

Art Therapy Workshops for Preschoolers, Centered on Creativity Development

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Abstract

Introduction: *Art therapy unlocks the access gate to one's self, being based on the spontaneity of expression and on overcoming the communication barriers, involving the human creativity and the non-verbal expression of emotions and cognitions. The creative-expressive techniques help children to understand themselves, set themselves free from the accumulated anxieties, and loosen the process of elaborating strategies in solving conflicts and developing personal skills.*

Objectives: *The present research aims to analyze the manner in which the introduction of art therapy workshops in kindergarten leads to creativity development in preschoolers. 12 children aged between 3 years and 6 months – 5 years and 6 months, selected from 3 groups, were involved in the study, with the written consent of the parents.*

Methods: *The art therapy program for preschoolers centred on creativity development was structured in nine weekly workshops of two hours each, for a period of three months. In order to reach the objectives set and to emphasize the questions of the research, the following methods have been used: the observation method, the interview and the analysis of activity products.*

Results: *The effects materialized in positive changes of preschoolers both at the level of behaviour and action, confirmed by the parents and teachers, are: (1) the development of the capacities of verbal and non-verbal expression of emotions, needs and wishes, (2) the increase of self-confidence and improvement of relationships with other persons, (3) the development of spontaneity, imagination and creativity, (4) the release from accumulated tensions, frustrations and emotions.*

Conclusions: *The obtained results show that the use of creative-expressive techniques gives children the impression that they are playing and the motivation to play increases their authentic participation degree, the benefit being often maximal and a topic such as creativity development can be extremely attractive for them. It is very important that the adults encourage and support the cognition and creative manifestation of their children by adopting a democratic style, constantly encouraging and supporting their achievements, through well-intended and constructive criticism.*

Keywords: *creative-expressive therapies, spontaneity, imagination, preschool, creative potential*

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I. Introduction

The main objective of art therapy aims to use creativity for improving and healing life, as it unlocks the access gate to oneself, being based on spontaneity, non-verbal expression of emotions and cognitions and overcoming communication barriers (Drugaş, 2010). The American Association of Art Therapy considers the creative process as an excellent way to stimulate self-awareness and personal development, therefore using art as therapy implies that the artistic product and associations related to it can challenge clients to discover the best compatibility between the internal and the external world. There are three currents of art therapy depending on the place occupied by art in therapy, as follows: (1) Art therapy developed from psychology and psychotherapy, it is thus a form of psychotherapy that seeks a connection with the art (the artistic product of the client is used as a material for interpretation as well as a support for verbal therapy). (2) Art therapy developed from art, which does not refer directly to therapy and its techniques, as it considers that art in itself has therapeutic effects (the creation process and the design of the artistic product are sufficient). (3) The integrated approach of art and therapy, in which the art unravels for the individual the possibility to express during the entire therapy and it is used for channelling, adjusting and transforming the emotions, aggressiveness, negative energies in order to obtain a psychological shift. The artistic process fulfils the following functions:

- *Cathartic* function – consists of discovering that the expression of a difficulty or concern leads to liberation. Sometimes, the artistic process not associated with verbalization is sufficient for dealing with the existing difficulty and releasing the tension. Kramer thinks that art is curative by itself and that the creative act is an act of sublimation – channelling, reducing and transforming the possible destructive or anti-social energies.
- *Communication* function –an important, if not unique function. Naumburg considers the artistic production superior to verbal communication as it reduces self-censorship, allows the expression of dreams and fantasies in a direct way, ensures the communication conservation and encourages the transfer, allowing the client to interpret the outcome.
- *Restructuring* function, which is carried out by ensuring a model of ego functioning in which new attitudes and feelings can be expressed and lived.
- *Art therapeutic* function, during the artistic process it consists of encouraging the creative production and offering emotional support and technical assistance

(Dinişoae, 2000).

Art therapy consists of four particular therapies: drawing, modelling and collage therapy, drama-therapy, movement and dance therapy and melotherapy. The use of expressive-creative techniques helps eliminate blockages and the children can “reveal directly or symbolically their feelings, experiences and beliefs in an open way that leads to personality integration and development” (Mitrofan, 2008, page 232). The creative therapy offers preschoolers the possibility to express the emotions and feelings that are difficult or impossible to verbalize because the songs, musical instruments, dance, colours, modelling clay are naturally accessible and the novelty of such concrete activities is pleasant, surprising and also stimulating (Mitrofan, 2000). The art therapy process aims solely the expressiveness of preschoolers, being eliminated any attempt to judge and/or evaluate the achieved products. These can be chaotic, aggressive, unstable and impersonal, but it is necessary that they are perceived and accepted for what they are, especially by the person who created them (Anghel, 2010).

In the vision of Gheorghe & Mastan (2005), the children are stimulated in their own development by the autonomy need, the desire to discover and learn, therefore the social and educational environment in which they will grow is decisive for their future. They show originality and develop valuable products, even though creativity is most of the times unintended. Also, they manifest a series of characteristics considered part of the creative adult personality: spontaneity, opening to experience, energy, initiative, expressiveness (David, 2013).

The game is associated with creativity, with that ability to be less rigid and more flexible, representing the means by which children will integrate complex concepts and will develop a more profound way of thinking. What games can offer them at the right time remains an acquisition for life, being the most natural therapeutic way of personal development (Golu & Ioniţă, 2009). Mitrofan & Ene (2005) strongly believe that creative skills of preschoolers are only revealed if they are challenged to express themselves using the art language through creative games. In the opinion of the authors, this represents: (1) a way to permanently stimulate creation and creativity; (2) the most accessible and exciting form to satisfy a vital need, to learn the language of art, balanced action, free and creative boldness; (3) a form of incitement to creation starting from an infinite strategy as solutions and outcomes.

Pursuing the creativity development,

techniques specific to art therapy were used in the workshops involving preschoolers, as they enable expressing emotions in a non-verbal manner and determine them to be active, to have the courage to launch in a process of shifting and to try and solve their own problems in a way that balances what they are doing with what they are thinking and feeling. In addition, art therapy is a personality integration act – the integrative experiences imply the acknowledgement of hidden conflicts, repressed feelings and conciliation between unconsciousness and consciousness (the conflict is relived, solved and integrated in the artistic act). In the same time, it stimulates children to experiment the role of being the creator of their own situation, not only the victim and it encourages the development of beneficial interpersonal relations and intensification of inter-human communication (Năstasă, 2013).

II. Method

In order to depict creativity development in preschoolers by means of art therapy workshops, the following objectives need to be reached:

1. Identifying the presence of creative skills and emphasizing those that best match the attitude of preschoolers in relation to the manifestation of their creative potential.
2. Elaborating and materializing by piloting a program for creativity stimulation through art therapy techniques, awareness and free expression of the children emotions, imagination development, as well as the formation and improvement of skills and manual dexterity in preschoolers.
3. Emphasizing the importance of educational experience diversification through programs centered on systematic stimulation of the children's creative potential.

This paper is a qualitative focused research based on art therapy group workshops that allow the detailed and specific analysis of creativity manifestation and development of preschoolers. The mission envisaged will take into account the main aspects related to the way in which the creative potential of preschoolers can be stimulated and developed by applying creative-expressive techniques. Thus, it is considered important to pay a particular attention to the following questions:

- Are preschoolers described by creative attitudes that favour the manifestation and stimulation of their creative potential?
- Would the children's involvement in a program

conceived under the form of art therapy workshops that answer their interests lead to the development of their productive creativity at an artistic, productive and behavioural level?

- What is the best way through which preschooler's creativity can be stimulated and developed by means of art therapy workshops?

In order to reach the objectives and emphasize the research questions, qualitative work instruments have been used: the observation method, the interview and the analysis of activity products. As a qualitative investigation method, the observation is an act of following and systematically describing the studied behaviours and events that take place in a certain situational and temporal context. It is a less intrusive and flexible method and it provides rich data after brief periods of observation. An important feature is that the researcher does not intervene on the participants and that the researcher is tracing the flow of events.

However, the observation is not a passive research method as it implies selection, classification, categorization, analysis and organization of the data as perceived by the researcher, with the final purpose of understanding and ascribing meanings to what is being observed. One of the limitations of such a method could be the difficulty to control all variables involved in the phenomenon studied and the fact that the results might be contaminated by the subjectivity of the observer.

The observation's quality is given by its integration next to other methodological techniques, such as the interview and analysis of activity products. The interview allows the profound and nuanced understanding of the research participant and its relation with the other group members. It implies a dual communication relation between the researcher and the participant, as it is carried out in a specific context (within art therapy workshops of creativity development, or at a direct, individual or group level). The interview style can vary from a very structured form to informal conversation, the latter being preferred and used mainly in this research. Interviewing children can raise special problems related to their level of cognitive, emotional and social development. Playing was often used in order to make possible the necessary interviews. The questions were according to the age of the children, therefore brief, concrete and in particular related to actions. The activity product is an object with a tangible and concrete form, which the person created in either imposed or free situations (e.g.: drawings, literary creations, objects). Capacities, skills, emotional traits,

ideas are objectified in these products (Băban, 2002). In the case of this particular research, their analysis provides objective indices such as the level of creativity development of the participants to art therapy workshops.

Depending on the objectives set, the interventions were decided upon on short-term, from one workshop to the next one. The program centred on creativity development was structured in nine weekly workshops, of two hours each, for a period of three months. The art therapy workshops aimed 12 children, aged between 3 years and 6 months – 5 years and 6 months, selected from 3 groups (lower, upper and medium preschool) from a kindergarten with regular working hours, based in Braşov. They participated before to other extracurricular activities, proving initiative, involvement, resistance to additional intellectual effort, cooperation and team work skills. Also, both the children and their parents expressed the wish to spend their free time in a way as interesting as possible, in which they can experiment and learn new things. The final decision of preschoolers to attend art therapy workshops belonged exclusively to their parents who undertook the responsibility for their childrens' attendance. The members of the creativity development group through art therapy techniques have similar ages, approximately the same level of development and interests.

A special attention was paid to the compliance with professional deontological norms, starting with research planning and ending with its effects. Well-being, health, dignity of participants were essential elements and permanently respected, combined with the express desire to bring them benefits. For this purpose, even before starting the group activities, the parents of the participants were informed with respect to the objectives set, techniques and methods used, data collecting purposes, the option to unsubscribe their children at any time and their written consent was requested for the practical implementation of workshops. The participants in the study were protected against any moral, physical, emotional or social exposure by using fictitious names in the written reporting and facial masking in case of photographs.

Through structured artistic activities, such as musical audition and song, composition of melodic lines, creation of drawings and paintings, collages, modelling clay modelling, dance, movement, dramatization of scenes and role play, the emotions and events were expressed correspondingly, being thus exercised adequate emotional behaviours. The artistic activity created a motivating environment in which the

creativity development was shaped by the therapist as a specialist and practiced by the children as recipients. Each group member was actively involved by talking, narrating, singing, colouring, painting, modelling, dancing or simply moving. The purpose of the therapist was that of guiding, encouraging and giving adequate roles to the children, according to their personal skills. Although conceived under the form of art therapy group workshops, the program was customized and adapted to the possibilities of each participating child, comprising four fields of personal development: exploration, mimicry, improvisation and creation. Within the exploration, the children discovered the multitude of possibilities in sounds, colour, words and in movement, being presented with a stimulus and the freedom to manipulate it.

The mimicry develops the talking capacity, movement and the creation of objects. A stimulus was initially presented to the children and they were subsequently invited to repeat it, action which can be carried out in an informal manner or in the form of a dialogue. Once children were able to correctly imitate the models, the improvisation was introduced. This is centred on activities related to mimicry, ensuring in the same time the possibility of the child to initiate similar activities. The child participates in the group activities using his/her personal skills and the therapist the improvisation structure, encouraging him/her to modify the form of the material learned before in his/her own manner.

This was carried out under the form of questions and answers or in the form of a game in which the singular activity of a child alternated with the group's activity. The final part was dedicated to the proper creation. In this stage, the group combined materials from the first three phases: exploration, mimicry, improvisation, children being encouraged to create their own works. They had the possibility to express themselves, to be creative and imaginative while participating to these activities painting, modelling, talking, singing vocally and instrumentally, dancing, interpreting roles and moving their body.

The entire creative-expressive experience allowed the preschoolers to connect to their own desires, needs and emotional states. Also, it was a real opportunity for them to discover different constructive relational patterns that can help them initiate and maintain beneficial interpersonal relations, while challenging them to identify the way in which they participate in fulfilling a group task. We provide as an example the nine art therapy workshops, briefly describing the stages of the activities, the pursued

objectives and used materials, as well as a significant part of the results obtained.

III. Results

Workshop 1 “Yarn ball and the rain” aimed to facilitate inter-knowledge and integration within the group, reduction of inhibitions and conflicts generated by the first inter-relational contact, encouragement and facilitation of freedom of expression, reduction of anxiety and tension. A verbal and non-verbal contact was created between all of the children – through physical contact, prior to the physical and emotional integration in the group. As methods, the receptive melotherapy, dance therapy and role play were used and the necessary materials were a yarn ball, a large piece of fabric for the “roof” and CDs with music.

The preschoolers were placed in a circle while the audio background evoked natural sounds specific to the four seasons, birdsong, water murmuring, and lisp of leaves. Holding the end of a big yarn ball, the therapist said her name: “Alina” and gave the yarn ball to the child next to her – Bianca. The end of the string remained at the therapist and after the little girl said: “Alina, my name is Bianca”, she took the string and holding it in her hands, gave the yarn ball to Mihai, who said in his turn: “Alina and Bianca, my name is Mihai”, then he handed on the yarn ball, holding the string in his hands. Every child remained with the yarn ball in his/her hands, so that a network was created in the end. At the therapist’s order, the children stood up and spun around clockwise and counter-clockwise faster and faster on the rhythm of the music, holding the string and then sat down laughing on the carpet in their places. In this stage, the created task was to remake the yarn ball from the hand of the last group member. Until they came again to the first child, the route of the names was remade. When a participant did not remember the name of a colleague, the other children helped him/her quickly. After they rolled the yarn ball, the following task was given by the therapist: “Imagine that a heavy rain came and you have to enter all under a fabric roof, protecting very carefully the yarn ball from the rain water. Who remains outside is in danger to get very wet so you have to help each other and make room for each other under the roof”. The children entered very quickly in their role. The final challenge was to imitate the storm through body sounds: blowing, whistling, and clapping their hands and feet. Some children felt extremely comfortable in expressing themselves non-verbally, while others were relatively blocked and shy in manifestations.

Diana: *I don't like to move unusually when the other children are looking at me. I don't know what to do with my hands and feet. It's funny.”*

Therapist: *How do you play at home with your parents?*

D: *Well, we draw, make puzzles and play with cubes. We tell stories...*

T: *I understand... Do you also run?*

D: *No. Mother says we make noise and it's not nice. The neighbours will get upset.*

T: *Aha... mother says it's not nice to make noise and run. You must be careful...*

D: *Yes, I am always careful to be well-behaved.*

The children had the opportunity within this exercise to become aware of the way in which they relate to the non-verbal aspects and the way in which this mode of expression – by means of the body, is present in their life. During the exercise, in which the therapist actively participated, the children were requested a few times to hold well the string in order to form a network that includes all of them. Through this game, the children learned their names and integrated in the group. After a first uncertainty reaction, all of them helped each other when they were invited to take shelter from the rain, except Ovidiu.

Andreea: *This makes me laugh every time. I like these children.*

Therapist: *Did you feel good with them here?*

A: *Yes, it's good, they are nice. Especially Diana and Emma. Actually, I don't really like Ovidiu. He is quite bad, he fights and talks dirty.*

T: *Did Ovidiu talk dirty to you during the activity?*

A: *No, not to me but I saw him at the kindergarten while he was fighting with other children and said ugly things. I am a little scared of him. But he didn't do anything to me.*

T: *Aha... so he behaved nicely with you...*

A: *Not nice, normal. However, I think he can behave nicely if you also behave nicely with him.*

T: *Would you like to be friends?*

A: *Yes, I like to be friends with all. I like princesses. I am also a princess, as my father says.*

T: *How so? From what kingdom are you coming?*

A: *From a magical place. There are a lot of ponies. And everything is pink and purple and with glitter. In my kingdom is also joy. I like glitter, you know....*

T: *I understand. If Ovidiu accompanies you in*

your magical kingdom, what would his role be?

A: He would be one of my ponies. If he behaves nicely, I will dress him with feathers and velvet. (she shouts with laughter)

T: I can see you have transformed him to your taste. Do you think he would like it?

A: Of course. I would give him carrots and sugar and I would present him to everybody in the beautiful clothes.



Fig. 1. The created “network” and group formation

Workshop 2 “Group drawing” continued the development of self-knowledge and inter-knowledge by increasing personal confidence and self-esteem. The children were divided into two groups, each having the task to carry out a common project and a representative image of the group was obtained. The used methods were drawing and active and receptive melotherapy. A3 sheets of paper, coloured crayons, felt tip pens, watercolours and CDs with music have been used (*Voi che sapete* from *The marriage of Figaro* opera, *Andante* from *Cassation in major G* and *Andante* from *Symphony no. 6* by Mozart).

“You have in front of you a big sheet of paper. Each of you can choose a place on this sheet so that you also leave a space as big as yours to your colleague. You will receive coloured crayons and felt tip pens. Each of you can draw what he/she wants, have patience and use the space that you chose.”

After several minor incidents related to the space delimitation, the children began to draw. Luca and George had a bigger space, Horia complained and it was necessary for the therapist to intervene to calm down the spirits. The other children continued impassibly their started drawings. The formula of boy-girl placement in circle functioned best for the

In the end, Andreea intended to make a nice drawing with a pony, to give it to Ovidiu in the next workshop and to tell him that she wants to be her friend. In the next workshops, Andreea and Ovidiu became really good friends. Andreea is a sensitive, shy little girl with a very rich imagination, who tamed and tempered the volcanic Ovidiu through her kindness, who was thus challenged to deepen his latent protective side.



Fig. 2. Children take shelter from the rain

cooperation. Ovidiu tried to draw in the space of other children but he was rejected, the most vehement of them being Ionuț: *“You are ruining my drawing! Colour in your own space!”*

After ending the drawing, each and every person told in turn what he/she drew. The other children received the task to listen to the person who was talking (often violated both by boys and girls, anxious to ask questions, to receive clarifications or to describe their own creation). Flavia and Emma did not want to tell anything about their drawings (a princess surrounded by flowers, namely a landscape with butterflies and trees in blossom under a rainbow). The therapist did not insist on this topic, preferring to give them their own adaptation and integration rhythm. Horia and Luca drew only spots of different colours about which the other children said they were ugly but the two of them defended vehemently their creations which proved to be a boy who eats sweets and ice cream bought by the father, named Spiderman. Andreea, Emma, Cristina, George and Mihai were drawing one next to each other, sharing colours individually but still careful at what the other one was creating. George was drawing apparently focused when he suddenly turned to Mihai.

George: *This does not look like a house. What you are drawing. It looks like a wild animal.*

Mihai: *Well, it's not even a house! It's a bear. Only that it's too red. And it has a roof.* He laughs out loud, amused by the joke he made.

Andreea (to Mihai): *It really does not look like a house, it looks like a siren. Look, there is the tail.*

George: *You are looking backwards. There is the roof. Sirens have feet.*

Andreea: *No, they don't. Or maybe they have feet in the tail.*

Mihai: *I also put the windows. Now it looks like a house.*

Emma (laughing): *It's the house of sirens!*

Cristina: *I drew a tree, some flowers and butterflies...*

The therapist invited Cristina to give life to her little tree by using her body, giving free reins to her fantasy and imagination.

T: *Right now you are this tree that you drew on paper. Sit on it (she encourages Cristina to come into play). You know, you are not an average tree. You are a magical tree, one that can talk.*

Cristina is a gentle, happy, spontaneous, delicate and very sociable little girl. Always helpful, she helps her colleagues when she thinks they need it, she easily establishes friendship relations with the other children. She easily expresses her feelings and emotions and always volunteers in the activities within the workshops. She is a spontaneous child who manifests her authenticity with joy and confidence.

Flavia: *I am upset as Ionuț coloured here over my drawing.*

Ionuț: *No, I didn't want to do this! And there was too much brown. It was ugly as it was sad. I made it more cheerful.*

T: *What made you want to make Flavia's drawing more cheerful?*

Ionuț: *Well, colours are beautiful. I like colours. It's nice when there are colours ... and it's cheerful.*

T: *Everything is cheerful... Is it important that everything is cheerful?!*

Ionuț: *Yes, to be cheerful, to laugh, play, sing, dance. I get very bored when I don't do anything.*

Bianca: *Diana's drawing is not clear, it's like a fog. And you can no longer see the fish due to the multitude of colours she used!*

Diana: *It's like a fog as I want to show that the fish is swimming in the water. And it's a clown fish, this is why it has so many colours.*

In the last part of the workshop, the children

were requested to find a common language of the group by means of body sounds: handclap, feet clap, trampling, cracks, whistling, whizzing. It resulted in a real turmoil, the children managing in the end to find a common rhythm for everybody by mimicry.

In **workshop 3 "Group creation"** the method used was modelling with modelling clay on a musical background (*Andante grazioso* from *Symphony no. 18*, *Adagio* from *Gran Partita Serenade No. 10 in major B-flat*, *Concertante* from *Serenade No. 9 in Major D* by Mozart) within the individual activities and in the large group. The children were placed on chairs around tables and they were given modelling clay of different colours. Each of them modelled what he/she wanted until the signal: "*Stop game!*", moment in which the children had to give their personal creation to the colleague on their right, for 2-3 minutes, period after which the therapist repeated the signal.

The creation of each and every child passed to all colleagues from the group, at the end of the activity reaching its rightful owner, being obtained 12 models of modelling clay. Through this challenge, the children had the opportunity to express their feelings, needs and opinions when the colleagues modified their creations but they did not have the possibility to intervene in the colleague's activity. If the children were initially happy with the idea of model exchange, conflicts appeared between them along the way. Luca and Mihai wanted their initial idea to be respected and the colleagues ruined their plans through the personal manner and style in which they continued. The situation was frustrating. The therapist intervention consisted in explaining to them the fact that there is no good or evil, beauty or ugliness but simply a model of modelling clay – a special and unique one. It was remarkable that George and Ovidiu tried to influence the ideas of the colleagues, impressing their own ideas and feelings on the forms. Except Flavia, the other children did not have the intention to continue what their colleague started, feeling the need to impress their own vision.

Emma: *My model is almost like I made it. The others are very different than they were in the beginning. I am not even sure if these are theirs.*

T: *Yes, it remained almost the same, although it passed to all your colleagues.*

Cristina: *It was very nice; this is why I didn't change it.*

Bianca: *Yes, it was already beautiful, with many colours...*

Emma was surprised. Her mimicry oscillated between joy and perplexity. The sincere encouragement received from her colleagues had a

powerful influence on the way in which she chose to get involved in the subsequent workshops and to venture in bold creations.

Luca: *My form is very changed, I don't even know for sure if it's mine.*

T: *It does no longer look like what you started...*

Luca: *Yes, the children didn't like what I made.*

Luca is upset, tears appear in his eyes and he is about to burst into tears. He perceived the modification of his initial model by the colleagues as a non-valorising message of his creation. He draws the conclusion that it was something worthless, that it wasn't likeable.

T: *I invite you to also look at the other figurines. Do you still recognize them compared to how they looked in the beginning? Or they remained unchanged?"*

Luca: *No, all are different. Only Emma's has remained almost the same.*

T: *So the others modified also... How do they seem to you?*

Luca: *They are beautiful, I like them. I even made some of them beautiful.*

T: *Yes, you made them beautiful... What do you think of your form?*

Luca: *I like it, but it's not as it was in the beginning. When I started it.*

T: *It's not the same. It passed through many hands which left their print on it. They left a part of them as a gift.*

Luca (suddenly brightening up): *Like me! I also left gifts for children when I modelled nicely.*

In the last part of this workshop, the children were requested to make a group creation: *"Each of you is kindly requested to place his/her piece on the big cardboard from the middle. Place the models so that you make a common group work. Give also a name to your creation."*

The purpose of the activity was to bring the children in contact with their tactile sense, to stimulate their creativity and manual dexterity. The final part contributed to foster the group cohesion.

Workshop 4 "Bush of roses" aimed to develop the creativity and the capacity to verbally and non-verbally express their own feelings. The drawing, musical audition, guided dream, narration and role play

were used, along with sheets of paper, coloured crayons, felt tip pens and CDs with music.

The children presented and revealed themselves to their group colleagues only if and when they wanted/felt ready, being useful the establishment of a limit between the personal and social space. Also, the activity helped the children to form their realistic and positive self-image, implicitly developing their creativity and spontaneity. The physical and psychic balance was obtained through conscious complete respiration, meditation with guidance to imagination in fascinating and relaxing places. In the safe space of the art therapy office, with ambient relaxation music in the background, the children were asked to close their eyes and breathe deeply, holding the air in their chests for a few seconds and then exhaling it for a long time, until they felt they were relaxed and the music became more and more present.

With a warm voice, the children were guided to imagery, the therapist suggesting them to imagine that they are slowly becoming flowers, more exactly bushes of roses. With the relaxing music in the background, more situations were presented, choosing what they think suits them best. For example: *"What type of rose bush are you? A very small or a very big one? Are you in blossom? Or maybe only with buds? Do you have leaves? Of which type? How do your roots look like? Or maybe you have no roots? Do you have thorns? Where are you? In a yard? In a city? In the middle of the ocean? Are you in a flower pot or do you grow on the earth? What is around you? Are there any other flowers? How it is like to be a bush of roses? Does someone take care of you?"* The children were requested not to verbalize the answers to these questions and to open their eyes when they are ready. They were each given a sheet of paper and coloured crayons and were asked to draw their imagined bush of roses. Ionuț and Horia said that they don't know how to draw roses, so they were encouraged to draw any other flower they know. *"It doesn't matter how you draw, it is important to do this as you can, with joy."*

After finishing the drawings, whoever wanted presented his/her bush of roses and described it. The purpose was to discover the positive personal characteristic which will help the children overcome their difficulties, as a realistic and positive self-image is the basis of developing a harmonious, authentic and spontaneous personality.



Fig. 3. Bush of roses created by preschoolers

Bianca: *I drew a big bush, with many red and velvety flowers. I don't have thorns so that people can smell me without getting stung. Around me are many other flowers and little trees of all kinds as we live in a garden. When no one is around, we tell all kinds of things, we laugh and have fun. When someone comes closer, we no longer make any sound so as not to give ourselves away. A family takes care of me. They water me when I am thirsty, protect me against weeds and other bad things. I repay them with my flowers and special smell.*

Ionuț: *I am a big rose and I have powerful thorns. I have deep roots and nothing can hurt me. I grow in a park where a lot of people admire me as I have the most beautiful flowers.*

George: *I am a white rose. I live a small clearing in the forest. I don't know how I got there, I simply grew and blossomed. The sun and the rain take care of me. It's very nice where I live. There are a lot of flowers, trees, birds and bees. The clearing where we are is secret and no one that wants to hurt us can find it. It's a magical place.*

The preschoolers had the opportunity to discover themselves and the universe in which they are living. Some of them were willing to communicate what they felt or reveal in front of the group and the therapist didn't insist in this direction. They were asked to show their drawings and tell their stories personally, at the end of the workshop.

It was much easier to tell their stories in the small and secure space. They were encouraged to be braver in the future and thus offer the opportunity to as many persons as possible to enjoy their creations.

Workshop 5 "Parade of emotions" offered the children the opportunity to express their emotions, needs, experiences, to release the accumulated anxiety and to create connections with themselves, at the same time training their imagination and distributive attention. The drawing, musical audition, dance and drama were used as methods. Necessary materials: A4 sheets of paper, coloured crayons, felt tip pens, CDs with music.

In the first phase, the children were placed at tables and the materials were distributed to them. Fragments from *The seasons* by Vivaldi were chosen, which express different feelings, the children being requested to be very attentive and focus on what they are feeling in that moment, without discussing with the others. Each fragment lasted between 2 and 3 minutes, given the reduced functional capacity of the children of this age to maintain their attention focused for a long time.

Subsequently, the children were requested to draw four human faces: happy, sad, scared and angry. In the end, those who wanted presented their drawings. An important rule was that the other children would not comment the choices made by their colleagues and criticize their work. We didn't insist in Ovidiu's case, who hesitated to present his drawing.



Fig. 4. Portraits that express different emotions



Fig. 5. Dance and free movement within the group

In the second part, the children danced on the same musical selections, expressing this time their emotions through their body, accompanying the dance with mimicry. In the first phase, they were given examples of feelings which they imitated and represented through dance as they felt it and then they were left to dance freely. Subsequently, the drama therapy phase of the workshop continued on musical background. The children, placed in a circle, became trees of all types (represented by the posture chosen by each and every person), they related, talked and expressed their emotions in relation with certain interactions or challenging events (hot sun, strong storm, and blizzard). In the end, they all had a moment in which the earth energy unified with the sky energy and circulated through each little tree, offering peace, stability, warmth and joy.

This movement activity relaxed and helped them find themselves through dance, having thus access to their inner world, releasing them from the anxieties accumulated and acquiring more self-confidence. The non-verbal expression of feelings was preferred by the children, compared to the verbal one. Those who wished to present their works to the group were encouraged and George, who did not want to do this at that time, presented at the end of the workshop. Flavia created more drawings with portraits expressing different emotional states.

Totally absorbed by her work, working by herself, she lost for a period of time the contact with the rest of the group and with the evolution of activities. With a lot of care, she was writing something very focused. Then she was placing the drawing over the created pile. At the end of the workshop, she was asked if she wants to show what she drew. On the back of each drawing was drawn a big heart, Flavia's name

was written and the word "Mother". Flavia's mother left abroad to work since she was only one year old. "From now on I will send them to my mother. When I will be happy, angry, sad... In this way she will know how I am and she will come to me faster." She is a little girl with an amazing self-learning capacity, a big curiosity and wish to discover new things.

The exploration of different emotional states helped Flavia understand aspects related to their nature and feelings evoked by the gift and the reception of gifts. The little girl wanted very much to take home the created materials in order to show and send them to her mother.

Cristina: *Look at the colours I use!*

She was encouraged to continue. The drawing was indeed extremely expressive. She was waiting the adult approval in order to have the courage to continue.

Andreea: *I need some pink. Tell me how to do it.*

She did not receive an answer immediately. She was asked if she noticed how other children did this.

Andreea: *Yes, I saw. Mihai used white. I will also put a little white over my red, to see if it works.*

In this activity, Andreea felt free to look at the other children drawing, to ask the others what they think about her work and to experiment the colours in order to obtain the nuance desired. Offering immediate answers, without the encouragement to experiment, would not have created the opportunity to practice her observation ability and to use her own imagination in a purely personal representation of emotions.

Workshop 6 "City of famous dwarfs" combined the imagination and the manual dexterity with the expression of needs, emotional states and creativity. The children were challenged: (1) to express

their feelings, needs, experiences, curiosities and opinions; (2) to build their own space; (3) to develop their motor and creative skills; (4) to discover decisive strategies concerning the conflicts occurred within the group, training their imagination and attention. The task of the children was to build a city from paper, cardboard, string, thread, remains of textile materials, polyvinyl alcohol, and glue.

After they made the city plan, the children created design elements: windows, doors, roofs, buildings. For the therapist, the way in which the children involved in making the construction was a clear example of the way in which technical aspects can be presented in an interesting manner, which makes possible the testing and error strategy without demotivating them. Mihai started to draw geometrical shapes on the cardboard with a crayon: squares, rectangles, triangles, circles.

T: *What will you do with the shapes you drew?*

Mihai: *We will cut them out.*

The other children from the group agreed. The cut-out requires an action of space and volume anticipation and organization, as well as the careful follow-up of the drawn line contour. It is a difficult activity for a group of preschoolers. The children worked very focused and silent for the first time since the beginning of creation workshops. The cut-outs were not perfect from Mihai's point of view but he decided it's ok even like this *"I did not cut it right until the end but I will colour it nicely and I will take care how I glue it to the other pieces."*

Even though at the beginning he drew the same pieces as Mihai, Horia claims: *"I want to make my building different"* and taking a red crayon, he adds parallel lines and makes a big triangle for the roof. Bianca and Diana work side by side, one next to the other, in amazing cooperation.

They negotiate concerning drawing lines, choosing colours and construction materials, completing each other's ideas. From time to time, they lift the pieces in the light of the windows in order to check if the shape is cut perfectly and when they consider necessary, adjust it.

Their working mode caught the attention of other children, who follow them constantly. Even though the others continue to work individually, a few of them adopted their method for verifying the cut geometrical shapes. The imitation produced among the children is an interesting process and it sometimes becomes creative.

As the children continue their activity, they become more and more skilful and talented. Another interesting observation: instead of throwing the small pieces of cardboard that he cut while cutting out the main shapes of the buildings, Ionuț arranged them in the bigger composition, integrating them into the city construction by giving them different uses: *"We can glue them very well. Look, this small square looks like a window if I draw another line. And I will make a tree out of this shape, see? And here, with these pieces we will build the road"*.

He is very pleased, especially because the other children embraced his ideas. Each small piece was perceived as being part of the whole. He did not have the heart to throw them, as long as they could be used again. From the multitude of materials, a few of them drew the attention of the children.

Cristina: *This paper looks like silver. It is shiny and smooth when you touch it.* Then, Cristina took transfer paper and started to firmly draw curved lines on it: *This has slants. It's good for the hills around the city.*

Ovidiu: *I cut the road from blue paper, which is smooth. The black one is so ragged that it can hurt your skin. It can even cut you!...* (he tried to cut it but he concluded that it is easier to tear it into small pieces)

Andreea put red cellophane over a piece of white paper and announced everybody happily: *Now the kindergarten is painted in red.*

Luca searched carefully for the pieces of smooth paper and grouped them separately from the ragged one, classifying them depending on their texture. Until the creation of the city, the children faced with more technical or esthetical problems. But they did not lose from sight the final objective – the creation of their city, which they called *"City of famous dwarfs"*.

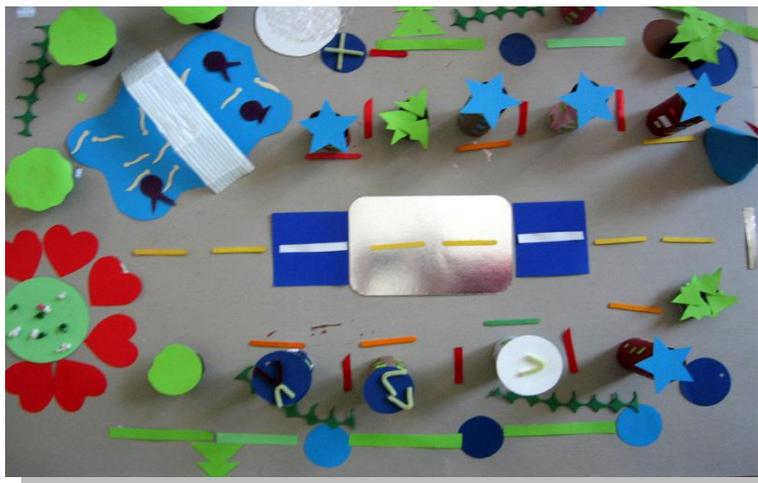


Fig. 6. City of famous dwarfs built by the children

Workshop 7 “Ad-hoc orchestra” aimed to develop spontaneity and free musical improvisation. The methods used were dance therapy, receptive, active, individual and group melotherapy, with different musical instruments. Every child chose one instrument after they tested it, then suggested certain rhythms, creating a melodic line together with the other. Emma, 5 years, was fascinated by the toy xylophone that she chose it from the instruments basket. She asked the therapist a lot of questions about the way in which the notes can be transposed into musical sounds. It is important to outline the fact that a child who learns to create, discovers not only art, but also discovers himself. The encouragement from the adults of personal, original, different creations will avoid in the future the idea of conformism and copying, given the fact that works considered valuable already exist.

In the next stage, children were suggested to make a dialogue between the musical instruments, to harmonize them or accompany a sound, a group of sounds or a melodic line. The children explored in the beginning the sounds generated by the percussion instruments. For some of them it was the first time they had the chance to experiment this type of materials.

The first reaction was that of curiosity: the children watched and touched the different drums, sticks, tambourines. They asked their name for each of it. How do you play them? Why is the tambourine empty inside? They were shown how to obtain different sounds by beating with their hands or fingers in various areas of the instruments or by using a different intensity of the beat. As they became more and more confident, the children ventured in producing

more and more bold sounds. For the younger ones, the stronger the emitted sound, the bigger the pleasure. However, the older ones were rather interested in creating a rhythm and coherent melody. It was noticed that the most active ones in vocalizing or producing sounds through instruments spontaneously were the children aged between 3-4 years old. The oldest ones were more inclined to take breaks in which they verbally shared feed-back, being more interested in the value of the musical product, therefore less spontaneous and more inclined to a built audio form.

A common rhythm was created, using the hands and feet and this way a song of the entire group was created. Then every child chose his/her preferred instrument in order to produce his/her own sound to his/her liking, the force with which he/she beat the instruments being different.

Diana, Bianca, Horia, Ionuț and George, in one corner of the room, created an ad-hoc band, practising the sounds produced by different instruments (whistles, xylophone, drums and tambourines) in a vibrant and extremely intense melody. The extreme delight produced by the sounds emitted by the instruments from their hands and the constant surprise that they were the authors could be read on their faces. A new experience that did not require any previous training. Subsequently, the children were suggested an exercise with the purpose of bodily focus and the increase of personal spontaneity.

“I invite you to a walk in which you are very careful at your body. Go on your toes. Now on your heels. Now on your entire sole. The step of the dwarf. Jump. Join hands and jump two by two. Come back to normal walk. Turn the arms forwards and backwards.

Turn your neck and head. Now you feel the entire body. Now close your eyes and listen to the music in silence. Listen every sound very carefully. Take the children on your right and left by their hands and form a circle."

On a music adequate to the movement needs of the children from the *Music box*, placed in a circle, they were invited by turns in its middle in order to suggest one movement to be executed by all group members for understanding which is the message that each wants to transmit personally to the group about themselves. The exercise continued through the suggestion of dance in dyads, in groups of four and then the dance of the entire group. Besides the bodily unlocking, it was also aimed at the positivity increase of children's' emotional tonus, which creates a context adequate to creative and spontaneous activities. The emotional contagion produces easily through the physical activation on the rhythm of the music and the group dynamics were lively, expressive and cheerful. The main purpose of this workshop was to encourage the bodily expression, the capitalization of personal expressiveness, the creation of an activator and happy environment, where the children felt safe and free to express themselves in an authentic way.

In **workshop 8 "Portrait"**, the children developed their manual skills and practiced the modes of inter-relation acquired in previous experiences. The methods used were drawing and drama therapy on a melo-therapeutic background. In the first stage, the children were divided into dyads. Staying face to face, they expressed bodily, each of them, a series of emotional states that the other child identified and had the task to reflect. The exercise continued at the level of the upper preschool group with the *Room of mirrors*, in which every person expressed bodily a certain state reflected subsequently by the others. The next stage consisted of the task of making a portrait of a child who offered voluntary. The model was Bianca, whose physical and behavioural characteristics were first noticed and commented by her colleagues.

Cristina: *She has big and black eyes. The lips are also big, the upper and lower one. Her mouth becomes smaller when she smiles.*

Diana: *She has a ponytail and lots of coloured hair pins.*

Bianca: *My mother always makes my ponytails and puts all types of beautiful hair pins. She knows how to make many hairstyles. She is very talented. She often intervened to confirm or infirm the comments made by her colleagues.*

At the therapist's indication: *"I invite you to sit at the tables and start making Bianca's portrait"*,

the children sat down on the little chairs placed around the model. Each of them had another perspective of her, different from the perspective of their other colleagues: front, sides, back. The positioning was not random: it was known that the children from the sides and from the back will encounter difficulties in making the portrait, fact which will require their creative resources. During the activity, the children verified periodically their creations, standing up from their tables. The purpose was partially the necessity to satisfy the curiosity, partially to receive suggestions for fulfilling the task.

Andreea (while she was looking curiously at Flavia's work): *It's not good how you drew her, that you drew Bianca as from the front. You should have drawn her from the side, with only one eye, one leg, one ear...* Then, showing her own work: *Look, like I did it.* She put the two works one next to the other in order to compare them: *You drew her with two arms, two eyes, as you see her from the front, not as seen from the side...* Andreea's tone was friendly and academic, proud that she explains something correctly to her colleague. Flavia, who at the beginning was confused and did not seem too keen on lessons from her colleague, understood little by little what was necessary to change to the portrait.

T: *Your portrait is very nice, but seen like this, where would you have stayed normally?*

Flavia indicated non-verbally the right position, namely that in front of Bianca. The therapist's remark aimed to encourage the little girl, she was not requested to remake it and it was aimed at making sure that the difference of perspective was realized: front and back. In the end, the entire group witnessed the spontaneous confession of one of the most shy and introvert participants.

Horia: *When I grow up, I will become an artist.*

T: *What is the reason for which you want to become an artist?*

Horia (very confident): *As I know to create many works of art.*

T: *And what type of artist do you want to be?*

Horia (pauses, then says loudly so that everybody hears him): *Painter!*

The theme approached in **workshop 9 "About planets and stars"** was *"the initiation road"*. The activities took place under the form of role play in sequences, following the framework of the story *"Little Prince"*. In this manner, it was possible to express freely the emotions and feelings, to train the imagination and find solutions to personal and group

conflicts in crisis situations. As methods, drama therapy, dance therapy, melotherapy, modelling, metaphor and story were used. Materials used: modelling clay and an illustrated edition of the story "Little Prince" by Antoine de Saint-Exupery.

The story that aims a noble cause was read and it was easy for the children to understand it: the rescue of a flower from the planet of the Prince and his way through the stars, with a lot of meetings along which he grows up. Subsequently, the participants had to choose either to model the planet, the flower, the fox, Time-King, the snake, the desert, the plane or the Prince from plasticine. Asked what sensation does the plasticine offer them when they touch it, some said it feels "smooth", others "cold", "sticky", "soft", each stating his/her own sensory perception.

Ionuț: *I can give it what shape I want but if it is not warmed, it breaks. It crumbles.*

Mihai: *I warm it in the hand and make doughnuts of it. After that I put them one on top of each other to make the Time-King.*

Ovidiu: *I roll it on the table, afterwards I press it to make it flat and I will make a sleeping snake.*

T: *How do we realize that the snake sleeps?*

Ovidiu: *As I coil it. This is how snakes sleep.*

After creating the characters from modelling clay, the children entered in their skin and created a spontaneous play, recreating on the scene the meetings between the Prince and the other characters. With the occasion of meeting the Time-King, the children learned about measurable time, in which the clock says how it passes throughout days, nights, weeks, months, years, centuries, millenniums.

Through the meeting between the Prince and the fox, it was discussed about gaining the confidence through efficient communication, knowing the others through mutual appreciation and patience. In the desert crossed by the Prince, the children placed creatures and

plants that represented their fears, empathizing with prince's suffering from the story. The fears were explored more at the stage of dramatization of the meeting between the Prince and the snake.

The preschoolers were challenged to negotiate another ending of the story and to create a group song composed only of vowels. They came up with the idea to repair the plane and save the flower from the Prince's planet by finding a cure = *Love*. By means of interpreted characters, each child created initially his/her own melody, through variations of the vocal tone and low or high vocal inflexions, which subsequently integrated into the group melody.

The children involved actively in the musical-dramatization moment, changing spontaneously their places and emitted notes, exploring varied emotions through role play. Most of the time in which this exercise took place, the children's attention focused on their own person, with sequences in which they entered in the common atmosphere of the group.

The group melody was not carried out in a structured form, but the children felt free to improvise individually. In the next stage, each child created a planet from modelling clay, which was painted, decorated, given a name and afterwards they created a small story about it: what type of planet it is, who lives on it. A discussion about stars and the fact that each of us has his/her protective star took place.

The children launched the planets on an imaginary orbit for a magical journey. At the therapist's suggestion, the children described the road and what did the planets do in that journey. A story was created in which the built planets will become stars that they could see every night and their star will be the brightest one. They launched together the constellation into the cosmic space, emphasizing the idea that the group will stay together through the stars that shine on the sky.



Fig. 7. Figurines inspired from the *Little Prince*



Fig. 8. Planets and stars in a cosmic constellation

The art therapy workshops aimed to develop creativity of preschoolers by activating the personal resources and discovering new efficient interaction patterns. The artistic products created facilitated the emotional expression of the experiences that the children communicated and gave meaning afterwards within a safety relationship.

IV. Discussions

Under the apparent simplicity, the study herein hides a lot of complexity, a careful awareness increase from part of the therapist of the person itself, the approached subject, specialized literature, techniques, rules and ethics of qualitative research. Also, it was characterized by sensitivity to the given context, personal involvement, rigor, transparency and coherence. It started from the assumption that the creativity development in children is strongly correlated with the influence factors from the environment and had the purpose of obtaining answers to a series of questions which appeared after studying the specialized works on this theme, concerning the positive influence of creative-expressive therapies in the interaction with preschoolers.

Based on the analysis and interpretation of qualitative results concerning the creativity development in preschoolers through art therapy workshops, a descriptive picture of the manifestation of their creativity can be created, especially the artistic and situational type. Therefore it can be concluded that:

1. In the case of research question if preschoolers are characterized by creative attitudes that favour the manifestation and stimulation of the creative potential, it can be noticed that they: show spontaneity, manifest in general an increased confidence in their own person, wish to end what they start and enjoy the created product, prefer the freedom of movement and action (not restricted by strict rules), are interested in the new and manifest a strong curiosity. The obtained results support the vision of Glăveanu (2011) according to whom children: • show spontaneity, energy, initiative and originality; • develop valuable products; • use creatively the available resources generating new interpretations; • have the availability to know and experiment and have an open attitude towards life.

2. Concerning the second question – if the involvement of children in a program conceived under the form of art therapy workshops that answers their interests would lead to the development of productive creativity at the artistic and behavioural

3. levels, we can draw a series of clarifying conclusions based on the experience accumulated in

practice. The personal development workshops for children, implicitly those centered on creativity development through art therapy methods can be carried out as long as they exceeded the age of 3 years and 6 months. Taking into account the age particularities of the children, a humanistic-experientialist approach was chosen, because this approach offers preschoolers the impression that they are not attending an instructive program but rather they come somewhere where they can play.

The motivation for play increases their degree of authentic participation in the therapeutic process, the benefit being sometimes maximal, and a theme such as the creativity development can be extremely attractive for them. The effects materialized in positive changes at a behavioural and action level made by the children, were confirmed by their parents and teachers (which came to validate additionally the efficiency of the art therapy intervention program), such as: • the development of capacity of verbal and non-verbal expression of emotions, needs and desires; • the increase of self-confidence and improvement of relationships with the others; • the development of spontaneity, imagination and creativity; • the release from tensions, frustrations, emotions and anxieties accumulated. It can be asserted that within these workshops, it was confirmed the increase in the preschoolers' creative attitudes both at the artistic and behavioural level. All these aim to outline the opinion of I. Mitrofan (2008, p. 233), according to which art therapy stimulates children's creativity because human creativity is "the primary language for obtaining insight and healing". It can often be sufficient that preschoolers manifest openly the blocked behaviours and emotions which interfered with their own emotional growth process, without being necessary to verbalize the insights or findings and become aware of the behavioural changes.

4. Related to the third question formulated – which is the optimum way through which preschoolers' creativity can be stimulated and developed, we can assert that:

• These workshops were created for a small number of children – 12, in order to allow the careful observation of the way in which every participant evolves related to the group theme.

• The number and duration of activities was sufficient in order to facilitate and consolidate the new acquisitions of children, able thus to produce a series of changes in their life. Also, the suggested exercises and techniques were characterized by a large diversity and richness, taking into account the reduced capacity to

focus on the task of the children at this age.

- The game, music, dance, painting, drawing, collage, modelling, dramatization are work instruments for the therapist, recommended in organizing such workshops in order to reach the objectives.

The group formation depended on the responsible involvement of each child. Gradually, the group intimacy increased, self-disclosure appeared, constructive confrontations of different points of view and the first initiatives of emotional support also surfaced. Different positive emotions and the feeling of unity with the others were present, which increased the preschoolers' desire to involve in new experiences. In this way, they adopted and experimented new attitudes, conducts and behaviours, without the fear of risk.

As a result, each group member, in his/her own rhythm became his/her own creator, discovering how important it is to receive but to also to offer support, which favoured the acceptance of his/her own person, self-esteem, self-confidence and confidence in others. The art therapy experience centred on creativity development offered the children, in an authentic and spontaneous manner, the possibility to live here and now the experience of meeting the other and also meeting with his/her own image through the eyes of other people. In this way, every preschooler became for the other "a window that offers another perspective on reality, a privileged space in which any group member can meet themselves in another state" (Badea, 1999, p. 16).

The diversification and permanent character of informal educational activities allows the formation of competences that can improve the creative skills of preschoolers. Although including creativity in kindergarten can be difficult or encounters a lot of resistance – being a seductive, but difficult to manage notion (David, 2013), the results obtained within the art therapy workshops strengthen the essential role of teachers to support and implement it in education by: (1) creating the opportunities for preschoolers to manifest in a creative way; (2) offering creativity models; (3) capitalizing creative manifestations; (4) creating an adequate environment that includes resources and a safe atmosphere within the group (Runco, 2007).

V. Conclusions

Following those presented previously, it is necessary to encourage a creative environment not only in the educational space but also outside it, as the quantity of information received in the non-formal and informal environment is more incisive on the

children's' interests and options. It is extremely important that adults encourage and support the actions of knowledge and creative manifestation of children by: (1) adopting a democratic and free style of communication, as well as a precocious intervention; (2) encouraging and supporting constantly the children's' achievements; (3) well intended and constructive criticism.

The stimulation and education of creativity in preschoolers can be carried out depending on the multitude of external or internal influences exercised on them. For this purpose, it is recommended to take into account the following aspects: (1) creativity is not always developing in all children automatically; every child has a creative potential that requires to be discovered and stimulated; (2) rigidity paralyses creativity; (3) encouragement of children's' creative ideas is essential; (4) criticism of failures is not recommended; (5) adults are invited to reflect on the importance of their own creativity as this can be contagious.

The face to face interaction with the participants, the verbal and non-verbal data collected in the natural environment, the exploration of perceptions, the emphasis of nuances, the contextualized information, the cooperation between the therapist and the participants, the obtainment of large and diverse data quantities represented major and authentic concerns during the entire research.

Of course, the research being a qualitative one, does not imply the rigour of processing quantitative data, therefore the limits that result inherently from the specific design of this type of research depend on the cooperation degree of the children, the essential part being sometimes lost in the multitude of data which can be interpreted in different ways. The relatively small number of participants, namely 12 preschoolers from a kindergarten with normal program from the city can be another restrictive aspect. We consider that the results of such research would be more interesting and conclusive if a higher number of preschoolers was taken into account, from more kindergartens, and from both the urban and rural environments. Another limit of this research is also the vastness of the creativity domain and the very large number of works on this topic, which resulted in the thorough selection that we carried out both in the presentation of theoretical aspects and also in establishing the objectives and questions, wherefrom the possibility to neglect aspects that in their turn can contribute positively to the creativity development in preschoolers.

We believe that it would be interesting that the

action of theme thoroughness – the creativity development of preschoolers through art therapy workshops would be completed with a series of research that aims:

- The elaboration of valid instruments for underlying the positive relations between creativity stimulation in preschoolers and creative-expressive techniques.

- The extension on larger populations that contain preschoolers from more kindergartens, which could better emphasize the relation between personal and instrumental factors, subject to the research.

- The sphere of motivational-emotional mechanisms that support energetically the activity and modes of manifestation in their practical activity.

- The analysis of possibilities of children's artistic creativity manifestation and the identification of modes of making accessible its expression.

- The implementation of specialized programs for the stimulation and development of creative skills among children in the educational formal space.

The research herein, beyond its contributions and limits, managed to outline a model of creativity development in preschoolers through art therapy techniques and represents a starting point for subsequent research that helps practitioners to better understand everything that creativity means, starting from the factors that influence its development at a personal level and ending with the importance that this personality aspect has in influencing our life from all points of view.

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