

## SELF – ASSESSMENT OF STUDENTS OF FINE ARTS EDUCATION IN THE CONTEXT OF THEIR PERCEIVED SUBJECTIVE PREDISPOSITIONS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

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**Abstract:** The paper is concerned with the problem of student self-assessment in the context of their subjectively perceived individual predispositions for the study and acquired learning outcomes. It is based on the results of research the author carried out at Department of Creative Arts and Art Education at Faculty of Education of Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra in the winter semester of the 2011/2012 academic year, on the sample of students of the programme Training Teachers of Visual Arts as double major combining with other subjects. The author offers a quantitative analysis as well as interpretation and evaluation of partial results of research conducted through two anonymous questionnaires.

**Keywords:** self-assessment, individual predispositions, training teachers of fine arts

### 1 Introduction

Pedagogical evaluation is a frequently discussed topic nowadays. As for the higher education teacher practice, it is relevant in several respects. It is important both from the aspect of evaluation - grading of students by a teacher either through continuous evaluation or exam, or in the context of the evaluation of education quality assurance by students, which already has its tradition at the Faculty of Education and is required by law. Last but not least, what is also important is self-assessment, both related to the educational activity of a higher education teacher as well as students. The outcomes of research carried out at the mentioned university show that student self-assessment, which is part of the outcomes of pedagogical practice completed by students during their study in teacher training study programmes, prove to be an exceptionally valuable means of self-understanding and one of the instruments of developing personality qualities of a future teacher during the pregradual training (Satková, 2012).

### 2. Self-reflection in pregradual teacher training of visual arts students

The problem of teacher self-reflection has been currently discussed by many authors who consider it an inevitable predisposition for the success and efficiency of self-assessment process, and a condition of a teacher's development on the personal, ethical and professional levels (Hupková – Petlák, 2004, Babiaková, 2012). Others emphasise the need to develop the self-assessment abilities already in pregradual training of teachers (Švec, 1996, 1999). Self-reflection in pregradual teacher training of fine arts students is perceived as an exceptionally significant area of the development of professional competencies of future teachers, (not only) with regard to the difficulty and specific nature of evaluation in fine arts education. The products of educational process in a form of outcomes and effects as defined by Průcha (1997, s. 364) are very difficult to be exactly measured in the context of visual arts education, therefore any evaluation by an educator requires a sensitive approach and erudition. On the other side, the visual arts educational environment provides a whole set of opportunities for the development of emotional intelligence.

Our long time objective is a high quality preparation of future teachers of visual arts for practice; therefore we have decided to conduct a research aimed at the evaluation of education by students and self-assessment of students in the context of their subjectively perceived individual predispositions for the study and the acquired learning outcomes. The research outcomes are considered to be a significant source of information for a potential innovation of educational curricula at the university.

### 3. Research aimed at student self-assessment

#### 3.1. Research objectives

The objective of the research conducted through two anonymous questionnaires was the evaluation of the quality of education and teachers by students with regard to the University and to the Department of Creative Arts and Art Education, as well as the self-evaluation of students in the context of their individual learning predispositions, real learning outcomes and their attitudes to the teaching profession. The questionnaires consisted of 21, or 30 items, but due to a limited extent of the paper the detailed quantitative and qualitative analysis of only some of them is provided here. In the analysis and interpretation of partial outcomes there are also references to the findings which were not included in a synthetic form into the paper, but are important from the aspect of various correlations between objective and subjective indicators of the evaluation of quality by students.

#### 3.2 Research hypotheses

It was assumed that:

1. Our respondents will be more critical to themselves as regards their individual predispositions in the subject of visual arts than in their second subject.
2. Subjective assessment of individual study predispositions of the respondents from higher classes will be more in accordance with real learning outcomes than in the case of respondents from lower classes.
3. There will be more persons who think that their study outcomes realistically reflect their real knowledge, abilities and skills than of the ones who, on the contrary, think that their study outcomes do not quite reflect, or do not reflect at all, their real knowledge, abilities and skills.
4. There will be more of such respondents who think that their study outcomes realistically and adequately reflect their expended effort than the ones who, on the contrary, think that their study outcomes do not quite reflect, or do not reflect at all, their expended effort.

#### 3.3. Research plan and research set

Our research sample consisted of 187 respondents for the first questionnaire and 146 for the second questionnaire, all studying full time in the study programme Training Teachers of Visual Arts (henceforth as UVU) as part of a double major programme, in all years of bachelor's and master's study of the 2011/2012 academic year. Table 1 shows the overview of sub-programmes combining with the UVU, indication of the belonging of the sub-programmes to individual faculties and the number of students in individual years. Of the total number (187) of respondents, 79 (42.30%) study UVU in combination with other subjects at Faculty of Education (in the table below as FE), 75 (40.00%) students combine with subjects from Faculty of Arts (in the table below as FA), 21 (11.20%) students have the second subject at Faculty of Natural Sciences (in the table below as FNS), and 12 (6.50%) students at Faculty of Central European Studies (in the table below as FCES). Of the total number (187) of respondents, 159 (85%) were female and 28 (15%) male.

With regard to a high percentage (93.5%) of participation of potential respondents – students of bachelor's and master's study whose current number (in the winter semester of 2011/2012) in the given study programme has reached 200 – as well as with regard to the anonymous nature of the questionnaire, we assumed adequate validity of research outcomes.

**Table 1** Overview of the number of respondents and their belonging to study sub-programmes, studied in combination with Training Teachers of Visual Arts

Sub-programme which I study in addition to visual arts	1 <sup>st</sup> yr. BC.	2 <sup>nd</sup> yr. BC.	3 <sup>rd</sup> yr. BC.	1 <sup>st</sup> yr. MA.	2 <sup>nd</sup> yr. MA.	Total
English language and lit. (FE)	2	0	0	3	6	11
Pedagogy (FE)	3	10	7	5	2	27
Psychology (FE)	8	4	6	7	2	27
Training teachers of music (FE)	0	0	2	0	0	2
Physical education (FE)	0	4	1	5	0	10
Technical education (FE)	0	0	0	1	1	2
Slovak lang. and lit. (FA)	2	0	1	0	2	5
Russian lang. and lit. (FA)	1	0	0	0	0	1
German language (FA)	0	0	3	1	0	4
Spanish language (FA)	1	1	0	2	0	4
Italian language (FA)	0	0	1	0	0	1
History (FA)	2	0	0	1	0	3
Aesthetic of education (FA)	16	8	11	5	5	45
Ethics (FA)	1	1	2	2	0	6
Civic education (FA)	1	1	1	0	1	4
Religious education (FA)	0	1	0	1	0	2
Mathematics (FNS)	0	0	0	2	0	2
Physics (FNS)	0	1	0	0	0	1
Chemistry (FNS)	0	0	1	0	0	1
Biology (FNS)	0	1	2	1	0	4
Ecology (FNS)	0	1	1	1	1	4
Informatics (FNS)	3	1	0	0	0	4
Geography (FNS)	1	2	2	0	0	5
Hungarian lang. and lit. (FCES)	0	3	3	4	2	12
Total	41	39	44	41	22	187

Source: Own arrangements

### 3.4 Research methods

The data were acquired through two anonymous questionnaires containing closed questions, with scaled possibilities in individual items, and open questions with a possibility to develop the answers. The questionnaires consisted of 21, or 30, items aimed at the evaluation of quality of education (from the aspect of objective indicators as well as from the aspect of subjective indicators perceived and evaluated by students themselves) by students of visual arts teacher training programme as double major programme combining with other subject at Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra. The research was carried out at the end of the examination period of the 2011/2012 winter semester, at the time when the evaluation of the completed subjects was made accessible in the academic information system. The data were processed through quantitative and qualitative analysis of answers from the questionnaires, projected into the tables, or into a verbal interpretation of answers, including verification or evaluation of hypotheses.

### 3.5 Analysis and interpretation of research outcomes

Our research has brought several interesting findings. Naturally, the main objective was to find out how respondents assess their individual predispositions for the study of fine arts teacher training; however, also individual predispositions with regard to the study of the second subject as part of the double major study programme as well as with regard to the whole study programme, are considered important. Our hypothesis no. 1, by which we assumed that our respondents will be more critical to themselves with regard to individual predispositions in the context of fine arts than in the second subject, was not

confirmed. The respondents perceive their individual predispositions for the study of fine arts more positively than for the study of the second subject. As many as 174 (93.05%) respondents expressed various levels of satisfaction with their individual predispositions for the study of fine arts teacher training. It was surprising that the total number of those who evaluate their individual predispositions in this item as "below average" was 13, because the acceptance to the study programme is conditioned by passing talent entrance exams in visual arts, within which – in our opinion – the ones who do not have individual predispositions for visual arts teacher training are singled out. On the contrary, we were glad that the option "insufficient" was not checked, though it has to be stated, based on real learning outcomes, that in each year one could find 1–3 students who, unfortunately, do not meet the criteria for some subjects (see Table 2).

**Table 2** Assessment of individual predispositions in the study programme Training Teachers of Fine Arts

How do you assess your individual predisposition for the study of UVU?	1 <sup>st</sup> yr. BC.	2 <sup>nd</sup> yr. BC.	3 <sup>rd</sup> yr. BC.	1 <sup>st</sup> yr. MA.	2 <sup>nd</sup> yr. MA.	Total
As above average	6	3	4	4	8	25
As average	33	33	34	35	14	149
As below average	2	3	6	2	0	13
As insufficient	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	41	39	44	41	22	187

Source: Own arrangements

For the sake of comparison, an overview of obtained evaluations in the 2011/2012 academic year in theoretical as well as in some practical disciplines is provided (source: AIS UKF in Nitra). Only the evaluations of those disciplines were included into the text in which the number of the signed up and evaluated (graded) students is about 40. In case of theoretical disciplines, the number related to a given year may be considered relevant, since these are the subjects which must be obligatorily attended by every student. As for practical disciplines, which are obligatory, obligatory upon election, elective, or selective, also the ones chosen by a group of students of about 40 in number are provided. In the brackets the form of evaluation is given (E – exam, CE – continuous evaluation). There is information on the number of signed up and graded students, the group's total average, and quantitative data on the evaluations based on current grading scale: A – excellent (1), B – very good (1.5), C – good (2), D – satisfactory (2,5), E – sufficient (3), FX – insufficient (4).

#### Theoretical disciplines:

- Introduction to visual culture (E), signed up 46, graded 44, average: 1.82, grades: A-17, B-8, C-13, D-3, E-3, FX-4, 2 students failed.
- History of medieval art (E), signed up 41, graded 41, average: 2.09, grades: A-9, B-8, C-11, D-8, E-5, FX-4.
- History of 20<sup>th</sup> century art (E), signed up 50, graded 48, average: 2.25, grades: A-13, B-10, C-10, D-8, E-7, FX-11, 2 students failed.
- Analysis and interpretation of a visual art work (E), signed up 28, graded 28, average: 1.64, grades: A-14, B-5, C-5, D-0, E-0, FX-3, 3 students failed.
- Didactics of visual arts education (S), signed up 44, graded 44, average: 1.18, grades: A-35, B-6, C-2, D-0, E-0, FX-1, 1 student failed.

Practical disciplines:

- Material drawing (CE) signed up 48, graded 47, average: 1.59, grades: A-10, B-21, C-14, D-2, E-0, FX-0, 1 student failed.
- Figural drawing and painting (E) signed up 44, graded 43, average: 2.01, grades: A-10, B-6, C-16, D-7, E-4, FX-3, 1 student failed.
- Free plastic (E), signed up 45, graded 45, average: 1.71, grades: A-16, B-12, C-10, D-2, E-2, FX-3, 3 students failed.
- Modelling – relief (CE), signed up 45, graded 44, average: 1.35, grades: A-27, B-8, C-7, D-1, E-0, FX-1, 2 students failed.
- Basics of photography (CE), signed up 46, graded 45, average: 1.39, grades: A-22, B-16, C-7, D-0, E-0, FX-1, 1 student failed.
- Free photography (E), signed up 43, graded 43, average: 1.64, grades: A-17, B-10, C-9, D-6, E-3, FX-0.
- Introduction to graphic arts (CE), signed up 39, graded 39, average: 1.59, grades: A-13, B-10, C-12, D-4, E-0, FX-0.
- Area, structure in textile creation (E), signed up 44, graded 42, average: 2.13, grades: A-8, B-5, C-14, D-9, E-8, FX-2, 2 students failed.
- Intermedial creation – installation (E), signed up 40, graded 40, average: 1.99, grades: A-6, B-8, C-15, D-3, E-8, FX-0.
- Basics of visual communication (E), signed up 44, graded 44, average: 2.02, grades: A-5, B-14, C-12, D-6, E-4, FX-3, 3 students failed.

Point 3 Art. 10 of Constantine the Philosopher University's Study Code says that a student is graded by A if he/she achieved excellent results, B for above average results, C for average results, D for acceptable results, and E for results which meet minimal criteria. Our hypothesis no. 2, which assumed that the subjective assessment of individual study predispositions by the respondents from higher classes (years of study) will be more compatible with real learning outcomes than in case of the respondents from lower classes, was confirmed. If data in Table 2 are compared, with regard to the respondents of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year of master's study in which no one checked the option of the below average individual predispositions, with real learning outcomes, for example, in two theoretical disciplines (Analysis and interpretation of a visual arts work – 2<sup>nd</sup> year of master's study and didactics of visual arts education – 1<sup>st</sup> year of master's study), it is found out that the respondents obtained grades A, B, C, no one was graded by D and E, with 1 student failing in the 1<sup>st</sup> year and 3 students in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year. Naturally, successful passing of a subject does not depend only on individual predispositions of students, but on his/her many other qualities and abilities.

The research also included identification of a type of previous secondary as well as spare-time art education the students had completed. The data were also obtained through questionnaires, with 146 respondents. The findings showed that as far as the assessment of individual predispositions for the study of visual arts teacher training is concerned our respondents are restrained, careful, and probably also "modest".

It was found out that the most numerous group (52.05%) of our respondents consists of the graduates of secondary vocational schools with art orientation, with an exceptionally wide spectrum of completed subjects. The secondary grammar school – "gymnasium" – (both the classical 4-year and 8-year type) was completed by 26.71% of the interviewed and the secondary vocational school without orientation on art was completed by 21.24% students.

The previous secondary school study of our students of visual arts teacher training shows that in case of more than a half of them, currently studying at the Department of Creative Arts and Art Education, one may expect a steady interest in visual arts, as well as adequate skills in individual theoretical and practical visual arts disciplines. Of the total number (146) of the interviewed, as many as 102 (i. e. 69.86%) said that as pupils

they had attended a basic art school. In addition to visual arts field, studied by 89 (i. e. 61%) of the participants, of the total number (146) of respondents, high percentage was obtained for music in all the years and a really wide scale of musical instruments. Of the total number (146) of respondents, 43 (i. e. 29.45%) indicated the completion of the musical field, 19 (i. e. 13.01%) indicated dancing, and 7 (4.79%) attended the literary-dramatic field. A detailed analysis of the findings will be published in another paper.

For the sake of comparison, the paper also brings the findings as regards the relation between the assessment of individual predispositions for the study of the programme as a whole, and for the study of the other subject that the respondents have in their double major programme – in addition to visual arts (see Table 3 and 4). It was surprising that with regard to this other subject, in addition to visual arts teacher training, three respondents – students of the 1<sup>st</sup> year of bachelor's study level - checked the option "insufficient" predispositions, and a relatively high number checked the option "below average" predisposition. It is surprising since these are the study programmes (for example, pedagogics, aesthetic education, civic education, and so on) which if compared with other sub-programmes combining with the UVU, do not require much special individual predispositions, abilities and skills.

**Table 3** Assessment of individual predispositions in the context of their double major programme (the UVU programme combining with another subject) as a whole

How do you assess your individual predispositions for the study of the selected double major programme as a whole?	1 <sup>st</sup> yr. BC.	2 <sup>nd</sup> yr. BC.	3 <sup>rd</sup> yr. BC.	1 <sup>st</sup> yr. MA.	2 <sup>nd</sup> yr. MA.	Total
as above average	2	2	2	3	5	14
as average	32	33	31	38	17	151
as below average	5	4	11	0	0	20
as insufficient	1	0	0	0	0	1
No answer	1	0	0	0	0	1
Total	41	39	44	41	22	187

Source: Own arrangements

**Table 4** Assessment of individual predispositions in the context of the other study programme studied in combination with visual arts

How do you assess your own individual predispositions for the study of the other subject combined with UVU?	1 <sup>st</sup> yr. BC.	2 <sup>nd</sup> yr. BC.	3 <sup>rd</sup> yr. BC.	1 <sup>st</sup> yr. MA.	2 <sup>nd</sup> yr. MA.	Total
as above average	2	6	3	2	2	15
as average	22	27	26	36	19	130
as below average	13	6	15	3	1	38
as insufficient	3	0	0	0	0	3
no answer	1	0	0	0	0	1
Total	41	39	44	41	22	187

Source: Own arrangements

It was assumed that there will be more of those respondents who think that their learning outcomes realistically reflect their real knowledge, abilities and skills than of those who, on the contrary, think that their learning outcomes do not quite reflect, or do not reflect at all, their real knowledge, abilities and skills. Hypothesis no. 3 was not confirmed. Only 83 (44.39%) respondents think that their learning outcomes realistically reflect their real knowledge, abilities and skills, and the remaining 55.61% checked various answers, which either negate this statement or are on a neutral level. This fact confirms the findings of still another research within which a similar

uncertainty, unwillingness or inability of self-evaluation by students emerged (Satková, 2012).

Similarly, it was assumed that there will be more of such respondents who think that their learning outcomes realistically and adequately reflect their expended effort than of those who, on the contrary, think that their learning outcomes do not quite reflect, or do not reflect at all, their expended effort. Hypothesis no. 4 was not confirmed either. The results are similar to the preceding item, even though the option of real and adequate reflection of the effort expended for the study by students in learning outcomes was marked by almost half of the respondents – 90 (48.13%). Compare Table 5 and 6.

**Table 5** Assessment of learning outcomes with regard to individual predispositions for the study

What do you think of the learning outcomes of your study with regard to your individual study predispositions?	1 <sup>st</sup> yr. BC.	2 <sup>nd</sup> yr. BC.	3 <sup>rd</sup> yr. BC.	1 <sup>st</sup> yr. MA.	2 <sup>nd</sup> yr. MA.	Total
my learning outcomes realistically reflect my real knowledge, abilities and skills	17	16	21	18	11	83
my learning outcomes do not quite reflect my real knowledge, abilities and skills	19	22	20	20	11	92
my learning outcomes do not reflect at all my real knowledge, abilities and skills	0	1	2	0	0	3
I cannot judge this	4	0	1	3	0	8
no answer	1	0	0	0	0	1
Total	41	39	44	41	22	187

Source: Own arrangements

**Table 6** Assessment of learning outcomes with regard to the effort for study expended by students

What do you think of the learning outcomes of your study with regard to your effort expended for the study?	1 <sup>st</sup> yr. BC.	2 <sup>nd</sup> yr. BC.	3 <sup>rd</sup> yr. BC.	1 <sup>st</sup> yr. MA.	2 <sup>nd</sup> yr. MA.	Total
my learning outcomes realistically and adequately reflect my expended effort	21	18	21	18	12	90
my learning outcomes do not quite reflect my expended effort	13	21	17	20	7	78
my learning outcomes do not reflect at all my expended effort	3	0	4	1	2	10
I cannot judge it	3	0	2	2	1	8
no answer	1	0	0	0	0	1
Total	41	39	44	41	22	187

Source: Own arrangements

#### 4. Conclusion

Pedagogical evaluation is considered to be one of the key instruments of making education more efficient. The aim of our research was not to quantitatively measure educational results and effects, but to concentrate on the self-assessment of individual predispositions for the study of a selected study programme by the students of Faculty of Education at Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra, studying the programme Training Teachers for Visual Arts as double major, that is combining with various other sub-programmes.

The acquisition of self-evaluation instruments is of an extraordinary significance for the higher education training of future teachers. The experience in the field of self-understanding and self-reflection may positively influence the formation of a student's personality and contribute to the development of an ability to objectively evaluate other people, which is an inevitable competence of an educator in current educational environment.

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**Primary Paper Section: A**

**Secondary Paper Section: AM**