



With the support of the UNESCO Office in Moscow
for Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus,
the Republic of Moldova and the Russian Federation



The Pilot Project of UNESCO and IFESCCO

“Arts Education in CIS countries: Building Creative Capacities for 21st Century”

“Spontaneous Culture” in the System of Arts Education

The term “spontaneous culture” appeared in the glossary of arts education not long ago. Its introduction is connected with the scientific interpretation of the educational potential of an individual’s life activities. The specificity of “spontaneous culture” is in its being a product of a human life; its values are passed on in the process of unprogrammed communication, interaction, intercourse which are spontaneous by nature. “Spontaneous culture” is based on a lifestyle, traditions, beliefs, norms of behaviour which are significant for a certain social community.

The process of formation of “spontaneous culture” takes a whole human life. The content of the notion includes various cultures – family, settlement, regional, national, etc. – which can be appropriated by man without vivid purposeful efforts. In its objective meaning “spontaneous culture” is viewed as a complex of values and norms of a multitude of social communities in which a person is included during his/her life.

Very often a person is not aware of the influence of “spontaneous culture” but it has impact on the formation of a structure of needs, activity specificity and behaviour of an individual. In the aspect of arts education “spontaneous culture” specifies the peculiarity of creative self-expression as it directs the individual’s artistic activity – perception, evaluation, artistic-and-practical activity.

In the world of today the number of pedagogically arranged educational situations is nothing near so numerous as spontaneous educational situations, as a result understanding of the specificity and educational potential of “spontaneous culture” as well as the use of its capacities in the process of modernisation of the system of arts education are quite significant.

Within the space of arts education “spontaneous culture” can be viewed as a starting point of a person’s cultural development. Together with genetically conditioned capacities and faculties it distinguishes a basic educational potential which is different for different students. The differences in this potential cause the necessity to project individual trajectories within the space of arts education.

Elaboration of integrated methodological grounds

Incorporation of values and norms of “spontaneous culture” in the system of arts education first of all demanded the elaboration of new methodological grounds, as the methodology of purposeful education, traditionally used in arts education, contradicts the essence of “spontaneous culture”.

Belarusian researchers realised that cultural conformity of arts education is mostly provided by the potential of “spontaneous culture”; it resulted in elaboration of communicative methodology which is inherently practice-oriented. Desire to preserve the best traits of the national arts education system, not to lose the traditions of education in various art forms and at the same time to enhance culturally creative potential of arts education caused the necessity to integrate the traditional methodology and new communicative methodological grounds that correspond to the essence of “spontaneous culture”.

As a result new methodological grounds were obtained, unique as they were. They integrate methodologies absolutely different by nature and consequently give a chance to model an educational pattern which will meet diverse needs of a person in artistic creativity.

Interaction of theory and practice

The use of integrate methodological grounds conditioned the specificity of interaction of theory and practice in the framework of the research. In the context of the traditional methodology of purposeful education this interaction was carried out on the basis of the following algorithm:

- development of theory;
- its testing in practice.

But in the aspect of communicative methodology, which corresponds to the essence of “spontaneous culture”, theory development followed the existing practice and was an instrument for its reconsidering and changing. The peculiarity of that interaction lay in the fact that the theory somehow “superstructured” over the outstripping practice and then again returned to practice correcting it on the basis of a scientific interpretation.

Modernisation of the system of arts education

Elaboration of integrate methodological grounds gave a chance to implement modernisation of the arts education system taking into consideration the potential of “spontaneous culture”. For the first time in the process of modernisation prerequisites for provision for the system’s integrity were created, the essential trait that allowed to implement cultural continuity and creative development of an individual simultaneously. The potential of the modernised system solve differently directed tasks:

- actualisation of the creative potential of students;
- guarantee of a purposeful advancement to the ideal set by the demands of the professional artistic activity.

Integrity of the system gave the researchers a chance to cover the plentitude of relations characteristic for education and culture. Here subject-subject relations, determined by the nature of artistic communication, and subject-object relations, peculiar to the methodology of purposeful influence, were presented.

While projecting, a specific method was used, when “spontaneous culture” was put in the base of a pattern and the culture formed during the process of education “superstructured” over it. As a result the processes of setting goals characteristic for the traditional arts education were not opposed to the processes peculiar to “spontaneous culture” but were rather equalised and harmonised. Consequently a multidimensional pattern of arts education was developed. It integrates various lines of artistic development of a person in the direction from real, actual to potential, possible.

It should be emphasised that the traditional system of arts education amplified with the components of “spontaneous culture” got a much bigger developmental potential. Introduction of components of “spontaneous culture” gave an opportunity to change the ratio of real and ideal in the system of arts education. A distinctive feature of the system is its orientation toward the sphere of the activity-defined ideal. It is gradually shifting to the real level of development of capacities and “spontaneous culture” of students. Monitoring of the system also gave a chance to establish that the

environment ensuring artistic self-expression of a person, based on “spontaneous culture”, has a constant tendency to expansion. It is reflected in activation of the educational process in the informal sector, expansion of the field of continuous education.

Modernisation of the system of arts education caused the introduction of transitional educational patterns. These patterns integrate real and ideal aspects of arts education giving an opportunity both for free self-expression through creative activities and mastering various art forms. An example of such patterns is comprehensive educational establishments where musical, artistic, theatrical and choreographic directions are implemented. At present there are more than 500 such educational establishments in the Republic of Belarus. There favourable conditions for creative development of students in art are created; also vocational guidance and preparation of the most talented students for entrance examinations to specialised secondary and higher educational institutions, which train specialists in the field of culture and art, are carried out. Educational tasks are solved in such establishments with the help of a wide range of special school subjects, elective courses, circles, and out-of-class and out-of-school activities. The content of each of them represents values and norms corresponding to different levels of “spontaneous culture”.



Exemplary dance group “Viarbinachka”, Grodno Gymnasium №5



Exemplary pop song studio “Suzorye”, Borisov Gymnasium №1

© State educational establishment “Borisov Gymnasium №1”

Out-of-class activities are based on involving family members and family experience of aesthetic education.

Out-of-school activities give an opportunity to take part in cultural life of a village, region, town and to assimilate basics of the settlement culture.



Dance group “Paparats Kvetka”, Slutsk Centre for Children’s Creative Work

© State educational establishment “Slutsk Centre for Children’s Creative Work”

In the content of elective courses peculiarities of the regional culture are reflected – local folklore traditions, handicrafts.

In the content of special school subjects a significant place is given to the national culture.

Integration of various layers of “spontaneous culture” within such pattern allows to carry out arts education in the unity of cultural succession and cultural creativity ensuring formation and development of a wholesome person.

The potential of natural culture is also used in the field of out-of-school education and training. There are over 10 000 circles in arts which involve over 150 000 students. The circles operate to meet students’ individual demands and as a result the specificity of their “spontaneous culture” is taken into consideration the most. Favourable conditions for creative work are arranged in out-of-school educational establishments. As a result at a certain stage creative self-expression reaches a new qualitative level passing into a stage of self-actualisation. It is proved by the fact that in the field of out-of-school education and training there are over 60 % of performing and amateur groups which were bestowed the title of “exemplary” and “people’s”.



*Exemplary folk dance group
“Krynichka” (Tiny Spring),
Brest State Regional Centre for Youth’s Creative Work*

© Educational establishment “Brest State Regional Centre for Youth’s Creative Work”



*Exemplary group
“Fashion Theatre ‘Spadchyna’”,
Volkovysk Centre for Children’s and Youth’s Creative Work*

© State educational establishment “Volkovysk Centre for Children’s and Youth’s Creative Work”

The Republic of Belarus is a polyethnic country which homes representatives of over 140 nationalities. The potential of their culture is implemented through ethno-cultural public associations. At the moment there are 124 such associations on the territory of the republic. Here arts practitioners are coherently connected with mastering mother tongues, assimilation of cultural traditions, means of communication specific of a certain culture.

Festivals of national cultures for different age groups are carried out regularly in the republic; in their framework national households operate, amateur groups perform, experts in traditional and folk crafts work.

The use of the potential of “spontaneous culture” in the system of arts education let us look from a different point of view at such category as “continuity”. Without denying the necessity of implementation of continuity between stages and levels of arts education experts pay special attention to the enhancement of continuity between “spontaneous culture” lived by a person directly and the culture acquired in a process of purposeful educational activities. Such understanding of continuity allows to ensure continuous cultural development and formation of a person as a subject of culture.



Festival of national cultures “Sonechny Ptah” (Sunny Bird)

© Personnel of the Authorized Representative for Religious and National Affairs



Festival of national cultures “Sonechny Ptah” (Sunny Bird)

© Personnel of the Authorized Representative for Religious and National Affairs

Incorporation of values and norms of “spontaneous culture” in the system of arts education had a significant influence on the degree of its openness. Due to “spontaneous culture” the system constantly gets stimuli from the real life for its further development and implements artistic experience, which was accumulated in the process of education, in a broad life context. It is reflected in constant enrichment of the content, forms and means of arts education owing to meetings with art and culture workers, bearers of cultural traditions, implementation of research projects, participation in folklore and ethnographic expeditions, as well as introduction of educational outcomes in the area of life activities through cultural actions, revival of cultural traditions, feasible activities in protection and restoration of cultural heritage, etc.

Each art form presented within arts education can be brought into correlation with “spontaneous” or projectible culture. Both “spontaneous culture” and the culture values of which are appropriated in the process of education ensure cultural development of a person. But there should be a certain balance between “spontaneous” and formed cultures to guarantee a harmonious combination of purposeful and communicative influences.



*The sun is for summer, the frost is for winter.
Performance of the students of the Belarusian
State University of Culture and Arts*

© Educational establishment “Belarusian State University of Culture and Arts”



*Honoured amateur group of the Republic of Belarus
“Studio of Arts and Crafts ‘Skarbonka’”,
Soligorsk Centre for Children’s Creative Work*

© State educational establishment “Soligorsk Centre for Children’s Creative Work”

“Spontaneous” and projectible cultures have their own values and norms. As a result there are often contradictions between them in the process of education. The acuity of the contradictions depends on the content implemented by arts education as well as the type of “spontaneous culture” peculiar to students. The research showed that the depths of contradictions lie in a cultural gap. If there is a gap between the content of the culture predetermining the life of a person and the content of arts education, it is impossible to “start” internal mechanisms of cultural development and actualise an individual’s creative potential. The contradiction between spontaneous and controllable, purposeful can be overcome in the educational process through:

- the use of family experience of aesthetic education in arts education;
- inclusion of arts education in a broad context of cultural life of a village, region, town;
- regionalisation of the content of arts education, wide use of local performing traditions, mastering national and local folk crafts in the process of education;
- predominance of types of imagery conditioned by the national mentality, creation of conditions for cultural expression in the process of arts education.

Successive assimilation of various levels of “spontaneous culture” creates prerequisites for further cultural development of a person. But cultural advance of a person cannot be limited to the level of “spontaneous culture”. To make this advance continuous it is necessary to have access to various forms of culture set by the content of arts education and acquired in simulated situations of pedagogic influence. In modern conditions such influence takes place not only in educational establishments but also in specially created structures of culture institutions. When the values and norms of “spontaneous culture” get in contact with the values and norms of the culture set by the content of education, the experience of other people becomes available. One has a chance to transcend the limits of his/her own culture, correlate its values and norms with the values and norms of other cultures, reconsider the norms of “spontaneous culture” and if necessary to change one’s own attitude to them. This process is inherently deeply creative and ensures continuous cultural development.



*Honoured amateur group of the Republic of Belarus
“Studio of Arts and Crafts ‘Belorussky Suvenir’” (Belarusian Souvenir),
Soligorsk Centre for Children’s Creative Work*

© State educational establishment “Soligorsk Centre for Children’s Creative Work”

It should be underlined that incorporation of “spontaneous culture” into the arts education system is positive for “spontaneous culture” itself. The contradictions between an individual’s values and life norms and the values and norms formed in the educational process are a source of “spontaneous culture’s” development. The influence exerted by education on “spontaneous culture” is reflected in the development of family traditions, change in the “cultural landscape” of a village, region, town, etc.

Implementation of the arts education pattern with a view to the potential of “spontaneous culture”

In the course of the research concrete recommendations were worked out on practical implementation of the arts education pattern with a view to the potential of “spontaneous culture”. The starting point became realisation that any form of trainee’s activity – perception, evaluation, practical activity – is originally programmed by his/her “spontaneous culture”. This initial programming must be allowed for during the process of education and taken into account while prognosticating its outcomes. Teachers were recommended to familiarise themselves with the essence of “spontaneous culture”, its structure, mechanisms of acquirement, and forms of display. While arranging the process of education it was offered to:

- elaborate individual trajectories of students’ creative development basing on the programme laid by “spontaneous culture”;
- choose methods and means of education on the assumption of its peculiarities;
- find optimal ways of transformation of values and norms of “spontaneous culture”.

It seemed reasonable to create developmental situations based on putting constant emphasis on positive experience of the social community a student is in at the moment.



Exemplary dance group “Pramenchyk”, Brest Municipal Centre for Out-of-school Activities



*Folk group “Children’s Fashion”,
Minsk State Palace of Children and Youth*

© State educational establishment “Minsk State Palace of Children and Youth”

Compliance with the recommendations gave an opportunity for students’ cultural development without losing a touch with the roots of “spontaneous culture”.

During the research it was taken into account that incorporation of trainees in social communities correlate with certain periods of age-specific development. As a result the correspondence of certain strata of “spontaneous culture” with the levels of the national system of education was set up.

Pre-school education is characterized by emotional perception of the reality which leads to prevalence of spontaneous activities. At this level the potential of “spontaneous”, first of all family culture, is actualised the most. It is favoured by the process of education aimed at self-expression in creative work, wholistic character of education, a wide spectrum of creative activities, and the use of gaming and communicative methods. Arts education is based on positive experience acquired within a family. The use of family traditions significantly enriches the palette of means and methods of arts education, and its outcomes are immediately introduced into the life of a growing person.



UPK “Kindergarten-school ‘Harmony’ №60”, Department of Education of the Administration of Pervomaisky district, Bobruisk

© UPK “Kindergarten-school ‘Harmony’ №60”

At the level of primary education the positive experience of family aesthetic education is superstructured by the level of settlement culture. Little by little students begin to acquire cultural traditions of their village, region, and town. It is reflected in primitive forms of local history activities, acquaintance with the creative work of their outstanding fellow-townsmen and villagers – art and culture workers, work of performing and amateur groups. Within their powers children are involved in the cultural life of their settlement – together with the parents they go to various festive occasions and other activities; take part in exhibitions and contest organised by local authorities. Formation of a value attitude toward culture of the “minor homeland” begins.

Next level of “spontaneous culture”, acquired in the process of arts education, is the level of region culture. Its acquisition coincides with the period of formation of self-consciousness that lets students comprehend regional peculiarities of artistic imagery and creativeness. At this level a big place is taken by ethnographic work – research, expeditionary, when students study tangible and intangible cultural heritage.

While getting acquainted with the regional culture specific peculiarities characteristic for inhabitants of different regions of the republic must be in the centre of attention:

- specificity of artistic imagery;
- group and individual type of self-actualisation;
- personality’s orientation on activity or communication.

Comprehension of the peculiarities of mentality characteristic for different regions of the Republic of Belarus, correlation of the detected specificities with the own “Self” promote students’ awareness of being a representative of a certain region, help them make the correct choice of means and ways of personal cultural development. It should be pointed out that administrative and ethnographic-territorial divisions of the Republic of Belarus do not match. To make the conditions for the formation of a subject of the regional culture natural ethno-cultural patterns of arts education are being developed. These patterns will correspond to regional-territorial division of the Republic of Belarus.

Consecutive advancement from one abovementioned cultural stratum to another leads to acquisition of the national culture. In students’ consciousness it naturally grows from family, settlement, regional culture and as a result it is not detached from man. Such acquisition makes a student feel as a subject of the national culture, he/she is actively involved in its preservation, transmission, advocacy of its values and cultural creativity.



*Exemplary club of amateurs of folklore “Kastrynka”,
Volkovysk Centre for Out-of-school Education,
Kamenets district executive committee*

© State educational establishment “Volkovysk Centre for Out-of-school Education”

The following conclusion can be made on the basis of all the above:

- actualisation of the creative potential of a person is possible with due regard for “spontaneous culture” and its peculiarities in the process of arts education;
- the specificity of “natural culture” creates possibilities for continuous cultural development;
- “spontaneous culture” gives a chance to balance the exclusive and the inclusive components of the arts education system;
- incorporation of “spontaneous culture” gives an opportunity to combine in the process of education a purposeful pedagogic influence and unprogrammed communication;
- naturalness of creative self-expression inherent in this culture helps overcome the detachment of arts education from man turning it into a “generic necessity and ability of a human being”.

Literature

1. Kudriavtsev, V.T. Culturally Conformable Education: Conceptual Basics / V.T. Kudriavtsev, V.I. Slobodchikov, L.V. Shkolyar // Proceedings of the Russian Academy of Education. – 2001. – № 4. – P. 4-46.
2. Levko, A.I. Theoretical-and-methodological Issues of Education: Socio-cultural Analysis / A.I. Levko. – Minsk: Bestprint, 2003. – 340 p.