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# **GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE**

carried out within the Erasmus+ project

## **ART THERAPY FOR AUTISM**

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# GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE

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## I. The European development of our school

director Nedelcu Gabriela



Gymnasium Special School Pașcani had and has among its long-term and short-term strategic objectives institutional development based on the development and implementation of partnership and school education projects in the European space, Leonardo da Vinci and ERASMUS + projects. One of the strategic development targets of our school for the coming years is **ensuring the increase in quality in education for all fields and all indicators from the periodic evaluation standards of pre-university education units** by developing and capitalizing on professional skills, including digital skills for 90% of the teaching staff and teaching assistant of the school, by participating in training courses and carrying out exchanges of good practices with other organizations and special/inclusive schools in the European Union implementing ERASMUS + projects in the next 4 years.

The choice of this strategic target was substantiated by the special results obtained through the implementation of projects that significantly contributed to ensuring the European dimension of the school. A major impact was reflected in the professional development of teachers, which led to a significant increase in the quality of the educational and therapeutic act, to the diversification of the range of modern methods and techniques of educational and therapeutic intervention. The participation of teachers in these European projects contributed a lot to their professional development because they ensured a professional environment for collaboration and exchange of experience, to partnerships with other teachers from the European space and to professional training activities, together with colleagues from various countries

European. Getting to know the education systems of other European countries, learning modern intervention techniques contributed to global institutional development. All the developed projects offered pedagogical tools that integrated the new technologies in the learning process, the knowledge of countries and partners, the possibility of involvement in joint educational, therapeutic and research activities.

Another significant result of these projects was the transnational, multicultural cooperation between partner schools, organizations involved in education and training, students, teaching staff, etc. International experience, the development of partnerships, intercultural knowledge and communication, reporting to European education and training standards are effective ways of promoting the European dimension in education.

Starting with the implementation of the first Leonardo da Vinci project "Vocational education of teachers who work with children with special needs" and until now when we are completing this ERASMUS + "Art Therapy for Autism" project, we can characterize this period as **the years of openness and performance** of students and the teachers because we managed to increase the quality of the didactic and therapeutic act, the promotion rate increased, and the school dropout rate decreased due to the transfer of good educational practices and the knowledge of European education systems. We also managed to set up several workshops (the kitchen laboratory, the pottery workshop, the multisensory stimulation room) and offer the children new and modern therapeutic intervention techniques, methods and techniques that we learned in the European space within the projects ERASMUS+ rolled out.

Another important role of these projects was the facilitation of cultural exchanges, knowledge of popular values and traditions, identities and lifestyles of the European partners. The mobilities also contributed to the personal development of those involved, through the development of communication

skills, both from the perspective of using a foreign language, and from a social perspective, of self-management skills.

Considering all these aspects and taking into account that our school received ERASMUS + Accreditation in the field of School Education, we are confident that the European path and route of our school will continue and complete the European dimension of our unit.

## II. About the Erasmus+ program

prof. Munteanu Sînziana

Erasmus+ is the European Union's program in the fields of education, training, youth and sport for the period



2021-2027. Education, training, youth and sport are key areas that support citizens in their personal and professional development. High-quality, inclusive education and training, as well as informal and non-formal learning, ultimately equip young people and participants of all ages with the skills and competences necessary for their meaningful participation in democratic society, for intercultural understanding and for successful market transition work. Building on the success of the program in 2014-2020, Erasmus+ is strengthening its efforts to multiply the opportunities offered to a greater number of participants and a greater variety of organizations, focusing on its qualitative impact and contributing to the creation of more favorable societies inclusive and more cohesive, greener and digitally ready.

It is necessary for European citizens to be better endowed with knowledge, skills and competences needed in a society that is changing at a dynamic rhythm and is increasingly mobile, multicultural and digital. Staying in another country to study, learn and work should become the standard, and the opportunity to learn two more languages in addition to the mother language should be offered to everyone. The program is a key component supporting the objectives of the European Education Area, the Digital Education Action Plan (2021-2027), the EU Youth Strategy and the European Union Work Plan for Sport (2021-2024).

In order to improve the qualitative impact of its actions and to ensure equal opportunities, the program will address, more effectively, to a larger

number of people of different ages, coming from diverse cultural, social and economic backgrounds. The main objective of the program is to make it more accessible to people with fewer opportunities, including people with disabilities and migrants, as well as EU citizens living in remote regions or facing socioeconomic difficulties. Thus, the program will also encourage its participants, especially young people, to get involved and learn to participate in civil society, raising awareness of the common values of the European Union.

The program can make a significant contribution by boosting innovation and reducing Europe's knowledge, skills and competence gap.

Another challenge concerns the generalizing trends in Europe, namely the limited participation in democratic life, as well as the low level of knowledge and awareness of European issues and their impact on the lives of all European citizens. Strengthening European identity and young people's participation in democratic processes is a matter of vital importance for the future of the European Union. This can also be addressed through non-formal learning activities aimed at improving the skills and competences of young people and promoting active citizenship.

In line with the European Union's priorities for the sustainable development of its economy, projects should be designed from an ecological perspective and include ecological practices in all their components. Organizations and stakeholders should adopt an ecological approach when designing their projects, which will encourage them to discuss and learn about environmental issues, make them reflect on what can be done at their level and help them to find alternative greener ways of implementing their activities.

Supporting and facilitating transnational and international cooperation between organizations in the fields of education, training, youth and sport is essential for equipping people with more key skills, reducing the early school leaving rate and recognizing skills acquired through formal, informal and non-

formal learning. All of this facilitates the flow of ideas and the dissemination of best practices and expertise, as well as the development of digital capabilities, thus contributing to high-quality education while strengthening social cohesion. The Erasmus+ program is one of the most visible success stories of the European Union. It is based on the achievements of over 30 years of European programs in the fields of education, training, youth and sport, and the partnerships created within it can have both an intra-European and an international dimension.

The Erasmus+ Program Guide is developed in accordance with the Erasmus+ annual work programs adopted by the European Commission and can therefore be revised to reflect the defined priorities and lines of action.

### III. The history of European programs of Gymnasium Special School Pașcani

prof. Munteanu Sînziana

*Leonardo da Vinci project  
“Vocational Education of Teachers  
Working With Children with  
Deficiencies”*



*Leonardo da Vinci –  
Mobility project” Skills Training  
and Professional development of  
teachers working with children  
with disabilities”*

*Erasmus+ 2014-1-RO01-K101-  
001402 -European dimension of  
school achievement through the  
integration of European models in  
the schooling of children with  
disabilitie*

ȘCOALA GIMNAZIALĂ SPECIALĂ PAȘCANI

ȘCOALA DE PAȘCANI

Realizarea dimensiunii europene a școlii prin integrarea de modele europene în școlarizarea copilului cu dizabilități  
2014-1-RO01-K101-001402

Erasmus+

Coordonator: Școala Gimnazială Specială Pașcani  
Parteneri: Progetto Crescere-Italia,  
Cervantes Training-Spania,  
Edukarjala-Finlanda

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PROGETTO CRESCERE

eduKarjala  
Smile with Us :-)

2014 - 2016



*Erasmus+ "AUTISTIC SUN"  
2014-1-TR01-KA101-005082 -  
jobshadowin*

*Erasmus+ „Creating Positive Behaviors”–  
2019-1-TR01-KA229-077568\_3*



*Erasmus+ 2021-1-RO01-KA122-SCH-  
000035796 - "Say YES to digital  
education, NO to school dropout!"*

Spune DA educației digitale,  
NU abandonului școlar!

*Erasmus+ KA201-2020-1-RO01-KA201-  
080184- " Art Therapy for Autism"*



## IV. What is therapy through art?

prof. Munteanu Sînziana

”Art Therapy adopts the idea that art is a symbolic means of communication and expresses personality, emotions and other aspects of the human experience” – Cathy Malchiodi



”Art Therapy is a profession in the field of mental health in which clients, accompanied by an art therapist, using artistic materials, through the creative process and through the final product, explore their feelings, reconcile emotional conflicts, develop self-awareness, manage behavior and addictions, develop social skills, finds new perspectives to look at reality, reduces anxiety and increases self-esteem.” – American Art Therapy Association

At the end of the 40s, simultaneously in England and in the USA, Adrian Hill, artist and Margaret Naumberg, psychologist, used the expression "art therapy" to describe their work. If Adrian Hill discovered the benefits of art therapy by experimenting directly through drawing and painting while recovering from tuberculosis, Margaret Naumberg, in her practice, saw the images created as a form of symbolic communication between patient and therapist.

The two pioneers of art therapy, most likely due to the differences in previous training as well as the way in which they discovered the therapeutic virtues of art therapy, had different perspectives: Hill promoted art as therapy while Naumberg spoke about the use of art in therapy.

The two considered that the value of art therapy consists in "the complete absorption of the mind (and the fingers) which allows the release of creative energy, often inhibited in the patient" (Adrian Hill) respectively "the release of the unconscious through the means of spontaneous artistic expression" (Margaret Naumberg).



These initial differences generated the subsequent development of art therapy in two different ways of perception and practice: the use of art as therapy and (psycho)therapy through art. The first perspective emphasizes the healing virtues of art, while the second promotes the importance of the therapeutic relationship that forms between the therapist, the client and the latter's artistic product.

The difference between an art therapy session and a classical (verbal) therapy session is that in art therapy there are three important elements: You, the Therapist and the Work, the emphasis being on the work done and not on the dialogue between the therapist and the client although this is also very important.

The goal is not for the created work to be beautiful or to be clear in what it represents, so you don't need to have a talent for drawing to participate in art therapy sessions, but that through drawing, using imagination and metaphor, we can bring new perspectives to solve the situations we face.



Art Therapy starts from the idea that the soul speaks through images and that it is often easier to express our emotions through colors and abstract shapes than through words. Also through creation we find emotional relief in the conflicting situations

we face.

Art therapy is a method of psychotherapy in which different forms of art are used: painting, drawing, collage, modeling, etc. with the aim of improving the person's condition. Art therapy offers emotional support for people who have various ailments or have experienced various traumas, reduces stress, helps unlock creativity and promotes personal development.

Art therapy is a form of expressive therapy that uses creative activities such as drawing, painting or sculpture to improve physical, mental and emotional well-being. Art therapy is often used to reduce stress or anxiety, explore complex feelings, manage side effects, and improve quality of life.

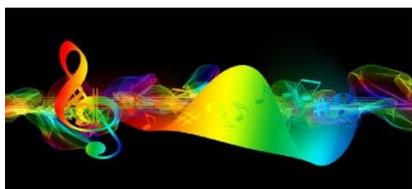
Music, art and dance are the main expressions for this variety of therapy.

Music therapy can be a mixture of playing instruments, listening to music and singing.

Dance therapy uses dance and movement. It makes sense that it's so effective - loads of endorphins are released into your body when you shake it up!

Art therapy can be a mix of drawing, coloring, painting, sculpting, and pretty much anything else you can think of as artistic.

It can be difficult for children to communicate their thoughts and emotions. Art therapy can provide a way for children to express themselves. Children are naturally creative, and painting a picture can be easier than talking about complex or scary topics. Creating artwork can also increase a child's



sense of control at a time when so much is out of control.

Art therapy can help children process struggles or find a positive way to look at their situations.

All forms of art therapy have "as object of activity" man, his moods and emotions, his integrated development. Depending on the person's predispositions, it may resonate more with one or another of the artistic methods used. Art therapy influences several spheres, in addition to activating and influencing cognitive processes.

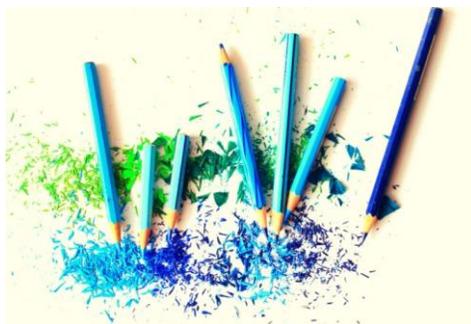
Art therapy can also be used successfully for children with various other problems of language, thinking or various pathologies, with adults with various problems of interaction, relationship and expression. In this way, art therapy can easily be included among classical psychotherapies.

Art therapy consists of four particular therapies: **melotherapy** (therapy performed with the help of music), **drama therapy** (therapy performed with the help of dramatic, theatrical expression), **therapy through drawing, painting, modeling and collage** and **therapy through movement and dance**.

According to Preda (2003), the main effects of art therapy are:

- stimulating creativity and a creative way of life;
- restoration of confidence in one's own strength, in the ability to create something
- orienting unconscious processes through creative action, with the aim of obtaining an improvement in the emotional state.

Compensation through art is a very important resource for people with disabilities. Through art therapy, children can access their resources in a non-formal way, they can maximize their creativity, spontaneity and abilities to develop symbolic play.



## V. About art therapy and children with special needs

prof. Barbir Andrei

Change and evolution in education does not come by itself, you have to want more to progress even if it means breaking down certain barriers. In the Pașcani Special Secondary School, there has always been the need to offer the best educational services to the children it works with, and this has also materialized in various projects that have been developed at the school level, projects with external funding as well as European projects.

I would like to review some of them: projects with extra-budgetary funding such as "*Special artists*" and "*I feel and smile like you*" funded by the Community Foundation and MOL Romania through which we provide art therapy services through the pottery method and multisensory integration therapy; the "*Special Cookss*" project financed by the SOROS Foundation through which we diversified the school's range of services with occupational therapy and many others.

It all started nine years ago, and like all good and beautiful things it started from an idea, the idea of establishing a pottery workshop where children with special needs can learn to work with clay. Pottery is an occupation that we Romanians inherit from the depths of time, but at the same time it was and is one of the most favorable ways to materialize artistic qualities. In terms of shape, proportions, decoration and color, vessels of any type have, in addition to practical purposes, artistic virtues arising from the science, inventiveness and imagination of the folk craftsman, from the mastery of techniques and craftsmanship.



Art therapy is based on the recognition that fundamental thoughts and emotions, which come from the unconscious, find expression in images rather than words. There is no right or wrong way to express emotions through art therapy. You don't have to excel at painting, modeling or sculpting. You just need to feel free and express yourself freely. And who can do that better than children. And the art therapy workshop is the place where children express their emotions, feelings, fears and desires, therefore we believe that it is a valid enough reason to introduce children with special educational requirements to the world of modeling and pottery, regardless of their level development or why it can do.



Art therapy teaches children and adults alike, to express themselves, to give free rein to creativity. Whether it is art therapy through painting, modeling, play, theater or dance, the child learns to become himself, to express himself freely, to become confident in his own strengths, to communicate and relate, in a word, to be a child happy, being an opportunity for everyone to express themselves spontaneously and authentically, an experience that over time leads to personal fulfillment, emotional healing and profound transformation.

Modeling is a creative, relaxing activity that develops children's creative skills. By modeling we can represent a two- or three-dimensional object with the help of our hands or with modeling tools (sketches) or we can reproduce certain images or various objects.

Art therapy helps children discover themselves and express themselves more freely, but it also helps with relationships with others. Art therapy, especially modeling, also helps a lot in developing the vision of the three-

dimensional, putting the mind to the test and at the same time the challenge of creating a decorative or sculptural object. A child who has certain language barriers through artistic activities can open new ways of communication on the respective themes (favorite flower, favorite animal, etc.). The reduced conversational skills, the lack of initiation of group games, the lack of involvement of some of the children in competitive games, are improved by the activity of modeling in materials such as clay, plasticine or dough. Modeling is not only a way of self-knowledge and self-development, but also a means of communication and entering into a relationship with other people, by using clay as a common subject in the group.

The art therapy cabinet is the place where children express their emotions, feelings, fears and desires, therefore we believe that it is a valid enough reason to introduce children with special educational requirements to the world of pottery through the proposed optional curricula "*Special Artists*". This will be the place where free, spontaneous expression will be encouraged in a relaxed atmosphere where children will feel safe and protected.

- Through art therapy, the student with mental and associated disabilities better represents his body scheme, has better segmental and general dynamic coordination, acquires elements of laterality, has better static coordination - balance, perceptual-motor coordination (perception of space, rhythm and of own movements), and an increase in the speed of movements is observed.

- They can express their ideas more easily and initiate relational actions with those around them, without reservations and fears.

- Art therapy helps children with relationship and communication problems to initiate verbal and non-verbal contacts and offer help to their colleagues, stimulating their emotional and social maturation process.

- Art therapy helps the child to understand himself, to free himself from the anxieties accumulated by tensions and to develop interpersonal communication and relationship skills.

The contents of the categories of the activity of "Artistic-plastic education through the technique of pottery" present in the "Curriculum at the school decision for the Special Artists workshop":



- clay manipulation, its processing on the work table, preparation for processing on the potter's wheel;
- creating shapes from clay;
- the composition of spontaneous and elaborate forms, through various clay processing techniques using the potter's wheel or molds;
- identifying and using plastic language elements;
- applying colors using different techniques (brush, sponge, palm, sole, plugs, cloth, stamp, etc.);
- recognition exercises, association of primary colors;
- painting activities using primary/binary colors organized in the art therapy workshop;
- exercises to obtain the point through various techniques (sprinkling, the template, blowing with a straw);
- decorative treatment of ceramic surfaces using specific colors for baking or cold;
- exercises to complete the ceramic objects made.

## VI. Dance - therapy for students with SEN

prof. Plaiu Oana Monica

### Why dance?

Because dancing is an art that is addressed to all people regardless of age, regardless of physical or mental health. Because dancing means joy, release, energy, relaxation... Because dancing helps the body, mind and spirit. As a physical exercise, it helps to strengthen bones, improve the functions of muscles and joints, helps to burn calories, contributes to the strengthening and strengthening of health, to harmonious body development. Dancing improves cognitive function and memory. It favors learning choreographies that will be useful in different life situations: weddings, discos, other parties. Increases self-confidence and self-confidence. Forms and develops team, cooperative and competitive spirit. Dancing helps to relieve nervous tension, release stress, release negative emotions: anger, fear, hatred, etc. Moving with others at the same pace helps build relationships. Thanks to communication through movement, the child becomes more self-aware and more able to interact with others. Dance offers a suitable framework for collective experience of joys, to freely express feelings and desires, to strengthen friendship and cooperation, but also to discipline each child individually. Music helps the body produce more endorphins, relaxes and increases the feeling of happiness. For these



reasons, after a dance lesson, children are visibly more relaxed and smile even more. And the list could go on.

In the 2011/2012 school year, the pleasure and joy of dancing gave rise to the extracurricular educational project "Special

Dancers", a project that contributed and contributes to the creation of opportunities for communication, relationship, affirmation, valorization and

social integration of children with CES , to promote the school at local, county, national and international level.

A first objective of the project was and is the organization and running of the "Magic of Dance" school dance circle. Thus, every year, we started with the development of a program for the school circle, the approval of the circle program by the curriculum committee and the Iași County School Inspectorate and then its implementation. As framework objectives we proposed: influencing the healthy, correct and harmonious evolution of the body, developing the ability to receive the rhythm of a song, training and developing the skills and abilities to interpret a choreographic text in the rhythm of the music, training vocal interpretation skills, stimulating interest and motivation for practicing dance, stimulating expression through movement.

The school dance workshop addresses both children from the special school and their peers from mainstream schools. Thus we had Miron Costin Pașcani Theoretical High School, Valea Seacă Structura Conțești Technological High School, Valea Seacă High School and Nicolae Iorga Pașcani Economic High School as partners.

Weekly we organized 2 workshop activities, traditional dance and modern dance respectively.

The activities of the dance workshop took place in the festive hall of the Special School, in the festive hall of the Pașcani Children's Club and on the stage of the Pașcani Municipal House of Culture.



The children who attended the school dance workshop were put in the position to feel and understand the beauty of Romanian folk dances, to play them as authentically as possible, to preserve and promote them accompanied

by the appropriate costumes and the appropriate songs, which enhance their beauty and they harmonize perfectly.

Also, modern dance gave the children the opportunity to express themselves to pleasant, contemporary, trendy music and in a friendly environment. We approached our own styles of combining music with movement, harmonizing ballet, gymnastics and sports dance movements.

Within the school dance workshop, another proposed objective was to select children with "artistic skills" to form dance groups and prepare them to participate in celebrations, shows and competitions.

This is how the traditional dance troupes "Hora" and "Busuiocul" and the modern dance troupe "Iris" came into being.

"Hora" is made up of children from the Special School and it was affirmed at school celebrations, exchanges of experience and competitions organized at the level of special schools in the county.

"Busuiocul" and "Iris", were composed, over the years, of students from the Special School and volunteer students from other schools in the city and its surroundings, and it was born from the desire to overcome the boundaries of the special schools in the county and participate in The National Competition "Together for the Future" within the National Community Action Strategy.

In the nine school years of operation, after sustained work and with a desire for progress and affirmation, the traditional dance troupe "Busuiocul" and the dance troupe "Iris" went through the county (Iași) and regional phases of the National Competition "Together for the Future" (Piatra Neamț, Comănești, Negrești Vaslui, Pașcani, Botoșani, Comănești, Suceava, Iași) and proudly and professionally represented the N-E region of Moldova at the national stages of the competition (Craiova, Pitesti, Piatra Neamț, Galați, Brăila, Slatina, Sighetul Marmăției).

The results and feedback received at this contest mobilized and motivated them to participate in other contests and festivals, returning with prizes and trophies, increased their self-confidence and self-esteem, mobilized them to persevere and become better.

We took advantage of every trip to competitions, festivals or shows and we also organized a hike or excursion. This is how I discovered the Vorona Monastery, the Hurezu Monastery, the Cozia Monastery, the Curtea de Argeş Monastery, the Black Church, the Turkish Mosque in Constanţa, the Marine Museum, Transfăgăraşan, Lake Bâlea, Neamţ Citadel, Râşnov Citadel, Făgăraş Citadel, Bran Castle, Nămăeşi Monastery, Poenari Citadel, Peleş Palace, Babel and the Sphinx in the Bucegi Mountains, Ialomiţei Cave, Bolboci Dam, Vidraru Barge, Olt Valley, Danube, Black Sea, museums, Ceahlău and Făgăraş Mountains ridges, Maramureş, Bucovina.

We had the pleasant surprise and joy that good people rewarded our work by supporting us financially at every trip or supporting us in the purchase of audio equipment and popular costumes, thus improving the didactic-material base of the school.

It seems that the dance not only ennobled the soul and beautified the body of the dancers but also delighted those who watched us, an additional reason to continue the "Special Dancers" project until the restrictions are imposed in March 2020.

The coronavirus came with the unknown, insecurity, uncertainties, distancing, limited access to education and therapies and total lack of access to ... dance. *Get caught in the chorus..., dance with your partner....etc have been replaced by keep your distance..., don't touch..., don't stand next to..., stay in your seat..., just follow the signs. ..., it's not allowed....And the frequent question was: When do we dance again?*

We resumed dancing only with students from special education...shy...after a break of 2 years...during which, in the absence of an educational and therapeutic alternative that would positively influence the emotional and personal course, a child who came from a bad social environment he fell prey to its influences, the temptations of inappropriate surroundings, ending up in situations of juvenile delinquency and even on the verge of dropping out of school. For the same child, from the 1st grade to the 5th grade, dance and everything that involved his mobilization in these activities, offered him alternatives to the harmful environment from which he came, kept him in an emotional balance, offered him alternatives of personal valorization, of pride, of increasing confidence in him, of sustained work and commensurate rewards, gave him friends and opportunities to discover new people and wonderful places in the country.

“Let us read and dance; these two pastimes will never harm the world.”

(Voltaire)

## VII. Art therapy through modeling

prof. Mocanu Verginica

Tranquility, calmness can be installed through modeling. During the work a transformation takes place: inner conflicts are metamorphosed through the complete absorption of mind and fingers – as stated by Adrian Hills, the



father of art therapy. This transformation also happened in the autistic children in my class. I have noticed in the last 3 years that they often prefer modeling as their first morning activity. R.M., 9 years old, is a child with infantile autism, who presents stereotypes (imitates writing words in the air, on the floor, then writes a lot on

papers or on the blackboard - predominantly English or Romanian words/names memorized from TV, or strings of numbers, then claps very loudly). If at first the little boy preferred to spread the plasticine, without giving it a shape and then mixing all the colors, managing to make a brownish-gray lump, gradually he accepted to use one color at a time, to model and give shape to an object, to use work tools, forms, use different techniques and create works that represented



familiar objects: sun, flowers, cars, etc. Favorite were the characters from the stories (the dwarfs from "Snow White and the 7 Dwarfs", the rooster from "The 2 Money Bag", all the characters from "The Musicians of Bremen"). Of course, he could not do these works alone. It required teacher coordination, tandem work or team work with another classmate. During these works he became more aware of what he had to do: for example, with the dwarfs, he realized that he had to make 7 hats, 7 beards, 7 noses, 7 pairs of hands and feet each, count them, notice where else to put it. I did not aim to give them the perfect shape,

but to become more attentive, more aware, to work with pleasure, to increase their ability to concentrate.

I also noticed that M.M., 11 years old, another child with autism, at the time of work, does not have the ability to finish the work, the activity being often interrupted by stereotypes. The encouragement and help



provided led to the completion and awareness of what he had achieved, to the consolidation of knowledge in different areas and to sensory and psychomotor development.

I can say that art therapy through modeling has a wide applicability and contributes to the rehabilitation, stimulation and development of children with disorders on the autistic spectrum.

## VIII. Expression through art therapy

prof. Mocanu Verginica

**Each child with autism is a unique individual with unique abilities, strengths, and unique needs.** Music therapy is very helpful for children with autism. From classroom experience I can say: children love music. Autistic children like sounds, they like melodic lines, they like lyrics/songs (even if we see some of them with their hands over their ears). I experienced in the 2nd grades this school year the degree of attraction of a musical instrument on children with autism. I used instruments such as: the xylophone, the drum, the triangle, the tambourine, the darabana, the mini-piano.



Thus, the M.D. student, 9 years and 7 months, pervasive developmental disorder of the autistic type, nonverbal, hypersensitive, put her hands over her ears when someone else used an instrument, but was no longer bothered by sounds when she herself used that instrument . I noticed that she also wants to experiment, even if she doesn't show, that she is careful when she executes another person. I can say that this student's tolerance for unpleasant stimuli has increased and that the desire for experimentation and involvement has increased. This little girl played the xylophone individually, imitating what we had rehearsed together in the group several times.

I also found that the student R. M., 9 years old, with infantile, verbal autism, during a musical activity does not manifest himself, does not sing with others in front of an audience. He seems disoriented in group activities, he doesn't seem to pay attention, he wants to do something else. But later, around the classroom or at home, he



starts humming the songs. I found that he remembered the melody, the lyrics. At home he records on his phone and sends the song to the class group. In this way, I noticed the need to be listened to, to be appreciated in a special way in this child. By listening and appreciating him, they increased his self-esteem, motivation.

Likewise, other autistic children, even non-verbal, at activities with several people, such as celebrations, performances, even if they do not sing, they enjoy in their own way: clapping, jumping/jumping, swaying, beating the rhythm, they also want to say something on the microphone. They thus become more aware of what is happening around them, their level of socialization increase, their desire for communication/expression and, of course, their self-confidence increases.

Although each child's experience was different, through music therapy, emotional and sensory regulation was achieved and the impact was positive on the overall behavior of the autistic child.



## IX. Ebru - "Dance of water and colors" - from art to therapy

prof. Vîncă Ana Maria

In the mobility in Mersin, Turkey, as part of the Erasmus + project, "Art Therapy for Autism" I saw and experienced, in a workshop, the water painting technique and I was immediately impressed by the way I felt from the moment which I started my "work of art" and until, with emotions, I transferred the model to the sheet of paper provided by the hosts.



I know I didn't leave Turkey well either and I started looking for information about what it would entail to practice this type of activity in school.

First I looked for information on the origins of this occupation that the Turks raised to the level of art.



*Ebru* is the art of drawing on water; it appeared for the first time in the city of Bukhara in Turkistan, later spreading throughout the Ottoman Empire.

In 2014, Turkey registered "Ebru - the Turkish Art of Marbling" on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. Light green, red and yellow is popular in Ebru. In Turkey, many women practice this art, which strengthens the role of women in society.

Nowadays, the paintings made by Ebru art are framed and used most often to decorate the walls of rooms, printed on various materials or draperies, while in the beginning, they were used to decorate valuable books.

Then I looked for information about the necessary materials and about the material variants that can be found on the Romanian market. To work in the Ebru technique, a liquid base, pigments and various tools are needed.

The liquid base for painting must be dense and thick so that the paint does not sink. It can be done by combining water with a thickener. This



component can be produced in the form of a powder or liquid extract, which requires further dilution according to the instructions on the package. As a rule, first the purchased thickener is thoroughly mixed in water for 10 minutes. Then the mixture is left to swell for 5-10 hours, until it has the consistency of a paste. Professionals prefer a powder called kitre, which is derived from Hevea, which is a

plant.

Ebru brushes are created on the basis of horse hair. For creativity, both a simple brush and a brush-like one are suitable. To prevent the paints from mixing with each other, each has its own tool prepared. Special combs, which are several pins fixed on a flat base, allow creating symmetrical patterns or creating a background. Toothpicks, matches or sushi sticks can also be used to create fine details.

The finished drawing is covered with a sheet of matte paper for 10-15 seconds, after which the painting is transferred to the base. At the end of the lesson, the sheet is removed from the surface and allowed to dry.

Starting from the fact that an art unites people around it, I thought that practicing this technique in our school will help students express their

emotions, accept each other more easily, collaborate to create a product ending that will bring them joy.

Therefore, I preferred the purchase of a kit for water painting, because it is easier to combine and use the materials, in the absence of experience. Many of the sites were out of stock, a sign that these products are new on the market but highly sought after, due to the new and beneficial experience they provide.



The city's bookstores or supply stores, on the other hand, did not have such kits.

I also studied what benefits this art could bring, which once practiced turns into therapy (arttherapy):

- ⊗ Developing creativity and stimulating cognitive functions;
- ⊗ Discovery and valorization of skills;
- ⊗ Development of fine motor skills;
- ⊗ Increasing personal esteem;
- ⊗ Hand-eye coordination;
- ⊗ Expressing feelings of joy, involvement in the creative process by associating emotion with color.

I recently managed to purchase the kits, with the support of the school management, and I decided that first I need to prepare the basic solution and experiment myself, before planning the activity with the students.

Therefore, the classes will take place in the arrotherapy workshop at the school, and will start with the presentation of the materials and the technique, then with the demonstration and the working steps, and finally, the technique of printing the painting on water on a sheet or on various materials .

Each teacher will be free to experiment and use the materials so that as many students as possible can benefit from this form of art therap

## **X. Art Therapy for autism**

prof. Barbir Andrei

Years of experience and observing the benefits of art therapy in children with special needs, led us to try to write a project that would see the benefits of different forms of art therapy in children with autism spectrum disorders.



This is how the Erasmus+ KA201 Strategic Partnerships project was born with the title of Art Therapy for Autism project no: 2020-1-RO01-KA201-080184, which will be carried out for a period of two years, a project that will have a total budget of 164640 euro and with partners from Turkey, Greece, Poland, Macedonia and Latvia.

Project financed by the National Agency for Community Programs in the Field of Education and Vocational Training (ANPCDEFP) <https://www.anpcdefp.ro>, a public institution that was designated to implement the community programs "Lifelong Learning" (LLP), " Youth in Action" (YiA) and Erasmus Mundus during 2007-2013.

Through this strategic partnership project in the field of school education, we want to bring added value to special education due to the development, transfer of innovative practices, as well as the implementation of joint initiatives with the aim of promotion, cooperation, mutual learning and the exchange of experience at the European level.

This project is addressed to teachers who work with children with autism and wants to increase the quality of educational services in special education provided by specialists in the field to children with autism through the use of various forms of art therapy, the transfer and development of knowledge and skills specific to the field.

The present project wants to address a specific training need identified among teachers who work with young people with ASD, a topic that has not been addressed in any European project so far, namely how we use different forms of art therapy in educational activities with children with autism spectrum disorders, what are the results of their use and how can we adapt our educational activity to include these forms of therapy as well as possible.

In order to see on which levels changes are registered following the intervention by using one form of art therapy or another, we will create together with the partners in the project and apply during a school year an evaluation grid specially made to measure the impact of different forms of art therapy for children with autism spectrum disorders.

The partner schools and institutions within this project are educating at primary, secondary and high school level children with mental deficiency, disorders from the autistic spectrum, associated disorders, former partners from the old Leonardo project as well as new ones.

- Posebno osnovno uciliste "d-r Zlatan Sremec " - Macedonia, Skopje;
- Eidiko Epaggelmatiko Gymnasio Kavalas, Greece, Kavala;
- Valmieras pilsetas pasvaldibas Valmieras Gaujas krasta vidusskola attistibas centrs Latvia, Valmeira
- Stowarzyszenie Wyjątkowe Serce, Poland, Olsztyn
- Mersin büyükşehir belediyesi özel eğitim uygulama okulu ii. kademe, Turkey, Mersin.



At the end of the project, we want all the teaching staff in our school and in the partner institutions in this project to gain more experience in using various forms of art therapy and to succeed in adapting them to the specifics of children with autism spectrum disorders, thus increasing the quality services offered to these children.



WYJĄTKOWE SERCE  
STOWARZYSZENIE



## **XI. The methodology and timetable of the research carried out within the Erasmus+ project. Project Art Therapy for Autism, 2020-1-RO01-KA201-080184**

The research aims to identify the benefits of using a form of art therapy for children with autism in primary and secondary education.

An experimental group and a control group will be formed, made up of children diagnosed with autism from the Pascani Special Secondary School who will benefit from initial and final evaluation respectively.

The evaluation grid created within the partnership of the Erasmus+ Project Art Therapy for Autism project will be applied and used, both for the initial evaluation and for the final evaluation.

The experimental group will benefit from a form of intervention in the form of modeling therapy (plasticine, clay, etc.).

Each child in the experimental group will work 1-2 hours a week.

The teaching staff who will work on this research will use and adapt the exercises presented in the Special Artists CDS

The way of working is 1 to 1, preferably in the Art Therapy Workshop or in a secure setting.

### The timetable of the research:

- ❖ 1<sup>st</sup> of June 2022 – 31<sup>st</sup> of August 2022 - Curricular development.
- ❖ 1<sup>st</sup> of September 2022 – 20<sup>th</sup> of September 2022 - Establishing the participating teachers, establishing the target group and carrying out the initial evaluation.



<p>1.4. Development of orientation, organization and spatial structuring capacities</p>	<p>in various places in the school;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Exercises to make a mock-up of the art therapy cabinet;</li> <li>- Exercises to organize the work space by selecting the work materials from the shelves, as indicated by the teacher, etc.;</li> <li>- Exercises to make a mock-up of the art therapy cabinet;</li> <li>- Work space organization exercises by selecting work materials from the shelves, as indicated by the teacher, etc.;</li> </ul>
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## 2. Practicing basic hand gestures and motor coordination

<i>Specific skills</i>	<i>Examples of learning activities</i>
<p>2.1. Development of fine motor skills and precision of movements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Exercises - game to warm up the hands: "Let's play the piano!" "The rain is coming" "The wind is blowing!"</li> <li>- Elementary exercises of breaking/gluing/bending/shaping/coiling/twisting/moulding/stringing/lacing/cutting/knotting/joining;</li> <li>- Modeling activities of a favorite object: fruit, vegetable, animal, etc.</li> <li>- Exercises to touch the left ear with the right hand, the left knee with the left hand, etc.</li> <li>- Stringing, knotting, ordering game exercises of some objects indicated by the teacher;</li> <li>- Exercises to train and stimulate the fine muscles of the hands/fingers: using the</li> </ul>

<p>2.2 Training - practicing eye-motor and bimanual coordination</p>	<p>thumb and forefinger to transfer different objects from one place to another (balls, corks, wooden cubes, etc.), using some utensils ( tongs) to move objects from one container to another, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Familiarization exercises with the work material (name, touch, expression of characteristics) and work tools (what is it called, what is it used for, at what stage?);</li> </ul>
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**3. Knowledge and use of working techniques with different materials and utensils specific to art therapy through pottery;**

<i>Specific skills</i>	<i>Examples of learning activities</i>
<p>3.1 To know and differentiate work materials and tools, to know and apply rules for their use;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Exercises in naming materials and work tools (plasticine, clay, watercolors, etc.) and reporting the characteristics and transformations of materials during work;</li> <li>- Exercises to observe some rules for the correct use of materials and work tools (not to put plasticine / clay in the mouth, nose, ears, not to put dirty hands in the eyes);</li> <li>- Exercises to maintain order at the work table/work space</li> <li>- Free expression exercises, without a given topic, using the work material indicated by the teacher;</li> <li>- Game exercises to identify the characteristics of the work material: What color is the clay? What can I make from a ball of clay? What is the smell of clay?,</li> </ul>

<p>3.2 To become familiar with clay or other modeling materials;</p>	<p>etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Exercises to make some elements of your choice, based on exhibits already existing in the cabinet</li> <li>- Exercises of stretching the clay in the form of a sheet, using the rolling pin and then cutting it using different shapes;</li> <li>- Exercises using templates with different shapes;</li> <li>- Exercises to obtain different effects, using tools from the workshop: templates, molds, templates, string, etc.</li> </ul>
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#### 4. Making simple products

<i>Specific skills</i>	<i>Examples of learning activities</i>
<p>4.1 To perform simple, then complex movements according to the teacher's demonstration;</p> <p>4.2 To make simple products according to the given model</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Exercises in using the modeling material according to the teacher's explanations and demonstration (stretching the clay with the help of the palms, rolling pin, bending, crumbling, cutting, extruding, etc.);</li> <li>- Exercises to create objects resulting from the joining of extruded clay threads, the use of templates, stamps;</li> <li>- Decoration exercises of the obtained products (painting, sculpture, etc.);</li> <li>- Exercises to carry out some works that involve the use of previously studied methods, then encouraging cross-evaluation between students</li> </ul>

### LEARNING CONTENTS

### **1. The art therapy cabinet**

- Placement of the cabinet in the school space
- Materials and utensils;
- Complex learning activities;

### **2. Basic perceptual-motor structures**

- Body plan and laterality;
- Color - shape - size;
- Orientation, organization and spatial structuring.

### **3. Work techniques, materials and work tools**

- Work tools (brush, scissors, molds, planchet, ruler, tape measure, template/pattern, drawing kits, etc.) and their utility;
- Materials (glass, glue, clay, wax, plaster, play dough, seeds, paper of different sizes and thicknesses, crepe / glossy paper, cardboard, blocks, plasticine, beads, thread, string, wool, leaves, dried flowers, shells , snails, chestnuts, acorns, wire, wood, tinfoil, sticks, eggshells, ribbons, leather);
- Manipulation actions and knowledge of the objects in the art therapy cabinet;
- Working techniques (breaking / gluing / bending / collage / modeling / coiling / twisting / molding / stringing / lacing / cutting / knotting / splicing / assembling / painting, printing, etc.).

### **4. Simple products (decorative or useful)**

- Stages/operations of making some simple products



## XII. The results of the research – ”Art Therapy for Autism”



*Scientific research on the benefits of Art Therapy for students with autism*

**School name: Stowarzyszenie Wyjątkowe Serce, Olsztyn, Poland**

### **BENEFICIARY**

*Name* : J. G.

*Grade*: 1st A

*Diagnosis*: multiple disabilities: atypical autism, moderate intellectual disability. The student has difficulty controlling emotions, verbal hyperactivity. It happens that he reacts impulsively. His behaviour often disrupts the course of classes. He has difficulty understanding instructions. The student shows difficulties in making decisions. He is unable to independently choose from among various activities.

#### ➤ *Initial assessment (according to the grid)*

<b>Evaluation content</b>	<b>Initial assessment</b>
Literacy:	<b>2</b>
Language:	<b>1,6</b>
Numbering	<b>1,21</b>
Personal autonomy:	<b>1,92</b>

- ✓ **Formative training program in the chosen type of art therapy:**  
painting.
- ✓ **Intervention priorities:**

- Orientation in the studio space.
- Getting to know the organisation and equipment of the workshop.
- Knowledge of various painting techniques and subjects.
- Developing skills leading to independent work.
- Self-painting pictures.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES	SUBJECT OF ACTIVITY	ACTIVITY DETAILING	TEACHING STRATEGIES -Form of organisation -Methods and procedures -Teaching tools	DATE
<p>Getting acquainted with the safety rules in the laboratory.</p> <p>Getting to know the space, tools and materials for work.</p>	<p><b>Our studio - getting to know the space, organisation and equipment of the studio - getting to know the tools and materials for work.</b></p>	<p>At the beginning of the class, I familiarised the students with the regulations of the studio and the safety rules. The students got to know the space of the studio: the layout of the room, marking the shelves, arrangement of tools and materials for work. I thoroughly discussed the tools necessary for the work (brushes, spatulas, plastic cards, dryer) and materials (canvas, paints, crayons, pastels, glass, marker). In the practical part, students tested the tools. They could see what painting effect each of them gives. During the classes, they also consolidated their knowledge of colors - all students pointed or read the names correctly.</p> <p><i>Note: Thanks to familiarizing themselves with the layout of the studio, the marking of shelves and the arrangement of tools and materials for work, they were able to move around it independently and prepare a place and materials for work.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- individual</li> <li>- group</li> <li>- explanation</li> <li>- demonstration</li> <li>- method of practical operation</li> <li>- materials: canvases, paints, crayons, pastels, glass, marker, cards</li> <li>- tools: brushes (sponge, synthetic), spatulas, used credit cards, dryer</li> </ul>	<p>5.10.2022</p>
<p>Getting to know the term</p>	<p><b>We learn painting</b></p>	<p>At the beginning of the class, on the basis of a</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- group</li> </ul>	<p>12.10.2022</p>

"painting technique". and specific painting techniques.	<b>techniques: watercolour painting.</b>	multimedia presentation prepared by me, I explained the term "painting technique". I discussed watercolour painting in detail. I have presented examples. The students were supposed to search for examples of watercolour painting on the Internet on their own or with the help of them.	explanation -demonstration - multimedia presentation - multimedia board - tablet	
Learning specific painting techniques.	<b>We learn painting techniques: acrylic painting.</b>	During the classes, together with the students, we recalled the term: "painting technique". I discussed acrylic painting in detail. I have presented examples. The students were supposed to search for examples of acrylic painting on the Internet on their own or with the help of them.	- group explanation - demonstration - multimedia presentation - multimedia board - tablet	19.10.2022
Learning specific painting techniques.	<b>We learn painting techniques: pastel painting.</b>	During the classes, together with the students, we consolidated the term: "painting technique". I discussed pastel painting in detail. I have presented examples. The students were supposed to search for examples of pastel painting on the Internet on their own or with help.	- group explanation - demonstration - multimedia presentation - multimedia board - tablet	26.10.2022
Learning specific painting techniques.	<b>We learn painting techniques: painting with watercolour pencils.</b>	During the classes, together with the students, we consolidated the term: "painting technique". I discussed watercolour painting in detail. I have	- group explanation - demonstration - multimedia	2.11.2022

		presented examples. The students were supposed to search for examples of watercolour painting on the Internet on their own or with the help of them.	presentation - multimedia board - tablet	
Learning specific painting techniques.	<b>We learn painting techniques: painting on glass.</b>	During the classes, together with the students, we consolidated the term: "painting technique". I discussed painting on glass in detail. I have presented examples. The students had to search for examples of glass painting on the Internet on their own or with help.	- group explanation - demonstration - multimedia presentation - multimedia board - tablet	9.11.2022
Getting to know the term "painting genre" Getting to know selected painting topics.	<b>We get to know species painting: portrait.</b>	At the beginning of the class, on the basis of a multimedia presentation prepared by me, I explained the concept of "painting genre". I discussed the painting portrait in detail. I have presented examples. The students were supposed to search for examples of portraits on the Internet on their own or with the help of them.	- group explanation - demonstration - multimedia presentation - multimedia board - tablet	16.11.2022
Getting to know selected painting topics.	<b>We get to know painting genres: abstraction.</b>	During the classes, together with the students, we recalled the term: "painting genre". I discussed abstract painting in detail. I have presented examples. The students had to search for examples of abstract painting on the Internet on their own or with help.	- group explanation - demonstration - multimedia presentation - multimedia board - tablet - tablet	23.11.2022

Getting to know selected painting topics.	<b>We get to know species painting: landscape, veduta (view of city).</b>	During the classes, together with the students, we consolidated the term: "painting genre". I discussed the landscape and veduta in detail. I have presented examples. The students had to find examples of landscapes, vedutas on the Internet, either on their own or with the help of them.	- - group explanation - demonstration - multimedia presentation - multimedia board - tablet	30.11.2022
Getting to know selected painting topics.	<b>We get to know painting genres: still life.</b>	During the classes, together with the students, we consolidated the term: "painting genre". I discussed still life in detail. I have presented examples. The students were supposed to find, on their own or with the help, examples of still life on the Internet.	- group explanation - demonstration - multimedia presentation - multimedia board - tablet - tablet	7.12.2022
Work with step-by-step instructions. Improving the ability to work independently	<b>Portrait - painting a picture based on step-by-step instructions</b>	The next step, leading to independent work, were painting exercises based on the "step by step" instructions I had prepared. Before the exercises, we always repeated the previously learned terms related to painting genres (portrait, abstraction, landscape, still life, veduta). Students painted pictures on a given topic according to the instructions.  <i>Note: The student was able to explain some of the above terms in his own words, he was able to match the description</i>	- individual explanation - demonstration - method of practical operation - materials: canvases, paints, crayons, pastels, glass, marker, cards, glass - tools: brushes (sponge, synthetic), spatulas, used credit cards, dryer	14.12.2022 4.01.2023

		<i>to the picture correctly.</i>		
Work with step-by-step instructions. Improving the ability to work independently	<b>Abstraction - painting a picture based on step-by-step instructions</b>	Painting exercises based on "step by step" instructions. Consolidation of terms related to painting genres (portrait, abstraction, landscape, still life, veduta). Pupils painting pictures on a given topic according to the instructions.	- individual explanation - demonstration - method of practical operation - materials: canvases, paints, crayons, pastels, glass, marker, cards, glass - tools: brushes (sponge, synthetic), spatulas, used credit cards, dryer	9.01.2023 18.01.2023
Work with step-by-step instructions. Improving the ability to work independently	<b>Landscape, Veduta - painting a picture based on step-by-step instructions</b>	Painting exercises based on "step by step" instructions. Consolidation of terms related to painting genres (portrait, abstraction, landscape, still life, veduta). Pupils painting pictures on a given topic according to the instructions.	- individual explanation - demonstration - method of practical operation - materials: canvases, paints, crayons, pastels, glass, marker, cards, glass - tools: brushes (sponge, synthetic), spatulas, used credit cards, dryer	8.02.2023 13.02.2023
Work with step-by-step instructions. Improving the ability to work independently	<b>Still life - painting a picture based on step-by-step instructions</b>	Painting exercises based on "step by step" instructions. Consolidation of terms related to painting genres (portrait, abstraction, landscape, still life, veduta). Pupils painting pictures on a given topic according to the instructions.	- individual explanation - demonstration - method of practical operation - materials: canvases, paints, crayons, pastels, glass, marker, cards, glass - tools: brushes (sponge, synthetic), spatulas, used	22.02.2023 1.03.2023

			credit cards, dryer	
Painting a picture yourself. Making choices. Free expression.	<b>I'm a master of painting. Self-painting a picture using a technique of your choice on a subject of your choice.</b>	<p>During the classes, the students painted the pictures on their own or with a little help. They made their own selection of techniques, species, materials and tools.</p> <p><i>Attention: Thanks to the cyclical activities carried out, the student participating in the study was able to independently prepare the workplace, choose the technique, topic, materials and tools. Most of the paintings he painted himself - some based on a step-by-step picture instruction. While painting, he was able to concentrate on the task at hand. Sometimes he needed verbal support. After finishing work, he cleaned his workstation (wiped tables, washed tools and put them away). It was noted that the painting theme most often chosen by Jakub was abstraction. And the most often chosen tools were spatulas and cards/smoothies for rubbing paints. One of Jakub's paintings went to the exhibition in the Municipal Public Library in Olsztyn, the other to the school counsellor's office.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- individual explanation</li> <li>- demonstration</li> <li>- method of practical operation</li> <li>- materials: canvases, paints, crayons, pastels, glass, marker, cards, glass</li> <li>- tools: brushes (sponge, synthetic), spatulas, used credit cards, dryer board</li> <li>- tablet</li> <li>- printer</li> </ul>	<p>8.03.2023 15.03.2023 22.03.2023 29.03.2023 5.04.2023 12.04.2023</p>

➤ **Final evaluation:**

<b>Evaluation content</b>	<b>Final score</b>
Literacy	<b>2</b>
Language	<b>1,6</b>
Numbering	<b>1,21</b>
Personal autonomy	<b>2,78</b>



**CONTROL PUPIL**

*First name and surname of the control student:* Bartłomiej M.

*Grade :* 3rd F

*Diagnosis:* multiple disabilities: early childhood autism, moderate intellectual disability.

The student is reluctant to undertake new activities. Difficulty in concentrating on a task, difficulty in understanding instructions. He gets discouraged quickly. He needs frequent breaks and requires support in self-service activities.

➤ **Initial assessment (according to the grid)**

<b>Evaluation content</b>	<b>Initial score</b>
Literacy:	<b>1,11</b>
Language:	<b>1,2</b>
Numbering	<b>1,2</b>
Personal autonomy:	<b>1,4</b>

➤ ***Final evaluation:***

<b>Evaluation content</b>	<b>Final score</b>
Literacy	<b>1,11</b>
Language	<b>1,2</b>
Numbering	<b>1,2</b>
Personal autonomy	<b>1,4</b>

**REMARKS:**

Thanks to the cyclic activities which were carried out under this project, the beneficiary student who participated in the study was able to prepare a workplace, select a technique, topic, materials and tools independently. He painted the pictures himself or on the basis of a step-by-step picture instruction. After finishing work, he cleaned his workstation - He wiped the tables, washed the tools and put them away. Sometimes he needed verbal support while completing the tasks. During the work the student was able to concentrate on the task at hand. His behaviour has improved during the programme.

It was noticed that abstract painting was the most popular topic chosen by the student. Brushes, spatulas and cards/pads for rubbing paints were the tools most often chosen by him.

During the course students also had the opportunity to speak to each other, to experiment and to express themselves. It allowed them to go beyond the framework of their previous activities. Painting classes were tailored to the students' individual abilities, provided opportunities for creative activities in a good atmosphere and cooperation. Students were allowed to express experiences and emotions with the use of available kinds of expression. They were motivated to be active, shaped interests and revealed artistic abilities.

Pupils developed an attitude of curiosity and openness in the students. They advanced the ability to organise and to spend free time. They were conducive to conversation, exchange of observations - they became an opportunity to develop in the area of social relations. In addition, they fostered the development of fine motor skills - manual dexterity, coordination and control of hand movements, and gross motor skills - adopting the correct posture while working.

In the case of classes with a control student who did not participate in the programme, the techniques introduced to the classes did not meet with the student's enthusiasm. There was a great reluctance to the proposed tasks and lack of cooperation. The student had difficulties in performing the activities in the correct order, he confused the art tools. He quickly became discouraged and refused to continue working. He didn't understand some of the actions. He performed art works as well as preparing and tidying up the workplace with a lot of active and verbal support. The attitude of curiosity was not noticed, it was difficult to activate the student. The pace of work was very slow, requiring frequent breaks.



## The results of the research –”Art Therapy for Autism”



*Scientific research on the benefits of Art Therapy for students with autism*

**School name: Eneegyl Kavala, Greece**

### **BENEFICIARY**

 **EXPERIMENTAL STUDENT:**

*Name: Z. A.*

*Class: B High School*

*Diagnosis: Pervasive Developmental Disorders (Autistic Spectrum)*

### ➤ **Initial evaluation – according to the evaluation grid**

<b>Evaluation content</b>	<b>Final score</b>
Literacy	4,55
Language	4,33
Numbering	4,66
Personal autonomy	4

### **Intervention program.**

- Type of art therapy: Expression of inner feelings-Upper torso movement
- Intervention priorities:
  - Fine motor skills
  - Body movement and music interaction
  - Emotional expression through music

Specific objectives	Subject of activity	Activity details	Teaching strategies (activity organization, methods, and procedures, teaching tools)	Date
Self-awareness	To depict their mood on a piece of paper and on a glove	We used colours to match the day's mood and colour the glove	Self-expression to promote the sense of uniqueness	6/10 14/10 19/10
To connect to inner self through music	Music and no other distractions	We created a relaxing atmosphere for music to work therapeutically	Individual encouragement and self – acceptance	10/11 18/11 29/11
To become familiar and accept strengths and flaws	Dealing with emotions	We guided them through music to hands and upper-torso dancing figures	Demonstration and imitation	7/12 19/12 18/1
Self-expression	Being set free from feelings of social exposure	Our hands, wearing the gloves and having acquired a 'personality' of their own, danced and improvised	Encouragement to expose themselves through the process	6/2 13/2 20/2 8/3

➤ **Final evaluation**

Evaluation content	Final score
Literacy	5
Language	5
Numbering	5
Personal autonomy	5

 **CONTROL STUDENT:**

*Name:* C. A.

*Class:* D, Junior High School

*Diagnose:* Intellectual Disability- Severe learning difficulties due to low intellectual potential in a satisfactory functional level

➤ **Initial evaluation – according to the evaluation grid**

<b>Evaluation content</b>	<b>Final score</b>
Literacy	3,88
Language	4,2
Numbering	3,33
Personal autonomy	4,88

➤ **Final evaluation**

<b>Evaluation content</b>	<b>Final score</b>
Literacy	4,66
Language	5
Numbering	4,55
Personal autonomy	5

**REMARKS:**

The initial aims are self-awareness, acceptance of the self, development of fine motor skills, connection through music to achieve free expression of emotions.

The initial assessment of the control student demonstrates a hyper-active pupil with an extremely good cognitive potential. He enjoys performing but is faced with concentration challenges.

The beneficiary pupil is also extremely competent in the cognitive domain but not as active as would be required by the process.

Initially, the control pupil was communicative and full of energy. On the contrary, the beneficiary pupil was unwilling and hesitant. Along the way, they both got engaged in painting the gloves by instinctively choosing colours which matched the mood of the day. They actively participated and cooperated

without actually realizing it when their hands, prompted by the teacher, danced side by side to the same rhythm. They finally engaged in a speechless dialogue where hands created a unique communication code. In particular, the beneficiary's performance was so good that the control student felt challenged to immitate him.

More specifically, the students used colours painting with fingers- not brushes. In this way, prevailing feelings of that particular moment of the day were imprinted on the glove. Those feelings were unleashed and expressed using gloved hands as their vehicle and producing impromptu dialogues.

Then to the accompaniment of the same music, the gloves took their way to relax, to be mounted on a piece of carton intended to hang on a wall of our school. This deliverable was characterized by the pair as their own private monument of friendship, cooperation and free expression.

The laboratory procedure described above has been devised and developed by Dr. Eleni Kavazidou and is academically known as 'Handiedance'.



## The results of the research –”Art Therapy for Autism”



*Scientific research on the benefits of Art Therapy for students with autism*

**School name:** Valmieras Gaujas krasta secondary school – development centre, Latvia

### **BENEFICIARIES**

#### **EXPERIMENTAL STUDENT:**

*Name:* E. S.

*Class:* 9.c

*Diagnosis:* moderate and severe mental disorders retardation

#### ➤ **Initial evaluation – according to the evaluation grid**

<b>Evaluation content</b>	<b>Initial assessment</b>
Literacy	3,2
Language	2,7
Numbering	1,6
Personal autonomy	3,8

#### ➤ **Intervention program.**

- Type of art therapy: handmade

#### ➤ **Intervention priorities:**

- Develop cognitive processes (attention, perception, imagination and memory functions), language, movement, poor social behavior correction and compensation.
- Train and develop general motor skills, movement coordination, sensitivity finger tips while using different handicraft techniques.
- To develop imagination, logical thinking and observation skills while using and different materials with various texture.
- Learn to know and use different techniques, while working with different crafting materials and tools.
- Making simple products – cards, paintings, decorate different objects etc.

Specific objectives	Subject of activity	Activity details	Teaching strategies (activity organization, methods, and procedures, teaching tools)	Date
<p><i>Working with natural materials and building materials.</i></p> <p><i>Working with wire and wood. Types of wires, their use.</i></p>	<p>Proper collection and storage of natural materials.</p> <p><b>Theme</b> “Autumn”.</p> <p>Wrapping a soft wire around a pencil - creating a spiral. Folding different figures according to the template.</p>	<p>Flower herbarium. Dried flower application. Creating collages. Safety rules for working with wire and needle (with rounded tip). Chains from small natural materials. Spatial products (birds, animals, beetles, etc.). App. Making simple spatial decor. Creating animal and human figures. Combined works. Learn to make various products from natural materials. Collect natural materials. Learn to create a flower herbarium, create applications, create collages, decorate. Observe safety precautions when handling needles and other accessories. Learn to wind a spiral.</p>	 <p>-Individual -Practical work -Explanatory illustrative method -Demonstration (narrative + sample)</p>  <p><b>Materials:</b> acorns, mountain ash, chestnuts, shells, seeds, dried plants, tree leaves, cones, branches, auxiliary materials - wires, sticks for fastening, scissors, sharp.</p> <p>Methods of direct perception: demonstrating exemplary behavior, practical work with the</p>	<p>September-October-2021, 2022</p>

		Learns to bend shapes according to a pattern.	teacher's physical or verbal descriptive support.	
<i>Working with various natural materials and paper.</i>	<b>Theme "Latvia".</b> November is the Patriot Month in Latvia. November 18 is the day of proclamation of the Republic of Latvia.	Applications. Collages. Drawings. Congratulations on Latvia's birthday.	Learning to evict; to fill the contour of Latvia with natural materials. marks, creates applications, collages, congratulations to Latvia on his birthday   Materials: natural materials, yarn, ribbons, napkins, application paper, cardboard. Methods: training activity, observations.	November 2021, 2022
<i>Work with paper, yarn.</i>	<b>Theme "Christmas".</b>	Various handicrafts with paper, yarn – Christmas room decorations and making simple greeting cards, decorations for Christmas trees, applications. Combined works.	Learn to make simple, three - dimensional decorations, Christmas tree decorations. Creates applications.     Materials: paper of various texbeads, glue gun, gluatures, yarn, scissors, needle, thread, ribbons, artificial decor - stars, household items, timber and others. Methods: visualization, demonstrating exemplary behavior.	December 2021, 2022
<i>Working with textiles.</i>	<b>Theme "Winter".</b>	Braiding of threads, yarns, cords. Their use in combined works. Yarn winding. Types of stitches (on paper and fabric). Simple hand dolls. Working with felt. Crochet.	Materials: threads, yarn, twine, needles, crochet hooks, cloth, cardboard, felt, stencils, used gloves and socks, toilet paper rolls. Learn to weave braids, create yarn windings (bracelet, pencil holder). Learns to	January, February 2022,2023

			<p>crochet a braid, knows how to make products using braids. Embroider simple hand dolls. Methods: training activity, practical work.</p>	
<i>Working with paper.</i>	<b>Theme "Spring".</b>	<p>Decoupage - decoration technique. Learns to decorate various objects in the decoupage technique.</p>	<p>Materials: napkins, PVA glue, bottles, vases, jars, glue - varnish, scissors, metal cans and others.</p>  <p>Practical work with the teacher's physical or verbal descriptive support.</p>	March, 2022, 2023
<i>Working with natural materials. Working with paper.</i>	<b>Theme "Easter".</b>	Making simple Easter cards. App. Combined works.	<p>Learn to make basic greeting cards, applications, using and combining different natural materials. Materials: poppies, eggshells, twigs, seeds, different types of textured /colored papers, scissors, PVA glue/</p>  <p>Observations, training activity.</p>	April 2022, 2023
<i>Work with natural materials - various shapes of sea stones.</i>	<b>Theme "Welcome, summer!"</b>	Learn to paint stones with acrylic or gouache.	<p>Materials: stones, acrylic gouache paints, brushes.</p>  <p>Practical work, demonstrating exemplary behavior.</p>	May, 2022, 2023

➤ **Final evaluation**

<b>Evaluation content</b>	<b>Final score</b>
Literacy	3,5
Language	2,8
Numbering	2,3
Personal autonomy	4,1

 **CONTROL STUDENT:**

*Name:* A. S.

*Class:* 9. – 2.c

*Diagnosis:* severe mental retardation, autistic spectrum disorders

➤ **Initial evaluation – according to the evaluation grid**

<b>Evaluation content</b>	<b>Initial assessment</b>
Literacy	0,9
Language	1,3
Numbering	0,8
Personal autonomy	2,9

➤ **Final evaluation**

<b>Evaluation content</b>	<b>Final evaluation</b>
Literacy	1,2
Language	1,6
Numbering	1,3
Personal autonomy	3,1

## **Comments following the application of the therapeutic program.**

### **1. How was the initial assessment carried out? What did you observe individually but also comparatively between the 2 students?**

The initial evaluation was carried out according to the established criteria. Each student was evaluated according to his individual abilities and health status.

### **2. How did you plan your activities?**

We planned the activities taking into account the time of year in a given month. After that, each season has some special days or holidays to celebrate (for example, winter – Christmas, spring – Easter etc.)

### **3. Why did you choose certain types of activities, strategies (frontal, individual, methods, procedures, teaching aids)?**

The choice of pedagogical techniques, time planning was created in such a way that it becomes a facilitator of development in a way that does not negatively affect the student's somatic and mental condition. Before implementing the content of the program, we specified: health status, activity limitations, student's activity abilities.

Such as autism is one of most complicated disorders of psychological development, which affect child's social interaction with the world, affect the way child communicates, takes on the world around him, and develops relations with those around him.

We paid increased attention to three areas of development:

1. Social interaction is ensured by a child-oriented approach.
2. Individual communication between student – teacher, teacher – student, student – student, student – parents.
3. Behavior results from the ability to use additional structured support.

#### **4. What did you observe during the educational/training process?**

Students with autism did not pay attention to other people's speech for a long time, could not perform simple actions, did not respond to their own name.

#### **5. What difficulties did you encounter?**

Students with autism did not pay attention to other people's speech for a long time, could not perform simple actions, did not respond to their own name.

#### **6. Have you noticed any progress in the students, following the application of the therapeutic program in any one of the 4 areas of the evaluation grid?**

Social imagination is not a skill that can be learned (although support can be provided). However, by applying successive steps, it was possible to connect creative imagination with operational processes according to specific plan. The presence of plan increased the likelihood of bringing creative work to final result.

#### **7. In which other areas of the child's development (other than those in the assessment grid) did you observe significant progress during and after the formative pathway?**

Students' communication with other people has improved. Symbols, drawings, pictograms, maps can be used. Symbols are like mediators in communication with other people. Students are more involved in school activities - poetry contests, fairs, excursions, hikes, visits to exhibitions.

#### **Proposals for a new curriculum in art therapy**

The direction of art therapy in natural aesthetics (teas, perfumes, colors of natural raw materials, wild plants, etc.)



## The results of the research –”Art Therapy for Autism”



*Scientific research on the benefits of Art Therapy for students with autism*

**School name: PSRC “Dr. Zlatan Sremec”- Skopje, North Macedonia**

**Name of therapy: Folk Dances**

### **BENEFICIARIES:**

 **EXPERIMENTAL STUDENT:**

*Name: S. S.*

*Class: 5<sup>th</sup> grade (12 years old)*

*Diagnosis: Moderate disability in mental development; Epilepsy; Combined developmental disorders; Autism*

➤ **Initial evaluation** – according to the evaluation grid

<b>Evaluation content</b>	<b>Final score</b>
Literacy	1,68
Language	3,21
Numbering	0,93
Personal autonomy	2,31

➤ **Intervention programme.**

- **Type of art therapy:** Creating paintings with natural and recycled materials
- **Intervention priorities:**
  - Sensory development and sensory tolerance
  - Fine motor developmental activities

- Cognitive development
- Communication and creating social relations

Specific objectives	Subject of activity	Activity details	Teaching strategies (activity organization, methods, and procedures, teaching tools)	Date
Getting to know the materials and their exploration	Natural materials- seeds, leaves	Materials are offered to the student for exploration (touching, smelling). <i>Note: Student is cooperative and doesn't hesitate- she explores them.</i>	-Individual -Explanations (naming materials) -Guidance -Natural materials (sunflower seeds, green and yellow leaves) -Counting seeds	07.10.2022
Arranging the materials according to a given pattern Materials: sunflower seeds, green and yellow leaves, glue Fine motor skills Visual perception Forming mental patterns	Creating the painting- sunflower	Pupil matches the colors of the seeds and leaves according to the pattern and glues them on the right place <i>Note: Student is guided to the toilet for washing hands (she wants to go on her own, but she actually needs assistance for washing hands)</i>	-Individual -Patterns (sketches, photos) -Verbal guidance -Verbal affirmation -Verbal stimulation -Natural materials (sunflower seeds, green and yellow leaves) -Glue -Visual support (sequential pictures for the sequence of actions and activities)	20.10.2022
Naming colors and materials Recognizing autumn characteristics Sensory stimulation	Autumn and hedgehogs	Pictures of autumn and hedgehogs are offered to the student and she is trying to name what he sees. <i>Note: Firstly the student was not cooperative- because of the verbal requests, but she accepted the walk in the yard and became cooperative.</i>	-Individual -Autumn and hedgehog pictures -Window observation -Walk and observation in the school yard -Gathering leaves from the yard -Verbal guidance	09.11.2022
Arranging the materials according to a given pattern Materials: brown leaves, toothpicks, pumpkin seeds, water colors, glue Fine motor skills Visual perception Hand-eye	Creating the painting- hedgehog, autumn	On a drawn pattern, student needs to put together the materials in right place so she can get a proper painting. First the hedgehog is made by brown leaves and toothpicks and then we presented autumn by sliced pumpkin with	-Individual and group work -Visual support (sequential pictures for the sequence of actions and activities) -Natural materials (brown leaves, wood/ toothpicks,	25.11.2022

coordination		pumpkin seeds poking out <i>Note: Student was extremely interested and motivated and satisfied from the results</i>	pumpkin seeds) -Glue, water colors -Explanations (naming materials and procedure proceedings) -Counting leaves	
Pointing out winter clothes Familiarization with materials- knitting wool Classification of materials by color and size Forming mental patterns Stimulating logic thinking Problem solving skills Forming representations	Indicating winter clothes- hat, scarf and mittens and dressing oneself. Touching and smelling knitting wool. Sorting wool balls by color	Pictures of winter clothes and real winter clothes are shown to the student. She names hat, scarf and mittens and dresses them oneself. We offer wool balls with different sizes and colors and ask her to classify them. <i>Note: Student cooperates well- she dresses (hat, scarf and mittens properly) herself with teacher's assistance. She touches wool balls uncertainly</i>	-Individual work -Exploring wool (touching, squeezing, rubbing, smelling) -Verbal stimulation -Counting wool balls	06.12.2022
Arranging the materials according to a given pattern Materials: different colored wool balls, scissors, glue Fine motor skills Sensory stimulation	Creating the painting- winter presented by winter clothes: hat, scarf and mittens	Student gets instructions to cut pieces of wool from the wool balls approximately 5cm long from all the colors she chooses. On a drawn pattern, student needs to glue these pieces in shape of hat, scarf and mittens. <i>Note: Student was not delighted to glue wool on the pattern as the wool had much fiber which got on her fingers. She was fixed to remove all the fiber from her fingers.</i>	-Individual and group work -Verbal guidance -Natural materials- wool (pieces) -Glue -Explanations (naming procedure proceedings) -Constant stimulation and motivation	23.12.2022
Pointing out winter characteristics- naming snow and snowflakes, sleds and snowman Familiarization with materials- cotton, cotton pads, ear picks, wooden spatulas (different colors and sizes), wooden branches (twigs), lentils. Classification of materials by color and	Indicating winter characteristics- snowflake, snowman and sled. Touching and smelling materials. Sorting materials by color, size and	Pictures of winter are shown to the student. She names snowflakes, snowman and sled. We offer different kinds of materials with different sizes and colors and ask her to classify them by color, size and smoothness. She needs to touch and rub materials to sort them right. <i>Note: Student was cooperative in exploring materials and sorting</i>	-Individual work -Verbal guidance -Explanations -Exploring materials (touching, rubbing, smelling, knocking them) -Grouping materials (soft and hard) Counting cotton pads	02.02.2023

size Forming representations Forming concepts Sensory stimulation	smoothness	<i>them.</i>		
Arranging the materials according to a given pattern Materials: cotton, cotton pads, ear picks, wooden spatulas (different colors and sizes), wooden branches (twigs), lentils, scissors, glue Fine motor skills Reading patterns Development of assumptions	Creating the painting- winter presented by winter characteristics: snowflake, snowman and sled	Using a dark background paper, student is asked to create snowman using cotton pads, and other materials (lentils, branches and orange wooden spatula) for all its parts. Student uses cotton to present snow on the bottom of the painting. Student creates snowflakes out of ear pads that she pre-cut them in half. Last- she creates the sled using wooden spatula in different colors and sizes- gluing them by given pattern. <i>Note: Student was semi-cooperative, meaning that some parts of the painting were made with no problem, but gluing cotton was challenging for her for the cotton-fiber was gluing to her fingers.</i>	-Individual and group work -Verbal guidance -Natural materials- cotton, cotton pads, lentils, wooden spatula, ear pads -Glue, scissors -Explanations (naming procedure proceedings) -Constant stimulation and motivation	15.02.2023 28.02.2023
Pointing out spring characteristics- naming blooming trees, snowdrops, storks and the sun Familiarization with materials- cotton pads, pasta, popcorn, sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds, dry corn seeds, colored paper. Classification of materials as edible and not edible. Sensory development Development of logic thinking Problem solving skills	Indicating spring characteristics- blooming trees, snowdrops, storks and the sun. Touching and smelling materials. Sorting materials as edible and not edible using own pattern of sorting. We also used color sorting	Materials were presented to student- she was asked to touch and smell them. Then on, she needed to sort them as edible or not and also by color in a different boxes. <i>Note: Requests were semi- finished. At the end she asked for popcorn to eat.</i>	-Individual work -Verbal guidance -Natural materials: cotton pads, pasta, popcorn, sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds, dry corn seeds, colored paper -Verbal stimulation (naming materials) -Motivation -Counting seeds	10.03.2023
Arranging the	Creating	Student was given big	-Individual and	15.03.2023

<p>materials according to a given pattern Materials: cotton pads, pasta, popcorn, sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds, dry corn seeds, colored paper, scissors, glue Sensory development Independence and perseverance in work Diligence</p>	<p>spring- popcorn tree, snowdrop, stork and sun</p>	<p>already cut tree to glue it in the corner of the paper. Then she needed to decorate it with popcorn- gluing them all around its branches. She was given yellow circle to put it where she thinks it should be- and she made it a sun. She was given pasta to make sun rays. Snowdrop was made from green paper and cut out cotton pads- which she glue properly (by given sample). Stork- made with sunflower, pumpkin and dried corn seeds on a drawn pattern- students glues the seeds as shown. <i>Note: Student was not very cooperative- she was overwhelmed with too many seeds, so we had to separate work in few days</i></p>	<p>group work -Verbal guidance -Natural materials- cotton, cotton pads, lentils, wooden spatula, ear pads -Glue, scissors -Explanations (naming procedure proceedings) -Constant stimulation and motivation</p>	<p>22.03.2023 28.03.2023</p>
<p>Familiarization with materials- stones, egg cartons (pieces), cotton pads, wooden spoons and forks, leaves, silicon gun, dried corn, branches, hemp rope, pencils, pipette, beans, toilet paper cylinders, scissors, wooden spatula Fine motor activities Sensory stimulation Verbal stimulation (naming)</p>	<p>Insects- meeting materials for creating insects</p>	<p>Students got the materials- one by one. They needed to name them, to touch and smell and note the difference between materials. They were explained the tools and their aim and they had a chance to try them. <i>Note: Student was cooperative but at the end of the activity she was sensory overstimulated.</i></p>	<p>-Individual and group work -Verbal guidance -Tools: glue gun, pipette, paint brushes, water colors, scissors -Explanations -Constant stimulation and motivation -Stimulating independence -Calming the sensory overdrive -Grouping materials</p>	<p>05.04.2023</p>
<p>Arranging the materials according to a given pattern and instructions Materials: - stones, egg cartons (pieces), cotton pads, wooden spoons and forks, leaves, silicon gun, dried corn, branches, hemp rope, pencils, pipette, beans, toilet</p>	<p>Insects- different kinds of insects in spring</p>	<p>Students choose which insects they like most, so they can create it. Everyone is creating its own insect with given materials. Constant guidance (verbal and practical) is used by teacher. <i>Note: Student was fixed on beans (touching and playing with her hands in</i></p>	<p>-Individual and group work -Verbal guidance -Tools: glue gun, pipette, paint brushes, water colors, scissors -Explanations (naming procedure proceedings) -Constant stimulation and</p>	<p>18.04.2023</p>

paper cylinders, scissors, wooden spatula Sensory development Independence and perseverance in work Diligence		<i>the beans) so she was guided to create an ant with beans which she colored them black at the end. She was satisfied from her work.</i>	motivation -Stimulating independence -Problem solving skills -Calming the sensory overdrive	
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➤ **Final evaluation**

<b>Evaluation content</b>	<b>Final score</b>
Literacy	2
Language	3,30
Numbering	1
Personal autonomy	2,45

✚ **CONTROL STUDENT:**

*Name:* M. A.

*Class:* 4<sup>th</sup> grade (11 years old)

*Diagnosis:* Autism

<b>Evaluation content</b>	<b>Final score</b>
Writing and reading	1,75
Literacy	1
Language	3,21
Numbering	0,93
Personal autonomy	1,71

- **Initial evaluation – according to the evaluation grid**
- **Final evaluation**

<b>Evaluation content</b>	<b>Final score</b>
Writing and reading	2,5
Literacy	2
Language	2,17
Numbering	0,8
Personal autonomy	2

**Comments following the application of the therapeutic programme.**

**1. How was the initial assessment carried out? What did you observe individually but also comparatively between the 2 students?**

-Initial assessment was carried out by the class teacher (with prior preparation and acquaintance of the teacher with the objectives of the research). It were observed more aspects of the student like- behavior, emotional status, communication with teacher and classmates, fine and gross motor skills, sensory development etc. The control students was observed in same way.

**2. How did you plan your activities?**

-Activities were planned to occur twice a month, but space was left for more times if necessary.

Why did you choose certain types of activities, strategies (frontal, individual, methods, procedures, teaching aids)?

-Group approach was used when students were gathered for meeting the materials for work and the topics. They were separated in 2 or three groups and were given different materials to sensitize them. Individual approach was main in this research, because of the student’s low functionality which

requires tette-a-tette communication and guidance. Visual support was used to simplify the explanation of the work procedure.

**3. What did you observe during the educational/training process?**

-During the process were observed more indicators such as: fine motor skills, spatial orientation, sensory overload, (verbal/nonverbal) communication needs, following instructions, occurrence of conflicts and the level of managing, hand-eye coordination, hygiene habits, independence in work, motivational levels, endurance, diligence, perseverance, patience.

**4. What difficulties did you encounter?**

-Difficulties were mostly about sensory overloading which required calming and using the relaxing space, but it wasn't too challenging because student was very interested about art work, so those were short time breaks.

**5. Have you noticed any progress in the students, following the application of the therapeutic program in any one of the 4 areas of the evaluation grid?**

-Biggest progress we've noticed was about increasing the student's motivational level, improving of fine motor skills and communication level (verbal and nonverbal) and of course sensory integration benefits .

**6. In which other areas of the child's development (other than those in the assessment grid) did you observe significant progress during and after the formative pathway?**

-It was evident that student improved her problem and conflict solving skills, she was more comfortable in company of peers and also sensorially she became freer.



## The results of the research –”Art Therapy for Autism”



*Scientific research on the benefits of Art Therapy for students with  
autism*

**School name: Mersin Metropolitan Municipality Special Education  
Practice School, Turkey**

**Name of therapy:** Folk Dances

**BENEFICIARIES:**

 **EXPERIMENTAL STUDENTS:**

*Name:* D. K.

*Grade:* 8/B

*Diagnosis:* Autism

➤ **Initial evaluation – according to the evaluation grid**

<b>Evaluation content</b>	<b>Final score</b>
Literacy	0,5
Language	0,1333333
Numbering	0,1111111
Personal autonomy	1,933333 3

➤ **Program intervention.**

- Type of art therapy: Folk Dances
- Intervention priorities: General and Fine Motor Skills,
- Concept of Location-Direction,

- Sense of Rhythm
- Imitation and modeling
- Movement Training

<b>Specific objectives</b>	<b>Field of activity</b>	<b>Event details</b>	<b>Teaching strategies (organization of activities, methods and procedures, teaching tools)</b>	<b>History</b>
When the command is given, she lines up on the wide arm.	Scene ordering	She was told by the whistle command that he should take the position in accordance with his order on the stage.	Showing, Modeling, Direct Expression. Whistle. Costume of the Caucasian Region	03.10
Together with the command, she takes the starting position.	Caucasian Dance Girl Starting Position	By showing the starting position in place on the stage with the whistle command (girls in the floating position with both hands open to the side) told	Showing, Modeling, Direct Expression. Whistle Caucasian Costume	10.10
She starts dancing along with the music.	Caucasian Dance (Girls)	Along with the music (in the position they are present, the girls wait on the stage with their gaps open) The girls were shown their positions.	Showing, Modeling, Direct Expression. Music, Caucasian Costume	17.10
Switches to the appropriate line for the dance.	Caucasian Dance	During the dance, the boys were shown to take their positions among the girls who were lined up.	Showing, Modeling, Direct Expression. Music, Caucasian Costume	24.10
She makes the figure given to herself. (girl)	Caucasian Dance	After each time the boys complete their figures, the girls spin around themselves.	Showing, Modeling, Direct Expression. Music, Caucasian Costume	31.10
She takes her	Caucasian	With the girls'	Showing, Modeling,	7.11

place on the stage.	Dance	intervention, the sword shield game ends and everyone returns to their places on the stage.	Direct Expression. Music, Sword, Shield. Costume of the Caucasian Region	
She unfurls the Turkish flag to make the closing.	Caucasian Dance (Flag Raising)	Along with the music, the closing ceremony is passed (a man comes to the middle of the stage by touring around the stage, kneels on her knees and opens the Turkish flag.)	Showing, Modeling, Direct Expression. Music, Turkish Flag, Caucasian Costume	14.11
He greets the audience to make the closing.	Closing and greeting	After the man who raised the flag returns to his place, everyone is greeted in a wide arm and the show is completed with a salute.	Showing, Modeling, Direct Expression. Music, Turkish Flag, Caucasian Costume	21.11

➤ **Final evaluation**

<b>Dstaking content</b>	<b>Final score</b>
Literacy	0,5
Language	0,11111111
Numbering	0,26666667
Personal autonomy	2



**CONTROL STUDENT:**

*Name:* Öznur

*Grade:* 7/A

*Diagnosis:* Autism

➤ **First assessment – according to the evaluation grid**

<b>Evaluation content</b>	<b>Final score</b>
Literacy	1,5
Language	0,333333
Numbering	0
Personal autonomy	1,766666

➤ **Final evaluation**

<b>Evaluation content</b>	<b>Final score</b>
Literacy	1,5
Language	0,333333
Numbering	0
Personal autonomy	1,766666

**Reviews after the implementation of the therapeutic program**

**1. How was the initial assessment conducted? What did you observe between the 2 students individually and also comparatively?**

Group and individual behaviors of the students were observed and evaluated. It was observed that the control student was more asocial and the student of the experimental group was sharing and willing to participate in group activities.

**2. How did you plan your activities?**

In order to reveal the relaxing effect of art on autistic individuals, artistic activities suitable for moving, rhythmic and group dynamics, which students are more prone to, were sought and folk dances were preferred.

**3. Why did you choose certain types of activities, strategies (frontal, individual, methods, procedures, teaching aids)?**

The student's sense of rhythm is developed and the mentioned teaching tools and method techniques have been selected due to his high interest in music and dance.

**4. What did you observe during the education/training process?**

When the dance figures are explained in cascading as much as possible, the student's learning speed increases and becomes easier. It has been seen that rhythm and figure harmony adapt faster by listening to music at the same time while explaining the movements. After the study, it was observed that the students enjoyed these activities more and their desire to learn increased.

**5. What challenges have you faced?**

The negative reactions of autistic individuals to the sounds given at high decibels have caused us to have difficulty in adjusting the volume of the music. There was difficulty in synchronizing with the group. With the warming of the weather, the fact that the students did not want to wear thick and feathered clothes adversely affected our dance integrity.

**6. Have you noticed any progress in students following the implementation of the therapeutic program in any of the 4 areas of the assessment grid?**

With the implementation of the therapeutic program, it has been observed that the student has made progress in the field of "Personal Autonomy", overcoming stage fright and increasing the sense of self-confidence.

**7. In what other areas of the child's development (other than those in the assessment guide) have you observed significant progress during and after the formative path?**

It was observed that there was a little progress in areas such as general motor skills, balance, imitation skills, music and rhythm harmony.

### **New curriculum proposals in art therapy**

Art therapy is not only limited to subjects such as painting, music, handicrafts, but also the addition of culinary arts to the therapy program will both increase the student's interest and provide diversity.

The parents of the students should also be organized together with the school in art therapy, and the students should be supported by the parents at home.

Displaying the activities after they have been collected in a portfolio will increase the self-confidence and personal autonomy of the students.



## The results of the research –”Art Therapy for Autism”



*Scientific research on the benefits of Art Therapy for students with autism*

**School name: Gymnasium Special School Pașcani, Romania**

### **BENEFICIARIES:**

#### **✚ EXPERIMENTAL STUDENT:**

*Name:* M. D.-M.

*Grade:* 2nd

*Diagnosis:* autism, severe language disorder, IQ = 37

*Observations:* single-parent family, parents divorced, the mother is the student's personal assistant, father working abroad, no siblings, low interaction with other extended family members.

#### ➤ **Initial evaluation (according to the grid)**

<b>Evaluation content</b>	<b>Initial evaluation score</b>
Literacy	0,3
Language	0,44
Numeracy	0,2
Personal autonomy	0,33

#### ➤ **Intervention program.**

- Type of art therapy: modelling

#### ➤ **Intervention priorities:**

##### **1. Communication and language**

Nonverbal and verbal communication skills training:

- stimulating and integrating the pupil into classroom activities
- using pictograms.
  - practicing skills for imitating various actions.
  - practicing imitation skills for sounds/onomatopoeias, syllables, and words.
  - maintaining eye contact during social interaction
  - using gestures and verbal elements to communicate.
  - drawing graphs with and without patterns.
  - copying letters and short words.

## **2. Mathematics:**

- formation of the concept of multiplication of elements.
- counting the elements of multiplication with support.
- writing numbers according to the pattern.
- operating with numbers in the 0-10 concentration (addition and subtraction).
- drawing four geometric figures (circle, triangle, square and rectangle) with and without a template.

## **3. Psychomotor skills:**

- proper use of working tools: pen, pencil, paintbrush, charcoal and other tools.
- knowledge and recognition of primary colours.
- development of motor skills through modelling, writing, drawing, and painting.

## **4. Personal and social autonomy:**

- developing personal autonomy skills: - the student will become independent, the facilitator (parent) will gradually withdraw from the student's activity in the classroom, receiving support only from the teacher.
- developing toilet-use skills with the support of qualified school nursery staff.
- developing skills to use personal items without support, like supplies, food, clothing.
- developing attachments to peers and teachers.
- being aware of the group to which she belongs.

Objectives	Subject of activity	Activity details	Teaching strategies	Date
1.Knowing the autumn fruits and their origin  2.Modelling trees with fruits	Autumn fruits	Students are shown several types of autumn fruit. Pupils recognise them, and it is established which fruit trees are formed: apples, pears, plums.	work in pairs  conversation, demonstration, teamwork, work in tandem playdough working procedure: breaking, stretching, flattening, circular movements	<b>11.10.2022</b>
3.Knowing other autumn fruits but from a different origin	The grapes	The pupils are shown the fruit from the vineyard, guess, recognize the colour and then modelling grapes from playdough.	conversation demonstration individual work work with support playdough working procedure:- breaking, flattening, stretching, circular motions, joining/gluing	<b>15.10.2022</b>
4.Ordering different types of elements according to specific characteristics (size, shape, colour)  5.Counting the elements from a	Flock of ducklings	Show the pupils the tools and announce the theme: making “Flock of ducklings” and then counting them. follow the pattern. By the end, the	conversation demonstration individual work work with support playdough working procedure:- breaking,	<b>15.11.2023</b>

specific category		students will be able to work independently without help from the teacher.	flattening, stretching, circular motions, joining/gluing	
6.Reinforcing mathematical concepts by modelling  7. Developing psychomotor skills	Add as much as fits	The pupil receives a board on which are drawn six acorns, on each acorn are dots representing different numbers, arranged in ascending order from one to six dots on the last acorn. The pupil must put a small ball of playdough on each bubble and then count by pointing to each acorn.	conversation demonstration individual work work with support playdough working procedure:- breaking, flattening, stretching, circular motions, joining/gluing	<b>24.11.2022</b>
8.Modelling balls and arranging them according to the pattern  9.Following the pattern step by step	Playdough skewers	The teacher is showing the steps and how to do the exercises, and the student will work with support to	conversation demonstration individual work work with support playdough working procedure:- breaking, flattening, stretching, circular motions, joining/gluing	<b>2.12.2022</b>
10.Recognizing the characters from stories 11.Creating the character from playdough	Santa Claus	The pupils are introduced to a character they like very much: Santa Claus. The characteristics of Santa Claus are discussed (colours, size, shape, components), and the pupils will create their own Santa Claus out of playdough. All the steps will be followed in order and the teacher will offer support if necessary.	conversation demonstration individual work work with support playdough working procedure:- breaking, flattening, stretching, circular motions, joining/gluing	<b>9.12.2022</b>
12.Memorising letters	Playdough letters	Students are shown pictures with letters. The student is asked	conversation demonstration individual work	<b>3.02.2023</b>

13.Pronouncing sounds		to pronounce the sound imitating the teacher and make the letter out of playdough following the pattern in the end, the student must pronounce the letter again, independently.	work with support playdough working procedure:- breaking, flattening, stretching, circular motions, joining/gluing	
14.Knowing "the animal's world"	Playdough animals	The student is shown images of animals, she must recognize them and emit onomatopoeia specific to each animal in the image and show the main body parts of the animals that she recognizes. In the end, she will have to make animals from the playdough: a cow, a puppy, and an elephant.	conversation demonstration individual work work with support playdough working procedure:- breaking, flattening, stretching, circular motions, joining/gluing	<b>13.03.2023</b>

➤ **Final evaluation**

<b>Evaluation content</b>	<b>Final evaluation score</b>
Literacy	1
Language	1.55
Numeracy	0,6
Personal autonomy	1.73

 **CONTROL STUDENT:**

*Name:* M. M.

*Grade:* 2nd

*Diagnosis:* a pervasive disorder of mental development, hyperkinetic syndrome, opposition-defiant disorder, delay in the acquisition of expressive language, delay in the acquisition of receptive language, oro-lingual and motor dyspraxia, slight delay in psychomotor acquisitions corresponding to the chronological age, attention deficit, low frustration tolerance, IQ=43~57.

*Observations:* 11 years, legally established family, 7 members: parents and 5 children, Mateo being the second

➤ **Initial evaluation**

<b>Evaluation content</b>	<b>Initial evaluation score</b>
<b>Literacy</b>	<b>1,6</b>
<b>Language</b>	<b>2,55</b>
<b>Numeracy</b>	<b>1,06</b>
<b>Personal autonomy</b>	<b>0,86</b>

➤ **Final evaluation**

<b>Evaluation content</b>	<b>Final evaluation score</b>
<b>Literacy</b>	<b>2,5</b>
<b>Language</b>	<b>4,22</b>
<b>Numeracy</b>	<b>1,6</b>
<b>Personal autonomy</b>	<b>2,06</b>

**RESEARCH OBSERVATIONS:**

The initial evaluation was carried out using the evaluation grid proposed in the Erasmus+ project “Art Therapy for Autism”. From the beginning, we started with significant differences between the two students, in terms of diagnosis, age, family type and IQ level. Both students were familiar with modelling in their day-by-day activities, this is the reason why we chose this type of art therapy. Based on the observations of the initial assessment, we

wanted to progress in all areas of development, starting with personal autonomy, language, numeracy and socialization.

Since the beginning of the first grade, the student was supported in the classroom activities by the facilitator (her mother) this year the facilitator's presence was dropped, and the student was encouraged to participate in group activities with the help of the teacher or the therapist. We have used the modelling technique in classroom activities, both in manual and cross-curricular skills classes, in other subjects such as communication and language skills, sensory and psychomotor education, and mathematics, the main purpose being relaxation, psychomotor development, personal autonomy training and socialization. The choice of themes coincided with themes included in the planning of school activities in different subjects, such as autumn and its fruits, animal world, learned letters and numbers, etc.

The activities were carried out in different ways: frontal, in pairs or individually, using as themes different topics that could attract and develop in the student, different skills and abilities. For example, the Autumn Fruits activity was organised frontally, so that all pupils knew and recognised the autumn fruits and then modelled trees and fruits, considering the appropriate choice of colour for each fruit. The methods used were conversation, demonstration, individual work, teamwork, and tandem work and the working processes were tearing, free modelling, kneading, pressing/stretching, tearing, pinching, cutting, flattening in palms, rolling, etc. The teaching aids used were playdough, as it has the advantage of being available in different colours and can be chosen according to this criterion, matching the characteristics of the real object with those of the object to be modelled; clay, cutting or rolling tools, rulers, plastic knives, templates, plastic working models.

During the educational approach, I noticed that the student needs support, explanation, demonstration and help in applying some techniques. I

often used tandem work precisely to team up with the student, to feel the support, and then I replaced the teacher's support with pair work with a colleague and individual work. If at the beginning the pupil did not break the plasticine by herself, did not need it, did not stretch it and did not complete the given task, gradually she started to imitate the teacher's movements and to contribute to the task alone or with one colleague.



She learned to make her own balls in circular motions and to flatten them, making works such as Grapes, Globules or to complete the picture with as many elements as they fit (on laminated support), counting with the teacher's help, but without verbalizing.



The pupil enjoyed rolling, using shapes/stencils, stringing balls on skewer sticks, making beloved characters such as Santa Claus, and story characters, and shaping letters on laminated pictures.



I can say that the student likes to model, and working with playdough calms her down. I don't think she is aware of what she likes to model more. She has been captured during the tasks quite a lot, her attention span has increased, her stereotyping time has been limited, and her autonomy has gradually increased. The pupil interacts more with her classmates, school pupils, school staff, the social worker, the nurse (accepting the use of the toilet in school, not only at home as it was until now), and the headmistress. Socially she has grown and maintains eye contact more.

So, of the 4 areas of assessment that the grid contains, I believe that the area of personal autonomy has increased the most. Next is the language area, although the pupil is still nonverbal but communicates nonverbally more, shows more, asks for what she wants, makes sounds, and syllables, and onomatopoeia by imitation, and hums. She wants to express herself and when she is not satisfied/ does not like something, she shouts, becomes self-aggressive or shows behaviours that she wants to escape from the so-called activities: she sits down and does not want to get up, leaving the classroom space. In terms of literacy the pupil has retained some letters-A, E, I, U, O, M, and T, writes all the letters of the alphabet according to the pattern, and copies words and short sentences. The pupil recognises and shows beings and objects in pictures and responds to adult requests by completing the given tasks, but at

her own pace and with support. In the numeracy domain, she is making progress in the sense that she makes crowds of objects with support, counts with support, copies all numbers and operates with support in the 0-10 concentration. Due to the modelling therapy, the ability to focus attention on tasks has increased. She has also become more sociable due to teamwork and partnership activities.

M. M.the control pupil, this school year did not benefit from art therapy through modelling at the class level as much as M D but made significant progress in all the targeted areas. From the beginning, he had several advantages: age (he is 2 years older than M.D.), family group (family with normal structure, with both parents present and 4 brothers/sisters). On the other hand, even if when he came to school he pronounced only 4-5 words, in the last 2 years he has developed a lot in the language domain, he has become verbal, in the sense that he repeats after the teacher, names objects correctly, remembers very easily poems, stories and recipes/performs them with expressiveness. In contrast, the pupil does not ask questions and does not initiate dialogues. For example: even when verbal, he asks to use the interactive whiteboard by pointing or looking for solutions to open it himself (the pupil is somewhat dependent on technology). Does not address people in the class by name unless asked to do so by the adult. Does not maintain eye contact for long and exhibits stereotypies (wanders around the classroom, waves hands and plays cartoon dialogue or makes sounds). The pupil has progressed very well due to sustained work at home and in the family. The pupil is more disciplined and has a good attention span. Even though he has not benefited from modelling art therapy, he has been attracted to other forms of art therapy: music therapy, story therapy, and painting. The pupil has memorised many songs, and musical games, has a musical ear, plays sounds on musical instruments (drums, xylophone), plays roles in stories, and paints.



**Conclusion: art-therapy through modelling helped the student with autism and brought her progress.**



### **XIII. Conclusions of the research –”Art Therapy for Autism”**

Our projects wants to improve the quality of educational, therapeutic and rehabilitation activities, skills and abilities, to expand or diversify the

strategies or therapies addressed to students with TSA and DMS. To increase the efficiency of the offered services which will be made by using its resources more efficiently, adapting to the particularities and needs of students` casuistry in order to make a substantial progress in theirs school and social recovery and integration, reducing absenteeism and implicitly, avoiding school abandonment.

At the end of project; we want teachers to acquire sufficient knowledge and experience, to overcome students deficiencies throught art, to specialize in effective classroom management and to increase their professional motivation. We hope to improve learning performance and reduce inequality in learning outcomes by providing an effective learning environment and become collectively more compatible and accepted by society.

The research carried out at project level involved special education teachers from six European countries, as well as students with autism who benefited from therapeutic intervention in the form of a specific form of artherapy. Thus modelling, painting, expression of inner feelings, handmade, folk dance, and creating paintings with natural and recycled material were used. These types of art therapy were chosen by the Erasmus+ project partners following discussions at partnership level and according to the possibilities and facilities available at each institution.

At partnership level an assessment grid was created and translated into English, Turkish, Polish, Latvian, Greek and Macedonian. This grid was used for the initial assessment of the subjects of children with autism from different educational levels and for their final assessment.

Also at the partnership level a research schedule was established and applied in each institution, so that after the conclusion of the partnership research we can draw the following conclusions:

- Therapeutic intervention involving one form of art therapy or another is beneficial for a good development of the child with autism as long as it is individualized to the psychocognitive particularities. The therapeutic approach can be adjusted according to the student's potential, working in stages by increasing the degree of difficulty of the tasks to which the student is subjected.

- The great variety of forms of art therapy that can be used in educational activities is a beneficial thing for the therapeutic intervention in children with autism, especially in the conditions where they show a preference for one form of art therapy or another. For example, in practice I have met children with autism who prefer not to get their hands dirty handling plasticine, clay or painting. For them, another form of art therapy can be chosen if the student does not cooperate or repeatedly refuses to get involved in activities

- The low number of teachers specialised in the application of one form of art therapy or another is a finding of this research. If they had a qualification on an art therapy-related topic, the scores obtained by the children with autism in the experimental group can be attributed in a way

- After analysing the research results and comparing the initial and final assessment scores of experimental and control subjects, we observe educational progress in both groups. Given that the therapeutic intervention was a maximum of two sessions per week, we cannot conclude that the higher scores of the experimental subjects obtained in the final evaluation are strictly attributed to the benefit of one form of art therapy or the other. At the same time, the control group also benefited from higher scores after the final evaluation. This is due to the fact that both the experimental and control groups benefited from other forms of intervention that could not be controlled for in the form of speech therapy intervention, or physiotherapy etc.

- In this research the success of one form of art therapy or another was also influenced by the way it was structured as a form of intervention.

- In this research the success of one form of art therapy or another was also influenced by the way it was structured as a form of intervention, by the experience of specialists who actually worked with children with autism. As a coordinating institution, the Pascani Special Secondary School presented during the project meetings the way in which the curriculum is structured at school level (CDS) on pottery, together with different types of exercises and applications that can be carried out both in the pottery workshop and in the classrooms. The project partners have used existing art therapy based therapeutic programmes which they have tried to bring to the form proposed by the coordinator, but they have also created other forms of art therapy at the level of the institution they represent.

We can conclude from the analysis of the reports submitted by the project partners that the use of art therapy in children with autism undoubtedly has therapeutic benefits in terms of the development of reading and writing, language and communication, mathematical skills and personal autonomy. We believe that further research is needed involving more students with autism. We also believe that during the research the frequency of the therapy sessions should be increased in order to better highlight the impact of the therapeutic approach on one of the four levels of development. At the same time, both the subjects in the experimental group and the subjects in the control group should not benefit from other forms of therapeutic intervention during the course of the research, but this is against the student's interest.

Through this project we wanted to show that regardless of nationality and culture, when it comes to the recovery and education of children with autism art therapy can play a more significant role, especially when it is applied in a structured way, individualized to the psychoeducational

peculiarities of each child, by experienced specialists who have previously followed a form of specialization in the field. The knowledge of the benefits of a wide range of forms of therapy is especially beneficial when we want to act on certain levels of development of children with autism by improving language, communication, social and practical skills, mathematical skills, etc.

Also at partnership level a valuable exchange of experience took place on visiting different workshops, pottery, woodworking, glassworking, metalworking, weaving workshop, flower arrangement workshop, sensory stimulation room and sensory pots, salt room etc. A gain of this project in terms of improved equipment and services offered was the establishment of a glass processing workshop in Valmieras pilsetas pasvaldibas Valmieras Gaujas krastavidusskola attistibas centrs-Latvia, and a sensory garden and a sewing and wood processing cabinet will be set up at the Pascani Special Secondary School with funding from NRDP funds. We can thus conclude that the Erasmus+ Art Thereapy for Autism project, in addition to the contribution in terms of experience gained at partnership level of those who benefited from the proposed activities, is also a support for the institutional development of the organizations participating in this project that in the next period can develop similar workshops locally.

#### **XIV. Examples of good practice activities**

##### **All about spring**

*Coordinating teachers:* Vîncă Ana Maria, Mărian Alina

*Target group:* students of the 4th B and 2nd A grades

*Methods and procedures:* explanation, demonstration, frontal and individual work, verbal assessment.

*Material resources:* worksheets, coloured pencils, watercolours, coloured paper, pumpkin seeds, silicone glue gun, band-aids, coloured paper, relaxation music and spring songs.



*Human resources:* pupils in grades IV B and II A.

*Aim of the activity:* To develop students' psychosocial skills through art therapy activities in partnership on the occasion of the approaching spring season.

*Description of the activity:*

The activity takes place in the classroom. It is carried out by capturing attention through the presentation of spring pictures. Some of the pictures will also contain spring flowers, which the pupils will have to name and then identify the colours specific to the spring season.



The teachers will sing the song "Spring" with the students, after which the materials and collage models will be presented. Following the working steps, but also using their imagination and creativity, the students will make, with the guidance of the teachers, collages in tune with the spring season against a background of relaxing music.



### **Art Therapy Workshop: Autumn**

*Coordinating teachers:* Slăbuțu Doina, Iancu Dumitrița-Iuliana, Apătăchioae Irina-Oana, Vezeteu Diana-Elena

*Target group:* classes: VI A, VI B, VII B, VIII C DMS

*Methods and procedures:* conversation, explanation, observation, demonstration, exercise, teamwork, didactic game, gallery tour.

*Material resources:* clay, kiln, calender, modelling moulds, twister, wooden spatulas, leaves, modelling boards.

*Human resources:* 14 pupils



*Aim of the activity:* Training of skills in making works/objects with the help of teaching materials, using different techniques, by developing fine motor skills and learning new working techniques.

*Description of the activity:*

Before starting the modelling activity, the pupils came in contact with clay and through manipulation they discovered that it is a material with a fine and pleasant texture. Students were instructed in the use of materials and modelling techniques. The activities



were carried out under the strict supervision of the teachers. The resulting products were fired in the kiln and then painted. At the end of the activity, the pupils displayed the products in the school premises for other pupils to see.



### **Christmas decorations- gnomes**

*Coordinating teachers:* Apătăchioae Irina-Oana, Barbir Andrei, Iancu Dumitrița-Iuliana, Vezeteu Diana-Elena

*Target group:* classes VI A, VI B and VIII C with MDD and MDS, autism spectrum disorders, Down syndrome

*Methods and procedures:* observation, conversation, explanation, demonstration, independent work.

*Material resources:* laptop, interactive whiteboard, thread, felt sheets and coloured sponge, buttons, decorative objects (beads, pom poms, fluffy wire), glue gun, scissors.

*Human resources:* 6 pupils

*Aim of the activity:* To reinforce practical skills and to develop the creative potential of the pupils by making Christmas tree ornaments.



*Description of the activity:* The activity took place in the classroom. First, the



materials needed for the activity were prepared and a positive climate for communication was ensured.

At the interactive board, the pupils were introduced to the theme of the activity and then an introductory discussion took place based on them. The students were asked to identify the materials on the table and the objectives were presented in accessible

language. The teacher presented the model ornament to the students and then explained the steps to work on it. Under the teacher's guidance, the students started to make the Christmas gnome, following the working steps:

1. The gnome's helmets were prepared from different colours of felt. The pupils took turns choosing their favourite colours and the accessories (beads, buttons, etc.) they wanted to use.

2. Coloured wool was prepared for the main Christmas ornament. The pupils knotted several strands of wool and then glued them on the hat.
3. The pupils took turns going forward and with the help of the teacher assembled the two elements.
4. The decorative accessories chosen by each pupil were glued on using the glue gun.

When all the students had completed the steps, they tidied up the desks. The students were praised for their respect for the way they worked, and the ornaments made were hung in the decorated tree in each class.

### *Christmas tree decorations*

*Coordinating teachers:* Apătăchioae Irina - Oana, Vezeteu Diana - Elena

*Target group:* 5th A and 5th B classes, pupils with severe mental impairment, autism spectrum disorders and Down syndrome

*Methods and*

Observation,  
explanation,  
exercise, independent work.



*procedures:*

conversation,  
demonstration,

*Material resources:* pictures, videos, interactive whiteboard, colored cardstock paper, templates, scissors, glue, hole punch, stars, snowflakes, paper trees, model work

*Human resources:* 5 pupils

*Aim of the activity:* to strengthen practical skills and to develop the creative and artistic potential of the pupils by making the proposed Christmas-themed works.

*Description of the activity:* The activity took place in the classroom. The materials necessary for the activity were prepared and a positive climate for communication was ensured. At the interactive board students were presented with a Christmas story, there was an introductory discussion about winter and then students answered a series of questions. Students were shown the model work and explained the steps involved in making the globes. To a background of Christmas carols, the pupils were given their materials and worked individually and with the help of the teacher where appropriate. The pupils cut out the outline of the circle for the globes, punched out stars, snowflakes and baubles and then glued them onto the cut-out shape. After the students finished the activity, they cleaned up the workspace and the work on the board was reviewed. General and individual assessments were also made, looking at how the work was done and the elements of originality.



### **Winter collage**

*Coordinating teachers:* Tătaru Alina, Vîncă Ana Maria, Mocanu Verginica Maria, Mărian Alina, Lipciuc Monica

*Target group:* students of the 4th B and 2nd A grades

*Methods and procedures:* explanation, demonstration, frontal and individual work, verbal assessment;

*Material resources:* observation, conversation, explanation, demonstration, verbal instruction, group work, verbal appreciation; coloured paper, tissues, worksheets, coloured pencils, diplomas, pictures;

*Human resources:* pupils in grades IV B and II A;

*Aim of the activity:* To improve psychomotor and social skills, space and time orientation, and socio-cognitive development through fun exercises and games about the winter season

*Activity description:* The activity takes place in the classroom. Attention is drawn by showing students a picture of the "Winter Collage".

The teachers ask the students what the collage represents. The pupils answer and are then asked what season is it and what are the characteristics of this season.

The following emerges:

- It is snowing, instead of raindrops we have snowflakes
- It is cold
- We can make snowmen
- Sometimes the sun comes out
- The trees have no leaves

Students will then be given the collage model to make, with support, by glueing the elements provided

At the end of the activity, students give their opinion on the lesson. The teachers give the students a diploma for their involvement in the activity and for completing the tasks.



### *Gingerbread sweets*

*Coordinating teachers:* Apătăchioae Irina Oana, Barbir Andrei, Iancu Dumitrița- Iuliana, Lipciuc Monica, Munteanu Mihaela, Vezeteu Diana-Elena

*Target group:* 5th, 6th B, 7th C classes

*Methods and procedures:* Observation, conversation, explanation, demonstration, exercise, independent work.



*Material resources:* laptop, speakers, aprons, gloves, recipe ingredients, special shapes, juicer, tray, baking paper, pencils for decoration sugar icing, decorative items, tea, and glasses.

*Human resources:* 8 pupils

*Aim of the activity:* To actively involve pupils in activities that make them aware of and understand the importance of practical household activities for the development of life skills.

*Description of the activity:* The activity took place in the school kitchen. The necessary materials for the activity were prepared, and the students were instructed on safety and hygiene rules in the kitchen. The teachers asked the students to identify the



working materials on the table, and then the activity continued with the preparation of the gingerbread, following the working steps: combining the ingredients, preparing, and rolling out the dough with the twister, cutting the gingerbread with the special shapes, baking the

gingerbread, decorating it with sugar icing or decorative elements and tasting the gingerbread with a cup of coffee. At the end of the activity, there were stimulating and encouraging comments on the way the pupils followed the work steps, their involvement, and the way they worked with the teachers.



## Spring flowers



*Coordinating teachers:* Vîncă Ana Maria, Mărian Alina, Vîncă Ștefan Alexandru

*Target group:* students of the 4th B and 2nd A, 9th grade.

*Methods and procedures:* explanation, demonstration, frontal and individual work, verbal assessment.

*Material resources:* acrylics, coloured paper, band-aids, relaxing music, and spring songs.

*Human resources:* students in grades IV B and II A, and IX.



*Aim of the activity:* To develop students' psychosocial skills through art therapy activities.

*Description of the activity:* The activity takes place in the classroom. It is carried out by capturing attention through the presentation of spring pictures. Some of the pictures

will also contain spring flowers, which the pupils will have to name and then identify colours specific to the spring season.

Teachers will demonstrate a technique for printing flowers on paper using an inflated bag. The acrylic paint will be applied to the bag with the brush and then transferred to the colored sheet. Then add details to obtain flowers, butterflies, and landscapes.



## **Bookmarks - Erasmus + Days**

*Coordinating teachers:* Apătăchioae Irina - Oana, Iancu Dumitrița - Iuliana, Vezeteu Diana - Elena

*Target group:* classes VI A, VI B and VIII C (DMS)

*Methods and procedures:* observation, conversation, explanation, demonstration, exercise, independent work.

*Material resources:* laptop, interactive whiteboard, speakers, printer, A4 white paper, laminated sheets, hole punch, pictures, scissors, thread, beads.



*Human resources:* 14 pupils

*Aim of the activity:* Description of the activity: The activity took place in the classroom. First, the materials needed for the activity were prepared and a positive climate for communication was ensured. At the interactive board, the pupils were introduced to the activity topic through a video, and then there

was an introductory discussion based on the pictures and explanations. Students were asked to identify the materials on the table and the objectives were presented in accessible language. The teacher gave a demonstration, and then students started to make the bookmark, following the working steps:

1. Images representative of Erasmus+ days were printed and laminated



2. The images were cut out according to the outline.
3. The bookmarks were perforated.
4. Preparing the thread.
5. The thread was inserted into the perforated part, beads were added and then the knot was tied.

After all the students had completed the work steps, they tidied up their desks and analysed their work. General and individual assessments were also made, and the work was followed. The results were displayed on the board prepared for Erasmus + days.

### *“Special hearts”*



*Coordinating teachers:* Apătăchioae Irina - Oana, Iancu Dumitrița - Iuliana, Vezeteu Diana- Elena

*Target group:* 5th A, 5th B and 7th C classes (DMS)

*Methods and procedures:* Observation, conversation, explanation, demonstration, exercise, independent work.

*Material resources:* laptop, speakers, liquid glue, caps, paintbrushes, plastic bowls, cardboard hearts, scissors, coffee beans, corn beans, bean beans, cardboard straws, acrylic colours.

*Human resources:* 10 pupils

*Aim of the activity:* To develop practical skills by making handmade crafts for Valentine's Day.



*Description of the activity:* The didactic activity took place in the classroom. The necessary conditions for the activity were created: preparation and distribution of the necessary materials, ensuring an appropriate psycho-affective climate. The pupils' attention was captured by

means of a power-point presentation, "All about Valentine's Day". Specifically, they were presented with some information about Valentine's Day, the associated symbols and people's customs related to this holiday. Based on this discussion, they moved on to announce the theme and the proposed objectives. Each student had the necessary materials on the table and the model work was displayed on the board. The students intuited the steps of the work with the help of the questions asked by the teacher, and then they did the work:



1. They cut out the cardboard hearts according to the outline.



2. They put liquid glue on the lid.

3. Using the brush they applied glue to the cardboard heart.

4. They glued the materials (beans, corn, coffee;) to the glue according to their own creativity.

5. Where only beans were used, pupils were painted with acrylic colours.

Pupils were supported at all times in their work, taking into account the specific nature of the classes.

The work was displayed in front of the class on a bench for scrutiny. The lesson ended with general and individual assessments of the student's involvement in the activity.

## Ceramic tiles

*Coordinating teachers:* Apătăchioae Irina Oana, Barbir Andrei, Iancu Dumitrița-Iuliana, Vezeteu Diana-Elena

*Target group:* grades VI A, VI B and VIII C (DMS)



*Methods and procedures:* Observation, conversation, explanation, demonstration, exercise, independent work

*Material resources:* glue, glue gun, watercolours, pens, clay stencils, cardboard stencils, canvas, scissors, and pictures.

scissors, and pictures.

*Human resources:* 12 students

*The purpose of the activity:* Develop practical skills and capitalise on the creative and artistic potential of the students.

*Description of the activity:* This activity took place in the art therapy workshop. The teacher initiated a short conversation about spring and how we



celebrate the first day of spring. The students were presented with the working stages for making ceramic objects, which they will offer on the occasion of March 1st. Before starting the activity, the students were asked to perform different exercises to warm up the muscles of the hands: "The storm, the rain, the sun is coming." The teacher invited the children to

discover the tools and materials that will be used to create the ceramic objects, he explained to the students the order of performing the steps for making the

objects: modelling the clay with the rolling pin, printing the forms, baking the clay forms and drying the clay, painting objects, glueing objects to cardboard. Through the Gallery Tour method, each child analyzed the works of the others and chose the one he likes the most. In the end, the ceramic objects were given as gifts.



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