

SEARCHING THE MEANING OF FINE ART EDUCATION IN EDUCATION OF THE STUDENTS - FUTURE FINE ART TEACHERS

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Abstract: In an environment of the changing circumstances, author of the paper seeks the base for the meaning of her teaching. The meaning is located not in „art“, but in „education“. The means of education are carried out in the space of three concepts: „personal centered education“, „creative-humanistic education“ and „animocentric stream“ of fine art education. The paper presents the possibilities of realizing the principles of affective education, imagination, relaxation, freedom, subjective interpretation of the art work and the cathartic experience of the student's artistic creation. Each of the principles is theoretically based, then concretized with activities and supplemented with comments from students. Written reflections from students illustrate how they experience and evaluate activities.

Keywords: meaning, fine art education, didactics, student.

1 Introduction

The paper contains subsections consisting of theoretical and practical part. The theoretical parts suggest an area of problems and concepts from the given area. The practical parts mention an application of the theoretical principles into the teaching visual arts disciplines. They are implemented at Department of Fine Art Creation and Education, Faculty of Education in Constantin the Philosopher University in Nitra. Some subsections include statements of students – both positive and negative. They are inspired by activities or they comment experienced activities. The paper is a collage producing a comprehensive system of our long-term educational activity, which phases were continuously published.

In the area of our teaching many things happened. The study system changed, including the new contents of the new subjects. The electronic systems was introduced, and the evaluation, educational, artistic and scientific work has changed. A scientific visual art literature changed and educational literature of fine arts expanded. Recent changes are concerning the new name and of course a new content of study program from "teaching of fine art education" to "teaching of fine art". Composition of our working team and superiors has also changed, and the students change constantly.

At first we taught practical and theoretical disciplines for the future teachers at the first grade of the primary schools. Now we teach only didactics disciplines two groups of students. The first specialization is "teaching of fine art" and in the second group are the future teachers for the first degree of elementary schools.

2 Searching for the meaning of fine art education

What has not changed is a sense of fine art education, without which is the teaching meaningless. We found the sense in our educational activity not in the content of fine arts, nor in the visual art qua, but in the formation of student's personality. Fine art creation and Fine Arts in general (including history of art present in the teaching of theoretical disciplines) find themselves in the position of means – medium for forming the future teacher's personality. The teacher will work in the different types of the schools, he/she will teach many different age groups in changing conditions in social, political and global context. Our goal is to offer opportunity to the students for finding their own understanding of fine art education, based on the experiences ingrained during their study.

2.1 The need of the new modern fine art education

The traditional fine art education has been characterized by being seen as a relaxation time. It has been taught mostly by the unqualified teachers. It has been clinged on obsolete methods and placed emphasis on the artwork, the product and the aesthetics (Šupšáková, 1999). It does not fit with the current

teachers and the pupils and it turned into the modern fine art education with the new goals. The aim of the modern fine art education is to enable children to perceive the world and themselves. A prerequisite are: openness of mind and heart, acceptance values of goodness and understanding. The creator expresses personal commitment and through inner experience, reflection on experienced, he/her can send the messages about him/her (Šupšáková, 1999). Unfortunately, we have to conclude, that the fine art education is still taught mostly by the unqualified teachers (Fichnová, Satková, Janková, 2008).

In our view the aim of the fine art education is through the personality of fine art teacher to develop 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 refinement of spirit, through increase of 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. We perceive this object as subjective and not as the only right one. Based on it we build our own pedagogical model, which is devoted to the paper.

3 Fine art education as means for development of personality

The means of our fine art education are realized in the area of awareness that fine art education must take into account also the artistically untalented pupils/students, because in the traditional classroom they feel unsuccessful. The basic concepts for our lessons are:

1. Personal centered education with the principles of freedom, trust, authenticity, empathy.
2. Creatively humanistic education and developing creativity through the development of emotional intelligence, empathy and synesthetic perception.
3. Animocentric stream of the fine art education using the principles of art therapy, artefiletics, spiritual fine art education and sensual fine art education.
4. Two of the art therapy's principles (relaxation and imagination) used for development of imagination and inner harmony.
5. The subjective interpretations of artwork and the cathartic experience of student's own artistic creation as the basis for student's positive relationship with fine art education.
6. The self-expression (verbal, written or practical art produced) as the principles of freedom and of creative atmosphere.

3.1 The new view on artistic talent

The new fine art education takes into account also children who do not have artistic talent in our traditional meaning. It is which is accepted, for example, on the aptitude tests at the fine arts high and higher schools. According to J. Belko (2001), if we are concerned about development of each pupil and we don't want to mark their genetic basis, we notice the less the pupil's level of manual dexterity, but we require the idea. Then we notice more the pupil's access to the task, passion and spirit.

Fine art education is an appropriate learning environment for application "creative and humanistic educational conception". It means to develop emotional and creative intelligency and socialization also with artistically untalented children. New fine art education wants to return joy of artistic games into the schools, where everyone has an equal chance (Belko, 2001). We perceive artistic talent 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. Our untalented students perceive this concept of talent positively, because they can develop without fear of failure.

In the reflections, our students wrote:

"I have found my drawing style. At first I was afraid that I will not have an idea what to paint, and I was surprised from myself. I liked most of my art works. I could let to work my imagination, I found that I enjoy that.

I thought it would be mark two, not mark one, but I am pleased that you liked my drawings.

I found that I was able to do, what I maybe even would not imagine."

3.2 Acceptance of individuality and freedom in the personal centered education

We believe that individuality of pupil is accepted more by alternative than by the traditional way of education. One of the most significant is an alternative system "person centered approach" created by C. R. Rogers, then applied in education, which is specified as "personal centered education" conception, known also as "PCE". In the conception are built motivation, self-development and teacher-pupil relationship, on four basic principles: a) congruence – the teacher's authenticity, truth, honesty and openness; b) teacher's acceptance of pupil; c) teacher's empathy; d) pupil's self-evaluation. Self-evaluation is seen as basis for personal development. Real self-evaluation leads to the positive motivation for overcome the negative sides of personality. It leads to tolerance and understanding for others. Parts of this conception are the notions of freedom and atmosphere supporting learning. This atmosphere is similar to atmosphere supporting creativity. In our quantitative research, we have gained the new knowledge about student's self-assessment (Fichnová, Satková, 2002).

In spirit of conception "PCE" are our students encouraged to self-evaluation, to solve problems on their own, not based on the teacher's solution. Each student performs and presents his/her own work in front of the class, expresses own opinion, leads a discussion. Students can comment (verbally or writing) a matter of the lessons, atmosphere and results of their work. They have freedom in their choice of themes, techniques, in processing of visual ideas, while respecting content of the subjects across the curriculum. At practical disciplines each student processed individually chosen topic, by any art technique, and he/she was motivated with teacher's non-assessment commentary. It did not concern the students-artist, but only the students of other fields having fine art disciplines in their study program, eg. the future educators and the future teachers of first degree at the elementary school. Their art-works were subjectively perceived as the master-work, over student's expectations. Also objectively the artworks were at a higher level than artwork formed by the classical method, which means 1 common theme + 1 common technique in 1 group. The students perceived freedom mostly positive, but some of them needed some guidance, they did not know what to do, they were confused. Others students perceived freedom in its absolute meaning and when the teacher tried to teach students some aesthetic artistic principles and how to use art techniques, they perceived the teacher's correction in the negative way. Informal relationship teacher-student was perceived positively, but the authenticity of the teacher was not always accepted. Teacher's humor was sometimes seen as irony and teacher's traits were sometimes seen as a strange behavior. Some students came to learn and accepted it, others did not. Student's reflections:

"I really liked the lessons of the fine art education. I was released at these lessons. The relationship teacher-student was very good. I really liked that we were able to express our own creation at these lessons.

I did not like that sometimes the lecturer interfered to my work, because everyone sees and feels it in a different way. Sometimes I did not know what to do, any topic would help me. I liked the lessons, there was a good atmosphere, there was a very good and friendly relationship teacher-student, tolerance etc. We formed what we wanted and the teacher did not interfere into it very much. Certainly after this semester I'll be able to harmonize colors and to continue create the images, more - less abstract. Thank you for a very nice time with a good humor, openness, etc."

3.3 Development of creativity by fine art education

In a general public opinion, there is an idea that each artwork is creative. However, according to psychology of creativity, it is not nearly so, if we do not identify so called "small/subjective" and so called "great/objective" creativity. Since creativity can be increased (Zelina, 1990), it is also possible to develop the properties useful for development of creativity: curiosity, independence, self-confidence, courage, motivation, self-esteem, fancy, imagination, intuition and empathy. Creativity is accentuated also by the concept-makers of "creative humanistic education": M. Zelinová and M. Zelina. Their aim is to perceive creativity as a means for achieving a self-actualization. According to this concept, we include the activities for directly or indirectly developing creativity into our lessons. Our quantitative research (Fichnová, Satková, 2006) shows the possibilities of increasing creativity in the fine art oriented disciplines in the university environment. Development of the synesthetic perception is regarded as one of the indirect ways of development a creativity.

Here's an example. The students should choose one from the several reproductions with some country theme and they should create the interpretation in this way: 1. to associate to country the music, sounds, smell (odor); 2. to figure out, from which movie could be the shot; 3. to determine, what was in that movie before and after.

"1. J. Mařák - Blaník: murmur of water, smell of forest, dramatic orchestral music; movie: In the shadows; before: slow twilight, after: suddenly a huge storm, tempest.

2. V. Beneš - From Talín by Písek: noise of the grain, mill and animals, smell of grass, folk songs; movie: Sun, hay, strawberries; before: subtitles, after: concrete event in the village (followed by a spontaneous debate about real and famous movie).

3. J. Mařák - Forest still life: the sounds of forest, birds twitter, murmur of lake; music of flute, guitar, piano; movie: A guide to the forests and mountains; before: shot at the forest clearing, its location and the place; after: a brief description of the forest clearing with the comment; and the whole movie would be shaded by oratory with Haydn's Seasons."

3.4 Development of emotional intelligence through the fine art education

The conception of "creative humanistic education" emphasizes the importance of the affective education. This education should include the pupil's feelings, experiences, memories, hopes, aspirations, attitudes, needs (Zelina, 1990). The emotional education is an important element in our effort to harmonize the personality, because people in their lives are experiencing a little emotional heat, thus limiting their ability to feel, to be themselves and to be good (Zelina, 1990). Fine art creation brings the opportunity to express feelings, using the principles of art therapy and the methods developing the empathy.

Students at our lessons are managed to expression their moods by their fingers, by body posture, gesture, grimace, or using the cube illustrated with the various mood expressions. Empathy - feeling in, is also one of the principles of the conception "PCE". The principle of empathy was realized through reproduction of the painting "Venus and Mars" from artist S. Botticelli. The students should write what happens between Mars and Venus. Student's reflections:

"They are trophy for each other. She has the property, he has the most beautiful woman, worthy of comparisons to his glory.

He is happy that he is happy, and she has sad face, pensively, wonders what she did and also about their relationship.

She has got her own world, her feelings hidden deep within herself, he does not care, he is acting possessive.

She feels guilty, but she does not want to make it clear and he's such a cool guy.

She feels guilty, she did something wrong and he is very sad - he is wounded.

She looks like she's remorse. She does not know whether she wants him or not. Maybe she does not know how to say it. He is now in another dimension.

She is sad, reflects on something, he does not care of anything. She really thinks about it, why she is with him, she wants to leave him, but he feels happy and satisfied, thinking only on himself, he is very selfish and did not notice that something bothers her."

3.5 Catharsis as unique experience of fine art creation

The experience play major roles in some alternative methods of education (Zelina, 1990). The student's experience can start a conversations about art, eg. presenting holiday's photos with the sights in the lesson of art history.

In the school is rarely present a cathartic/cleansing effect of artistic creation, because students rarely internalize the theme. However, well taught lessons have an aesthetic pleasure, experienced by both - students also teacher. Pleasure is associated with trouble as a part of the creative problem solving. After initial struggle with the issue and with 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 experience to students-nonartist, in the classroom we focus on active support of authentic creative self-expression. Means become the principles of the animocentric stream and according to the student's feedback it has very positive effect. During this process, the students are happy and satisfied with the results of their artistic creations. Many students continue work at home and they share their home art works with the teacher. Many of them are artistically active also after the lessons beyond their student's obligations.

4 Animocentric stream in the fine art education as one of the pedagogical models

From 4 existing streams of fine art education (art-, gnozo-, animal-, video-centric stream), the animocentric stream is the closest to our notion. It understands the fine art education as a means of development children's personality (Slavík, 1997 in Šupšáková, 1999). Next close conceptions are mentioned by V. Roeselová (2000). "Learning, experience and evaluation of the world" has global and ecological direction. "Spiritual Art Education" finds value and meaning of life. "Sensory Art Education" shows how natural processes, including physical sensations, can be foundation for understanding the world. "Artefiletics" is the processing issues based on the archetypes, presentation the opinions in a safe group, with aim to harmonize imbalance between consciousness and unconsciousness (Roeselová, 2000). The further means of developing the future teacher's personality is art therapy, which has the ability to influence positively on people (Šicková, 2002).

Fine art processing of the subjective contents, with aim to know pupils and help them, is very attractive for many teachers and students, but teacher of the fine art education should be aware of the pitfalls connected with it. The pitfalls lie in sensitivity and intimacy processed contents and in their presenting in group. Some students fail to develop protective interior borders, and they may feel threatened and manipulated. The seemingly innocent topics and techniques can revive wounds from the past. Teacher should have an estimate, sensitivity, tact and ability for psychological treatment of these cases and teacher should inform students about risks of subjective contents of visual expression.

4.1 Relaxation and imagination as methods of the fine art education

Art therapy offers us the methods of relaxation and imagination (Šicková, 2000). Relaxation as a psychological action to achieve harmony of the body, soul and spirit, leads us to liberation of a bonded energy. By a change of internal experience we achieve the change of our behavior. Relaxation may be associated with visualization inspired by art work or it may be aimed to release. The students saw the picture with the garden from C. Monet and they should imagine that they are there with someone they like. Student's reflections:

"I have been in the garden with sunflowers. I gasped at the bench with my friend, we look at nature and surroundings.

In the garden, I set in the middle of flowers, I lay on swing and a little boy has been swinging me.

I sailed down the river on raft. Then I gasped under tree in the tall grass.

I have been sitting in the garden on a huge lawn and then I fell asleep there.

I have been in a garden full of the beautiful sunflowers. As a little girl I sat and I ate the sunflower seeds. Suddenly I heard the voices in the background of some people and I quickly got up and I ran at home, which was located near the garden.

I have been in the garden with my girlfriends and we sat on the grass and we talked."

Another way of imagination was inspired by knowledge and images of prehistoric and ancient fine art. It was implemented when the students were transferred in the led imagination into spirit of any historical period with an idea of the place, their clothing and their imagined activities.

"I have been in the prehistoric time, wearing the draped leather and I painted murals in the caves.

In the prehistoric times, I was wearing the leader, I toasted some animal in the nature near the water.

I have been in Egypt in the temple, I has something like a satin with jewels, I rode a horse in the desert. I went with my master to the water spring.

I have been in the city Rome, in the atrium building. I sway in the wooden chair. I ate a fruit from the big bowl and I was wearing a princess dress.

I have been in ancient Coliseum in the city Rome, wearing a soft sail pinned with a gold buckle, gold jewelry. I watched a gladiator wrestled with a lion. I ate the grapes and I drank a wine."

Relaxation was used also during the familiarizing students with the stream of art - symbolism, which has motifs, inter alia, fairies, angels, sphinxes. Students should imagine that they are in a beautiful place with an angel.

"I have been on the high rock, on that was a white green meadow with tall grass, I was sitting there, then a little boy appeared - it was the angel. Then from the rock incurred the white stairs and we walked up.

I have been next the river Danube in the meadow. We played there with my parents and my friends. When an angel appeared, he began to play with us. He had golden hair and white dress. We flew, it was nice.

I have been at the sea, I watched the sunset. My angel looked like a little girl. It was very nice when we flew over the sea a long time.

I have been in a meadow, everything was green, all around me were the beautiful flowers, the grass was very high. An angel was a boy with the big wings. The angel stroked me.

My little angel had a large wings and a long hair. We flew a lot and then the wings grew also onto me.

I have been in Italy in the city Lignam. There we played, swam, collected the shells. An angel have come, he had a white dress, shining golden yellow hair and a crown. Together we flew, it was enjoyable."

These techniques are received by students mostly positively. After relaxation there is the intensified positive experience in a group and this positive spirit is capable to correct the rare negative individual experiences. The students often complain that relaxation was too short.

4.2 Self-expression as a way to communicate with the world

It is necessary for every student to have the opportunity of verbal expression of feelings, experiences and personal attitude. Through the verbalised feelings and experiences they connect with the art work and they can get easier to the demanding verbal interpretation. 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 about the lesson. They can verbal reflect on their own or their classmate art work, also they can do the individual interpretation of art works. Then our lesson's aim is eg. to create reflections about origin and meaning of fine art, to create poems and stories inspired by art work, to create poems using Dada and Surrealist creative principles, to create the manifesto of a new artistic trend, using the helpful questions. The samples of student's fictional manifestos:

"Original art

1. The artist cannot focus on creating copy, it has to be unique and original.

2. Art must not act disgustingly, it has have a positive effect on people.

3. Art should be engaging, aesthetic, it has something to radiate. Realism

1. The artist can take his ideas from an actual, real life.

2. The purpose of art is to make the knowledge in human.

3. Art should not be idealized.

Šuliejlizmus

1. The artist has to be creative, open-minded.

2. The picture should be such as the artist himself, what he feels, what he sees.

3. The aim of the artist is to express his/her own feeling.

Optimistic art

1. The artist is a man who can express their balanced attitude towards life.

2. The artist must not create a work from which radiates despair and hopelessness.

3. The aim of the artist's works is to show to public an opportunity for cheerful life through the art works."

The students initially tend to feel fear and uncertainty of creation and its presentation in their classmates group. They express these feelings verbally and nonverbally, immediately after entering the job. With an acceptance from the educator, they overcome that fear and that uncertainty. At last they see positively the possibility of self-expression:

"I enjoyed the opportunity to try practically create the art works belonging to fine art streams.

Lessons were free and we were able to show ourselves, it was great that we were able to say our own opinion, what was not during the last semester.

We did not spend a lot of time for prepare, in fact we educated ourselves among classmates."

5 Interpretation of art work as a means of education by art

Art has power to change lives of teachers and pupils. According to Š. Gero and S. Tropp (1999) art helps teachers and their students to deal with the certain life situations, to navigate in them, to find the key for issues of the contemporary life. This way art comes into people's lives as an indispensable element of education. History of fine arts inspires us by its development, the new techniques and procedures as well as the personalities of artists. Š. Gero and S. Tropp (1999) referred to various interpretations of artwork: verbal/explanation and practical/implementation. It makes the reproductions of art work more interesting, with aim to look at ourselves through art. The student discovers experiences and skills in contact with values enshrined in art and he/she can accept the values that go far beyond her/his current experience realm (Gero, Tropp, 1999).

Our students cut, glue, illustrate and paint the copy - reproduction of art work. They invent stories, poems, the new names for art work, they find associations connected with art works, copy them and paraphrase. During the lessons they create the new experiences through the actions, by animation art in our university gallery, through their own artistic creation, sometimes inspired by art work. For example: building dolmens and menhirs from the stones, creating the vivid images with the available props by using the reproductions, making performances and happenings in the classroom, creation inspired by the principles of land-art implemented in the outside area of the school. Except of the rare cases, when the student feels

action or experiment as unpleasant, embarrassing and pointless, this type of activity meets with positive response.

6 Sense of the fine art education – opinions of our students

According to our latest research findings, there is not a big difference in the views about spirit and purpose of fine art education between students of teaching fine art and students of the other specializations. The difference is expected that students-artists see as much important also the artistic and aesthetic principles.

Here are some views of the students-nonartists. Reflections were created at the beginning of semester, yet unaffected by animocentric stream concept of teaching.

"Fine art education enables the process of realization. It is possibility how to learn to perceive everyday things a little differently. It offers the opportunity to stop for a moment in this hectic world. At the fine art education lesson every child should feel that she/he can enjoy creatively, to feel free and to create what he/she feels.

Fine art education is important to me as a part of relaxation, introspection, psychological selfcleaning. In the fine art education lessons, I want to inspire the children's curiosity and creativity through the games, listening music, through walks and creative activities.

It is important that fine art teacher could encourage development of each child - not just those with talent. Being a man who learns to perceive the beauty in everyday life, look for beauty in ourselves.

For me will be the most important thing, that I will be able to motivate the children to express their personality effortlessly, spontaneously, with joy and gusto.

Fine art education should develop all aspects of personality. It should be friendly, motivating, relaxation and developing.

Fine art education should be the subject when students need not learn the craft. They should learn to like discover the new things and to see under the surface."

7 Conclusion

Personality can be developed through the theoretical, practical also didactic disciplines. The theoretical disciplines of fine art education 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, own experience with the growth of personality, own reflections of maturing, is the most important part of education. To summarize experiences gained during the implementation of animocentric education, almost all students joyfully welcomed any new creative work in the classroom and they have been released and active. The students-nonartists significantly changed their attitude to the subject of fine art education and to the art creation as a whole. While previously they have seen the content of subject only in the obtaining information and some craft skills, later they perceived the lessons as their opportunity for self-fulfillment. We believe that the issue of objectives and purpose of the fine art education is essential in education of art.

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