

STUDENTS' IMPLICIT THEORIES ABOUT QUALITY AT THE ART EDUCATION

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Abstract: In the art education (AE), the concept of "quality teaching" is often associated with the product, material sources or students' talent. It is primarily the teacher who affects the quality of the subject, his education and idea of the quality. The research outcomes of students' implicit theories about the quality in the AE indicate shared perception of formative influence of external conditions more than actual teachers' performance. The need for raising students' didactic and professional skills shows as crucial in order to achieve the quality of the subject. In practice, it is the pressure put by management and schools founders on the quality of subject and support of further teacher training. Quality barrier resulting from material equipment or time allocation is, compared to insufficient competencies of the teacher, only secondary.

Keywords: art education, quality of education, characteristic of quality, primary education, implicit theories

1 The concept of quality in education

Increasing requirement for achieving high-quality education, especially in recent two decades, is significantly emphasized. The reason is that market pressure which emphasizes the requirement of the ability of individuals and societies to succeed in strongly competitive world as well as the change of the philosophy of education itself. The quality standards are thus subject to different requirements than before. Above all, it is a change of perception of quality as the given "state" towards to the "process" which is not closed (Kessler, 2013). The emphasis on achieving of quality and the constant quality improvement is therefore raised from the side of school, its founders, parents, pupils and the market.

Clearly define the quality of education is very difficult. In this question experts agree primarily on the issue that quality is a concept hard to grasp, like any absolute value (Harvey Green, 1993). Cheng (1997) shows that the concept of quality will always be perceived differently depending on who it assesses and on the criteria of individual judges. These are not only different views on one fact, but different views on various facts that only have the same name (Harvey Green, 1993). Quality can be perceived either as an absolute category, as ideal or certain threshold set by standard, or can be seen as dynamic, according to the context, changing category.

1.1 Quality in Education

Cheng (1997) defines quality of education as "a complex of components that are present at the input, in process and at the output of the educational system and guarantee the satisfaction of all explicitly and implicitly defined requirements of educational institution" (p. 23). At the same time he points out the fact that "quality is a multi-faceted concept and therefore cannot be judged according to one indicator" (p. 23). Within the context of the Czech Republic, to the issue of quality education are significantly devoted Janík (2010, 2012, 2013), Janíková, Vlčková (2009), then in art education it is Slavík (Slavík, Dytrová, Fulková, 2010; Slavík, Lukavský, 2013). Janík, equally to foreign authors, points out the complexity of the issues and the difficulty in finding the criteria of its assessment, because they depend on the perspective adopted by the assessor. He draws particular attention to the need to define, besides the quality, also the poor quality and to start using this concept specifically, not only as an indication of optimal state. As the important indicator of quality of teaching Janík perceives especially teacher's pedagogical content knowledge and his

ability to transform learning content (Janík, 2008, 2009, 2010; Slavík, Janík 2012).

1.2 Quality Models

Quality assessment models used in marketing and management processes have become an important inspiration for assessing the quality of education. Frequently used example is e.g. TQM model (Total Quality Management) (Tanner, De Toro, 1992; Bonstingl 2001), or IPO (Input- Process- Output) (Chua, 2004). Important initiative for quality assessment in teaching practice offers Cheng (1995). Based on models for organizational and school effectiveness he defines seven possible models applicable to requests, assessing and adjusting terms of quality. It concerns 1. Goals and specification model; 2. Resource - input model; 3. Process model; 4. Satisfaction model; 5. Legitimacy model; 6. Absence of problems model and 7. Organizational learning model. These individual models show that it is necessary to distinguish quality not only at input, in process or at output, but to perceive indicators internal and external. It is necessary to take into consideration the perspective of accessor - whether it concerns the quality perception by pupil, teacher, parent, school, project owner of standardized test, potential employer or related level of education. These examples clearly show that research of quality in the learning process and its assessment require a clear definition of the field, goals and the chosen perspective. Otherwise it is not possible to grasp this vast and difficult concept.

2 Quality in the Art Education

Quality bound to a specific field, changes the definition and conditions of quality assessment in no significant way. What is only significant to note is that *"the quality in field of arts rather refers to undivided nature of a certain thing or an experiential area, while science seeks to detect qualities as measurable quantities"* (Janík, 2012, p. 246). The view of quality as a static standard or a dynamic process and transformation is further elaborated by e.g. Burrows, Harvey Green (1992), Harvey, Green (1993). The viewpoint of the standard can be seen as mandatory content of the curriculum, process as formation of knowledge by pupil himself or teacher's ability to transform the content of the curriculum and to support own learning of pupils. In direct teaching practice it is important to see both of these aspects.

2.1 Quality Barriers in art education practice

The look into the practice based on empirical evidence and research suggests that the issue of quality of art education at the primary school is perceived very loosely and is shaped primarily by external material conditions and by achieved knowledge of the teacher. Šobánková (2012), according to research shows that teachers do not understand RVP and curricular documents. These documents generally define not only the subject goals, expected outcomes and key competencies of pupils, but also define the basic indicators of the quality of the subject. Štěpánková (2015) on the example of creativity shows that the future nor the present teachers are clear about fundamental issues that determine form and realisation of art education. It concerns questions like: "What is creativity?", "What are the characteristics of creative pupil?", "Is creativity a gift or may be supported and developed in the school?". Creativity is in fact regarded as a key competence, not only in art education. According to creativity the quality setting of the entire educational process is assessed. Significant barrier to achievement of quality is a low professional self-efficacy of teachers (Bandura, 1996, 1999; Pajares, Urda, 2006). The self-efficacy is the belief in own professional abilities and skills, the strength of conviction to succeed in given activity. This personal approach of self-efficacy influences the quality of content and curriculum mediation. Self-efficacy is formed within the entire educational history of student. It is mainly based on early

experience from the period of self-education and initial experience from the teaching practice (Bandura, 1999, 2006; Lemon, Garvis, 2013). Insufficient professional training in art subjects, along with experience with the subject at the pre-primary and primary school sets then a low level of educational content quality passed by prospective teachers at the first stage of primary schools. So the teacher teaches what he knows himself. More precisely, what he believes he knows. Researches carried out outside the context of the Czech Republic show that the problem of implementation of quality in art education is general. The cause is a wide scope of subjects of the teachers at the first stage, professional training not covering the entrance deficit knowledge of students and their own problematic experience with the subject in the past (Bresler, 1992; Brown, 2006; Lemon, Garvis, 2013; Garvis, Twigg, Pendergast, 2011). Teachers are during preparation logically focused more on native language and mathematics that are important for school and moreover are an easily measurable indicator of success of education and thus its quality. These subjects constitute 50% and more in a weekly schedule of pupil at the first stage. Other educational subjects in general are therefore moved into the second- or rather third-line of interest.

2.2 Quality indicators in art education

Own quality indicators of art education in the Czech Republic can be found generally in RVP (2007), which defines three educational domains, along with required outputs. More detailed resolution can be found in the concept of a comprehensive curriculum (Day, Hurwitz, 2012), on which DBAE is based (Delacruz, Dunn, 1996; Greer, 1997) and in the concept VCAE (Anderson, Milbrandt, 2005). The transformation of look at the meaning, aims and philosophy of education is reflected by the theory of didactics in various national contexts. The curriculum in visual education takes place in four basic categories on which a different emphasis is put: 1. Art production, 2. Aesthetics, 3. Art criticism and 4. Art history. The outputs in field of Aesthetics and Art criticism are specified by VCAE of visual literacy; AIE (UNESCO, 2006) on multicultural understanding and social issues; postmodern theory about ways of interpreting art and gender issues. The quality of teaching is however directly dependent on the person of teacher, his education, ideas about the goals and purpose of the subject, according to his own experience, professional self-efficacy and also according to values and beliefs shared by society. Hayes et al. (Project Zero, 2009) presents extensive research mapping teachers' ideas about the attributes of quality in art education. He describes in detail particular areas shaping the quality of art education. It concerns 1. students learning, 2. pedagogy, 3. community dynamics and, 4. environment.

2.3 Implicit theories of teachers

Bandura (1977, 1986) shows that self-efficacy is significant indicator of future behavior, performance and aspirations. Besides attitude towards own competencies and ideas about oneself, personal and shared conception of construct, to which competencies are related to, is important too. This also influences the attitude and activity. Runco (1999, p. 27) states that *"Laic" constructs are very important as they shape and show attitude to given reality ingrained in the context of community, culture, society.* Research of implicit theories reveals shared ideas and stereotypes kept regarding the construct (Sternberg, 1985; Plucker, Renzuli, 1999; Runco, 1999). Realisation of art education in practice is shaped by the whole complex of effects - shared ideas about the meaning, aims and quality of the subject, gained experience in the subject, achieved knowledge, but also ideas about own knowledge and skills. This definition of quality teaching by far need not match the level of quality required by higher authorities. Knowledge of implicit theories thus enables to plan and evaluate efforts to promote art education quality in better way.

3 Methodology

The aim of the research was to ascertain the students' ideas about the ideal realisation of art education and what attributes of quality in art education they recognize. The research was conducted among students of 3rd to 5th grade of Teaching for primary schools at the University of Hradec Kralove. All interviewed students had completed practical art training and basics of general didactics and had at least a minimum practise experience (1th- 3rd grade 64,6 %). Students of 4th and 5th grade (35,4 %) had attended also professional didactic teaching. The research was conducted in three phases: 1. Analysis of sources, curriculum documents and researches describing the quality, 2. interview in focus groups (5 x 15 students of primary education), 3. survey. For research was selected a combined design, most of the questions were open-ended, for their evaluation was used content analysis and the frequency phenomena was determined. The categories were designed on the base of research about the quality of art education, comparison of curricula, documents defining quality in education (e.g. UNICEF, 2004; RVP, 2007; Project Zero, 2009; Burrows, Harwey, Green, 1992) and preliminary research. Part of the questions was evaluated on a five-point Likert scale. Data collection took place in September and in October 2016, questionnaires were sent electronically to students with an opportunity to fill them in printed form. The main research questions were inspired by Project Zero at Harvard University (Project Zero, 2009) determining the teachers' ideas about the quality in art education. For research purposes in the Czech context, the questions were modified. This report focuses on the questions: 1. *What is your fantasy about high quality art education?* 2. *What do you consider to be indicators of quality of art education?* We analyzed responses from 113 respondents.

3.1 Research findings

Students' fantasies about high quality of art education

These fantasies were concentrated mainly on field of applied didactic means and forms of teaching 31 (27,4%). It concerned visits of galleries, exhibitions and excursions, work in plein air or in studio, thus in the space offering a wider range of educational opportunities than a conventional classroom.

As another important indicator of quality of art education were mentioned techniques and innovative art methods 30 (26,5%) (*"interesting", "new", "action" techniques, "paint splash", "body painting", "someone known technique"*). The f a class, not as means bound to a specific visual problem.

The attractive context of answers shows that it is mainly about technique itself, that is regarded by students as a satisfactory aim and a scope onness of teaching 23 (20,3%) was the third most frequently represented indicator of the quality of art education (*"funny", "kids like it", "looking forward", "brings joy and satisfaction"*). This attribute falls more into the category of general wishes. It says nothing about the nature of "attractive" teaching, professional qualities of the teacher, his conception, methods of teaching, subject matter. In terms of question of subject matter 23 (20,3%) respondents agreed that the *"teaching should be useful and meaningful," "to familiarize with art education," "create relationship to art education and art itself", "should have content like any other subject, "" to fulfill set targets"* etc. The statements reflect the need of students to fill up the subject with the content, but with no ability to define it precisely. The most specific request was formulated as a *"learn to draw", "to mix colours, "to become acquainted with the history of art."* The above-mentioned positive attitude towards the subject is not created only by interesting techniques, experiments with art materials or satisfaction of students and relaxing nature of the subject. It largely depends on the extent of autonomy granted to the pupil 21 (18,5%). The teacher's ability to delegate a part of responsibility for learning to the student (freedom or participation within the choice of theme, methods, methods of processing) is based on the professional qualities of the teacher, as well as the choice of didactic means, most often quoted by

students. Teacher's qualities 18 (15.9%), however, were stated as only the seventh in the order ("has a target", "can explain", "supports individuality", "partner", "professional").

Without an opinion and personal idea what is quality teaching of art education, there were 25 of respondents 25 (22.1%) ("I do not know", "never thought about it", "it's hard to be precise"). This is an alarming, though not a surprising fact. The interviewed students had passed both professional and didactic education, however too broad scope of their studies and their low self-esteem in the field of art education partly explains this figure.¹

The imagination of high quality art education			
1.	Didactic methods	31	27,4 %
2.	Techniques	30	26,5 %
3.	Without opinion	25	22,1 %
4.	Subject matter	23	20,3 %
5.	Attractiveness	23	20,3 %
6.	Autonomy	21	18,5 %
7.	Artistic Means	20	17,6 %
8.	Teacher	18	15,9 %
9.	Time	4	3,5 %
10.	Modern technology	1	-

Quality indicators in art education

This question was determining specific effects and facts recognized by students as indicators of quality. First place went to originality 41 (36.2%), ie. divergence from standard. Among children of younger school age, this criterion is relatively easy to reach and it is relatively a well qualifiable attribute of artistic works ("mutually distinct works", "different", "original", "interesting"). Followed by autonomy 36 (31.8%), pupil's option to choose his own approach, method of elaboration, grasping of topic. This attribute is important indicator of the quality of the subject and one of the education goals at the same time. In both cases it concerns the competence linked to didactic and professional skills of the teacher, his teaching methods and formulation of subject matter. Space decoration 30 (26.5%) helps to create a friendly environment and thus contributes to external conditions of quality, still it is the artistic quality of exhibited works, not the mere fact that the works are exhibited. Similarly, the originality of the work is not necessarily the indicator of quality. Art means 14 (12.3%) were assessed as less important quality indicators and in the fantasy about the "ideal" teaching were mentioned by 20 respondents (17.6%).

Quality indicators in art education			
1.	Originality	41	36,2 %
2.	Autonomy	36	31,8 %
3.	Space decoration	30	26,5 %
4.	Attractiveness	34	30 %
5.	Teacher	26	23 %
6.	Subject matter	20	17,6 %
7.	Art means	14	12,3 %

4 Discussion

It can be summarized that idea of prospective primary school teachers about the quality characteristics of the subject arises mainly from its entertainment value and attractiveness. Subject matter, professional quality of teacher, chosen didactic techniques and methods only serve this aim. On the contrary, about curriculum content and the specific idea of the method of didactic transformation, we learn very little. Students perceive well the need to chose good didactic methods that increase the attractiveness of the subject (excursions, art galleries, plein air),

allow to strengthen the autonomy of student and get him involved in project based learning. However, if the aim is a simple distinction from traditionally taught lessons (interesting techniques, spectacular art materials, action art procedures), it can not be regarded as a sign of quality. Attractiveness of the subject, emphasized by students, depends on teacher's personality, his professional knowledge and ability to present it to the pupils. Interesting techniques or sufficient amount of material themselves are not able to satisfy demands for the subject, cognitive needs of pupils or student's demand for autonomy, if they are not tied to the specific content and the visual problem being solved. Attractive form can convey the content more effectively, quality material and external favorable conditions are equally important, but they are not a panacea. If teacher lacks artistic field competencies, vision and target of the content, the art education in his conception will be a useless subject. It will not be tied to the needs of pupils, nor to the needs of society. Much required creativity, ability to think creatively and to fulfill oneself creatively is developed especially in art education. If creativity in this subject is overlooked and especially at a younger school age, it can not be expected, nor required later.

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¹ The item "I consider myself a good artist," shows that own professional skills are assessed by students rather at the lower border: neither yes / neither no 41,6%; rather not and certainly not 28,3% (69,9%). "I can easily think creatively" neither yes / neither no 37,2%; rather not and certainly not 15,1% (52,3%).

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