

## The role of musical and aesthetic activity in the development of creative abilities of children with visual impairments

### РОЛЬ МУЗЫКАЛЬНО-ЭСТЕТИЧЕСКОЙ ДЕЯТЕЛЬНОСТИ В РАЗВИТИИ ТВОРЧЕСКИХ СПОСОБНОСТЕЙ СЛАБОВИДЯЩИХ ДЕТЕЙ

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Written by:

**Irina Aryabkina**<sup>88</sup><https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8765-2153>**Galina Tenyukova**<sup>89</sup><https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4526-0602>**Marina Karnaukhova**<sup>90</sup><https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9829-5657>**Elena Khrisanova**<sup>91</sup><https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5045-5148>**Olga Murzina**<sup>92</sup><https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9134-5570>**Irina Medvedeva**<sup>93</sup><https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3132-4078>

#### Abstract

A retrospective analysis of psychological and pedagogical literature and practical experience in the field of education allows us to state the fact that music development, musical lessons and aesthetic activity have a great positive effect on the development of the personality of children with hearing impairments. At the same time, the insufficient development of the methodology and methods for the development of musical and creative abilities of visually impaired children in order to correct their physical and moral development gives the reason to consider this problem to be quite relevant and timely. Some aspects of solving this problem are disclosed in this article.

The purpose of this article of ours is to disclose the essence and content of the concept of “musical and creative abilities”; analysis of the psychophysiological characteristics of visually impaired children in the context of the development of their musical and creative

#### Аннотация

Ретроспективный анализ психолого-педагогической литературы и практического опыта в сфере образования позволяет констатировать тот факт, что на развитие личности слабослышающего ребенка большое положительное влияние оказывают занятия музыкой. Вместе с тем, не достаточная разработанность методологии и методики развития музыкально-творческих способностей слабовидящих детей с целью коррекции их физического и нравственного развития дает основание считать данную проблему достаточно актуальной и своевременной. Некоторые аспекты решения данной проблемы раскрываются в предлагаемой статье.

Целью данной статьи нашего является раскрытие сущности и содержания понятия «музыкально-творческие способности»; анализ психофизиологических особенностей слабовидящих детей в контексте развития их

<sup>88</sup> The doctor of pedagogical sciences, professor of the Ulyanovsk State Pedagogical University, Russian Federation.

<sup>89</sup> The doctor of pedagogical sciences, professor of the Chuvash State Pedagogical University named after I.Ya. Yakovlev, Russian Federation.

<sup>90</sup> The doctor of pedagogical sciences, professor of the Ulyanovsk State University, Russian Federation.

<sup>91</sup> The doctor of pedagogical sciences, professor of the Chuvash State Pedagogical University named after I.Ya. Yakovlev, Russian Federation.

<sup>92</sup> Candidate of Pedagogical Sciences, Docent of the Derzhavin Tambov State University, Russian Federation.

<sup>93</sup> The doctor of pedagogical sciences, professor of the Chuvash State Pedagogical University named after I.Ya. Yakovlev, Russian Federation.

abilities; characteristics of the content and forms of musical education of visually impaired children in order to develop creative abilities and the results of the experimental work of the authors in this direction.

Theoretical and empirical research methods were used to solve the stated tasks: analysis of the musical, pedagogical and psychological literature on the research problem; analysis of pupil performance; study, analysis and generalization of advanced pedagogical experience on the stated problem, pedagogical observation, questionnaire, survey, conversation. The article contains a description of the results of the implementation in the process of experimental work of the pedagogical conditions that we have identified that contribute to improving the development of creative abilities in visually impaired children. The data obtained allow us to conclude that, after conducting experimental work, the indicators improved according to all the criteria we identified for the successful development of creative abilities in visually impaired children.

**Key words:** musical and creative abilities, a visually impaired child.

## Introduction

A person perceives the world through touch, vision and hearing. Unfortunately, some children (and their number is currently increasing) are born with pathologies of the organs of vision. It affects negatively their ability to get acquainted with the environment and, thus, their further development. Special attention must be paid to the development and upbringing of such children for their successful adaptation in adulthood. There are special boarding schools for teaching children with visual impairments in Russia. The main task of such schools is to correct the pupil's visual impairment, to develop a full-fledged personality, to provide secondary education, to prepare for labor and to develop individual creative abilities of a child (including musical and creative abilities). However, there are some serious shortcomings in the elementary music education, which impede the creative growth of children with visual impairments. There are no special techniques for working with such pupils. At the same time, thanks to its artistic and

музыкально-творческих способностей; характеристика содержания и форм музыкального образования слабовидящих детей с целью развития творческих способностей и результатов опытно-экспериментальной работы авторов статьи в данном направлении.

Для достижения данной цели были использованы следующие методы исследования: теоретические - анализ музыкальной, педагогической и психологической литературы по проблеме исследования; анализ результатов деятельности учащихся; изучение, анализ и обобщение передового педагогического опыта работы по исследуемой проблеме; эмпирические - педагогическое наблюдение, анкетирование, опрос, беседа.

В статье содержится характеристика результатов реализации в процессе опытно-экспериментальной работы выявленных нами педагогических условий, способствующих повышению эффективности развития творческих способностей у слабовидящих детей. Полученные данные позволяют сделать вывод о том, что после проведения опытно-экспериментальной работы улучшились показатели по всем выявленным нами критериям успешного развития творческих способностей у слабовидящих детей.

**Ключевые слова:** музыкально-творческие способности, слабовидящий ребенок.

aesthetic features, musical education in all its manifestations (music lessons at school, learning to play any musical instrument, vocal training, choral performance, musical and theatrical activities), contributes to the rehabilitation of people with visual impairments by means of musical and creative activity and provides such children with great opportunities for self-realization.

Studying music, performing on stage, participating in various festivals, shows, contests, holidays helps children to overcome shyness, tightness, and self-doubt. Besides, participation in musical events helps to establish the contacts between children and teenagers with and without the problems in health.

The process of teaching music children with visual impairments is complex and hard. The peculiarity of teacher's work with children with visual impairments is in its corrective direction,

which requires the knowledge not only in the field of music pedagogy, but also in the field of ophthalmology, typhlopedagogy, speech therapy. Teachers-musicians are not specially trained by any educational institution for work with such children. In addition, there is insufficient research in the organization of musical education for blind children. In connection with what was mentioned before, there is a contradiction between the significant possibilities of musical art in the development of musical and creative abilities of blind children and the lack of theoretical and methodological aspects of teaching music children with visual impairments. This contradiction actualizes the search for methodological and methodical foundations for the development of creative abilities of children with visual impairments in musical and aesthetic activities.

### **Theoretical framework**

First of all, let us turn to the analysis of the concept of "creative abilities". The works of L. S. Vygotsky (Vygotsky, 1983; Vygotsky, 2006), A. N. Leontyev (Leontyev, 1993), L.I. Plaksina (Plaksina, 2001), N.N. Poddyakova (Poddyakov, 1994), S. L. Rubinstein (Rubinstein, 1989) and others were devoted to the formation of creative abilities (including that of a child with visual impairments). While studying psychology of creativity, these scientists paid great attention to its process, the change in any person's state when he started creating something new.

The problem of creative abilities was studied by E.P. Torrans (Torrans, 1964), J. P. Guilford (Guilford, 1965), E. S. Fromm (Fromm, 2009), S.A. Mednick (Mednick, 1962) and others in foreign psychology. In their writings, they explored features, characteristics, and set of qualities of a creative personality. The analysis of these writings allows us to identify its most common components (the ability to use imagination, originality, a sense of harmony).

According to E.P. Torrans, " Creativity is considered as an essential life skill, a major component of human intelligence, and the most important topic in the education of the gifted and talented students. Nations rely on youth to use their skills at the highest level possible to contribute to improving all life aspects including solving problems creatively, developing genuine innovations, and leading communities to productivity". E.P.Torrans calls creativity the ability to strengthen the perception of shortcomings, knowledge gaps, missing

elements, disharmony etc. (Torrans, 1964, p. 122).

E. S. Fromm offers his definition of creativity: "Creativity is the ability to see and to respond. It is the ability to be puzzled and cognize. It is the ability to find solutions in non-standard situations, the aim to discover new things and the ability to realize one's experience" (Fromm, 2009, p. 23).

J. P. Guilford understands creativity as the process of divergent thinking and he highlights the main factors of creativity: fluency (lightness, productivity); flexibility; originality; accuracy (Guilford, 1965, p. 34).

S.A. Mednick defines the process of creative thinking as "the forming of associative elements into new combinations which either meet specific requirements or are in some way useful. The more mutually remote the elements of the new combination, the more creative the process or solution" (Mednick, 1962, p. 31).

Creativity is one of the leading personality traits of an integrative-complex nature, associated with almost all of its other properties. Creativity manifests itself at various levels - unconscious, oriented-adaptive, conscious, cognitively-transformative and research level, in individual activity and in the social-role plan.

In general, the concept of creativity includes past, related and subsequent characteristics of the process, as a result of which a person or a group of people creates something new. Thus, the analysis of various definitions of the concepts of creativity allows us to draw the following conclusions (Bulka, 2002, p. 49):

- creativity is a personality trait aimed at creating new objects;
- creativity is a combined creative activity;
- creativity is important in the development of personality and contributes to this development.

Creativity is an activity that results in the creation of new values. The measure of creativity depends on the novelty of the situation, the means and methods of its transformation, on the originality of the getting results.

The nature of creativity, the manifestation of creative abilities are determined by various planning factors, which can be combined into the most general groups. The first group includes natural skills and individual characteristics that

determine the formation of any creative personality. The second group includes all forms of influence of the social environment on the definition and development of creative abilities. The third group represents the dependence of the development of creative manifestations on the nature and structure of activity (Ananyev, 1945). Psychological and pedagogical studies on the problem of children's creativity note that when children are taught in conditions of versatile training, they get interest in the surrounding world which is a source of creativity. In such conditions, children are able to master the methods of creative actions in a qualitative manner: to find a new solutions and apply what they have learned in new and unexpected situations. The studies show that certain indicators can display the quality of creative relationships, the methods of action and the products.

V. A. Petrovsky created the concept of creative abilities and offered the following principles for the development of creative giftedness of a person (Petrovsky, 1987, p. 32): orientation to the formation of an intellectual culture of the future (the development of evolutionary thinking, logical and mathematical thinking, as well as intellectual structures of thinking, paradoxical logic of intellectual integration); the orientation to the formation of the ability to spiritual activity; the orientation to the formation of a lifestyle which ensures the development of a creative personality.

The study of creative abilities became one of the main directions in the study of intellectual development in the middle of the 20th century. Creative abilities are the abilities for creative activity which give objectively significant results for a person in public life. They are fundamental in the development of a full-fledged, confident, smart personality. A child knows the world through a game, fantasy. He experiences various life situations, using imagination, logic, creative thinking.

Children have the ability to think creatively and to use fantasy but this ability can disappear with age if there is no further development. That is why it is very important to start helping a child to reveal his "hidden" talents, to realize the inherent creative potential, guiding and supporting him in this direction in early childhood.

The concept of creative abilities includes quite a few facets, to which it can be referred: liveliness of mind, intuition, fantasy, the desire to know new things, to discover the unknown, and to

apply the acquired knowledge into practice. All these qualities can and should be developed in a person almost from his birth.

Such scientists and psychologists as B. G. Ananiev (Ananiev, 1945), S. L. Rubinstein (Rubinstein, 1989), B. M. Teplov (Teplov, 2009) and others made great contribution to the development of problems of musical and creative thinking abilities.

Supporting the position of these scientists, we single out the main components of the musical and creative abilities of a person: musical and creative thinking; creative imagination; musical perception; ear for music; musicality.

Musical and creative abilities of a child consist of many qualities, one of which is musicality. Musicality is the individual-psychological characteristic of a person, which is expressed in the intuitive depth of the emotional experience of the essence of music, the ability to convey it in tuning, in the performing interpretation of musical works. Musicality is one of the synonyms of musical giftedness.

From a psychological point of view, the concept of "musical giftedness" is broader than the concept of "musicality," because it includes not only musical but also other personality traits: the activity of imagination, the variety of visual images and their close relationship with the auditory sphere, delicate auditory-motor reactions, emotional reactivity, and etc. The concepts of "musicality" and "musical talent" should not be substituted. A pupil may be musical, but he may not possess the talent of a musician. The opposite variant is also possible: a pupil can have vivid performing abilities with weak musicality.

A peculiar musical ability is a musical ear, which is expressed in the fact that a person with this ability can recognize the pitch of some sounds without comparing them with other sounds whose pitch is known. Musical ear is manifested in the perception of music, in its reproduction, in the creation of improvisations and in the composition of music.

There is a good reason to see in the ear for music a typical example of an "innate ability," that is, the ability based on innate inclinations.

However, it is possible to teach the individuals to recognize the pitch of individual sounds if they do not have a musical ear. It does not mean that these people will have absolute pitch, it means

that it is possible to develop a creative person with creative thinking and imagination.

The concept of “creative thinking” encompasses thought processes that lead to decisions, the creation of unusual and original ideas, generalizations, theories, as well as artistic forms. Every person has the ability to creative thinking to some extent. This ability can often be seen in drawings, modeling, constructing from improvised materials because creative thinking prevails in childhood. Many teenagers write poetry, adults can solve problems of different complexity (from everyday to scientific). Nevertheless, not every person can be called a creative person.

Creative imagination is the creation of new images without relying on a finished description or a given image. Creative imagination means independent creation of new images. The images of creative imagination are created through various techniques and methods. The transformation of the material in the imagination takes place under certain rules, which can explain its peculiarity. The imagination is characterized by certain processes that include elements of visualization. The problem of the formation of the children creative imagination is important because this mental process is an integral component of any form of child’s creative activity and his behavior in general (Bykova, Volkova, 2014, p. 52).

B. L. Yavorsky distinguishes certain stages in the development of creative abilities: the accumulation of impressions; spontaneous expression of creativity in the vision, sensory – motor, speech directions; motor and speech improvisations, the brightness in drawing (the predominance of collective creativity with some cases of individual creativity); the creation of their own compositions, which are the reflection of the artistic impression: literary, musical, visual, plastic (composing songs and plays for the piano) (Yavorsky, 1972, p. 85).

In order to make the music lessons for children active and emotional the teacher needs the following:

- 1) to select such musical material for the lesson, which can be the basis for the formation of specific creative skills. At the same time it should meet the didactic requirements.
- 2) to use the techniques, methods and forms of work that contribute to the creation of the

atmosphere of creative activity, interest, and ease at a lesson;

- 3) to choose methods of displaying samples of creativity in various types of musical activities of pupils, to improvise in various ways; to develop and set the most rational ways for the interaction of activities in each lesson, based on its theme. Each teacher should remember, while organizing music classes, that the psychological characteristics of each child are different according to age, environment, and health status. These psychological characteristics can be special concerning children with any physical deficiencies.

All visual impairments are divided into functional and organic. Functional ones include amblyopia (decreased vision, which is not optically regulated) and oblique-eye, which can be corrected. Organic disorders are pathologies of the structure of the eye and other parts of the visual system. They can lead to residual vision, low vision, blindness (Brambring, 2003).

According to the international classification of visual impairment, if the acuity is less than 0.3 after the optical correction it is a low vision. If visual acuity is below 0.05, then a person is considered visually impaired. If visual acuity is less than 0.02, then such people are officially recognized as blind (Zemtsova, 1956)/

Children with impaired vision and blind are trained in specialized institutions. The psyche of a child is influenced by the time of formation of visual pathology, its complexity, the presence of some other diseases, the effectiveness of treatment and the situation in the family. The earlier a visual impairment appears and the more evident it is, the more mental development is disturbed.

Physiological and social factors influence the formation of personality in children with visual impairment: hypo- and hyper-care, bad social environment or family conditions, limited access to communication and information. It is difficult for such children to navigate in space, so they have inactive lifestyle. This, in turn, causes muscle weakness (muscle hypotension). In order to develop space orientation skills, it is necessary to train the surviving analyzers (vibration perception, hearing, tactile and skin-kinesthetic sensitivity) constantly.

Children with low vision and blindness perceive fewer signs and properties of objects than their peers with normal vision. The decrease in

perception of color, the integrity and completeness of a picture, the low speed of perception make it difficult to know the surrounding world as a whole. That is why, children with visual impairments lag behind in development. Children with visual impairments have low visual focus and differentiation. They memorize information slowly and get tired very quickly. But, if they have remembered something, then they will keep it in their memory for a long time. Blind don't have visual memory. Visually impaired children have low visual memory.

Children with visual impairments don't have or have with restrictions the possibility of visual control. They have to memorize the information about the direction in space, where the objects are situated. Blind and visually impaired children have reduced interests, needs, motivational sphere and activity. At the same time, visual impairments do not affect their beliefs, worldview, temperament, or character (Bykova, Volkova, 2014).

According to the results of numerous experiments, it can be concluded that the brain of children with visual impairments functions in the same way as the brain of a healthy child. Nevertheless, such children are characterized by their psychological characteristics and some "problems" in development. As a rule, the development of children with vision pathologies is somewhat retarded, and this is mainly due to a little experience about the worldview, limited possibilities for environmental exploration, nonsufficient motor practice and reduced activity in exploration of the world. The development of a child with visual impairments is somewhat delayed and requires more time. This is because such children need to find their own methods of cognition of the surrounding world. Sometimes these methods differ from the methods of children with good vision.

Realizing these problems, it is necessary to think that children with visual impairments should be able to develop in comfortable conditions, which can help this process both in school and preschool institutions and out of institutions. This is important in order to prevent the appearance of secondary deviations: for example, the problems in the development of cognitive processes, emotional and intellectual development. Thus, the establishment of the process of training and upbringing of children with visual impairments and the selection of effective methods, which take into account psychological characteristics, will help to ensure the inclusion of such children

in normal communication, prevent the development of deviations, and increase the level of knowledge.

It is easy to notice the children with visual impairments by disorders of coordination. These are: the deficit of movement, uncertainty and the lack of focus. Children with visual impairments have limited eye contact. They do not seek to meet the eyes of the interlocutor, do not use gestures to communicate. Their voice contact is limited. There is a delay in speech development. Such children need much more time to complete tasks, due to certain difficulties with the perception of information and problems in the process of organizing their own activities. That is why they experience the feeling of insecurity in their own abilities, and seek support from adults. Many of them need additional stimulation of concentration of attention, constant encouragement. This helps children cope with indecision and overcome stiffness.

Children with visual impairments can differ from each other not only in the degree of the impairment, but also in other signs: fatigue, speed of assimilation of information, performance, etc.

Individual characteristics and visual impairments can cause these differences. It is not surprising that children with the same diagnosis can have big differences in intellectual and psychological development even if they study in one group. Every fifth pupil with visual impairments has problems in development at the primary school age. The number of pupils with visual impairments is increasing at the end of primary school age and problems in development can be diagnosed in every fourth pupil.

Children with visual impairments of different levels, as a rule, have similar psychological characteristics. They are often vulnerable and touchy, have a tendency to conflict, do not know how to relax, they are not able to communicate with the partner. Such children play primitive games, and they need help, especially in the early stages. Most of them are not able to learn the rules of the game quickly: they perceive information fragmentally; therefore they cannot memorize the plot for a long time.

Such children also experience some difficulties with some actions, both in preschool and in primary school. Due to the lack of communication experience and limited mobility, children with visual impairments have difficulties with "body language" – pantomime:

they do not know how to use motor skills to express emotions and needs. As a result, they are not always able to establish contact.

Visually impaired children try not to use gestures, using them only in extraordinary cases, if necessary, to clarify information. This is due to the immaturity of non-verbal communication tools. In addition, they may have problems with communication not only at a distance, but also close - due to the fact that they simply do not want to hear the partner. On the one hand, these features are related to the lack of perception; on the other hand, they are often the result of excessive custody of their relatives.

In many ways, the self-esteem of a pupil with visual impairments will be related to his defect and the emotions, which he experiences because of it at preschool age. If he does not pay particular attention to this problem, then it will be easier for him to find contact not only with his peers, but also with himself in the elementary school.

But in most cases, such children are embraced by the negative emotions, which lead to the development of a self-esteem crisis, when they enter elementary school. Schoolchildren change their attitude, they begin to relate to teachers differently, their motivation decreases, and the relations with classmates deteriorate. Children with visual impairments trust their teachers almost unconditionally, not daring to dispute their conclusions at elementary school but by the end of their study at elementary school, the pupils begin to understand that the educational activity is not leading in their lives. They change their attitude towards teachers, whom they consider to be not only people who transfer knowledge, but also tutors, who should be concerned with the problems of children not only at school, but also in life.

Here is a list of symptoms that are typical for pupils of primary and secondary schools with visual impairments:

- inability to study that are not related to health, intellectual or sensory factors;
- inability to build relationships with teachers and classmates;
- inadequate behavior and deterioration of health without evident reasons;
- state of stress and even depression;
- fear of school problems or teachers at the physical level.

Adults, who take part in the education and upbringing, influence the development of children with visual impairments and their psychological characteristics greatly. Adults should act as equal partners, choose the right game forms of training, and prepare children for school. In addition to the game method with learning elements, it is important to adhere to an art-therapeutic approach, which will contribute to the formation of a positive and harmonious view of the world.

The attitude of parents to the peculiarities of their children is very important. Their attitude will affect the upbringing and relationships in the family. Excessive anxiety about visual impairments and the reappraisal of the defect can lead to the development of excessive custody, which, in turn, will lead to the development of selfishness with the emphasis on passive consumer orientation. At the same time, underestimation of the problem is also bad, which can lead to wrong optimism of children and parents, as well as lightness and loss of feelings of reality.

Parents often protect and feel compassion to their children, who have visual impairments. They try to fulfill any wish and desire of their children. That is why, if the line of behavior is not changed, parents will get dependent personalities. While the children are small, they do not realize the system of requirements to themselves to full extent. Later, during the school period, they begin to follow the program which adults have created for them. That is, the demands of parents and teachers will become the demands, which they will make to themselves.

Many systems of correction of visual defects are introduced in educational institutions of both preschool and school types today. All of them are designed for one purpose: to help children with visual impairments adapt in any society and, taking into consideration their psychological characteristics, contribute to the normal development of the main spheres of personality.

A teenager needs to be a real member of the society in which he has to live. Meanwhile, the characteristics of adolescents with visual impairments influence the process of formation of their personalities. The status of the psychological factor of visual impairments is acquired only after the adolescent comes into contact with people who have good vision.

Conclusions were drawn about some of their inherent features on the base of the analysis of

the main personality traits of adolescents with visual defects of varying degrees. As a rule, the majority of adolescents in this case differ: by excessive impulsiveness, conservatism, bordering on alertness, anxiety.

One shouldn't diminish the ability of such children to socialize in a modern society. Many of them have the following features: an active approach to everything they face; curiosity; the desire to establish and maintain contacts, despite the contradictions; the ability to set evident goals and means to achieve them, even in adverse conditions. They often have their own opinion and desire to discuss various topics.

Children with poor vision often demonstrate a sociable, open character, they understand the situations realistically which they encounter in life, they differ in the maturity of their inner experiences. The level of socio-psychological adaptation of such children practically does not differ from the level of adolescents without vision problems, which indicates their readiness to integrate into society.

One of the most effective ways to prevent personality disorders in children and adolescents during their socio-psychological adaptation is considered to be psychological support, which is constantly aimed at the result. The development of creative activity of children is one of the main values of modern society and one of the main tasks of education. Blind and visually impaired children are often creatively gifted. They, along with other children, can show their creative abilities.

Musical and aesthetic creativity is an excellent means of rehabilitation for visually impaired children. The nature of the musical abilities of all people (with good vision and blind) is the same, but, of course, blind and visually impaired pupils experience and overcome certain difficulties in the process of learning music.

It is known that pathology of vision stimulates the development and manifestation of higher mental functions, which are realized through compensatory factors. Compensation, (translated from Latin, means "reimbursement"), according to L. Vygotsky, leads to the search for new "bypass pathways" of development (Vygotsky, 2006). These processes are manifested mainly in the field of abstract thinking, logical memory, arbitrary attention.

Visual impairments inhibit the full development of the cognitive activity of blind and visually

impaired children, which is reflected in the development and functioning of the processes associated with memorization. They have to memorize and keep in their memory materials which pupils with good vision do not have to remember.

It is widely believed that children with visual impairments are less emotional, calmer and more balanced than children without visual impairments. This impression is explained by the lack of reflection of their experiences in facial expressions, gestures, and poses. However, their speech is quite expressive. They recognize the speaker's emotional state accurately, capture the most subtle changes in the interlocutor's voice, and feel complex musical intonations. Due to the fact that blind and visually impaired pupils do not have a specific image of the teacher (they do not see either his face or his gestures, that is what people with good vision see and notice immediately at the first meeting with a stranger), the main burden of perceiving information is vested in his hearing and touch organs. Hearing assumes the main cognitive load. The blind and visually impaired can't see music notes and correct mistakes. They are forced to control their muscular and tactile sensations through an auditory analyzer, that is why the teacher has to pronounce, sing the studying material in the process of analyzing any musical work.

From the foregoing we can state, that there is no single understanding of the essence of the problem of compensating for the lost functions of the body both in the scientific literature on psychology and pedagogy and in musical pedagogy.

Music, like any other art, contributes to the formation of a common culture of children with pathology of vision, to the development of their moral, intellectual, physical, moral qualities, initiative, independence. Along with fiction literature, visual arts, and theater, it performs an important social function. Music for children with visual impairments is considered to be an irreplaceable means of development of emotional responsiveness to everything good and beautiful which they encounter in life.

Since the personality's musical culture is formed on the basis of holistic perception, understanding of musical art, reflection on it, expressive performance, children with visual impairments are trained in the same way as children with good vision. Intelligence is most often preserved in children with visual impairments, and in some cases even exceeds the norm.

However, for obvious reasons, these children may have a number of psychological characteristics. Compared to healthy children, their physical fatigue comes faster, which often leads to an erroneous perception of their educational material and its subsequent reproduction.

As the long-term practice of working with children with visual impairments shows, the same methods and techniques are used and accepted in musical pedagogy with both children with good vision and children with visual impairments.

At the same time, the musical abilities of visually impaired children (musical hearing, memory, sense of rhythm) and their motivation to learn music may not be clearly expressed and fall behind the norm.

Visually impaired children feel music more sharply, remember faster, they have more developed hearing (there is a compensation due to vision). Having acquired the skills of playing musical instruments, children form their ability to penetrate the artistic image and reconstruct it in the process of performance. Playing the instruments promotes the development of intonation, rhythm, harmonic and timbre hearing, serves as an active means of assimilation and consolidation of knowledge about music, and contributes to the perception of music as a whole. Playing musical instruments introduces a game principle into the lessons of music, contributes to increasing the interest of pupils in musical studies.

In the process of learning songs, children develop musical creative abilities, form the vocal and choral skills necessary for transmitting a musical image. The introduction of children to singing is an important condition for the formation of their musical culture and their musical capabilities.

The more active and diverse the musical activity in children with visual impairments, the more efficient is the process of developing creative abilities. That is why, music lessons need to have a diverse character and they shouldn't be boring for the child. In this case, all types of musical and practical activities can help the teacher: listening, singing, musical and rhythmic movements. Songs should be easy and accessible for understanding for the child. Melodic lines should be smooth with a small range. Every unknown word in any song should be explained in details.

While conducting any music lessons with children with visual impairments, including those in theoretical disciplines, the teacher should: observe the threefold target setting during the lesson (training, education, development); set accessible goals and tasks for the class and individual pupils; create a problem situation at the lesson; link the subject of the educational process with the correctional objectives of the lesson; follow ophthalmological recommendations at the lesson; take into account the functional defects of the pupils' organ of vision and secondary psycho-physical deviations in their development; observe modern typhlopedagogical requirements for the lesson; evaluate the work of pupils objectively.

Thus, a teacher should apply the individual approach to each student, taking into account its psychophysiological characteristics in the process of teaching music blind and visually impaired children.

### **Methodology**

The methodological basis of the study was the philosophical doctrine of the universal relationship of processes and phenomena, the statements of the dialectical theory of cognition; ideas which reveal the problem of interaction between a society and a man and his comprehensive development; theoretical studies in aesthetics, pedagogy and musical pedagogy; concepts of individual, personality-oriented, activity and cultural studies approaches; fundamental approaches to the creative development of personality in the process of musical and aesthetic education.

The experimental base of the study, which was carried out by the authors of this article for three years, was three boarding schools for visually impaired children (in the cities Cheboksary, Ulyanovsk and Moscow). The experiment involved 40 children from the first up to fifth grades.

To study the role of musical and aesthetic activity in the development of the creative abilities of visually impaired children, we used the following research methods: theoretical (analysis of musical, pedagogical and psychological literature on the research problem; analysis of pupil performance; study, analysis and generalization of advanced pedagogical experience in this problem) and empirical (pedagogical observation, questionnaire, survey, conversation).

In determining the initial level of development of creative abilities of schoolchildren, we applied the methods of G. A. Uruntaeva ("Diagnosis of musical activity"), A. I. Burenina ("Diagnosis of the level of musical and psychomotor development of a child"), as well as the method "Compose music", which was developed by the authors of this article. These techniques allowed us to identify the level of development of various creative abilities of children 7-11 years old (musicality, emotionality, mobility (lability) of nervous processes, the ability to improvise, original thinking).

### Results and discussion

The use of the above mentioned diagnostic methods allowed us to obtain the following results. A high level of development of musicality, emotionality and mobility (lability) of nervous processes at the initial stage of the study was shown by 20% of children (8 people), an average level by 25% (10 people), a low level by 55% (22 people). The ability to improvise and originality of thinking at the beginning of the experiment at a high level of development was revealed in 22.5% of children (9 people), at an average level in 27.5% (11 people), at a low level in 50% (20 people).

These results made it possible to judge about a rather low level of development of creative abilities in visually impaired children, in connection with which it was concluded that it was necessary to develop a set of adapted methods of musical and aesthetic activity for developing the creative abilities of children with visual impairments. The guideline was the statement that musical and aesthetic activity is a factor in the emotional, creative, moral, aesthetic and mental development of children, and, consequently, the development of musical abilities can be considered as a means of compensating for poor vision. At the same time, we implemented pedagogical conditions for the effective development of children's creative abilities, namely: the creation of a psychological attitude, the installation of creative work; the usage of various methods and forms of work at the lesson. It is important to take into consideration individual and psychophysiological characteristics of visually impaired children.

The tasks of music lessons with children were:

1. to implement prevention and correction the deviations in the development of mental functions, emotional-volitional,

motor spheres; creation of conditions for the socio-cultural adaptation of the child through communication with musical art in active musical activity by means of music;

2. to form the prerequisites and elementary musical and creative manifestations in children, their abilities to express their personality in all available types of musical activity;
3. to make children's potential active, ensuring the development of emotional, artistic, moral and aesthetic, communicational and reflective foundations of the personality by means of musical art and activity;
4. to ensure the satisfaction of the informational and cognitive needs of children in musical art through participation in musical and aesthetic activities;
5. to enrich the consciousness of children with musical impressions, the development of their sensory-musical abilities, timbre, high-altitude, dynamic, rhythmic hearing; promoting the initial manifestation of musical taste;
6. to form children's interest in musical art, ensuring musical and emotional development, responsiveness to music, from impulsive responses to the simplest musical phenomena to more pronounced and diverse emotional reactions characterized by mimic, motor and speech manifestations.

Based on the results of systematic activities to develop children's creative abilities by means of music (additional music lessons were held once a week for three years), we carried out a final diagnosis. The results of diagnosis made it possible to judge the effectiveness of organized pedagogical interaction. Thus, by the end of the experiment, the number of children with a high level of development of musicality, emotionality and mobility (lability) of nervous processes increased from 20% (8 people) to 40% (16 people); with an average level - from 25% (10 people) to 45% (18 people), with a low level - from 55% (22 people) to 15% (6 people). Measurements of the levels of development of the ability to improvise and to think originally showed that by the time the experiment ended, these indicators also underwent significant changes: from 22.5% (9 people) to 45% (18 people) in the high level; from 27.5 (11 people) to 50% (20 people) in the average level; from 50% to 5% (2 people) in the low level.

## Conclusion

The analysis of psychological and pedagogical literature and our own practical experience allowed us to define creativity as one of the leading personality traits, which has an integrative and complex character and is associated with almost all of its other properties. Creativity is manifested in individual human activities at various levels: unconscious, oriented-adaptive, conscious, cognitive-transformative and research. The development of creative abilities by means of musical aesthetic activity allows children with visual pathology to self-actualize, to participate in creative activities actively, to create a spiritual or material product that is distinguished by originality and novelty. Creative abilities open the way for individuals to express themselves, facilitating their adaptation to the surrounding reality.

The development of creative abilities in visually impaired children depends on their psychophysiological characteristics. In visually impaired children, the following psychophysiological features are observed: fragmentation and lack of reflection of the surrounding world; the predominance of hearing and touch in the perception of reality; decreased activity in relation to the world; poverty of facial expressions and pantomimic; high level of muscle clamps; slowdown in the process of perception; lack of correspondence between a word and an image; lack of reflection of the world in facial expressions, gestures, poses, etc.

Children with visual pathology often use hearing in the process of playing and learning activities, and a pathology of visual functions leads to deviations in the motor, speech, and mental spheres. Under the influence of learning music, children focus faster, become more attentive, coordinated, and fluent in speech. In case of visual impairments, the musical abilities of visually impaired children develop more slowly than usual. That is why it is necessary to begin the focused work at the development of their auditory representations as soon as possible. One of the most relevant ways to develop the creative abilities of visually impaired children is to use musical education regularly.

While analyzing the music education system in boarding schools for visually impaired children, we found that music lessons and extracurricular musical and aesthetic activities can be the forms of musical education of pupils (classes in vocal circles, choral or solo singing, participation in

mass school events, learning the basics of dance art, staging plays).

The generalization of pedagogical experience in the musical education of blind and visually impaired children revealed that music lessons are of great importance for the harmonious and comprehensive development of children. Music lessons develop creative abilities, communication skills, increase self-esteem. Music has a calming effect on the body. Timely corrective work with children with visual impairments gives a positive trend in the development of rhythmic hearing and musical rhythmic activity. This is facilitated by the use of musical didactic games, information and communication technologies, musical rhythmic movements, articulatory gymnastics. The corrective possibilities of musical art manifest themselves better if students have the opportunity to play music both during lessons and during extracurricular time, using various types of musical and aesthetic activities (playing musical instruments, vocals, listening to music, musical rhythmic activity).

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