

The Influence of Musical Education of Visually Impaired Children on their Rehabilitation and Integration into Society

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Abstract

In the article the authors reveal the peculiarities of the influence of musical education of visually impaired children on their further socialization and integration into society. The authors present the data of an exceptional personality change as a result of obtaining musical education. Musical education has a positive impact, both on the personality of a blind musician, and on his ability to find a appropriate place in society. The development of musical abilities of blind schoolchildren occurs in complex conditions of lack of visual sensations. The impairment of visual perception impedes blind schoolchildren from studying musical works and scores independently. The success of further musical education of visually impaired children depends on the teachers' typhlo-pedagogical knowledge. The success of rehabilitation and social adaptation of visually impaired musicians will largely depend on the special training of professionals that is music teachers.

Keywords: musical education, rehabilitation, social integration, inclusive processes, persons with disabilities, blindness, visual impairment, multi-level system of musical education.

1. INTRODUCTION

For a long time it has been well-known that people with visual impairments have very good hearing. The musical ear can be considered as a gift from God for the blind, for those who do not have the opportunity to see all the beauty of the outside world. Music becomes their a guide to the world of beauty.

In recent years the number of children with severe visual impairment has increased significantly. The reason to this increase is the so-called retinopathy of prematurity, which often occurs due to various medical resuscitation measures of newborns [1]. Strangely enough, advances in medicine can lead to an increase in the number of people with visual impairments. As a result, the still imperfect system of nursing in infant incubators promotes the formation of congenital malformations of the visual analyzer. Congenital blindness does not allow a person to see the beauty of the surrounding world, but allows "seeing" and hearing music better than with the help of actual seeing.

Visual impairment can occur in the form of complete blindness, when a person does not distinguish between light and darkness or in the form of practical

blindness, when weak visual sensations still present; there is a small group of visually impaired people who can see with the help of optical correction systems. Visual impairment in the form of blindness, when a person cannot distinguish darkness from light, is the heaviest condition. Teaching such people music allows them not only to expand their horizons of perception, but also further to adapt to the world of people, to find their vocation and place in life [2, 3].

Musical education can become a strong "bridge" for blind people to the world of sighted people. We can observe this from life examples of famous musicians, singers and composers who, despite blindness, achieved great results in their profession. Without the special assistance of their music teachers such a "bridge" would never exist. What would happen in the life of these people? How would they live if there were no such education [4, 5].

Musical creativity requires the early professionalization of the blind. Depriving a blind pupil of a systematic and fundamental musical education can mean significant reduction of his further professional prospects, and, in fact, depriving him of his future [6, 7].

2. THE REQUIREMENTS TO THE PERSONALITY OF A MUSIC TEACHER INSTRUCTING BLIND STUDENTS

Children with visual impairments usually study in boarding schools for blind and visually impaired children, but modern educational conditions allow them to receive both general and musical education in an inclusive way. Teachers of the inclusive system need to study the musical system of L. Braille and the peculiarities of presenting the musical material itself [8].

At present, there is a pressing need in music teachers who are able to demonstrate high professional skills, and who know how to teach people with visual impairments. They also must possess information technologies skills, understand the humanitarian problems and the specifics of the development of musical art, and solve non-standard professional problems as well [9].

The requirements to the teacher's personality is not just the performance of his/her duties in teaching music or vocals, it is also the improvement of his/her mastery of writing musical notes according to Braille system, the solid grasp of scores, the ability to use special devices and the ability to teach blind students to use those.

The reforming of education system in Russia required the capacity and preparedness of musical institutions teachers staff to work in new conditions; this includes the need for constant self-improvement, both in the field of a taught discipline and in the field of special psychological education, which gives an idea of the features of compensation for visual impairments, of the role of hearing perception and other mental processes. The teachers are required to constantly improve their professional skills, to master new technologies in the conditions of inclusive education of blind schoolchildren. The new professional – the specialists in this field are being involved into work with blind schoolchildren in different musical institutions; they are concert performers, researchers, specialists who accompany, educate, and develop persons with disabilities (for example, blind musicians) [10].

The introduction of new federal state educational standards in the field of music teaching required not only a change in the structure, but also in a number of aspects of the content of training professional staff for teaching students with visual impairments music. A new competency model aimed at constant self-improvement and active independent creative activity of bachelors and masters stimulates the pedagogical staff of music schools to work in new conditions [11]. The above mentioned facts indicate the positive aspects of the implementation of the new federal state standards in the field of musical education.

3. THE INFLUENCE OF MUSICAL EDUCATION ON THE PERSONALITY OF A BLIND MUSICIAN

In the practice of teaching persons with profound visual impairments music and vocals, there are many examples when the hard work of teachers and the efforts of

the pupil himself led to a remarkable result. Music helps to gain confidence in the future.

There are many different opportunities for the blind to find their vocation in music. However, there are limitations that are connected with the specifics of their visual impairment. For example, blind musicians cannot play in the orchestra, as they do not see the signals of the conductor. In addition, they cannot play from the sheet, but only from memory. While being a part in an orchestra, everyone plays with from the sheet, which is an important condition for orchestral musicians. Being able to play almost all musical instruments, a musician uses both hands, reading the text from the sheet with the eyes, whereas a blind man reads the notes with his fingers using the relief-dotted font of Louis Braille. Thus, it is impossible to read and play the instrument in an orchestra at the same time. Therefore, it is better if the blind learn to play individually such instruments as the piano, the accordion, and do not learn to play classical orchestral instruments, such as the violin and the violoncello [12, 13].

These restrictions should not affect the mood or capabilities of blind students in any way. All blind schoolchildren must be taught to read music in musical schools. It is not advisable to teach music basing only on hearing, but it is desirable to teach to write and read music, even if it's in relief-dotted type. Despite the fact that the blind cannot be a part of an orchestra, the knowledge of the musical notation is vitally important for them, as well as for the sighted musicians. Getting acquainted with notes, a blind musician can meaningfully and professionally approach a musical work, analyze the composer's way of thinking, and not just memorize this or that play mechanically.

Musical creativity has been and still remains the most important means of rehabilitation for blind children. Music classes, stage performances, participation in various festivals, shows, competitions helps boys and girls overcome diffidence, stiffness, excessive shyness and self-doubt.

Children with visual disabilities experience a legitimate pride for their musical success. They are pleased to bring joy to both peers and adults. Conducting musical events contributes to establishing contacts between children and adolescents with disabilities and people without health restrictions. This is the true inclusion.

It should be noted that in the modern world the social status of persons with disabilities should attract the attention of all members of society and should be the object of social policy of the state. In a just society, the needs and interests of all people, regardless of their social affiliation, including those who cannot be more successful for objective reasons, should be taken into account [4]. Reforming the system of permanent musical education should contribute to further deep historical cognition of the process, the disclosure of the thesis that education, as an inseparable part of spiritual culture, is to a large extent determined by the mentality of the era and the unique national character.

4. PRINCIPLES OF MUSICAL EDUCATION OF BLIND CHILDREN PROMOTING THEIR SOCIAL REHABILITATION AND SOCIAL INTEGRATION

Working with the blind a music teacher should be guided by all pedagogical and special principles that enable to implement the inclusive education and contribute to the further social rehabilitation and social integration of blind schoolchildren. The main principles or the principles that contribute to this and show the specifics of working with blind schoolchildren for their further rehabilitation and social integration are:

- the principle of joint (visually impaired children and children with normal sight) holding all musical (solfeggio) academic and educational events;
- the principle of participation in regional, all-Russian and international competitions and festivals of schoolchildren with visual impairments on an equal footing with healthy normally-seeing children;
- the creation of mixed creative groups including both children with normal sight and visually impaired children.

The result of the application of such principles or the guidance of a music teacher by these principles can be manifested in numerous victories of visually impaired children at regional, all-Russian and international competitions and festivals held among healthy normally-seeing children. However, the main task of a music teacher remains the same; it includes rehabilitation, socialization and integration of visually impaired schoolchildren into society, overcoming their forced alienation, making up conditions for creative self-expression of a person, developing musical talent.

5. CONCLUSION

Rehabilitation and social integration of visually impaired schoolchildren can be carried out in the process of teaching them music. The development of auditory, musical hearing while obtaining musical education gives visually impaired people a chance to achieve world levels. Moreover, the participation of blind musicians in various public events, concerts, and competitions will draw broad attention of society to the needs of people with visual impairments helping them find suitable means and ways of assistance.

The integration of children with visual impairments into society is not only the adaptation of blind schoolchildren to the world of the normal-sighted, but it is also a way out of their possibilities, limited by blindness, the showing of their real possibilities and thus serving the society.

The reforming of the multi-level system of musical education for blind schoolchildren, dictated by the requirements of the time, requires a deep humanitarian and special education of music teachers.

Therefore, all of the above mentioned facts indicate the positive impact of musical education on social rehabilitation and social integration of blind schoolchildren.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors confirm that the data do not contain any conflict of interest.

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