e-a-renovacao-da-arte-cearense.html. Access: 10 Aug. 2020.

MARTINS, M. C; PICOSQUE, G; GUERRA, M. T. **Teoria e prática do ensino de arte, a língua do mundo**. São Paulo: FTD, 2009.

MEIRA, M. R. **Filosofia da criação: reflexões sobre o sentido do sensível**. 3. ed. Porto Alegre: Mediação, 2009.

MIRÓ, J. (obra) O Galo. 1939. Available: <https://artsandculture.google.com/art-projector/6gECVMFVB7E05w?hl=PT-BR>. Access: 10 Aug. 2020.

MIRÓ, J. (obra) O Sol Vermelho. 1950. Available: <https://www.pinterest.com.mx/pin/17592254773703875/>. Access: 10 Aug. 2020.

OSTETTO, L. E. Educação infantil e arte: sentidos e práticas possíveis. *In*: ZAMBELLO, S. P. *et al.* (coord.). **Caderno de formação: formação de professores, educação infantil, princípios e fundamentos**. São Paulo: Cultura Acadêmica, 2011. p. 27-39.

PILLAR, A. D. (org.) **A educação do olhar no ensino de artes**. Porto Alegre: Mediação, 2014.

PILLAR, A. D. A educação do olhar no ensino de artes. *In*: Barbosa, A. M. (org.) **Inquietações e mudanças no ensino de arte**. 7 ed. São Paulo: Cortez, 2012.

READ, H. **A educação pela arte**. 2. ed. São Paulo: Martins Fontes, 2016.

VIGOTSKI, L. **A imaginação e a arte na infância**. Lisboa: Relógio D'Água Editores, 2009.

How to reference this article

MARTINS, S. A.; MATTOS, M. F. S. C. G. Relevant experiences of visual arts in early childhood education. **Revista Ibero-Americana de Estudos em Educação**, Araraquara, v. 16, n. 3, p. 2183-2204, July/Sep. 2021. e-ISSN: 1982-5587. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.21723/riaee.v16i3.14487>

Submitted: 23/11/2020

Required revisions: 24/02/2021

Approved: 12/03/2021

Published: 01/07/2021