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Eurhythmics: learning from a developmental-dynamic perspective

I think, better for presenting myself and telling you something about my curriculum it might be more interesting for you to participate on the motivation and qualities of my career that made up until now for me my profession as a meaningful, joyful and precious work in progress:

- *Curiosity* – it includes the risk to topple over and this happens in daily classroom practice as well as forethinking scientific ideas
- *Team* – in my teams we are all equivalent with different functions and positions
- *Farsightnetness, openness* – for me it was always important to see the bigger entirety and to find my own position in a realistic way
- *Reflexion, thinking over* – be self critical sometimes was nearly painful and sometimes I needed to do passes back
- *Courage* – defend positions of human rights was motor since beginning to teach in special school in 1965
- *Perseverance, persistance* – give up for me never was a strategy for challenges
- *Patience* – several times I was confronted with tasks which needed for solution a lot of time, even years, to find the right bricks and to fit them together in a stable functional position
- *Joy, gratefulness* – it grows by all the wonderful moments our pupils present us as gifts.

This is in someway: me.

I want to present you a basic insight in the educational work in heterogeneous groups, regardig to developmental recognition in theory and practise. Before we look more detailed to the work with the *Table of the Development of psychological Functions* (“Developmental Grid”), I want to mention some qualities, which I think that they determine professional education work:

Let us start with those conditions which I consider as undeniable for pedagogical work that is appropriate for children and fosters their development, but it concerns even education in general:

Concerning us teachers:

- *Empathy*: a self-evident predisposition of the teacher is the capacity to comprehend what is going on in the head, the heart, in the body of the other.... It means the open attitude for diversity and participative acting. All these important social-emotional processes which often happen in nonverbal communication.
- *Didactical skills*: It requires also continuous attempts to improve the own didactical repertoire and skills, a most interesting and most challenging lifelong learning process for us teachers alone and in team. There are no prescriptions, only some general guidelines.

- *Framing conditions*: especially important for the implementation of our inclusive way to teach in our countries: It requires that we bother about the framing conditions, which are regulating our options, our legal and financial resources – we are the persons with the first and last responsibility for our pupils and not only some persons in some offices who cannot imagine what is going on in our work day by day. We have to keep much closer interchange with the governmental part of our work.

- *Theoretical reasons*: It needs also a useful theoretical background to be able for reflection, analysis and documentation of our observations. Each practice is as valid as it can hold against a theoretic reflection. Each theory needs the proof of valid practical performance. Looking for this combination since beginning of my teaching activities, I could combine these two essential demands in my work as teacher for pupils with special needs.

Concerning our pupils:

Citing the most experienced teacher for inclusive music making Robert Wagner, in the Musikschule Fürth in Germany (www.musikschule-fuerth.de) there are only two conditions: The pupil must participate voluntarily, find sensual options for him/herself and he/she must be able to accept one rule: the start and the end of an activity. The rest, all the rest is on the responsibility of the teacher, and the system providing our conditions.

My daily practical work as a regular teacher in school is based on rhythmic-music education (Eurhythmics) since 1972. Since the beginning, I was looking for a theory that allows functionally orientation of development for being able to analyze my observations and to put them down in a reflectable documentation.

In 2006, we could realize in Vienna a research project in cooperation between the Institute of Music and Movement/Rhythmics and Musiktherapy of the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna and the Institute of Education of the University of Vienna. Karl Garnitschnig, University of Vienna, combined the key findings of those theories which focus on the functional operations (Piaget, Ciompi, Keagan...). As resuming, the result was the Theory of Psychological Functions and Operations (TPO).

Why Piaget – isn't he already "old iron"? Aren't there al lot of more actual theories? Not at all.

Process orientated observation

Piaget's insight concerning development is based on the observation and not on the qualification or measuring of the children's active role. He developed his findings by observing the processes when children perform their experiments, when they make observations and form their mind of the world. By using this strategy, we also implement one of the important qualities for teaching in general. Our teacher's way to approach and to understand the actual developmental possibilities of a pupil has to be done also in a progressive, continuous observation process for a longer period and not by one glimpse of a single moment as it generally happens in usual tests. At the same time, another important quality results for inclusion: relations are growing in participative interchange between teacher, pupil and group and approach to the content – they act in combination as partners with equal rights, but different competences and different responsibilities.

The functional meaning of the description of the observation data capture

Piaget's findings describe the functional meaning of the developmental steps and do this not in the way like most of the other systems to which are bound to certain contents. E.g.: At 18 months, a child should be able sort out small and bigger spoons. Trying this with my son with Down Syndrome at that age, he asked skeptically: "Where is food?" Quite logical. On the other hand, he could sort the sizes of his wooden animals quite well. For screening developmental functions and operations we are using expressive actions in abstracted way. It offers to name what is happening functionally in the described situations and not by describing the fulfilling of certain contents of a task.

The relation according to a time schedule

This was one of the misunderstandings concerning Piaget – he explored how children gain recognition, the relation between development and age was not his main interest. (©Garnitschnig)

Certain data limits have no relevance for the description of the actual possibilities a person uses for realizing a task, for finding proper solutions. E.g. at the age of 21 months a child is able to go backward. If this step cannot be realized without difficulties it is much more important to have the orientation and the overview on a general functional survey about the general developmental logical succeeding steps. This overview is necessary to recognize and to understand what we see. It is much more important to find out which are the previous steps we have to provide, which can be attractive situations and options to realize the conditions to enable the child to develop backward going.

The only purpose where measuring data have got certain relevance is the placement in the official fostering systems, which need some kind of diagnostic values, but not for our individually orientated organization of educational inputs.

These are three important guidelines for teaching due to individually orientated educational offers, which should happen without additive external stress by comparing with testing systems, by causing automatically that the focus shifts to the deficits, to what should be at this and that age and still is not reached. Everybody works with his or her capacities and not with the deficits.

The research process itself since then is still going on, mainly with my colleague Christoph Falschlunger. You will find the table of functions and a demo film basing on rhythmic-musical education (Eurhythmics) on this website: www.mdw.ac.at/mrm/mbe/inklusions-und-heilpaedagogik-diversitaet/entwicklungsraster-tpo/

Regarding to time schedules I would like to add one detail, that might have some practical relevance: Piagets classification of the four development stages (in some literature are mentioned five):

1. *Sensoric Stage:*
The child builds up his mind mainly in sensomotoric way.
2. *Symbolic Stage:*
The child can express reality already by using symbols, generally in accordance to the development of language as its precondition.
3. *Concrete Stage:*
Single action schemes can be combined to complex classifications.
4. *Formal Stage:*
The child does not need concrete objects for planning actions.

The analysis of tasks often shows, that a child fluctuates between the stages. The same happens with adult persons with and without disabilities. Not all functions must be realized in the same stage. This observation sometimes allows quite helpful recognitions and indications for the better adaptation of a task and understanding a pupil as a whole personality.

Picture: Fiora

This girl can develop by his inner capacities and the possibilitis of her environment the functions of social and emotional acting with her 12 years nearly on the formal stage, also her intenting, willing actions are already highly developed. But concerning thinking and verbal communication she used steps between sensoric and symbolic stage.

Now you can get a short insight on the use of the table in the raster screen now. With each act, we realize ourselves, we activate at the same time our whole actually disposable functional potential, that means we have eight functions at our disposal for forming our individual mind of the world.

Table of the Development of psychotological Functions (“Developmental Grid”)

Entwicklungsphase	Bewegen	Empfinden, Wahrnehmen	Denken	Sprechen, Kommunizieren	Fühlen, Sozial-emotionales Handeln	Wollen	Intuieren	Erinnern, Merken-Gedächtnis
	Modalitäten Pulsieren, Atmen, Saugen, Schlucken, Strecken, Beugen, Strampeln, Greifen, Hülsen, Ziehen, Drehen, Drehen, Federn, Schwimmen, Krabbeln, Rollen, Sitzen, sich Aufrichten, Klettern, Gehen, Springen	Modalitäten Riechen, Hören, Schmecken, Tasten, Sehen, Schmerz-Wärme-Empfinden, Raum-Lage-Empfinden, Gleichgewicht, Körperström, Rhythmus / Harmonie-Empfinden, Energetisches Spüren	Modalitäten digitales, analytisches, logisches Denken analoges, geschlechtliches, symbolisches Denken	Modalitäten Schlucken, Lallen, Lachen, Weinen, Linsen, Gehörten, Symbolisieren über Stimmlinien	Modalitäten Lieben - Hassen, Sicherheit spüren - angänglich sein, sich fürchten, sich freuen - trauern, offen sein - geschlossen sein, interessiert/ungewiss sein, überrascht sein, sich ekeln, sich ärgern, Schickd fühlen	Modalitäten Triebimpulse folgen, aufmerksam sein, sich zuwenden, Streben	Modalitäten Fantasieren, divergentes Denken, freies Assoziieren, kontrastives Denken, analoges Denken, kreatives Denken, Erfinden/Entwerfen von Ideen, Neues entwickeln, sich Empfinden öffnen	Modalitäten Wiederholen, Erinnern, Merken
senso-motorische Phase egozentrische Rollenübernahme	1. reflektisches, austitatives Bewegen 2. Bewegen und Üben der Reflexe 3. durch Zufall hervorgerufene Ereignisse aktiv wiederholen 4. Differenzieren von Bewegungen 5. Koordinieren von Bewegungen 6. spontanes, autonomes Bewegen 7. Koordination von Bewegungen und Wahrnehmung	1. an den Augensein gebundenes Wahrnehmen 2. Wahrnehmen von Ganzheiten 3. kreuzstabiles Wahrnehmen 4. Zentralität der Wahrnehmung auf nur ein Merkmal 5. Gliederung von Wahrnehmungen 6. intermediäres Wahrnehmen 7. Integrieren von Wahrnehmungen aus verschiedenen Sinnen	1. sensomotorische Schemata bilden 2. Generalisieren, Diskriminieren 3. Permanenz der Person 4. Größen- und Formkonstanz 5. zwei sensomotorische Schemata so kombinieren, dass daraus eine neue Handlung entsteht 6. Unterscheiden zwischen Selbst/Objekt/Handlung 7. zielgerichtetes/intentionales	1. Kommunizieren durch Schreien, Gurren, Lallen 2. Laute unabhängig von Schreien, Atmen, Schlucken, Quetschen 3. soziales Lächeln 4. Gesten, Geräuschen, Klagen aufmerksam folgen 5. Die Stimmungsqualitäten von akustischen, optischen... Reizen erfassen	1. von (Körper-)Empfindungen und Wahrnehmungen ausgelöstes Fühlen 2. Personen mit libidinöser Energie besitzen 3. soziales Lächeln 4. direkte Übernahme von Verhaltensschemata 5. reagieren, nachahmen	1. innen und außen unterscheiden 2. sich von Unangenehmem abwenden 3. über differenziertes Schreien unterschiedliche Signale abgeben 4. sich Personen zu/von Personen abwenden 5. sich selbst zuwenden 6. sich Gegenständen zuwenden	1. (reflektische) Bewegungen an Gegebenheiten anpassen 2. inneren Impulse folgen 3. einem inneren Erleben unmittelbar Ausdruck geben 4. ein inneres Bild von einer Person haben 5. ein inneres Bild von einzelnen Gegenständen/Ablaufen haben	1. Wiedererkennen eines dargebotenen Reizes von statischen Objekten und ihrem Merkmalen, zuerst Minuten, dann Stunden und Tage 2. sich an die unmittelbaren Bezugspersonen erinnern etwas erwarten 3. Wiedererkennen von Gesichtern

© Christoph Falschlunger: developmental grid (detail)

The intensity of the representation of the functions during the action depends on the intention which the person gives to the task and can be quite different. In the same task for one pupil the main interest is given to the social cooperation with the group, but for another child it is more important to experiment some variations in his movements during the same action. As Rhythmic- music Education is also a process orientated procedure it matches quite well with the Theory of psychical functions. So you can find the functions in the raster-screen in the colored horizontal line above and they are marked with capital letters from A (Moving) to H (Remembering/Memorising).

Functions:

A = Moving, B = Sensing/Perceiving, C = Thinking (means: conceptualizing, forming meanings), D = Speaking/Communicating, E = Feeling, Social-emotional Acting, F = Intending, G = Intuiting, Creative Acting, H = Remembering, Memorising.

These are in fact the eight functions by which we all are able to interact with ourselves and the world outside, by which we form our individual inner picture of the world.

But now: How can we find out, which are the specific steps which a person activates here and now in a learning situation? Which operations can be observed, can be documented?

How can we express this in a common educational language? Therefore, it is necessary to break down each function into those steps, by which generally human beings develop their individual abilities.

In the grid we systematized them in order to general logical sequences. They are marked with numbers beginning with 1 in the sensoric stage following with a quite different quantity in each function up to the formal stage. Each person follows more or less to these steps. Nevertheless, of course we find also individual shifts. We tried to differentiate so far, that the whole grid still can be handled quite practicable.

"General (Inclusive) Pedagogy" means, that ALL children and students
- in cooperation with each other
- at their respective level of development
- according to their current competencies of perception, thinking and acting
- in orientation to the 'next zone of their development' (Vygotskij)
- can play, learn, study and work on and with a common object." (Georg Feuser 1984, 1995)

The inner differentiation of the task is one of the most challenging facts in mixed-abled groups. The setting should be: each member of a group works at the same time, on the same content, by using his or her individual strengths and capacities which are at the moment available, without exclusion (definition of inclusion by *Georg Feuser*). This way results a cooperative and co-creative process. That means, we need with prime importance the knowledge and structured overview how in general the capacities step by step form and build up the individual developmental structure in these eight functions. This way we can observe and point out by which steps a person uses his/her capacities and we can describe it, document it in a factual way.

Our observations compare the pupil to his personal, individual developmental steps, he/she keeps being subject and so we can adapt the input due to his/her capacities.

For understanding the intention of the *Table of the Development of psychological Functions* ("Developmental Grid"), we will now analyze one scene. We can follow the steps in all functions and should be able to see which are the possibilities given by the task and which are the steps in each function the person is choosing.

You will see a short clip from our dance association "Ich bin O.K." Vienna (www.ichbinok.at) at the summer camp in August this year. This time we worked on a rather abstract theme: geometrical forms such as circle, square, triangle, straight line. Have a look at our member *Anton*, he is the tall person with the red circle on the black T-shirt.

Video: Anton (www.hoou.de/projects/rhythmik-musik-und-bewegung/pages/vortrag-06-helga-neira-zugasty-inklusion-rhythmik-entwicklungsdynamik , minutes: 09:50-13:55)

He achieved that he could cooperate nearly for the whole sequence in the last day's performance with nearly no 1 to 1 guidance. He follows the sequences by himself. He decides in a quite appropriate way, when he realizes the choreography as active member or when he better keeps out observing the others. However, he also could decide well the moment to step in and to correspond again. He often catches the situation with his eyes in a quick moment just like a flashlight and goes on moving his left right steps, moving his hands on the t-shirt, looking somewhere, but he gets quite well what is going on around him.

Let us now analyze with the grid which steps Anton is using:

A-Moving:

Position 13: integrating movements that are perceived, visually in one's own movement

He drops those parts of the sequence, where they go around on the hoop and realizes his movements within his capacities.

B-Sensing/Perceiving:

Position 7: integrating perceptions from various schemes

Although the tasks would offer much more differentiated steps, in this setting he can act on his own decision without interfering with the others. So it is quite intelligent how he resolves the task by his own decision.

C-Thinking:

Position 9: combining of several schemata – in progress

Position 12: imaginative inner representation of pictorial symbols

For being able to comprehend that circle maybe the opposite of square, a person must interiorize by own experience with his senses what are the qualities of circle, or of square. Circle means continuous moving /the square: change of direction at each edge. Anton can gain this experiences and strengthen these activities in mostly unconscious way.

D-Speaking/Communicating:

Position 25: Translating what is given and presented into facial expressions/gestures

Generally, Anton has a certain vocabulary to express joy; he also claps his hands if he likes something. If he does not like something he would not express this by words, one can get it nonverbally and notice it by his mimic, turning away, talking something by himself.

E-Feeling, Social-emotional Acting:

Position 17: Internalizing an image of other persons

Anton knows quite well to whom he can rely, who provides safe contact. So we see, that he does not complete the free dance until he comes back to his place. When he feels that he did what was necessary, he sits down next to the teacher, his safe place, and goes on observing the others.

F-Intenting:

Intuitively he knows, that his balance would be overtaxed, but he matches with the next movement knowing that he can master it

Position 9: Attention controlled by people or object

Position 10: acting according to own needs

Generally, he is inspired by others, tries sometimes to imitate corresponding to his possibilities or is indicated to move in a certain way. In general: Studying the table, we really can find options, which have no chance to be realized in our program. In my practice, I noticed that I changed and slowed down my program for giving chances to experience exactly those steps which do not occur in the observations.

G-Intuiting:

Position 5: having an inner representation of individual objects, processes

Anton's intuition mainly is focused on being aware of the social, emotional processes around him. That Anton would move, dance and participate with interest and joy with the group the task must offer sensual connections to his concrete imaginations. A circle is a clear form for him, but not so much a motivation to express some rounded shapes with his body.

H-Remembering, Memorising:

Position 8: mechanical repetition of single movements, words

Anton identifies his movements in some way and what is going on with the group. When I asked him after the lesson which of the forms he was dancing, he had to think, but he knew: Circle.

We see that Anton mostly is operating in the sensory stage. He can take part in the choreography with those capacities, which he has available at the moment. Even if other members of the group realize quite different options, much more artistically elaborated, the inner differentiation of the sequences allow that Anton can participate in a sensual way.

Which steps requires the task – which steps realized Anton

If the data are matching well, we say the task was well balanced to the capacities of the pupil. If there are in some functions obvious differences, one has to go for a look for the reasons and find solutions to adapt the task, to find options for developing the previous steps. In heterogeneous groups in the exact analysis mainly result differences, although the majority is cooperating in common patterns, common time sequences and common expression of the idea of the task, but forsterng each other with the individual performance watching each other and acting together.

You see in nearly each function in the analysis of Anton's performance has quite different positions. In the first moment one could think: "Oh, a completely not adequat offering for Anton, he nearly in no position can achieve the goal of the task." And this is the point: He need not fullfill the goal of the task; he actualizes his at the moment available capacities at the same time, within the same activity of the group with his kind of solution and decision. That's how Georg Feuser defines inclusion. The problem mostly occurs in the demands in the teacher's mind that certain goals have to be reached by all pupils, if the offering is classified as successful. Anton is successful, he is active within the group, he observes and copies, he interchanges with interest, concentration and joy and he learns.

For us teachers the consequence of this observation is and was also already in further training classes: We offer nearly in every dancing class of course not especially focussed on him alone, in the warming up as fix program the previous steps as there are: Crossing vertical axis, stabilization of the focus, eye contact, balancing exercises, shifting weight from left to right, strengthening the foot ankles... orientation in the body. So gradually little by little also Anton can develop his balancing capacities in an unforced way within an inspiring context with a lot of emotional stimuli.

Use of the *Table of the Development of psychological Functions* (“Developmental Grid”)

Beyond the scientific use of the grid of the functional steps as you can see on the website also in English for the daily support of our work the table results as a personal support to describe observations for differentiating the single steps which activates the person in the learning situation in each function. There is not only the option to observe and analyse which steps a person uses to find solutions for a task, for acting.

Of equal interest for us teachers is the knowledge, which steps are required for being able to deal with the task in a meaningful way – already when we are planning a task this maybe an important information. We discover that there happen a lot of simultaneous steps at the same time, we are able to compare with further observations. Often we are not aware how many steps mutually are included and required to realize one simple task. We are focused on our intention, but oversee what else is necessary to be set free at the same time.

But even more helpful seems the fact that we can find out which are the foregoing steps, a person can realize. Therefore, we can adapt the exercises to this knowledge and find situations, which allow to connect to those steps, the pupil already can master and go forward from there. We describe, but we do not classify, in the meaning of tests, or other judgements. We want to find out in a more detailed and complex way by which capacities a person realizes learning situations and is looking for solutions of the task.

So, we register only capacities. Not activated positions have no relevance, because nobody realizes himself by his deficits, but by his possibilities. To find out in which way a person changes his options to act, develops und uses his capacities it is necessary to observe and to describe situations for a longer period. Not the results are the point of interest, but the quality of the process. In this procedure the pupil always stays the subject, is seriously taken aware in his specific way to act.

What happens as most important fact: the paradigm shift from content- and goal-orientation to development- and process-orientation in our educational work.

Rhythmic-music education (Eurhythmics) has the function and the potential of a basic tool for education in general. Let us go back and forward equally with the genius ideas of E.J. Dalcroze. His wish was: that his ideas find teachers, artists, psychologists, economics,... which will experience with his ideas and find methods which reach beyond his own ones. He wished, that we enable children to have at disposal a well harmonized body, just as brain and their in consciousness developed personality.

