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EDUCATIONAL MESSAGES SEEN THROUGH A CHILD'S EYE – A "JOURNEY" OF QUESTIONS

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Abstract

The present article represents a "journey" of analysis and of important questioning related to the impact of different educational messages being sent and perceived through children's eyes (books, television, music, toys etc.). The design of the paper is based on empirical data obtained from two various samples of age. Thus, the opinions and perceptions concerning educational messages seen or developed could have an impact on our children's wellbeing in general (learning, behaviour, emotions etc.); as well as, for our education and society system; these are just some of the questions analysed throughout the paper. The key question at heart is what "educational messages" are upright for today and tomorrow in preparing pupils for their future? The opinions and perceptions obtained will bring into light an imagine on the topic of the importance and impact on children (positive versus negative) and, at the same time, it will offer a portrait regarding the children's and parent's needs, in forms of our answers as means for raising a child ("what's good/unwelcomed?", "Is this enough/too much?" etc.). The methods and techniques: analysis of documents – studies, theory etc. and a simple "case study" analysed step by step throughout this paper. More and more didactic materials and tools developed in education are becoming of important issue for the future of our children (learning approaches, habits, competences that need to be developed etc.). Consequently, what to select, how to select it, how to make it accessible etc., could be consider significant for our children.

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Keywords: Children education; comprehension; effects; messages; thoughts.

> Children understand much more than they can really express
> Personal thought

1. Introduction

Recent event happening around our world (events, earthquakes, water floods etc.), captured my daughter's attention and interest, putting her in the situation of posing questions; questions that even a parent can't even respond always so easily. Thus, these questions at hand have brought me into the cycle of questioning and presentation of this article and in consequence to conduct a "mini" research, a "mini case study" on the topic. Since messages[1] are all-over, whether we like it or not, we can agree that they could leave an impression or a representation[2] on one's child mind throw meaning. Hence, my daughter's opinions and insights became the muse for this article. Again, I'll underline the fact that, some of the conclusions and recommendations will be based more or less on empirical data, in the sense that the results cannot be generalized for a certain group of individuals. In other words, since I haven't conducted a scientific research addressed to a large lot of children, the analyses in this article is based on exploration of documents – recent studies, theories and case studies in the field.

1.1. A "Journey" Full of Questions

A "journey" full of questions began when my daughter saw me watching a recent event on TV and so this began with questions and critical thinking. The background of the whole aspect goes something like this: I was watching the news; the context was related to the recent events around Europe with the movement of immigrants. I will not go into further details, because I don't feel it's necessary. In regards to the questions were related to: "Why am I watching the news?"; "What is going on?"; "Why is it important for you to know what is going on?"; "How come people are pushing?"; "Why are you watching such images?"; "I'm not allowed, why are you?;" The list of questions and the" journey" of questions can go on and on... What is important to keep in mind is that sometime we do not realize that certain messages that we consider to be natural as adults, may not be for our children. After all we have to be informed or not?! Should I have watched the news later?! Thus, this is when I started to put certain questions regarding the educational messages being propelled, whether they are heard or viewed they are still being reflected by our children. And so, the "journey" of my case study started to reflect on these messages. I have made a list of them purely exploratory, but we will look into them in the next subchapters.

A paper that summarizes very well my other means of investigation is that according to Pam Winter (2010), *Engaging families in the early childhood developments story. Neuroscience and early childhood development: Summary of selected literature and key messages for parenting* (2010) in which emerges the idea that the messages we send to our children are more important than the content: "When they are very young the way messages are given to children is more important than the content as they are learning what they are like as a person and a learner" (Winter, 2010, p.29). As a result, we have to be careful how we address our children different aspects: ideas, stories, events etc.

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[1] Messages are part of the communication process in which each one has "meaning" for the individual (According to Theory of Communication, Shannon, 1948).
[2] Representation is seen as a primitive form of symbolic thought in which allows the child to reproduce throw behavior what he/she sees.

The two target groups in the "mini" research analysis as I have already mentioned, are my daughter and I. My daughter finished preschool education this school year (2015-2016), she's bright, full of questions and personal responses. Behaviours that are equivalent with her age and that are considered to be developed at the preschool level, thus, it is no wonder that she started to put certain questions or to have certain remarks towards something she saw that day on television.

I chose this type of research investigation for two main reasons: the first reason is due to the fact that recent events have made me more aware of what should be or not, good or bad, what educational messages are transmitted to our children, almost every day. When we choose a TV channel, toys, music etc., actually do we really think of what kind of educational messages we are sending?! The second reason is related to the circumstances in which the issue at hand has been brought to my attention. Consequently, a simple dialogue with my daughter got me thinking. The present article does not plan on giving a prescription to the matter discussed, but more it tries to respond to a certain questions that may be of importance to some parents, teachers etc., are our educational messages all right?!

2. Preschool Education Level[3] - an Age-Related Stage of Importance for Development

Our "journey" continues in the understandings surrounding the preschool education level, as so many specialists have examined, the degree in which an individual is anchored in a period of intensive learning making it all the more significant with the accumulation of skills and abilities, such as: acknowledgement, communication, exploration, knowledge, self-awareness etc.

Looking into, what pupils acquire at preschool[4], in terms of *school programs* or *syllabus* offered to them by the Ministry of Education and Scientific Research in Romania, it stipulates that pupils should ask for support when they do not understand the meaning of a message that is being directed to them by the teacher (for instance, to ask for help when one does not understand a word, a situation and to attempt to resolve it) (School syllabus, 2008, p. 43). So, as we can note, children since kindergarten are taught in this sense and are used to the idea of asking questions in ways of trying to solving the problem or certain situation that they encounter. In other words, even before entering the school system, meaningful messages are being transmitted through teachers, whether we are talking about he's/her voice or what the lesson is trying to portrait (represents).

In connection to this school program mentioned above and her age of development, specialist in the field of childhood developmental psychology (Freud, Erickson, Piaget, Vygotsky and others) consider that children by the age of six should be able to communicate with other peers or adults, use mental combination, play pretend, masters motor skills etc. According to a specialist in the field of psychopedagogy, a professor at the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences in Romania, E. Verza (1993) states that children become active in learning; their capacity is doubled by interest and knowledge, while verbal symbolistic forms are evaluated at a higher level (Verza, E., 1993). This explains the reason why children at this age are not only interested in having a purpose for something, it being one way or another; they rely a lot on explanations (cause-effect). More so, they want to know

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[3] I will make reference to this school level, because she just finished.
[4] Preschool education in Romania starts from age 3 to 6 or 7 in Kindergarten and it could be with full-day, extended-day and weekly programs.

concrete why something is like this or that, the whole imagine. Piaget (1896-1980) entitles the stage "preoperational thought" since children have a vast amount of knowledge, but they are unaware of the process behind the logic of the process. Other educational approaches could relate to moral values, artistic aptitudes for what is nice, creativity etc. Thus, it's mainly the adult's or the teacher's role to support the children in his/her development, even if this means additional efforts or it is more time consuming for the adult in decoding the messages.

Additionally, at this stage of development, perception and representation are very well present, aspects that we cannot overlook. The multiple types of perceptions or representation, competencies and abilities in which children come into contact at some point or other in their life, positive or negative ones, reflect in some manner the educational atmosphere to which the child is exposed to, by the messages that are propelled at preschool or at home through: play, storytelling, communication etc., all relevant aspects on the topic we will look into in the next subchapters.

This "journey" led me into a recently revised education law in Romania, where it is empathized the fact the education means to promote a set of principles and values oriented to develop: creativity, cognitive, volitional and actionable capacities, fundamental knowledge, competencies, abilities (Educational Law, no 1/2011, art. 2). In the centre of this whole education process lays aspects related to the individual and his/her future development, on the one hand and on the other, the directions of progress that need to be taken into account (principles, knowledge, behaviour etc.). As Armeane M. Choksi (2008) put it pretty clearly in an article related to the importance of early childhood education, she see education as being very important also for our society in general: "Children whose earliest years are blighted by hunger or disease or whose minds are not stimulated by appropriate interaction with adults and their environment pay for these early deficits throughout their lives - and so does society" (Choksi, 2008, p.5.).

Looking into my daughters' reflections and line of questioning mentioned from the beginning, in relation to the certain preference on T.V., reasons for watching, levels of permissions, why's and don't etc.; aspects that reveal the normal process of thinking. In another sense, it is clear that she already detected that something does not make sense or she considers being unfair. Likewise, this made me persist our "journey" of inquiry and subsequently, one can only ask him/her, the following questions: "is this age group prepared in appreciating different messages (positive or negative)?"; "At what age could pupils understand these messages?", even non educational ones?[5].

The response associated to those questions above, are not easy ones. Piaget (1896-1980) discusses that active searching as part of the intelligence process, in which the human, in this case the child, wants to find and understand the significance of something that poked their interest. In his point of view, the result of this process, comprehension, is actually, what we call "intelligence", which, the result of two interconnected processes, organization and adaptation. Children in other words, organize their thoughts in such a way that makes sense by separating the most important ones with less important ones. Another aspect that is foreseen in this process is that they establish links between one idea to another, for instance, children tend to organize mentally clusters according to whether they are animals, birds, fish etc. At the same time, people, adapt their thinking to another process through accommodation (the intellect adjusts to

[5] I have focused the paper on "educational messages", because it seems more suitable to the means of what we transmit to our children in everyday life, through education, attitudes, beliefs, concepts, skills ,values etc.

new ideas) and assimilation (the information is purely added to what is already therein the cognitive organization). So, as we can remark, children are always naturally provoked and the sooner they start to understand the process of thinking the better it could be for them. To answer consequently, one of the questions posed above, no, it is not early for a child at the age of six to process messages; all the more, they begin solve multiple provocations good or bad. What is important is for adults to start to explain their explanatory filed of knowledge.

Equally, many studies have already highlighted that entering into preschool is of great significance, because it is essential for children's learning process for themselves, as well as for, their future. According to the Eurydice and Eurostat Report, *Key data on early childhood education and care in Europe*, 2014, "on average in participating EU-28 countries, students who attended Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) outperformed those who did not by 35 points – the equivalent of almost one full year of formal schooling" (Key data report, 2014, p. 13). As well, "evidence from PIRLS 2011 indicates that children who have spent longer periods in ECEC are better prepared to enter and succeed in primary education. For most of the European countries participating in PIRLS 2011, the data shows that the longer a child spends in ECEC, the better their reading results" (idem, p. 13). In algorithmic terms, the earlier children start preschool education the better chances they have for receiving good grades and are more prepared for life.

As stated from the beginning of this paper, the sample does not claim to take into account the whole population, the paper is more explanatory and it is trying to see this issue as it is, in means of understanding and clarification.

3. Messages: Definitions, Models and Factors – A "Journey" of Structure

Our "journey" continues to analyse the outset of a "message (s)" being transmitted, starting from definitions, models of communication, factors that are involved, to the structure of communication.

Breaking down this process of query and contextualization, we could come across various theories and models associated with aspects that interconnect with communication and the transmission of "messages". The Oxford Dictionary & Thesaurus defines "messages" as "spoken or written communication; moral or social teaching" (Hawker, S. & Cowley, C., 1997, p. 391).

Our "journey" continues to address, without going into too much depth, four models that have been developed by Krauss, R.M & Fussell, S.R. (1996) and that describe the mechanism behind the idea of transmitting them, we can mention: Encoder/Decoder model, Intentionalist model, Perspective-taking model and Dialogic model.

The first model, entitled "Encoding/decoding" refers to the means in which the information processed affects, and is affected by, others. In this sense, comprehension is a key value in that, the speaker (or sender) has to be careful to what is being addressed (listener, hearer or reviewer). Meaning thus, is a "property" of messages for encoding/decoding model.

The second model, "Intentionalist" model refers to the fact that messages are the vectors in which exchanges are accomplished. In this spirit, the speaker selects the formulation that best expresses a particular intention. In this approach, the construct of meaning is social shared in that speaker's intentions

are understood correctly if rules are used to formulate words that deliver the intention and listeners identify them.

The "Perspective-taking" model assumes that individuals express the world from different advantage points, and the nature of each individual experience, to some degree, dependent upon a particular advantage point he or she occupies. Piaget and Inhelder (1956) consider that it is very important that in early development children should achieve the ability to appreciate differences between one's own and others perspective. This model underline the fact that shared context must be identified in order to perform and understand messages.

The last model analysed by the authors, the "Dialog" model, states that the goal of the participants in communication is very important. Intersubjectivity is the goal of communication for Dialog's theorists. The message produced by the participants in the act of communication emerges from the process by which speakers and addresses agree that the messages have been understood. For instance, a play could be a result of this collaborative communication through various messages.

Without neglecting the importance of each of these models mentioned above, the simplest definition that represents "communication" is the diagram in which a "signal sends messages from a source to a destination" (Krausse, 2002, p. 2.). What is important and to keep in mind when we transmit messages is that they ought to be understood by others (receiver), therefore, signs should clearly, concrete, actual, in order to obtain a feedback of understanding.

Since we are discussing "education" as part of every child's upbringing, no one questions or denies this, aspects which many specialists (Ausubel, Dewey, Durkheim, Bruner, Gagne etc.) have considered, consequently as being very fundamental for them. In this sense, the notions associated with "education" are interconnected to many things according to their views and concerns. In short, it is the process facilitates the development of capacities, knowledge, skills, values, etc. for a group of people. This process can be completed with the support of a wide range of methods and educational techniques that are useful throughout the learning development, such as: discussions, demonstrations, role-playing, storytelling, etc.

My "journey" led me, to the examination of the distinguished factors that contribute to the transmission of these educational messages (positive or negative, conscious or unconscious[6]) that can be greatly affect the individual's comprehension, attitude and behaviour in the long run. Moreover, the educational messages transmitted and developed in school, mentioned above, could be interconnected with the families approach to education and the social content (friends, colleagues).

The family and the home environment is a place where various manifestation take place, forms of behaviour that reflect educational messages being communicated, from constructive messages such as, appraisal, love to deconstructive ones, manifested through authority, punishment, violence etc.

Studies have shown that the family or the home environment is vital for cognitive development of a child. Chadwell and Bradley (1994) in this perception, divided six subscales of the meaning "home" showing that they are practically predictors for a child's development: 1. Emotional and verbal

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[6] I have stress on these two terms known in psychology relating to the individual's ability to conceive an action plan, the steps carried out by him/her and the consequences arising from their actions. These actions could be determinants in their behavior, actions, thoughts etc.

responsiveness of mother; 2. Avoidance of restriction and punishment; 3. Organization of physical environment; 4. Provision of appropriate play materials; 5. Maternal involvement with child; 6. Opportunities for variety in daily stimulation. All these predicators reveal the family's practice in connection with their children's nurturing (Berger, 1997).

"Habitus" as a notion developed by Pierre Bourdieu (1990) is based on "infinite capacity for generating products - thoughts, perceptions, expressions and actions …" (Bourdieu, P., 1980, p. 55). In this equation the family is seen as a particular group that constructs a particular identity for the individual. Through the "habitus" a "product of history, produces individual and collective practices - more history - in accordance with the schemes generated by history" (idem, p. 54). In other words, it ensures the past experiences to be in the present, in which, the "deposited in each organism in the form of schemes of perception, thought and action, tend to guarantee the 'correctness' of practices and their constancy over time, more reliably than all formal rules and explicit norm" (idem, p. 54.). As we can note, the key concepts in Bourdieu's approach are: history, perception thought, action and disposition, aspects that leave a mark in one's existence, as a parent, a teacher, a creator etc.

To paraphrase Bourdieu's theory of the "habitus", discussed, as a product of educational messages being transmitted overtime within a family and deposited by the individual's as form of perception and action, Grotevant and Cooper (1985) underlines the significance of family reinforcement. They found that adolescents who have highest self-esteem and are the closest to identify achievement are those who have a family that encourages each member to express his or her feeling and belief.

Likewise, punishment by means of reinforcement (violence or verbal aggression) when the child behaves, could be a deconstructive message and most of the time is very unpleasant for children, producing other effects than those desired. Barclay Martin (1975) studied literature on punishment and as a result considers this type of discipline increase the negative behaviour instead of improving it. This is why the emphasis should be placed on developing more confidence and the keen to take up new and interesting activities such as: sport, creative activities, excursions etc. In other world, increasing self-recognition, love and support should become key factors in educating our children (Berger, 1997).

A recent focus-group conducted as a result of project elaborated in Romania funded by the European Commission and U.E (*School violence: research, policies, recomandations*) underlines in the framework education and the role of the family in transmitting positive messages in order to eradicating violence: "everything starts from childhood, everything starts from the route, it is about the those << seven years of upbringing from home[7] >>. To no end we in the school can do something, we try to shape them, but it is too little. What we do is for a short period of time and they behave exactly as their model" (teacher) (Mitulescu, S., Scoda, A., & Sandru, I, 2016, p. 76). As we can note, the teacher who participated in the focus-group feels that the family plays an important role in one child's education as means of positive behaviour, while the education system is left to ameliorate bad conduct .Nevertheless, the phenomena of violence is still present, therefore, we must think of the kind of messages we are sending before a child reaches seven and what roles are being played by different actors (parents, teachers, counsellors, education system in general etc.).

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[7] The expression the "seven years of upbringing from home" is very often used as a Romania expression which refers to "good education" given in childhood, other world the *habitus* transmitted by the family to the children as good manners.

We can all agree that these educational messages are recognizable, but both their content and complexity depends mainly on its significance for humans, generally speaking. We can choose to love, be kind, hate, be violent etc. All aspects that are transmitted in early childhood and as emphasised from the beginning of this paper, children understand much more than they can really express through our messages.

The analysis on the social content, can't be neglected in our "journey", since it underlines the importance of friendships as children grow up, becoming gradually imperative. If 4 years old may acknowledge that they have many friends, over time the circle of friends is reduced, having one "best-friend" to whom they become loyal. In this context, in kindergarten, children characteristically have a special vocabulary, dress-codes (a certain character becomes the brand) and manifest a typically behaviour (tease, nickname, flourish things etc.). More so, children are more aware of personality traits and behaviours, classmates who are bullies or those withdrawn. It harmonies with the issue, different educational messages are being pasted within different contents and actions: approval versus disapproval, tolerant versus intolerant, trust versus mistrust, compassion versus cold etc.

Other educational influences such as the television may be primarily strongly used during the preschool year. Another interesting article written by H. Kirkorian, E. A. Wartella and D.R. Anderson (2008) reveal a "hate – love" situation in regards to leaving our children in front of the television: on the one hand they consider it could be beneficiary if the early "exposure is appropriate with programs designed around an educational curriculum, associating this with cognitive and academic enhancement", while on the other hand, the "exposure to pure entertainment and violent content in particular, is associated with poorer cognitive development and lower academic achievement" (Kirkorian, Wartella & Anderson, 2008, p. 39). In other words, the television should be seen as something negative as one would think, but if it is based more on educational skills (educational curriculum) for instance with the use of critical thinking, problem solving, encountring values etc., then it could be viewed as having a pozitive use?! Although, this depends, again, a lot on the age of child, the number of hours spent, what is ecposed and how he/she proceeses what is being shown on televsion.

Our "voyage" and the list of reflections on the types of "messages", more so, educational ones, can go on, but my intention is just to outline the most significant aspects that are connected to my subject's understanding. By leading this "mini" research analyses on other topics and inquirings of how pupils, especially my daughter, reflects these various messages we will look more into this in our next chapter.

The perplexity of this "journey" is somewhat associated to how we can appreciate these messages from different types of sources (educational versus non-educational, conscious versus unconscious) in connection to the children's level of comprehension and age, so that we can make sure that these are applicable. For example, it is common for children around six to see in the park two children fighting perhaps on a toy or to get on a swing that is already been taken by another child, and although in not might be in regular, it might be useful to explain in certain terms the aspects viewed, but equal to their level of understanding. Emile Durkheim considers that social rules/facts are linguistic, moral, religious, juridical etc., but they can not be transmitted or kept just by external pressure of the individual and not by biological internal lending (Piaget, 2006a).

Currently, the more children are exposed to distinct issues, the more they organized and reorganise their thinking, thoughts, attitudes etc. Perhaps, this explains the need for asking so many questions of clarification and understanding are needed.

The question still remains what are these messages that are being sent every day and how could a child evaluate them?! Aspects we will discuss in the next subchapter, in connection to what my daughter's habits, preferences, inclinations and how they reflect educational messages being transmitted.

4. What Do These Educational Messages Tell Us?! – A "Journey" of Selection

I have related my findings in regards how these educational messages result from distinct interconnection with my daughter's habits, preferences, emotions or inclinations, so we can clarify them and convert them into types of messages being communicated (positive or negative, conscientiously or unconsciously).

In the effort to obtain responses relating to the title at hand and to the metaphor concerning our "journey" of selection, I have made a list of possible educational messages that we will look into as they are discussed and investigated together with my daughter. Some of these messages, namely educational ones, that we will look into, reflect our day by day habits, preferences and inclinations, thus, the use of the term selection[8]: toys, television preferences, clothes, books, music and play friends etc., as means of edifying messages that are being transmitted.

If we look at toys, she noticeably plays with dolls, something more representative for girls not one doubts this. At the age of 6-8 years, pretend play is typical, the more complex scenes and play the longer they stay to play. At this stage they transform symbolic understanding and convert them into extended stories, stories that could be assumed from movies, books, music, television or Internet. Another aspect girls enjoy, especially at this age are the accessories, they are very fashion orientated and are interested in film characters that are commercialized by mass-media.

In harmony with a recent study elaborated by professor Sarah M. Coyne in colaboration with other authors (2016) *Pretty as a princess: Longitudinal effects of engagement with Disney princesses on gender stereotypes, body esteem, and prosocial behavior in children,* the analysis shows that girls who play with Disney Princess dolls at least once a week tend to be influenced, have different behavioural manifestation, perceive their self-esteem differently, are likely to formulate gender stereotype etc. The author considers that the stereotypical behaviour "is not bad in and of themselves", but they may in the long run affect their behavior (body self-esteem, school performance etc.). On the other hand we can take into account that we encounter other messages, related to values such as courage, beauty, kindness, anger etc. We, again, come across the idea mentioned previously and emphasized by the author as well, that we should talk to our children about the various cultural messages being transmitted being those desired or not.

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[8] A number of "messages" could be encountered daily, subsequently I have selected a few due to that fact that it is pretty difficult to name the all, so I have decide to examine and consider the most important ones that I have discovered throughout my discuss with my daughter.

Asking my daughter throughout time why she prefers a certain doll at the expense of another one, she argues that, for instance the Winx doll, "Bloom"[9], as see reports: *they* [dolls] *is full of power, has wings and she has magic.* Another doll that she frequently plays with as well, is "Elsa"[10] from the film Frozen, she argues that: *she has the power to throw ice, has a pretty dress and is the most prettiest of them all.* Without going in into the psychoanalysis on the topic, since it is not the objective of this paper, she as we can observe, portrait the following four main messages being reproduced in their role-playing: power, especially to make ice, ability to fly , have magical abilities and dress very nice compared even with their self. The results of another study, elaborated by Bazzini, D., Curtin, L., Joslin, S., Regan, S., & Martz, D. *Do animated Disney characters portray and promote the beauty–goodness stereotype?* (2010) show that, in some Disney films, "attractive characters are portrayed as being more morally virtuous and less aggressive and as achieving more positive life outcomes than unattractive characters". One can only point out that although, moral values and aspects are represented within these films, unconscious values could be depicted such as, not playing with a peer who does not look nice or that a peer who is aggressive does not have moral values without taking into consideration other factors (certain frustrations accumulated, the impossibility to express his/her feelings, family problems etc.) (Bazzin, D., Curtin L. Bazzini, D., Curtin, L., Joslin, S., Regan, S., & Martz, D., 2010, p. 20).

Another aspect nonetheless important and is very present in my daughter's playing habits and preferences are drawing. As we will notice below (Fig. 1. and 2.), she usually draws her two favourite characters,"Winx" and "Elsa". As we can notice, they portrait power, very colour full, reflects the possibility to fly and with a positive attitude (see the big smile on her face):

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[9] The character ""Bloom", is the Fairy of the Dragon Flame. She has fair skin tone, red waist-length hair and cyan blue eyes. Her character portrays a person who tries to help her friends and is known for generosity, bravery, loyally, strong, and optimistic way of being, yet she is a bit stubborn, insecure and can sometimes be quite impulsive, causing her to never back down from a challenge or obstacle. As well, Bloom has a strong sense of justice (for more information see, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Winx_Club_characters).
[10] The character "Elsa" or "Queen Elsa of Arendelle" (also known as "Snow Queen") has the ability to create ice and snow (for more information see, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elsa (Disney).

Fig. 1. The drawing of Winx

Fig. 2. The drawing of Elsa

From a psychological point of view, the key factors that are very persistent in these drawing, as we noticed, are power, magic and the ability to release something… fire or ice etc. The interpretation of the drawings does not make the objective of this paper, so we will not go into too much details and examination about them. Piaget (2005) explains that "magic" is the reproduction of symbolism of an action that resonates within itself and with the magical gesture from something given symbolically. In the Preoperational stage, semiotic functions are outline in the children's ability to engage in several different activities such as drawing and recall memory which are differentiated by signifier systems and in turn are

essential for symbolic representation. Children at this level of development adopt a subjective view, rather than an objective one, assuming that everyone understand what they are communicating or addressing.

The dolls she prefers are apparently in many cases linked to her other preferences, such as, animated movies, music, books and playmates, aspects which are reflected in children's childhood and we will look into briefly.

Both movies, cartoons or musical, have an impact on the audience by portraying a mood, a behavior or even an event, aspects that can leave a mark or an impression, especially at a younger age. Again without going into too much depth on the topics, according to Stuart Fischoff (2005) the role of the music within the films have the following major functions for the audience. Provides a sense of narrative continuity; 2. Reinforces formal and narrative unity; 3. Communicates elements of the setting; 4. Underlines the psychological states of characters; 5. Establishes an overall emotional tone or mood or a film or scene; 6. Can be an identification of or signature of a character. In other words, a film, cartoons or musicals can be very much influential, positively or negatively, consciously or unconsciously, by the music foreseen within these, starting from emotions (happy, sad, scared, conflictual etc.) to the connotation (understanding the role of each character or the scenes in themselves). Thus, we could grasp the uses of imagination, fantasy, judgement in her play (Fischoff, 2005, p. 24) .

Reflecting a little on the role of "reading for pleasure"[11] and even though my daughter cannot read fluently on her own, the need for it, in Guthrie and Wigfield opinion (2000) is essential for increasing the development of personal, social, economic and civic skills, connected with that express a lot of emotions, behaviours, habits etc. Looking again at what my daughter agrees on reading for pleasure, noticeable she prefers those that are connected to fairs or mermaids, aspects that relate to the imaginary, make-believe, critical thinking that to questions, such as: "why don't we fly or have tails?!" (Guthrie & Wigfiled opinion, as cited in Clark & Rumbold, 2006).

Another variable that I have considered in my analysis, are her playmates, girls with who she prefers to play. Usually, she likes to be around girls, but she'll play with boys as well, who are calm, listen to one another, which enjoy the same activities etc. She argues that her choice with whom she prefers to play reflects clearly children who send positive behaviour, rather than negative ones: *some girls are very aggressive, they want me to do whatever they want and they don't consider what I want.* As we already know, pre-schoolers tend to interact and engage with children with whom they feel comfortable; they make their own selection according to their beliefs, principals or views.
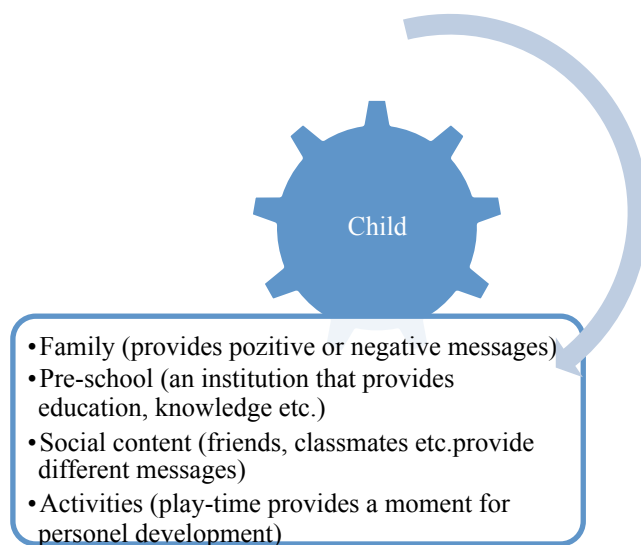
5. Conclusion

Children understand much more they can really express… and so our "journey" is almost to a finish and although this paper strives to look into daily basically educational messages "seen through a child's eye", the main conclusion that could result from this analysis is that these messages are "hic et nunc", but more importantly how we explain what is being filtered in one child's mind, what is being sent, and how to understand the, become more a less an important issue for today, but for tomorrow as

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[11] "Reading motivation" according to Guthrie & Wigfield (2000) is a multifaceted construct that includes reading goals, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, self-efficacy and social motivation for reading (cf. Clark, C. and Kate Rumbold, K. (2006) *Reading for pleasure a research overview.* National Literacy Trust November, p. 14).

well. However, the present article could not comprehend all aspects of symbolic means, the need for understanding various messages, especial those that reflect our educational comprehension, are not free of contradictions, difficulties and tensions, but at the same time, they offers a huge potential, by providing in general an important resource for our society in general (children who are polite, who understand tasks, who portrait value and common sense etc.) – are just some of the reflection questions stressed in this "journey".

To sum up and breakdown these analyses into a diagram, by taking into account the track of conveying these "educational messages", it could look as such:

- Family (provides pozitive or negative messages)
- Pre-school (an institution that provides education, knowledge etc.)
- Social content (friends, classmates etc.provide different messages)
- Activities (play-time provides a moment for personel development)

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