

SPECIFICS OF UNIVERSITY EXPERIENTIAL TEACHING OF DIDACTIC DISCIPLINES IN THE FINE ART EDUCATION

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Abstract: Teaching of fine art education in the didactic disciplines may be not only theoretical. It can be also focused on obtaining the skills and experiences. Teaching takes place in terms of the external manifestations in premises of the department, in the university gallery and also in the broader campus. In terms of internal experience the teaching takes place in thoughts, feelings and actions of teacher and student. Effectiveness of our effort show us the results of our qualitative researches. The means of education are carried out in the space of personal centered education, creative-humanistic education and animocentric stream of fine art education. Our goal is development of student's personality and development of student's ability of transfer the acquired skills to the teaching practice.

Keywords: student – future teacher, didactics, fine art education, research, personal development.

1 Introduction

The paper informs about the specifics of university experiential teaching in area of the didactic disciplines of fine art education in the circumstances of Department of Creative Arts and Education of Faculty of Education at Constantin the Philosopher University in Nitra. The paper informs about teaching system of our long-term educational activity and it is aimed at practical side of the education, at the animocentric stream in fine art education and at qualitative researches implemented into the educational process. This article deals with the theoretical basis of meaning and aim of our education and focuses on practical process of teaching with regard to goals of education, given to the results of our previous studies.

2 The Basic Principles of the Experiential Fine Art Education

At our Department we teach didactic disciplines the specialization *students of teaching fine art* (previous students of teaching fine art education) - the future students for the second degree of elementary school, basic art school and high school, and students – the future *teachers for elementary school*. In our view the aim of the fine art education is through developing the personality of fine art teacher to influence the child's personality in all its breadth. It begins from self-perception and self-evaluation, to perception and evaluation of others and of the world. It continues from development of communication with self and with others, through the cultivating the soul, through increasing creativity, to problem solving and coping with the negative aspects of life. It ends in ability to live fully, to understand mission and purpose of life.

Based on it we build our own pedagogical model. We base our education on several principles. We have a new view on artistic **talent** and we see an **interpretations of artwork**, **gallery animation** and the **cathartic experience** of student's own artistic creation as the means of creating a good relationship with visual art. We see **motivation** as a way of internalising teacher's objectives by students and **self-expression** (verbal, written or practical art creation) as the principle of **freedom**. We see an **evaluation** including **self-evaluation** as a means of self-knowledge. We see an **Internet** as a source of inspiration, information and motivation, and as an enrichment of communication between student and teacher.

3 The Practical Application of the Theoretical Principles

We perceive **artistical talent** in accordance with J. Belko (2001) as ability to accept stimulus openly, find solutions in fulfilling the task of visual art, pick up the new procedures. Then the pupil/student can express boldly, creatively and authentically, and he/her can develop through the artistic creation. In this view

each student can feel and experience the individual and pleasant success.

According to Š. Gero and S. Tropp (1999) art helps the teachers and their students to deal with the life situations, to navigate in them, to find the key for issues of the contemporary life. Š. Gero and S. Tropp (1999) referred to various **interpretations** of artwork: verbal – explanation and practical - implementation. Our students cut, glued, illustrate and paint the copy - reproduction of art work, invent stories, poems, the new names for art work, they find association connected with art works, copy them and paraphrase, create **gallery animation** in our university gallery, create the vivid images, make performances and happenings, implement the principles of land-art in the outside area of university.

Well taught lessons have an aesthetic pleasure, which is associated with trouble as a part of the creative problem solving. After initial struggle with the issue and with the chosen art methods, pupil/student transforms these challenges into art through his/her own abilities and ambitions. Then comes a solution, satisfaction and release, which are related with identification of their art work (Štofko, 2010). In order to convey this precious **cathartic experience** to students-nonartist, we focus on active support of authentic creative self-expression.

The students of teaching fine art underestimate external **motivation** and in their imagination of the teaching profession they prefer teaching the talented students against untalented. The reason is that for gifted pupils the students predict the internal motivation for creating, in accordance with their own experience. The aim of our teaching is to offer a new perspective on the motivational part of lessons as an opportunity to create a joyful, playful, inspirational or relaxing experience that enriches not only the lessons, but also a personality of pupil, in addition to educational goals of teaching.

The students connect with art work through the verbalised feelings and experiences and they can get easier to demanding verbal interpretation of art work. The reflective nature of assumption formulation is typical for the visual interpretation, which creates the conditions for free expression of opinions (Gero, Tropp, 1999). These principles are conducted with our students by interviews during lessons and by possibility to **express their feelings** and their thoughts in the written reflection. Then they create texts about origin and meaning of fine art, poems and stories inspired by art works, the manifesto of a new artistic trend.

According to creators of guidelines of evaluation in the subject fine art education, L. Čarný and K. Ferliková (2012), the evaluation is difficult, because experience and interpretation of the world by artistic expression is the value connected with the individual characteristics, and the possibility of its objectification is limited. Nevertheless, sensitive resolution, indication and recognition of these values are very important for personal development of pupils.

Our students are faced with issues of evaluation in their lessons and in their practice at schools and self-assessment is a welcome part of evaluation. The students are confronted with self-evaluation of their own seminar and artistic works and their outputs during lessons. The self-assessment is also part of written reflection from their practice. The possible increasing of the self-assessment skills can be achieved by increasing of the self-knowledge by inclusion of specific art therapy creative activities. The another possibility is making a **self-reflective pedagogical diary**. The diary provides teachers the look at him/herself with the necessary distance, reminding him/her the positives and beauty of profession, but also the negatives, so the teacher knows what to avoid in the future. He/her can review the past and plan the future of the teaching. The diary also helps in

area of mental hygiene, so required in a busy teaching profession.

This generation of the young people, studying at our university, raised with the **information technologies** from their infancy and it is quite natural for them. The use of **Internet** during the lessons requires an interesting unanswered question, a discussion or finding of a lack information. Welcome is listening to music during the practical art activities, as a background or dulcification, but also as an incentive for activity and as an integral part of painting the music. The students use the Internet for prepare their teaching units, where they imitate the art school lesson. The student represented the teacher, before entering the job, has task to encourage classmates for artistic activity and for that purpose students choose almost everytime a picture presentation or video from Internet.

The students often make an account for their class on **Facebook** in order to inform each other about studies and deadlines. They share information, tasks and topics of the term papers, create the state exam questions. In the case of mediation of some information from the teacher, they publish them on the FB account, to ensure the greatest extension of the information. The students like to watch the photos from lessons on the website of our Department (www.kvtv.pf.ukf.sk). They share photos from our experiential teaching at their personal Facebook accounts and many of photos are spontaneously made by them with their mobile phones during our lessons.

4 The Main Streams of the Education

Except of the **Personal centered education** (next only PCE) with the principles of freedom, trust, authenticity and empathy, and except of the **Creatively humanistic education** (next only CHE) as a means of developing creativity through the development of emotional intelligence, empathy and synesthetic perception, we use in our teaching the principles of one of 4 known streams of fine art education - **animocentric stream**, using the principles of **art therapy**, **artefiletics**, **spiritual fine art education** and **sensual fine art education**.

In a spirit of the conception **PCE** (Freiberg, Rogers, 1998), our students are encouraged to selfevaluation, to solve problems of the teaching and artistic processes on they own. They present their own work in front of the class, express their own opinion, lead the discussions. The students can comment a matter of the lessons, atmosphere and results of their and others work. They have freedom in their choice of the themes and techniques, in the processing of visual ideas and they are motivated with the teacher's non-assessment commentary.

Since the **creativity** can be increased, it is also possible to develop the properties useful for development of creativity: curiosity, independence, self-confidence, courage, motivation, self-esteem, fancy, imagination, intuition, empathy and **synesthetic perception** (Zelina, Zelinová, 1990). We include the activities of the directly or indirectly developing creativity into our lessons. The students should choose one from several reproductions with the country theme and they should to associate the music, sounds, smell; to figure out, from which movie could be the shot; to determine, what was in that movie before and after. The conception of **CHE** emphasizes the importance of **affective education**. Students are managed to **express their moods** by their fingers, body posture, gesture, grimace, or using the cube illustrated with the various mood expressions. **Empathy** - feeling in, is one of the principles of the conceptions PCE and also CHE. The principle of empathy was realized through the reproductions of the art works (mostly paintings) when are the persons, into which the students can empathize. The students create a dialogue and situations in which the persons from the picture feel, think and act.

We include into our lessons the principles of the various stress included into animocentric stream. We will list their names, means and goals. The **animocentric stream** of fine art education wants to develop the children's personality through the active

fine art creation (Šupšáková, 1999). **Learning, experience and evaluation of the world** has a global and ecological direction, **Spiritual Art Education** finds the values and meaning of life, **Sensory Art Education**, in artistic creation of the natural processes, including physical sensations, finds the understanding of the world (Roeselová, 2000). **Artefiletics** has aim to harmonize an imbalance between consciousness and unconsciousness through the specific themes based on the archetypes, through the presentation of the opinions in a safe group. The further means of developing the future teacher's personality is the **art therapy**, which has the ability to influence positively on people through the active reflective art creation in the save atmosphere, with the leading of art therapist.

We use many various **topics** from the above listed streams, but each class is focused on a particular specific **goal**. Many of those topics are already part of our long-termed education, for example Me (Psychological self-portrait, My name, What's in my head, Me here and now, My Two Faces), You, We, Group creation, Territory, My family, Emotions, Place where I cry/laugh, Problem, Relationships, Love, Communication (Misunderstanding, Dialogue, Quarrel), Heroes, Love yourself, My life (Panorama of life, My way of life, From where and whereto I go, Past-present-future, First steps into the future), Watercolor Action, Map of stress, What is my dream, Masks, Archetypes (Love and Hatred, Goodness and Evil, Man and Woman, God, Nature, Elements, Mandala), Mandala diary, Soul (Temple of my soul, Color and shape of my soul), Synesthesia (Music and Sounds in the classroom), Desires and wishes (What I want for Christmas, Country where I am a king, Ideal partner, Ideal myself, Ideal life), Free self-expression without the theme.

The important parts of the lessons take also these activities: visual reflection of the lesson, relaxation with visualization, projective techniques (tree, house, boat in a storm), playful drawing for two, drawing with two hands together, blindfolded palpation of objects and then drawing the objects, blindfolded drawing and modeling, relaxation drawing and painting for relaxing a stress, painting with fingers, using the principles of action-, land- and body-art. In our teaching, the focus is on the positive experience, including a reflection of work and group, as well as on the awareness of the potential pitfalls of the used art therapeutic principles.

The art therapy offers us the methods of **relaxation and imagination** (Šicková, 2000). We use the pictures of some artists with the flowers or trees for support of relaxation and imagination. The students have to imagine that they are in a nice place from the picture with somebody they love. Another way of the imagination was inspired by knowledge and the images of the prehistoric and ancient fine art. The students were transferred by the leaded visualisation to some historical period with an idea of the place, clothing and imagined activities. The relaxation was used also during familiarizing the students with some art tendency. For example the symbolism has motifs, inter alia, angels, and the students should imagine that they are in a beautiful place with an angel.

5 Researches at the University Fine Art education

Area of the fine art education seems perfect for implementing the qualitative research. At first, we devote the theoretical basis of qualitative research and its specifics regarding to the specifics of teaching fine art, next we devote the research results and findings. Our Department has tradition of the researches, as well as the future plans. We discusses a number of the **qualitative pedagogical researches** conducted in the university environment. The results of research are applied almost immediately into teaching practice, what we see like its greatest importance.

5.1 The Theoretical Basis of the Qualitative Pedagogical Researches

A qualitative approach is typical by non-quantification (Miovský, 2006), by its unique and unrepeatable, processuality

and dynamics, therefore for the need of practice we see as the most appropriate the qualitative type of research, as its character match with the specifics of the teaching fine art education. For the purposes of our teaching practice is important to examine one small group (the number of about 40 students studying at our department) more than a large group (students in Slovakia or in other departments), because the applicability of the research findings is rather limited due to the differences in circumstances.

According to A. Strauss and J. Corbin (1999), the qualitative research is used to detect the nature of a phenomena or to obtain some new views about a known phenomena. In the teaching process, in the current changing conditions in education, there are a lot of new phenomena. In many ways we enter the uncharted land under current conditions and then is welcome when we do not have a hypothesis, because it provides freedom and authenticity of the research. The researcher is not required to explain the phenomena, more important is their understanding (Jusczyk, 2003), and it allows to remain constantly curious and suppliant in front of the mysteries of the world. The same data can be interpreted in different ways, the more in the visual arts, based on a subjective individual's experience.

The research has become a natural part of the teaching didactic disciplines of fine art. The students are actively interested in purpose of the research in which they participate, and in the research activities related with education, in content of the questionnaire, which are often the impuls for a talk. We treat the sample of students not as "objects", but as the personalities with the changing mood, changing living conditions and with the right to change views on the research subjects.

5.2 Research Findings

Below are some of our previous studies. In all cases was researcher also a teacher. Participants were always the students-future fine art teachers from our university. Research conducted over one or two semesters and data were collected during the lessons. We put a lot of emphasis on the survey of attitudes of students to different aspects of fine art education, because on these attitudes we can build and correct them at the lessons.

In order to optimize the experience of our fine art lessons we verified **the effectiveness of applying the animocentric stream** into our teaching. The research findings confirm that our students feel comfortable in the classroom due to a personal well-being and a meaningfulness of content of the subject. The impact of teaching on the level of their artistic abilities was subjective also objective positive and **art activities had a positive influence on their self-confidence**. While previously they have seen the content of subject only in obtaining information and some craft skills, later they perceived the lessons as their opportunity for self-fulfillment.

In order to find out the students **opinions to meaning and aims of fine art education**, we have found out that our students most often associate fine art education with creativity including fantasy and imagination, with relaxation, personality development including development of skills and emotional intelligence, art techniques, art skills, freedom in self-expression, aesthetic/artistic feeling/perceiving, the development of perception with aim to see the beauty, motivation, art therapy including diagnostic, game/play, joy/pleasure and art history with understanding art work.

In order to base our teaching on the real ideas and experiences of our students in the field of evaluation and self-evaluation we conducted two studies. In the first study we have found that **students perceive evaluation of pupil's art work as difficult**. Their pursuit of objectivity in the evaluation is in conflicts with subjectivity of perception and expression of fine art creation and also they cannot find the positive aspects of some art works. They don't know how to boast it and they are afraid of the pupils' injury because of the teacher's assessment. The assessment at university should be also applicable to the

teaching practice of students, hence the research contribution includes chosen evaluation criteria from artefiletics.

In the other research we have found that our **students considered self-assessment of their own artworks easy rather than difficult**, but difference is not significant. Some students have a sense of good ability to evaluate their own work, but the self-assessment discourages others students by its subjectivity. Impact on the perception of self-assessment by students as difficult has also present preponderance of external assessment.

In order to align the education with actual knowledge of information technology and the mass media we studied **how our students perceive the mass media**, what they know about them, what attitudes they have, how they use them and how they see their effects. **Attitude to the media is positive more than negative**. We found that some students do not know what the media is and they **have prejudices against them**.

6 How the Students Perceive the Fine Art Education

Except of a few negative reflections, mostly of our students perceive this concept positively, because they can develop without fear of failure. The negative writing reflections reflected the fear of freedom, spontaneity, openness, rare bad feelings from relaxations and fear of presentation of own thoughts. Our students wrote that they found their drawing style, and although at first they were afraid, then they were surprised from themselves, they enjoyed painting, they found that they were able to do, what they even did not imagine. During this process, the students were happy and satisfied with results of their artistic creation.

Many students continued their art work at home and they shared their home art works with the teacher. The students in their reflections liked the lessons, a good atmosphere, a friendly relationship teacher-student, tolerance, they thanked for a very nice time with a good humor and openness. The students initially tended to feel fear and uncertainty of creation and its presentation in a classmates group, but with an acceptance from the educator they overcame it.

7 Conclusion

In the area of our teaching many things happened. The study system changed, the electronic systems was introduced, the evaluation, educational, artistic and scientific work has changed. The teacher will work in the different types of schools, he/she will teach many different age groups in the changing conditions. In this area of changing circumstances we search the base for our education and we have found it in the student's personality.

Personality can be developed through each discipline - theoretical, practical and didactic. The theoretical disciplines of fine art education also have the great potential to develop the student's personality (Récka, 1996, Récka, 2000, Récka, 2010), applying the principles of education through art. In our opinion, the experience with own development, own reflections of maturing, is the most important part of university education. Although we have to conclude, that fine art education is still taught mostly by the unqualified teachers (Fichnová, Satková, Janková, 2008), we can also say, that the new generation of fine art teachers is very promising.

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