

### 13. THE EVOLUTIONARY OF THE CONCEPTS OF INTEGRALITY AND SYSTEM FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE MUSICAL EDUCATION LESSON

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**Abstract:** *This study highlights and theoretically argues the approach to the conceptual direction of integrality and system in the field of education, the multi-aspect perception of the respective phenomena. The analysis of literature from different fields, of normative acts, of national and international experiences regarding musical education determined the formulation of a series of benchmarks regarding the integrality. This fact led to forming an integral vision in the development of the student's personality and designating the ways to achieve this objective in the musical-educational field. The integrality becomes one of the basic dimensions of the systemic unit, being the result of the interconnection of the components of this system. The concept of integrality in the contemporary educational system is characterized by the formation of a new type of thinking, being in accordance with the new educational orientations. The integrality is under the influence of the profound changes taking place in education, there being several factors that prove the increased interest in the concept of integrality in musical pedagogy.*

**Key words:** *dimension, integrality, systemic approach, integrality factors, musical education*

#### 1. The Concept of the lesson – retrospective visions

The lesson, as the most widely recognized form of structuring the educational process, has been a central focus of study for numerous researchers in pedagogy over time. It has been defined and conceptualized in various ways, such as: *a method of organization, a fundamental element, an instructional approach, an instructional microsystem, an activity*, etc. When analyzing the lesson as an instructional microsystem, it becomes evident that it must be approached from multiple perspectives: historical development, specific and strategic dimensions, and others. Researcher I. Cerghit, who considers the lesson as the "fundamental form," "main form", "dominant form" or "central form" of organizing school education, highlights the inherent ambiguity of the term. At the same time, by emphasizing the qualifier "main" and its synonyms, Cerghit points out that "the lesson is more than just a method or framework for organizing teaching. It encompasses mechanisms, structural, and functional principles that must be thoroughly understood" [1, p. 14].

M. Cojocaru, L. Papuc, and L. Sadovei define the lesson as a "form of organizing learning activities conducted by pupils under the teacher's guidance within a set timeframe during the school day. Its purpose is to facilitate the acquisition of a specific segment of the content outlined for study within a study object. Additionally, the lesson provides a framework for completing learning tasks, employs well-structured, processed, and adapted content, utilizes specific strategies, methods, tools, and modes of action, and allows the achievement of the teaching-learning-evaluation unit" [3, p. 84].

Viewed as effective methods for organizing and conducting educational activities, lessons are categorized into various types. According to S. Cristea, the concept of *type* corresponds to several criteria or perspectives for classifying

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lessons: *traditional didactics perspective*: communication lessons; lessons of skills and abilities formation; lessons of recapitulation; lessons of testing and evaluation; *perspective of curriculum design and development*: teaching-learning-evaluation lesson, related to pedagogical objectives targeting competence and performance; *criterion of priority targeted competence*: lesson that primarily aims to form the capacity to acquire knowledge; lesson that primarily aims to form the capacity to understand the acquired knowledge; lesson that primarily aims to form the capacity to apply the acquired knowledge; lesson that primarily aims to form the capacity to analyze-synthesize the acquired knowledge; lesson that primarily aims to form the capacity to critically evaluate the acquired knowledge; *criterion of priority targeted performance*: lesson that primarily aims to master the subject; lesson that primarily aims to achieve operational transfers; lesson that primarily aims to create products that express the pupil's personality; lesson that primarily aims to acquire cognitive strategies; lesson that primarily aims to acquire attitudes (cognitive, behavioral, affective, motivational), etc. [5, p. 214 – 215].

In the context of approaching the problem of lesson classification, G. Cristea's opinion [6, p.70-92] on lesson classification integrates both the *macrosystemic* and *mesosystemic* levels of educational activity, highlighting several models: a) of lesson management; b) of traditional communication, interactive communication; c) in which action strategies predominate: the heuristic model, the operational model; d) in which interactional strategies predominate; e) in which informatization strategies predominate.

In modern didactics, the lesson is conceptualized as an instructional microsystem.

From a systemic approach perspective, all lesson components are inherently three-dimensional. In this context, I. Cerghit proposes a three-dimensional model of lesson variables, encompassing, namely: a) *the functional dimension* (the lesson pursues well-determined goal and objectives); b) *the structural dimension* (the lesson involves human, material, content resources, teaching methods and tools, and it is carried out in a specific timeframe and in a defined pedagogical environment); c) *the operational dimension* (the lesson is carried out based on strategies, methods, procedures, and operations, phases and events) [1, p. 180]. Therefore, in Figure 1.2 we refer to the *Three-dimensional model of lesson variables*, according to I. Cerghit. It highlights a systemic approach to the lesson, emphasizing the *functional, structural, operational* components:

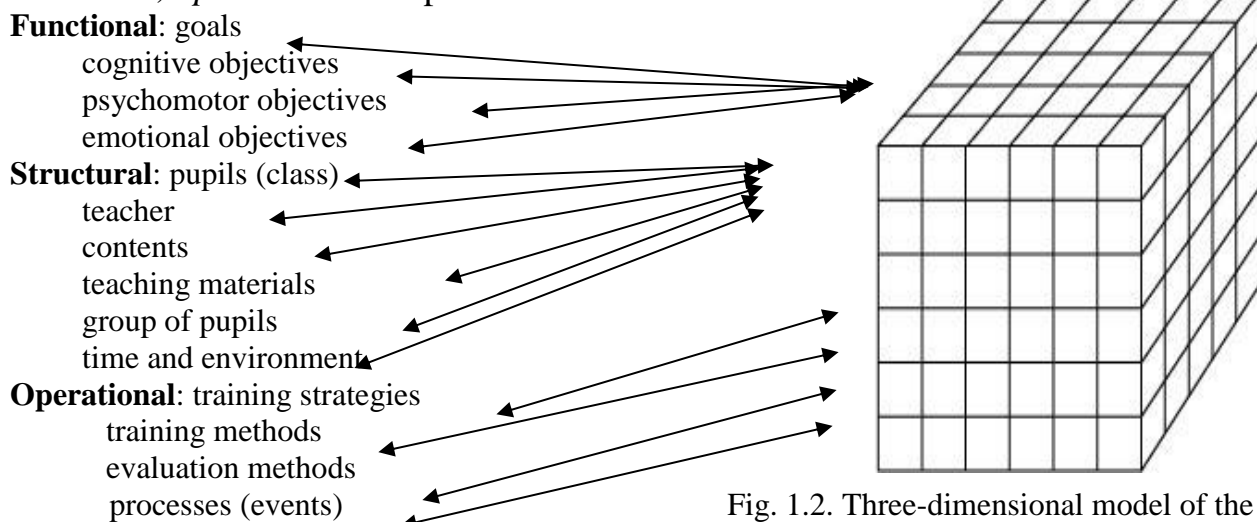


Fig. 1.2. Three-dimensional model of the lesson, after I. Cerghit

Relying on this framework, we integrate two aspects of both theoretical and practical importance: the systemic approach to the lesson in an analytical manner, which highlights its fundamental components, including the typical stages of its actual implementation, and, at the same time, captures, in a synthetic form, the complex interaction of the respective component elements of the lesson, its specific structuring into an ensemble that integrates and organizes its processuality.

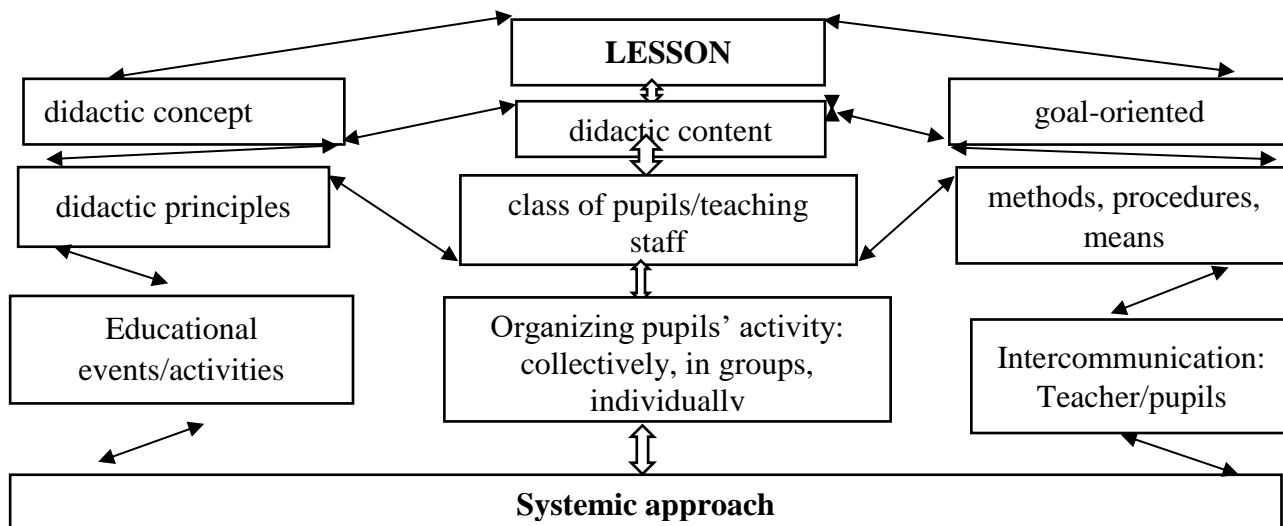


Fig. 1.3. The microsystemic model of the lesson, after I. Cerghit [2, p. 22-25]

In Figure 1.3, we present the elements and relationships organically organized and integrated into a microsystem, constituting a functional integrative structure, a distinct entity of the lesson. In line with the systemic approach, this Model represents the true integral structure of the composition and organization of the lesson.

## 2. Systemic approach in music education lessons

The methodology and practice of music education have accumulated a substantial body of experience in designing lessons, conceptualized by prominent figures who, across various historical periods, identified systemic approaches to music education. In *Romania*, notable contributors include A. Motora-Ionescu, P. Delion, G. Munteanu, I. Serfezi, V. Vasile, E-M. Pasca, and others. In the *Republic of Moldova*, key figures are A. Popov, E. Coroi, Al. Bors, S. Croitoru, Vl. Babii, I. Gagim, M. Tetelea, M. Morari, T. Bularga, M. Vacarciuc, L. Granetkaia, M. Cosumov, V. Crisciuc, and others. In the *Russian Federation*, influential contributors include Dm. Kabalevsky, O. Apraxina, N. Grodzenskaia, B. Iavorsky, N. Vetlughina, E. Abdulin, E. Nicolaeva, P. Halabuzari, L. Dmitrieva, N. Cernoivanenko, L. Goriunova, B. Racina, and others.

Researchers perceive the lesson as a holistic, continuously evolving process that synthesizes all types of musical activities involving both pupils and teaching staff. The objectives of the lesson focus on the necessity of cultivating pupils' musical culture as an integral part of their spiritual culture. This includes the ongoing stimulation of individual thinking, the ability to make independent decisions based on knowledge and skills, and the capacity to apply these in various educational contexts. The systemic approach to music education, from the perspective of musical-didactic activities, has triggered a broad process of rethinking the discipline, reconstructing and developing the curriculum,

reevaluating and restructuring its content, and reconsidering and adapting it to the principles of art and integrated methodologies in the classroom.

The efforts of the aforementioned researchers are valuable, laying the foundation for multiple directions in the field. However, the issue of a specific methodology for a systemic approach to musical-didactic activities (MDA) during the lessons is ample and requires continuous investigation, influenced by various factors. Thus, it can be observed that the systemic approach of MDA during lessons is addressed in diverse ways: either due to its association with already established instructional methods and principles, its alignment with different theories and systems, or the belief that such an approach is merely a didactic issue rather than a defining way for individuals to express themselves in society.

In the matter of reconceptualizing the lesson focused on music education (ME), I. Gagim's research holds a special place. According to the theorist, "Contemporary music education in schools is based on a system of principles and laws that assigns to it the value of an educational and scientific entity" [8, p. 10]. As one of the founders of the curricular reform in music education, he contributes to a broad openness toward practical solutions in the methodology of lessons and integrated content through the systemic approach to musical-didactic activities (MDA), from both musicological and psycho-pedagogical perspectives. Analyzing the sciences of education and educational practice in our country as distinct and autonomous fields, the researcher offers the personal perspective on the concept of the music education lesson: "The contemporary lesson implies its integrality, the unity of various musical-didactic activities that ensure the communication between pupils with the art of music. It is to be mentioned that the lesson must be interesting, captivating, and attractive. The need for music, the inner desire to connect with it, the lack of resistance to its charm", referring to the pupil's level of musical culture and the degree of assimilation with the art of music" [9, p. 53].

Based on the concept of music education (ME) in the Republic of Moldova, which defines "the formation of musical culture as an integral part of the pupils' spiritual culture" [Coroi, E., Bors Al., Croitoru, p. 3], [Chiriac, Rusnac, Gagim, *Conceptia educatiei*], [Morari, *Educatia muzicala. Ghid.*], etc., the research of the practice, according to this approach, demonstrates that this focus alone is not sufficient to achieve the objectives of the music education discipline in schools.

The implementation of this concept requires "discriminating the semantic values of the expression, expressing that the goal of music education contains a dual meaning: 1) *formation of musical culture*; 2) *musical culture as an integral part of spiritual culture*" [8, p. 18]. In this context, I. Gagim, the co-author of this regulatory document, points out: let us refer to one of the authors of the concept of Music Education – Dm. Kabalevsky. Why, when formulating the purpose of music education, did he consider it from two perspectives: forming musical culture as an integral part of spiritual culture? Why did he not limit himself to just the first part of the definition? Is it not enough to form the individual's culture? Emphasizing one part of the goal of music education is a halfway stop. As I. Gagim argues, these points address all the constituent areas of artistic-aesthetic education, highlighting specific situations for each discipline [8, p. 5].

Analyzing the statements of researcher M. Morari, the following idea stands

out: "The conceptualization and implementation of the music education Curriculum depend on the specific nature of the art of music and how pupils perceive it" [10, p. 7]. Thus, the modern curriculum aims to develop pupils' musical competencies, requiring teachers to adopt a varied, systematic, and integrated theoretical-praxiological approach aligned with the educational processes of the contemporary era. The revision of the content of music education in schools in the Republic of Moldova, followed by the development of the Concept of Music Education and the Music Education Curriculum, marked a new direction for the school discipline.

Examining the work *Psychopedagogical and Musicological Foundations of Music Education* by I. Gagim, we deduce that the author proposes the redefining the concept of music education (ME), explaining the choices as follows: "The concept of music education must also involve a scientific framework for advancing the educational process: from forming musical culture to defining musical culture in the context of the pupils' spiritual culture" [8, p. 18]. For Dm. Kabalevsky, "the integrality of the lesson means: the topic, the studied works, the teacher's questions and comments, the pupils' answers—in other words, everything that happens in class and pertains to a common topic for the lesson, that is, the lesson with all its components focused on a common subject" [13, p. 24].

Meanwhile, V. Vasile asserts that music education, as a school subject, cannot simply be "taught"; instead, it must be realized in a complete partnership between teacher and pupil. It is not merely a process for school but it should extend into society, religious, ethical, civic, and artistic life, continuing with forms of self-education" [12, p. 103]. According to recent investigations into the role of music in shaping pupil's culture conducted by M. Tetelea and V. Crisciuc, as well as praxiological experiences, this direction has a realistic prospect for implementation [11, p. 18].

In the context of these ideological reflections, we also refer to M. Cosumov, who states that "one of the essential tasks of music education is the development of musical skills that contribute to the assimilation, understanding, and interpretation of music at a higher artistic level. In this sense, among all musical classifications, vocal music is closest to the nature of childhood, as in singing, the melody forms a unity with the text, making it more accessible. Moreover, when combined with movement, music is more easily understood because pupils not only listen to it but also perform it" [7, p. 25]. Thus, the lesson cannot exist without live musical performance; it cannot be fragmented, as it is oriented toward decoding and experiencing the musical-artistic essence of the work—justifying its holistic nature.

### **3. Music education - the lesson of art**

The lesson is planned differently: some teachers go into into the topic of the lesson; others pay more attention to the final result and then outline the stages of the lesson; and the third ones imagine how pupils integrate into the outline, the "*musical-didactic score*" with different situations, etc. It is crucial to analyze in advance how the pupil's content will be perceived, how to properly structure the teaching materials to foster a productive teacher-pupil dialogue, and so on. The tendency to realize the integral lesson through MDA requires the teacher to address a series of questions: Which methods will best convey the main idea of the lesson?

Which moment in the lesson should serve as its climax? Which content will engage pupils not only emotionally but also cognitively? How should the lesson begin—perhaps softly or directly with the climax? How should the teaching process conclude so that the final moment of this "*musical-didactic score*" leaves pupils in anticipation because the extension of ideas elicits curiosity and a sense of suspense in pupils?

The continuous search for the most optimal solutions and their effective implementation contributes to the creation of the lesson's scenario, turning pedagogical activity into a genuinely creative process. The design of a lesson—its concept, structure, dramaturgy, musical material, and the dynamics of the educational process—is entirely in the teacher's hands and closely linked to their level of competence, accumulated experience, and skills. At the same time, based on regulatory documents, the teacher will shape the lessons in a unique and irreproducible manner, with the only criterion for assessing their work being the pupils' achievements in mastering musical art. However, at music education lessons, it is often observed that teachers plan MDA (musical-didactic activities) without establishing interconnections between them.

Consequently, there is no appeal to pupils' creative thinking, perception, or emotional states. Instead, pupils merely imitate the teacher, who only occasionally allows them time to respond. Frequently, pupils' active participation is inhibited by the teacher's own overly rigid adherence to the temporal sequences of the lesson, failing to provide pupils with the time needed to formulate their responses or reflect on the subject being discussed. Such lessons often result in a mere illusion of the teaching-learning and development process. Reflecting on the content and organization of a lesson, the teacher must seek ways to sensitize the pupils, finding possibilities to touch their hearts and souls.

#### **4. The dramaturgy of the lesson**

The dramaturgy of the lesson must be built on a dialog between "listeners", "composers," and "performers." All participants during the lesson—both the teacher and the pupils—share the same roles: those of the "listener," "composer," and "performer." Such an approach required identifying methods and principles derived from the inherent nature of musical art. A lesson cannot be fragmented into separate parts (e.g., vocal-choral singing from music listening; instrumental performance from music listening or knowledge about music). All musical-didactic activities (MDA) must work together to form a cohesive musical image. A creative teacher also becomes the dramatist of the lesson. Planning lessons for each class of pupils involves selecting precisely those scenarios that meet all methodological, scientific, and pedagogical requirements. A harmonious lesson, which is a complex and challenging creation for both teacher and pupils, demands special skills in arranging its elements to reach the "hearts," "souls," and minds of the pupils.

Usually, the composition of the scenario (*lesson score*) is conditioned by the observance of the following aspects: determining the problem, the main theme of the lesson, fixing the main moments of the lesson (large scenes on larger topics and groups of pupils; small scenes, with smaller groups of pupils, etc.); fixing the tempo of each planned activity at each stage of the lesson; tempo rhythmic transition in

different tempos, taking into account the planned contents; searching for ways to create a harmonious and pleasant atmosphere, etc. An interesting experience in approaching the lesson as a musical creation, compared with the musical form of *Allegro of a sonata* is described by B. Racina [Б. Рачинв, Технологии, 2007, p.17]. Therefore, the dramaturgy of the lesson will be algorithmically associated with a musical creation: *Introduction – Evocation* (the organizational stage of the lesson) with the *Exposition* from the musical creation; *Development* – with *Realization of meaning*; *Reprise* – the *Reflection* stage on the lesson; *Coda* – the Extension stage.

Just as the image of musical creation grows from a small phrase/musical idea and gains development, so too does the lesson "get shaped" from an intonation kind (subject/seed) and must reach a logical integrality. When designing a lesson from a content perspective, it is essential to implement a systemic approach to intonationally significant landmarks, which materialize the main ideas—the logic behind implementing the musical-pedagogical concept. The teacher must identify and integrate into the structure of the lesson the appropriate intonational form of expression of artistic emotions and understanding of images. The integration of images in different genres of art will facilitate pupils' integration into any type of musical-didactic activity.

## 5. Conclusions

Starting from the assumptions explained above, we can conclude that in the context of the systemic approach, the ME (music education) lesson is located in a central position, having a fundamental role due to its multiple valences in the formation of personalities. Being interpreted as a continuous individual process of self-improvement of the personality through multiple forms of contact with the art of music, the lesson brings together the following characteristic properties: art lesson; dramaturgy of the lesson; the integrality of the activity of the teaching staff and pupils: the transition from reproductive-informational to productive-creative; education of individuals through continuous dialogue with society, culture, and nature; systemic integration of contents, principles, methods; perpetuation of educational values through a time-relevant vision and approach, etc.

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