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**THE STRATEGY OF UNDERSTANDING
YOUNG CHILDREN'S GROWTH,
DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING**

The Strategy of an Educational Nexus

THEATRE LAB TRNOVO (TLT)





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Preface

Based on long-standing development research on the education of children in kindergarten, we have concluded that an institution need to move from childcare and day-care activities to the open development of space and the conditions for voluntary and liberating learning in a social learning community in order to achieve a joyous and curious life and/or holistic self-development in the institution.

An institution that used to take care of children instead of parents has to transform its fundamental priorities and thus the purpose in its philosophy, vision and activity so that the children can learn, demonstrate empathy and develop in the community without suffering from hospitalism or parental alienation syndrome.

The mental burden of a child does not pass simply by strengthening his/her personality, but mostly by relieving the organization of education work, by managing the institution and the group of children, putting an emphasis on ethical qualities and better professional skills, as well as by feeling love in co-experiencing with people we accept and thus respect.

Following long-standing development research and an innovative approach, the Trnovo Kindergarten has managed to find the key to understanding children's learning and development, which represents the foundation of the strategy we are presenting below.

Introduction

Educators observe various periods of children's development as part of their natural growth. In collaboration with parents and education experts, educators establish a special form of collaboration with children by introducing two threads: 1. enriched educator's work and 2. in the form of the Pedagogical Puppeteer. These two approaches, combined in one person, enable the spread of reciprocal and unconditional pedagogical love for the healthy development of children and their adaptation.

The Strategy of Understanding Young Children's Growth, Development and Learning considers all the current findings of the Project Work with a Puppet (PWP) and also includes courageous

ideas for the further development of educational nexus named TLT – Theatre Lab Trnovo.

The Strategy represents a starting point for launching an action plan for holistic programme activities and training for educators to establish the new pedagogic/didactic features of the newly created educational institution. In this context, the Trnovo Kindergarten and TLT will function together with the intention of mutually enriching professional knowledge.

Builders of TLT

WHAT IS THE NEXUS?¹

A Co-Existing Community.

Based on three different views:

1. Free natural adaptation²
2. An open didactic stage for developing the art of impressions and expressions³
3. TLT for the research, exploration and discovery of science and art⁴

1 A place for educational co-existence – Open Learning Space, open for free acceleration with prediction that everyone is able to do/search/discover everything without limits.

2 UNESCO learning strategy and PDL.

3 For relieving and reconstructing of one's mind.

4 Some sort of self-supply with learning magnets – attractive content that functions well and are up-to-date.

Free natural adaptation + the art of didactical communication + an open science approach = "TLT"

Goals of the strategy = the co-existence of the strengths of the big ones (adults) and the small ones (children)

Method: natural liberating learning

A didactic approach: didactic stage

Learning place: TLT

Goal of the Strategy: co-existing community

DEFINING the Theatre Lab Trnovo (TLT)

1. The Project Work with a Puppet (PWP) defines learning as natural, liberating adaptation.⁵ **Learning as a free and liberating form of adaptation to the world** is an innovative strategic goal of transforming global society by 2030. This is defined as the sustainable development of the global world.

⁵ According to UNESCO, learning is defined as free natural adaptation. The point is to ensure the sustainable development of the world by learning. Natural adaptation signifies the transformation, renovation and adaptation of temperament, an atmosphere where a person can cope with no health related consequences and minimal bad temper, anger and anxiety, with a positive attitude and interest that one is capable of sharing with others.

It is a matter of an inventive balance of the tendency towards a global world in the present time and place.

TLT is a movement that encourages this sort of learning for holistic self-development – so-called healthy development.

Nevertheless, it is not only about upgrading the global community in the way we intend, it is more about an innovative form of self-development with didactic support that expresses pedagogical love. We perceive it as optimal development with support for the innovative creation of sustainable pedagogical love. *This is a vision of the Strategy of Understanding Young Children's Growth, Development and Learn-*

ing. The vision addresses global society to help it self-transform and thus (self-) adapt by following a strategic learning method as an intertwinement of two didactical approaches simultaneously⁶: 1. the principle of life-long learning that encourages healthy development and 2. the reciprocal/inclusive principle of collaboration for creating and therefore mutually reinforcing⁷ growth. Both principles represent a challenge for society from the point of

⁶ As a UNESCO vision.

⁷ The principle of life-long education is regarded as an individual passing through all life periods (childhood, adolescence, adulthood and old age); the principle of inclusion is regarded as the social capability for the reciprocal empowerment of multi-generational and socio-personal development.

view of ensuring an open global learning space offering various possibilities and establishing multi-generational and multicultural liberating learning in the current era.

We are ready for global learning⁸ as a methodology for social transformation and thus, the transformation of pedagogy. Therefore, we push for a better understanding of the correlations. Innovative learning ensures greater harmony between space and time (friendly relations) inside and outside of ourselves (personal connection with the world). Through innovative learning, we sense a two or more di-

⁸ UNESCO offers.

Our vision = “Be smart – don’t fight, rather strive for permanent welfare.”

Developing an inner thinker for optimal personal and social development or cultural blossoming.

mensional perception of the world and didactics. We are aware of the varying vibrations of the learners’ strengths, who represent our common start-up educational material; the youngest collaborate with curiosity and the adults always search for better or new things to ensure the healthy development of society. Our vision, therefore, encourages an innovative search for the co-existence of mental process that enables each and every one to attain personal growth through community co-development. The innovative learning community in life-long learning believes in an individual who confides in society. Therefore, the adults and children together create the future

of the society.

2. Educational Theatre⁹ offers a pedagogic and didactic stage as an open place for representing what one has learned. According to Vygotsky, this is a place for building scaffolding, while according to Goethe the stage represents a place for play – the “playground”¹⁰. To both, the environment represents a process of (self-) transformation.

⁹ Theatre, playground; Theatre = stage; a place for open learning, a range or educational counter offering possibility to learn from both sides, a place where personal and collective stories are written and presented (exchanged).

¹⁰ Someone might think that we are talking about today’s playground; on the contrary, it is not a range. The notion of a playground should be regarded as a game for spontaneous creation.

To us, the educational theatre/playground represents a place with possibilities for discovering innovative literary-didactical stories for innovative adaptation to the world. It is a stage with and for the game of thoughts, and a stage as an opportunity for exchanging ideas and experiences for **metabolising**¹¹ and for forming personal and collective knowledge. This is a place where new ideas arise and new, unknown associative relationships are discovered. The stage enables a special way of learning and a cycle of accepting diversity and dealing

¹¹ "Metabolising" as a form of learning – an individual has time to self-reflect, assess, test, experiment and think and for other ways that lead toward self-cognition.

with it to achieve a harmony of awareness.

In the theatre/playground¹², we write intergenerational stories, create new educational magnets, spontaneously develop experiences and freely perform different experiments¹³. There is a fine, transparent and variable line between the imagination and reality. The learners' needs are taken into consideration.

The children can see how the adults identify themselves in public

¹² Theatre as a place that emphasises dialogue and communication, a place for observation; and a playground as a place for playing, which is an intimate method of understanding and creation.

¹³ Experiment as the purest form of observing the plan.

Theatre, playground for developing the art of accepting impressions and expressions and for developing innovative forms of thought support.

with the roles they play, how they perform and how others perceive their performance. The children even think about taking on their own role. The play within the stories is in fact simulated reality. The experiences of good and evil are in balance. Supporting and upgrading knowledge and mutual enrichment come as one since the social pedagogy is based on bringing together empathic relationships in a holistic co-existence in order to make the world a better place.

We all draw the Didactical Map¹⁴, in which the roles are shifted within the inspiring transformative Post-15

¹⁴ Read more in the manuals on the creation of PWP published by the Trnovo Kindergarten.

Education¹⁵ that encourages a naturally interdependent, contemplative, independent learner with the following characteristics: 1. courage for discovering new things, 2. self-motivation for creating and achieving personal and common goals, for self-examination, for creating references and for finding learning sources, 3. capability of facing the challenges, 4. capability for self-planning and setting criteria of personal learning for achieving a goal, and 5. self-education for building perseverance and resistance with the desire to pass through phases together in the process of self-development in the

¹⁵ According to UNESCO.

community – meaning to grow up.

A starting point and the concept of learning on the theatrical stage are already established, checked and tested within the Project Work with the Puppet at the Trnovo Kindergarten¹⁶. The approaches are described in publications recently prepared by the Trnovo Kindergarten. We develop a culture and skills for observing, thinking, expressing, collaborating, accepting and giving reciprocal messages from life and for life.

¹⁶ Find out more about the work and results in the manuals of the Trnovo Kindergarten. You can read about the open, transparent, respectful, responsible development of a life-loving being.

3. TLT: In its foundations, it represents a laboratory form of learning that enables a shift from closed forms of observation to the safe and open assessment of specific influences and then returning to a world of holistic perception. Opening and closing the learning environment is not controlled from the outside or in advance, it is regularly adjusted to the needs of the learners' thinking processes. In this way, we would like to use the brains of all generations, especially the young ones, to revitalise/re-invent classic analytic and synthetic thinking. The Theatre Lab Trnovo has its vision: *To teach people how to observe and sum up their insights to find innovative solutions that are compatible with prior self-development and*

are beneficial for natural and social co-existence. This means to rejuvenate academia by introducing the mental insights of the youngest. The purpose of the laboratory is to renovate the observation system using the principles of self-development for the healthy development and learning of the youngest with adults.

TLT functions according to the principles of an open learning environment. TLT provides open access to all kind of sources through open interaction and the cross-fertilization of thoughts and findings. Moreover, there are also open forms of presenting and preserving exchanges with other learning environments. We communicate in a research-adaptive way.

Everyone can be included and all can collaborate. Each individual is responsible for carrying out safe research for everyone. The young and old collaborate with mentors who assess their personal and common development. An open laboratory represents a place of the mental liberalisation of learning.¹⁷ TLT is a nexus that enables a person's self-restoration in the process of development, as well as a place for community development; an individual comes up with a basic idea and then presents it to the society so (s) he can use its feedback to continue the development of his/her idea. The bond

¹⁷ It was an attempt already in USA in the 70s, more in: Wedemeyer, Charles A., *The Once and Future school*, Washington, August, 1973.

between the individual and the society is essential for healthy life-long learning. Thus, this concept of open learning influences institutional education on all levels and also the development of educational technology.

A tendency to attain high grades is certainly no longer at the forefront, it is more important to have knowledge based on discovering what is inside of us. Therefore, in this context, openness means accessibility to oneself, self-discovery of one's potentials, and their understanding, activation and fulfilment. The inspirations and expectations, the capability to fulfil the self-development of one's potentials while feeling parental and peda-

gogical love and the love of learning are notions that are far more prominent.

Open learning thus signifies an open will, love of self-development and self-development itself. It is an unfinished life-long story that is unique for every generation. TLT therefore carries out a responsibility towards the learning community where an individual, in the process of development, seeks oneself and feels liberated in a dialogue with others. In this most natural way, we support each other in becoming what we desire and achieving what we can do, without any limits. TLT liberates our knowledge, unlike information overload. This is a com-

plex mental and didactic transformation that we are aware of. Nevertheless, we are encouraged by the already achieved goals of the literary-didactical stories of the Trnovo Kindergarten in the last decade.

The openness of the TLT can be detected from the point of view of methods and from research strategies and approaches.

Through openness, we consciously empower pedagogical, scientific and artistic discovery for creating updated expressions, enriched with the ideas and thoughts of the youngest, the experts and/or the experienced. It is an open laboratory, open science and art for 1. self-experiencing, 2. experimen-

tal games, 3. work, 4. the self-development of everyone (the youngest, their parents and/or experts) in education, science and art (a pedagogic, scientific and artistic approach or concept of the new era in education). Through this approach, we cultivate healthy project-based learning to foster innovation and conditions for sustainable development. Moreover, it offers open access to information or data and enables reciprocal enrichment with qualitative feedback so we can help each other / overcome problems using feedback recommendations, better suggestions for self-development connected to the current research questions and, at the same time, (self-)

judgement of adaptation (learning).

In the open environment, TLT not only represents an open process of understanding, it is a place for encouraging discovery and research¹⁸. An open laboratory generates ideas in a unique way: it enables free discovery using a systematic protocol of assessing the development of an idea and its use. In this way, we foster the current form of Project Work with a Puppet.

In a special pedagogic/puppet laboratory, the puppets and Pedagogical Puppeteers (PP) enable the formation and unfolding of new learning stories. The didactic principle is orient-

ed toward new innovative forms of co-existence and/or reciprocal connections between: thoughts, ideas, findings, people, the findings of previous disciplines, children's discovery play, children's and adults' games and other sources of surpluses (personal and other) for writing new creative stories. Special care is devoted to beauty (aesthetics) from the point of view of vital needs that change a character to enable the more subtle experiencing of the world's impressions and expressions, which support a better harmony in relationships. The laboratory is a perfect place for discovering and working with different material according to the children's perception. The puppeteer

¹⁸ Holistic mental process.

The VISION of Theatre Lab Trnovo (TLT): To teach people how to observe and sum up insights to find innovative solutions that are compatible with prior self-development and are beneficial for natural and social co-existence. In other words, to rejuvenate academia by introducing the mental insights of the youngest. The purpose of the laboratory is to renovate the observation system using the principles of development for achieving social self-development¹⁹.

encourages them to find answers to their research questions, which they enrich with the experts' and parents' thinking.

The Pedagogical Puppeteer (PP) is therefore not only a generational facilitator, encourager and source of pedagogical love, but also a prominent supporter and catalyst for the development of ideas. The PP does not only assess personal development but also the process of development in the holistic context and its forms of adaptation to the world. The PP assesses how the resistance of the youngest in the mental world develops through the desires of a child and not only through his/her needs. In addition to the weak-

nesses, the capabilities are put forward as a fundamental kick-starter of the learners' mental process. The PP is aware of the changing cyclical processes of content development and ensures an inexhaustible source of support. The PP represents an innovative binder who connects, strengthens, maintains and ensures that the TLT remains an inexhaustible oasis of knowledge that impregnates constantly.

We are aware that love is the strongest link and thus a master key for the qualitative adaptation and creation of a new world. Reciprocated love reinforces the affiliation of creativity.

Table: Summary

Our vision is free learning on a didactic stage for achieving the transformation of analytical and synthetic academic knowledge into self-recognition of the personal development of learning and into the process of development (in accordance with the principle of life-long learning).

We create a sustainable world in an open environment for self-restraining through inspirations and expectations.

An inclusive approach in life-long learning together with a Didactical Map within Post-15 Education enables the most open learning forms for self-recognition.

1. PWP

Natural free learning/adaptation
 Learning as free natural adaptation/development
 Sustainable development with 2 principles: life-long education, and inclusion

2. The didactic stage for accepting impressions and expressions

Healthy development
 The didactic stage for the self-transformation of learners – open learning for individual and common intergenerational learning stories – social pedagogy: emphatically bringing together within a holistic co-existence
 An open environment for innovative forms of adaptations
 Didactical Map in Post-15 Education (according to UN-ESCO)

3. TLT for the development of ideas and learning stories

Transformation of analytical and synthetic thinking including the insights of the youngest – observation/recognition of self-development
 A nexus of self-renovation with inspirations and expectations
 The most open form of learning for experiential and experimental games, work of self-development.

Used terminology (in an alphabetical order)

1. Coherence as a kaleidoscope of vibrations of several dimensions.
2. Conscious empowerment of pedagogical, scientific and artistic discovery of Post15 education is a new era in education.
3. Developing sustainable innovations as a form of encouraging the modernization/actualization/improvement of the living environment.
4. Educational theatre as art of impressions and expressions.
5. Feedforward instruction as a form of encouragement and support for continuation of adaptation/learning/innovation.
6. Freedom of defining learning aims is a vision for creating personal and social surplus.
7. Healthy project-based education as a healthy form of learning.
8. Inclusion for collaboration for mutual reinforcement.
9. Interdisciplinary groups and programs as the academic type of collaboration of different experts.
10. Laboratory as a place for scientific experiments and research.
11. Learning stage as an educational counter offering possibility to learn from both sides.
12. Multidisciplinary project collaboration – considering the problem/challenge from the point of different disciplines, professions that deals with life challenge.

13. Nexus. Place of binding together, building relationships, link.
14. Observation of holistic perception for reinventing of analytic and synthetic thinking.
15. Principle of inclusion as a form of mutual empowerment for the development of society and one's personality.
16. Principle of life-long learning – an individual passing through all life periods (childhood, adolescence, adulthood and old age).
17. Protocol of assessment is a holistic system and procedure of improving the existent knowledge.
18. Self-active heart-minded learning and teaching approach as a deep learning collaboration between learners.
19. Self-developing actual research question is a question for personal and social self-development.
20. Sustainable development of global world.
21. The aim of life-long school learning is an independent learner as a form of behaviour and learner's reaction; the overall goal of a free school is the transformative learning as a form of learner's thinking process.
22. Theatre – a place for work, study and play.

23. Transformative learning theory combines the theory of humane and constructive learning.
24. Trnovo lab is an open system of self-development in the community. This means to rejuvenate academia by introducing the mental insights of the youngest.
25. UNESCO Learning as free natural adaptation.
26. Using one's heart to achieve higher intelligence – considering intuition and inspiration that create a willingness and spirit for self-development.
27. Vision of UNESCO = aspirational, transformative holistic Post 15 education = Trnovo Lab = To teach people how to observe and sum up their insights to find innovative solutions that are compatible with prior self-development and are beneficial for natural and social co-existence.
28. Young in an innovative community.

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