

## EVALUATION OF PROCESSES IN THE ARTS CLASS IN TERMS OF THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS

<sup>a</sup>XÉNIA BERGEROVÁ, <sup>b</sup>MARTIN ŠEVČOVIČ

<sup>a,b</sup> *The Department of Fine Art Education at The Faculty of Education, Comenius University in Bratislava, Račianska 59, Bratislava, 813 34, Slovak Republic*  
 email: <sup>a</sup>bergerova@fedu.uniba.sk, <sup>b</sup>sevcovic@fedu.uniba.sk

The paper is one of the outputs of the project KEGA 003UK-4/2020 Art Education Evaluation.

**Abstract:** The paper evaluates teaching methods in the school subject Arts on the 2nd level of primary school. The collected data were evaluated using the grounded theory, which is based on the research processes of open coding, axial coding and selective coding. The research brought about a new theory that introduces an evaluation workbook into the teaching of Arts class – a practice which is not common in Slovak schools. The evaluative research tool (non-standardized) is not only aimed at supporting and streamlining processes in Arts class, but also at motivating students in their artistic endeavours.

**Keywords:** open coding, axial coding, selective coding, evaluation workbook, evaluates teaching methods, evaluation in the arts class.

### Introduction

Arts class is built on the knowledge that not all learning can be mediated through language alone (Valachová et al., 2019). Therefore, the arts, as a medium, supports learning, communication and self-expression. Students' artistic creations should follow goals of an artistic activity. Setting individual goals, as opposed to setting a uniform goal for the whole class, will help students think about the ways to achieve this goal. The uniqueness of the personal goal stimulates internal motivation in the student (Pretty, 1996). The most important thing here is to plan specific steps and choose strategies to achieve them. In order not to deviate from the goal, the entire process must be monitored and continuously reflected upon (Kováčová, 2020). Reflection can help students identify a problem for which a suitable solution will need to be found. Being aware of specific strategies to solve a problem can bring a deeper understanding of the essence of the solution. Such solution could be used to solve other problems as well. The artistic process, as described above, is made up of several elements of self-regulation. Therefore, it appears to be a suitable means for personal growth and development. The result of such development, as claimed by Wolters (2003, p. 189), is *autonomous, reflective and effective students - students who have cognitive and metacognitive abilities as well as the motivation and attitudes necessary to understand, monitor and guide their own learning process*. The aforementioned author also admits a change in metacognitive abilities, which are defined as the conscious control and management of one's own cognitive processes, the purpose of which is to learn as effective as possible and to progress towards achieving set goals (Popham, 1975; Benčíč, et al., 2020, Valachová, 2022).

### 1 Evaluation in the Arts class

The learning results can be evaluated in several ways. Tests are mainly used to determine cognitive results (knowledge) and, less often, skills and attitudes. These educational results are determined almost exclusively in individual subjects. Delacruz (1994), Fisher (1994), Průcha, Walterová, Mareš (2009), Stufflebeam (2000), Valachová (2011), Kováčová (2015) state the following methods of determining educational results:

- 1) Comparison of educational results in one subject between different types of schools. Such comparison shows how the educational results of a specific subject are shaped by a different type of school.
- 2) Comparison of educational results at the same type of school between individual subjects.
- 3) Evaluation of educational results of school graduates. This evaluation aims at finding out the educational results of students who have graduated from a primary school and

are coming to a secondary school, or secondary school graduates who are coming to a university.

- 4) Comprehensive evaluation of educational results and their determinants.

For the research hereunder, a comprehensive evaluation of educational results and their determinants seems to be the most suitable method (Gavora, 2008). In the evaluation process, the teacher can monitor the following aspects:

- 1) The course of children's artistic activity and their artistic expression. Specifically, the effects of education on children's artistic dispositions, such as artistic sensitivity, creative imagination and fantasy, and of course creative thinking.
- 2) Children's behavior related to evaluation, artistic creativity and artistic perception. The upbringing influences the general creative, ethical and intellectual dispositions of children.
- 3) Own actions during educational activities. The teacher's teaching preferences and psychodidactic dispositions play a role here. The teacher's assessment, which is intuitive, is essentially complex. It is an immediate reaction, an assessment and an immediate feeling one gets from the given art work in the form of a verbal statement (Valachová, 2011).

It still remains questionable whether the learning results of the Arts class are to be evaluated using a standardized test. There are still many voices that question its use, but for the sake of an argument we would like to use an example from Finland. The Finnish school system regularly achieves excellent results in the PISA assessment (Laitinen et al. 2011). In 2010, Finland carried out the first evaluation of art education in the national education system focused on learning results from the subjects Music, Visual arts and Crafts in the ninth grade. Specifically, this report describes the evaluation that was carried out on a sample of 152 primary schools with a total number of 4,792 students. The structure of the evaluation was as follows: First stage – all students completed a general written task/test (pencil-and-paper task), which included all 3 subjects. In the second stage, schools were divided according to subjects into three groups. In each school, students then took a test (pencil-and-paper) on a specific subject. Later, some students were given creative tasks (production assignments) from the same subject. The evaluation also included a questionnaire for principals and teachers on the Arts teaching and possible obstacles in the educational process. The students provided information about the learning process and the competences achieved in these subjects. (Laitinen, et al., 2011). This evaluation is interesting for us from several points of view. The way the Arts was evaluated in Finland makes a strong argument for starting similar processes also in Slovakia.

### 2 Research design

The research focuses on the Arts assessment from the student's point of view at the end of primary education. The broad term assessment could be understood here as an attitude of students towards the assessment in the Arts class and the place self-assessment has in this subject. As part of the research, we have introduced a teaching aid into the educational process – the Arts workbook (Kmet', 2020). Through the use of a non-standardized evaluation tool and teaching, we wanted to examine the students' attitudes towards evaluation and proposed changes. The workbook was also useful in self-evaluation (critical thinking). We were interested in the students' attitudes towards evaluation, which is closely connected with self-evaluation and understanding of evaluation processes in Arts (Valachová, 2011). The research was further specified in research objectives and research questions (Gavora, 2008; Betz, 2009).

The aim of the research was to examine the issue of evaluation and self-evaluation in the school subject Arts. Using research methods hereunder, the aim was to find out how the introduction of a workbook into Arts affects the students' attitude to evaluation and self-evaluation in this subject. Another aim was to find out the relationships between evaluation, learning and creative activities in Arts classes in primary education. The target group of the research was the fourth grade students (elementary school, Kmeť, 2018). In order to integrate this non-standardized evaluation tool into the teaching process and to study the impact this element would have on a specific phenomenon (evaluation) we implemented the participant observation research method.

The aim was to obtain data that will become the basis of the proposed theory. Aware of the methodological specifics of qualitative research, and with an increasing number of research questions, we determined that the method is definitive when additional data no longer contribute to a better understanding of the given concept (saturation).

In our case, we chose the method of an unstructured observation. The observation was carried out at fourteen meetings (the fifteenth meeting was dedicated to personal interviews, Gavora, 2008). Each session lasted two 45-minute lessons plus a ten-minute break in between lessons. The total observation time was 46.66 hours (sixty minutes-long hours). We performed an analysis of the Arts portfolio. In order to better understand the individual phenomena detected during the observation, we decided to supplement data using another research method: the analysis of personal documents. After getting all the information necessary, we proceeded to the last research method. As the two previous methods expanded the number of research questions, they provided us with data to formulate certain theories, which we tried to supplement with the third research method. The third research method was a group interview. When creating a discussion group, not only the number of members is important, but also internal homogeneity plays a crucial part. It is mainly about equality in terms of education and social position. Inequality of members of the discussion group could distort the results and bring imbalance to the group (in favour of the dominant participant). A characteristic feature of this method is that discussion plays a crucial role. The researcher acted as a host, who managed the discussion. Data were obtained in the form of video recordings. The interviews were conducted in a safe and undisturbed environment of the school library. The length of the interviews ranged from 20 to 25 minutes per student. The interview was semi-structured.

### 3 Research part

The research was carried out over a period of one and a half years. As it was a qualitative research, we have set up a general framework. The first part of the research (participant observation) was finished following a personal interview with the participants, during which topics related to the research were discussed in depth with each participant individually. This interview provided enough qualitative data to obtain basic codes. We used the time gap between individual stages to verify the stability of the information obtained over the course of four months during which students worked with their workbook in the Arts classes.

The group interview followed six months after the end of the participant observation. The fact that the pupils got older (half a year older) helped us as students became mentally and intellectually more mature. This could have a positive effect on their ability to express their opinion and engage in discussion. To evaluate the collected data, we used the "grounded theory" research method, which relies on three main research processes: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. In the first step of open coding, we subjected the obtained data to a thorough study with the aim of creating conceptual labels.

This process is also called phenomenon labelling. There are several approaches to analyze transcript texts. The essence of

this process is the analysis and conceptualization of the observation itself or the word (in both cases, the transcription of what was seen and heard). When analysing a specific transcript, it is possible to focus on individual words, on sentences as a whole or on paragraphs of the text. We chose a word-by-word analysis approach. The reason for choosing such an approach was the fact that we are working with information provided by children - students around the age of ten. Their verbal expression skills are not developed to such an extent that their statements would form coherent paragraphs of the text (in the transcript). In qualitative research, one of the most demanding operations is the processing a large amount of information and ongoing results overview (Švec, 2000; Gavora, 2010; Švec, 2011; Ševčovič et al., 2022).

### 4 Results evaluation

The complex and most common phenomenon that appeared throughout the research was calling the art activities "learning". After the introduction of a non-standardized evaluation tool (hereinafter referred to as tool), students began to talk about the activities they have been pursuing in the class as "we are learning" compared to the previous one "we only draw and paint".

Despite this, the majority of students described self-evaluation in the Arts class as very useful. They learned to present their work, because they do not do that in other subjects. Some students presented their work independently in front of the whole class for the first time (the projects they do and present on other subjects are often group work). Acceptance of "learning" in the Arts class was very high among the students. In contrast to this, low activity in specific learning processes was detected (e.g. not bringing a notebook to class, a passive approach to writing in a notebook, etc.). This could be explained (partially) as a side effect of introducing the novelty approach. The students were not used to using the tool, which might explain the passivity. The students had not yet realized the need to use the workbook for their own benefit. Wide acceptance of this approach and the tool could be expected after a longer period of time (1-2 years) when evaluation and self-evaluation of the artistic skills will take place. A significant and surprising result was that students perceived the central category "learning" to be related to the category "freedom". Based on the results of the research, we can say that the students perceived the variety of teaching methods as being given more "freedom". The claim is based on data analysis of student comparisons of activities in a regular Arts class before the introduction of the workbook. The students contrasted the old learning method (drawing and painting on defined topics) with being allowed to use the variety of art techniques, writing tests and working with the workbook. Nevertheless, writing in the workbook appeared to be perceived as the biggest negative of the established teaching aid.

Some students mentioned the joy of learning in the Arts class. The fun form of conveying knowledge and using this knowledge in the final art work and in the self-evaluation presentation resulted in high acceptance of the entire learning process. Having established the relationship between the category "learning" and "authority", we found the following: If the authority is in the position of causal conditions (the scheme above), learning means that students the expectations of the authority. If authority is moved to the position of "context" on the same level as, for example, an Arts class evaluation tool, the authority becomes a source of communication. If the authority is in the position of the causal conditions during the self-evaluation, the self-evaluation would not fulfill its purpose (of reflection).

The demands of authority could significantly influence the depth of reflection. The student would try to fulfill the expectations placed on him with his performance and prioritize them over being honest about the results of the self-assessment. The authority must therefore identify with the position of "context" (see above), where the teacher/parent in the position of authority can act as a communication partner. The reflection activity is

transferred to the student. Self-evaluation based on entries in the workbook was only partial. Taking notes for the presentation was described as useful, but after several presentations it was deemed as unnecessary. The reason for the change in attitude was that the student improved his self-evaluation skills. We did not manage to obtain long-term self-evaluation data (Gavora, 2008).

We consider it very important that students learn to be aware of errors in the creation process that lead to unwanted results already on the first stage of primary school. It is certainly naive to think that the ability to reflect on mistakes and the ability to accept them was created in such a short time (research period). This example shows us when and how the progress in question has taken place. During the research, the teacher drew attention several times to making mistakes, in particular redrawing and erasing. The goal was to draw students' attention to the importance of making mistakes and their identification in the creative process. The evaluation tool as well as the artistic portfolio show two different approaches to making errors. Crossing out is a definitive sign of an error with the possibility of making a correct statement in a new place. Erasing gives us the possibility to correct the mistake in the same place. This process may not have a visible trace, and therefore it is good to reflect on the creation process right away (or short period of time). The records in the evaluation tool lacked the necessary quality and frequency. Self-evaluation in the form of a presentation was viewed positively by the students. The reasons given included the development of presentation skills and lower levels of shyness (Valachová et al., 2019; Kmeť, 2020).

Several students refused to have the presentation evaluated (as part of the end-of-the-year summative evaluation) as they were afraid their grade would get lowered. The qualitative research based on the grounded theory methodology gave rise to a theory that we defined in the Selective Coding scheme (Švec, 2011).

## 5 Conclusion

The theory we have proposed could be verified in the context of other theories. By doing so, the field can move forward. As far as practical implications are concerned, the results could be transformed into recommendations. In order for art teachers to be able to use more diverse didactic methods, to support the development of a wider range of abilities in students, to allow students greater freedom in the way students realize their own ideas and creativity, we recommend introducing the evaluation tool (individual for each student) into the Arts class.

It is necessary to point out that the mere enforcement of one's own understanding of the rules without making sure that students understand them can lead to a distortion of the perception of the teacher's authority and also to a distortion of the Arts class as a whole.

The consequences related to this phenomenon are far-reaching, especially in terms of how students perceive authorities (students talk disrespectfully and derogatorily about the authority). If a student declares that the teacher gives them grades "on a whim", what he is actually saying is that anyone could do what a trained teacher does. In such a case, it is extremely important to use comprehensible evaluation criteria to build a natural authority. For students to understand that, we need to help them develop metacognitive skills in understanding the use of individual criteria and their meaning (Ševčovič, 2021; Turon, Kubik, Ševčovič, Tóth, Lakatoš, 2022).

## Literature:

1. Benčič, S., Kováčová, B., Valachová, D., Hudecová, A.: Výtvarné nadanie v súvislosti so špecifickým výskumným zameraním : Art talents in the context of a specific research focus. In *Studia Scientifica Facultatis Paedagogicae*, 2022. 21 (2), 89–99 p. ISSN 1336-2232.
2. Betz, J.: *Assessment practices in elementary visual art classrooms*. Orlando: University of Central Florida, 2009.

3. Delacruz, M. E.: *Looking at evaluation : What good is it?* University of Illinois. In Smith-Shrank, D. L., Hausman, J. J. (Ed.) *Evaluation in art education*. Lancaster, Illinois art education association : Mini-Manual, 1994.
4. Fisher, W. L.: *Evaluation of individual student learning*. University of Illinois. Smith-Shrank, D. L., Hausman, J. J. (Ed.) *Evaluation in art education*. Lancaster, Illinois art education association : Mini-Manual, 1994.
5. Gavora, P.: *Úvod do pedagogického výskumu*. 4. vydanie. Bratislava: Vydavateľstvo UK, 2008. ISBN 978-80-223-2391-8.
6. Gavora, P.: Nástrahy a problémy vyučovania metodológie kvalitatívneho výskumu. In: *Pedagogická veda a školská prax v historickom kontexte : Zborník z medzinárodnej vedeckej konferencie konanej dňa 28. januára 2010 v Trnave*. Trnava: Univerzita sv. Cyrila a Metoda v Trnave, 2010. 66–72 p. ISBN 978-80-8105-182-1.
7. Kmeť, M.: Myšlienkové mapy a ich využitie na hodine výtvarnej výchovy. In *CREA-AE 2018: kreatívne reflexívne emocionálne alternatívne - umelecké vzdelávanie*, Zborník z eklatívnej konferencie s medzinárodnou účasťou. Banská Bystrica: Univerzita Mateja Bela v Banskej Bystrici, 2018. 125–131 p. ISBN 978-80-557-1519-3.
8. Kmeť, M.: Ako merať spôsobilosti dosiahnuté na výtvarnej výchove. In *Pedagogica actualis XI: spoločnosť a výchova*. Trnava: Univerzita sv. Cyrila a Metoda v Trnave, 2020. 173–179 p. ISBN 978-80-572-0045-1.
9. Kováčová, B.: *Evalvácia programu v liečebnej pedagogike. Tvorba a evalvácia programu v liečebnej pedagogike*. Bratislava: Univerzita Komenského, 2015. 51–70 p. ISBN 978-80-223-3779-3.
10. Kováčová, B.: Priestor pre akčné umenie, akčné umenie v priestore. In *Pedagogica actualis XI: spoločnosť a výchova*. 1. vyd. Trnava: Univerzita sv. Cyrila a Metoda v Trnave, 2020. 217–224 p. ISBN 978-80-572-0045-1.
11. Laitinen, S., Hilmola, A., Juntunen, M. L.: *Perusopetuksen musiikin, kuvataiteen ja käsityön oppimistulosten arviointi*. Helsinki: Erweko Painotaitte Oy, 2011. ISSN 1798-8934.
12. Petty, G.: *Moderní vyučování*. Praha: Portál, 2004. 380 p. ISBN 80-7178-978-X.
13. Popham, W. J.: *Educational evaluation*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, 1975. ISBN 0-13-240515-6.
14. Průcha, J., Walterová, E., Mareš, J.: *Pedagogický slovník*. Praha: Portál, 2009. 395 p. ISBN 978-80-7367-647-6.
15. Stufflebeam, D. L.: *Evaluation models : Viewpoint on educational and human service evaluation*. New York; Boston; Dordrecht; London; Moscow: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2000. ISBN 0-306-47559-6.
16. Ševčovič, M.: *Princípia grafického média v tvorbe slovenských autorov*. 1. vyd. Bratislava: Univerzita Komenského v Bratislave, 2021. 127 p. ISBN 978-80-223-5320-5.
17. Ševčovič, M. et al.: *Evalvácia v predmetoch zameraných na praktické disciplíny pri výučbe budúcich výtvarných pedagógov*. 1. vyd. Bratislava: Univerzita Komenského v Bratislave, 2022. 139 p. ISBN 978-80-223-5530-8.
18. Švec, Š.: *Základné pojmy v pedagogike a andragogike*. 2. rozšírené vydanie. Bratislava: IRIS, 2002. 276 p. ISBN 80-89018-31-9.
19. Švec, Š.: K systémickej a systematickej koncepcii didaktiky výtvarného umenia. In *Didaktika výtvarného umenia koncepty, kontexty, prax*. Zborník príspevkov z medzinárodnej vedeckej konferencie. Banská Bystrica: Pedagogická fakulta Univerzity Mateja Bela, 2011. 406 p. ISBN 978-80-557-0302-2.
20. Turoň, K., Kubik, A., Ševčovič, M., Tóth, J., Lakatos, A.: *Visual communication in shared mobility systems as an opportunity for recognition and competitiveness in smart cities*. In: *Smart Cities*. Bazilej: Multidisciplinary Digital Publishing Institute. 5 (3), 2022. 802–818 p. ISSN 2624-6511.
21. Valachová, D.: Výskum v didaktike výtvarného umenia – potreba a zbytočnosť. In *Didaktika výtvarného umenia koncepty, kontexty, prax*. Zborník príspevkov z medzinárodnej vedeckej konferencie. Banská Bystrica: Pedagogická fakulta Univerzity Mateja Bela, 2011. 406 p. ISBN 978-80-557-0302-2.
22. Valachová, D.: *Projekty a projektová výučba vo výtvarnej výchove*. 1. vyd. Bratislava: Univerzita Komenského v Bratislave, 2022. 63 p. ISBN 978-80-223-5416-5.

23. Valachová, D., Lessner Lištiaková, I., Kováčová, B.: Gallery as an explicit stimulation environment in the development of artistic talent. In *Muzeológia a kultúrne dedičstvo*, 7 (2), 2019, 49–62 p. ISSN 1339-2204.

24. Wolters, C. A.: Regulation of motivation: evaluating an underemphasized aspect of self-regulated learning. In *Educational Psychologist*, 38, 2003, 189–205 p.

**Primary Paper Section:** A

**Secondary Paper Section:** AL, AM