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Arts Education and Practical arts cognition as a Compulsory subject in the undergraduate curriculum

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Quotation information

MATONIS, Vaidas; KAUINAITE, Kristina; JAUTAKYTE, Zudre (2008), "Arts Education and Practical arts cognition as a Compulsory subject in the undergraduate curriculum". *Proceedings of the 4th International Barcelona Conference on Higher Education, Vol. 4. Higher education, arts and creativity*. Barcelona: GUNI. Available at <http://www.guni-rmies.net>.

Abstract

Creativity, individuality, national identity, and the pursuit of freedom are some of our greatest cultural achievements. The cultivation of these values through the arts can be quite effective, and the implementation of these cultural goals should not end at the secondary level, but should continue through the college years. This endeavour is especially relevant in light of contradictory trends between global and local tendencies in cultural development. The disparity between these two forces in the spontaneous development of culture reveals that local culture is at a disadvantage. We are confronted with the problem of how to draw on the accomplishments of current technology without surrendering to globalization at the expense of local cultural traditions and identity. Clearly, a straightjacket mentality will not be fruitful—prevention and constraint will not bring solutions.

Investigation of university student (pre-service teacher) arts-related groups showed that extracurricular artistic education is an effective means of developing

qualities of creativity, communication, the ability to work in teams, and positive value outlooks. Former pre-service student participants (present teachers) of such artistic groups expressed the opinions that these qualities are at the core of teacher competence and have significant impact on their professional careers. Unfortunately, the total number of university students that participate in an extracurricular artistic activity is rather small.

In response to the aforementioned cultural needs of contemporary society and following academic reform, Arts Education was accepted by the Senate of the Vilnius Pedagogical University as a compulsory subject in the curriculum for undergraduates in 1993. Arts education subjects became part of the basic recognized subjects of university studies, such as philosophy, political science, pedagogy, and psychology. Students of all specialties, in addition to a theoretical course in arts education, must also attend at least one practical application in the arts (dance, music, visual, performance, or verbal). These five applied arts subjects were also proposed as electives throughout four years of bachelor studies. The fundamental philosophy of the arts studies program is the well-known discipline-based approach (in studio art, art history, art criticism, and aesthetics).

Both the theory-based and applied arts courses boosted the artistic interests of undergraduate students. Future teachers had the opportunity to acknowledge and uncover their own artistic natures. Differences in artistic interests were identified, as well as diverse outlooks regarding the arts and artistic activity. First and second year students of all majors began their applied arts experiences by choosing courses in one of five areas: dance, music, visual, performance, or verbal expression. However, the quantitative distribution of “talent” was rather enigmatic. It was thought that drama and music would be most attractive to the undergraduate students, yet dance turned out to be the most popular choice. What were the reasons and motives behind this? Undoubtedly, the personality of the instructor, the content and the setting influence the selection, but keeping in mind the professional qualifications of all the instructors, the search for the true motives behind the student choices required a deeper investigation into the strata of cultural life.

One important factor behind the preference for dance might be the youthful view that the ability to dance can facilitate interaction and foster new acquaintances

during leisure, in addition to building self-esteem through communication between partners. The choice of dance can also be explained by a desire for change from the inactivity of daily lectures. Like sports, dance activities restore physical form. Dance is also a good means for achieving grace and aesthetic style. Television and other visual media that portray popular dances and dancers have also fostered the attractiveness of dance. Also, we should keep in mind that another self-help motivation might be the inferior dance instruction in the present educational system. Few students engage in dance classes in Lithuanian schools, so students may want to compensate for the neglect of this art form during their college years. Schools are often driven by pragmatic criteria. Since the Middle Ages, singing was part of the school curriculum to prepare singers for the church. Dance was not an integral component of the ritual of Christian culture, so why devote lessons to the subject? Literature and the visual arts are in a different category. Incidentally, as the democratization of Europe leads to universal education, verbal arts and its basis—the teaching of language arts has become the most important component in the eradication of illiteracy. The visual arts, including calligraphy, were intended to develop attractive penmanship and to teach tradesmen the beauty of form. The famous educational reformer J. H. Pestalozzi held that music and drawing were the basic subjects of aesthetic education, since they best cultivated mental skills. Meanwhile, throughout the history of education such practical applications were not successfully credited to dance.

During the 20th century with the increase of civic education in many countries (especially in totalitarian states), literature was the unrivalled leader. There were constant attempts to draw music and the visual arts into close alignment with politics, and theatre arts were ascribed to the custodians of literature. This was not only because men of letters wrote dramas, but to insure the correct political interpretation of plot. Dance was also politically important for its story line, not for characteristics of choreographic expression.

The self-realization of values and changes in artistic interests are influenced by needs tendencies in the overall culture. It is quite possible that the technology-driven environment that surrounds us, as well as mobility, drastic events and the information overload that characterize daily life presuppose the need and importance of kinaesthetic and spatial thinking (or, in the terminology of Howard Gardner, bodily

kinaesthetic and spatial intelligences) in today's cultural consciousness. If this is true, we should not be surprised if the art of dance were to gain tangible popularity alongside the development of various sports activities. We may come to see the fulfilment of the dream of famous American dancer and educator Isadora Duncan, who strived for the entrenchment of dance in schools. Thus far, this theoretical reasoning is based on observational data. More specific answers and weightier prognoses regarding motivation behind artistic interests will be possible upon evaluation of quantitative and qualitative research results.

Separate research is also needed for so-called artistic "misfits" who are found among future educators of every specialization. These students apparently are unmotivated for artistic activity, they do not concern themselves with artistic experience, and they attend the activities out of necessity.

Theory-based activities that explain the nature and educative power of the arts facilitate understanding of artistic interest. During theory seminars with future teachers' difficulties in explaining genre preferences come to the forefront and show that the world of art is sufficiently spacious and complex. Without systemic analysis and study, it is difficult to embrace.

The rapid imposition of technology onto our daily lives makes arts education a means for achieving balance through creativity. It also mediates technological development and globalization with local cultural traditions. Sufficient attention to the process of arts education and creativity must be paid to achieve coherence between the global and the local.

Introduction

Creativity, individuality, national identity, and the pursuit of freedom are some of our greatest cultural achievements. The cultivation of these values through the arts can be quite effective, and the implementation of these cultural goals should not end at the secondary level, but should continue through the college years. This endeavour is especially relevant in light of contradictory trends between global and local tendencies in cultural development. The disparity between these two forces in the spontaneous development of culture reveals that local culture is at a disadvantage. We are confronted with the problem of how to draw on the accomplishments of current

technology without surrendering to globalisation at the expense of local cultural traditions and identity. Clearly, a straightjacket mentality will not be fruitful—prevention and constraint will not bring solutions.

Investigation of university student (pre-service teacher) arts-related groups showed that extracurricular artistic education is an effective means of developing qualities of creativity, communication, the ability to work in teams, and positive value outlooks. Former pre-service student participants (present teachers) of such artistic groups expressed the opinions that these qualities are at the core of teacher competence and have significant impact on their professional careers. Unfortunately, the total number of university students participating in an extracurricular artistic activity is rather small.

In response to the aforementioned cultural needs of contemporary society and following academic reform, *Arts Education* was accepted by the Senate of the Vilnius Pedagogical University as a compulsory subject in the curriculum for undergraduates in 1993. Arts education subjects became part of the basic recognized subjects of university studies, such as philosophy, political science, pedagogy, and psychology. Students of all specialties¹, in addition to a theoretical course in arts education, have to attend at least one practical application in the arts (dance, music, visual, performance, or verbal). These five applied arts subjects were also proposed as electives throughout four years of bachelor studies. The fundamental philosophy of the arts studies program is the well-known discipline-based approach (in studio art, art history, art criticism, and aesthetics).

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¹ Currently Vilnius Pedagogical University trains specialists in 35 undergraduate (Bachelor) study programmes.

music would be most attractive to the undergraduate students, yet dance turned out to be the most popular choice^{**}. What were the reasons and motives behind this?

Practical application in the dance

Undoubtedly, the personality of the instructor, the content and the setting influence the selection, but keeping in mind the professional qualifications of all the instructors, the search for the true motives behind the student choices required a deeper investigation into the strata of cultural life.

One important factor behind the preference for dance might be the youthful view that the ability to dance can facilitate interaction and foster new acquaintances during leisure, in addition to building self-esteem through communication between partners. The choice of dance can also be explained by a desire for change from the inactivity of daily lectures. Like sports, dance activities restore physical form. Dance is also a good means for achieving grace and aesthetic style. Television and other visual media that portray popular dances and dancers have also fostered the attractiveness of dance. Also, we should keep in mind that another self-help motivation might be the inferior dance instruction in the present educational system. Few students engage in dance classes in Lithuanian schools, so students may want to compensate for the neglect of this art form during their college years. Schools are often driven by pragmatic criteria. Since the Middle Ages, singing was part of the school curriculum to prepare singers for the church. Dance was not an integral component of the ritual of Christian culture, so why devote lessons to the subject? Literature and the visual arts are in a different category. Incidentally, as the democratisation of Europe leads to universal education, verbal arts and its basis—the teaching of language arts has become the most important component in the eradication of illiteracy. The visual arts, including calligraphy, were intended to develop attractive penmanship and to teach tradesmen the beauty of form. The famous educational reformer J. H. Pestalozzi held that music and drawing were the basic subjects of aesthetic education, since they best

^{**} Due to a considerable increase in the number of students enrolled and financial problems, the choice was limited to the alternative of three kinds of arts: dance, music, or visual; therefore, the article will further focus on the relation of the university students with the three above-mentioned kinds of arts.

cultivated mental skills. Meanwhile, throughout the history of education such practical applications were not successfully credited to dance.

Practical application in the music

Practical cognition of music comprises revision of music history and key definitions, analysis of music works representing different periods, discussions regarding various social functions of music, attendance of music events and reviews on them, value-based analysis of own relation with music and search for links between music and future teacher's profession. Identification of possibilities for practical application of music in students' future professional activity takes an important place during lectures. Since music is one of the most popular kinds of arts among school learners in Lithuania (the number of school students attending music schools and participating in non-formal music activity is especially high), teachers may integrate elements of music into the subject they teach and, thus, strengthen school learners' motivation to study. Currently, integrated models are being developed at national level such as module of music and geography 'The World of Musical Instruments'.

Students are encouraged to identify the areas in the subject they are trained to teach, where music may be applied, they also try to develop assignments and exchange creative ideas. Thus, students gain an innovative approach to their future profession and envisage the fact that music experience is of personal use to them. Young people penetrate in the subtleties of their own profession and peculiarities of music discussing the effect of Mozart, the influence of musicality on development of speaking, listening and writing skills and on perception and memorizing of information (VAUGHN, 2000). During assignments of singing, the impact of correct breathing and sound formation on health is clarified.

Students' attention is drawn to negative influence of noise or permanent sonic background and to damaging effect of strong noise on psyche and auditory organs of an individual. The issue of music therapy, which is of particular relevance in today's hectic world, are also discussed. Students have opportunities to discuss a certain repertoire of music, which serves for inspiring of different emotional modes. This information may be useful to students not only personally but it is also applicable in their future professional activity.

Since linguistic and musical activities are very similar in their nature, the biggest number of such assignments is created by future teachers of Lithuanian. A number of them are presented below. Working with senior school learners, students suggest creating a song according to the poem analysed and performing it in the classroom. They can also rap a text compiled from several poems. School learners may be encouraged to create own rap texts or to hold rapping contests. Such rapping contests are also appropriate for 7th– 9th formers. Being aware of the fact that this particular age period is complicated in terms of learning for boys in particular, future teachers assume they may evoke learners' focus on language learning applying creative tasks. Educators may ask primary learners to rhythmically syllable the text according to the pointed out tempo or to create musical improvisations according to the text read. Learners of basic school can illustrate the events in the text applying different means of musical expression. Later, several groups may be asked to illustrate certain places of the text employing music.

Future teachers of physics can be also successful in integrating music into the subject they are going to teach. They suggest analysing and visually demonstrating the origin of sound, its structure and other physical phenomenon with help of computer technologies. Applying special programmes, school learners can create sounds themselves altering the form and frequency of wave. Created sounds may be later used in compositions of electronic music. Teachers of physics are willing to teach their learners about the effect of the sound on human health and about the qualities of ultrasound during their lessons.

Future teachers of mathematics envisage a possibility to play W.A. Mozart's music during lessons of mathematical problems solution. Senior school learners can successfully analyse the mathematical origin of Pythagorean spheres harmony, gold section or modern principles of music composition (e.g. serial, scholastic music).

Students from the Faculty of Sports and Health are ready to employ the activating and organising function of music, i.e. to play rhythmical music during warm up exercises. According to them, school learners may be asked to draw up a play list of such music themselves.

During lectures at university, the comparative/contrastive method is applied for presenting music of different styles when elementary pop songs are contrasted to more

complex works of art-pop, art-rock or academic music. Students have to identify the main distinctive features of different styles and what makes simple music different from complex one. Analysis of popular music culture includes assignments to characterise a work of quality music, usually a song. The following description of good music work has been established: meaningful text, expressive and easily memorised melody, rich and interesting accompaniment with playback of different instruments and an interesting harmony. The charismatic features of the singer (performer) are also emphasised.

The analysis of musical phenomena and social functions of music is based on the examples of modern complex and pop music. Students are encouraged to critically evaluate the music culture around them and to present their own well-argued opinion. A big number of future teachers demonstrate a consumer approach to music. This is mainly conditioned by the taste formed by the mass media. Music is looked upon as a self-evident phenomenon which does not require any particular attention and spiritual or intellectual effort. A tendency to accept the hedonistic function of music is more frequently observed among students. This has a negative effect on their cultural attitudes and interests because, as Meki Nzewi states, 'Techno-classical sophistication stickles the soul and spirit for humanizing musical arts, thereby proliferating diabolic creative genius.' ((NZEWI, 2007: 305). Such situation is also illustrated by students' opinions: 'I haven't got my favourite performer. I listen to what is played on the radio'. 'I have a big variety of music in my computer and I change it depending on what is trendy'. 'I'm so tired of music that I want silence at home. Music is everywhere: in the shop, trolleybus, etc.'. Moreover, classes of practical cognition of music are also attended by real lovers of music, who create their own music, play in rock groups, work as DJs, play in academic groups or are fans of music and have huge and varied collections of audio records. Their comments are very similar to each other: 'I cannot imagine my life without music...', 'Music accompanies me in joy and sorrow. I have particular music for every part of the day', 'I listen only to quality music. I like groups which are capable of playing live in concerts', 'Music is good if it excites you and leaves an impression', 'My collection of audio records includes a big number classical music. I often listen to it'.

Generalising the students' opinions it is possible to agree with the statements of 'hedonist' group members: contemporary acoustic environment is overloaded. This

problem has to be solved at national level by introducing limitation to sources of noise and stricter control over music background. A critical attitude to the music broadcasted by mass media and to all the mass media products should be actively developed by secondary school as well as by family. A big number of music lovers are graduates of music schools with experience in intensive music activity, which facilitated formation of their positive and strict attitudes to music.

Analysing the efficiency of learning task, R. J. Marzano states that performance tasks are the most valuable ones since they require employment of the biggest volume of learner's cognitive powers (MARZANO, 2001: 124-128). The group of performance tasks comprises creative works, which facilitate development of learners' mental powers, their competences and attitudes. Written reviews on the attended concerts submitted by the students involved in practical cognition of music belong to the group of creative works. Next to other aspects, which have to be present in this work, the students are also asked to pay a particular attention to their emotional state and principles before and after the concert. Such tasks serve as a good means to reveal the effect of the dialogue which occurred between the listener and the work of music, students' value-based attitudes, their ability to hear and feel the language of music, their experience and ability to arrive at certain conclusions. Having attended G. Verdi's 'Aida' in the National Lithuanian Opera and Ballet Theatre, Neringa, a student of Lithuanian Philology, pointed out:

'I really admired this opera. The atmosphere in the National Lithuanian Opera and Ballet Theatre itself created a very exalted, even festive, mood. The surrounding was very fine, with intelligent people, who were dressed in a smart and subtle way. I met familiar people: my teachers and writers. It is pleasant to be among such people and to see that you go to the same events. This opera made as big impression on me as the operas 'Masked Ball' and 'Rigoletto', which I had seen before. However, "Aida", in my opinion, is the most magnificent and thunderous of all the Verdi's operas. I think, it is the most popular opera by G. Verdi, which is worth seeing and has to be attended not once in life'.

It is interesting that the popularity of the music taught as a subject among students depends on their speciality. The recent research shows that the course of practical music cognition is more popular among students of History, Social Sciences, Lithuanian Philology, Natural Sciences and Sports and Health Faculties. For example, sometimes up to 30% of the students in the Faculty of Lithuanian Philology choose music. The number of such students in the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Sports and Health Faculties amounts to 40%, whereas in the Faculties of History and Social Sciences this number reached up to 45%. Music is less popular among students from the Faculty of Physics and Technologies (25%) and the Faculty of Mathematics and Informatics (16%).

The meaning of music classes is viewed from an optimistic point of view. Having analysed music phenomena and social functions of music and having made an attempt to determine criteria of quality work of music, students are expected to critically apply them choosing music in future.

Practical application in the visual arts

Teaching of visual arts to students of different specialities is based on the underlying principle that artistic creation is not only the sphere of professional activity but also a natural need of every individual stimulating the spread of his/her creative powers.

The reasons for choosing the classes of visual arts within the course of arts practical cognition are very varied (see: Table 1). Almost one fifth of the students state that they enjoy creative activity and one fourth of them want find out more about the visual arts and contemporary arts.

Table 1

Students' reasons for choosing classes of visual arts within the course of practical arts cognition

No.	Reasons	%
1.	Wish to find more about visual arts	11
2.	Wish to understand contemporary arts	14
3.	Liking of creative activity	19
4.	Ability 'neither to dance or to sing'	27
5.	Accompanying of friend	16
6.	Do not know	9
7.	Other	4
Total		100

It was quite unexpected that more than a forth of the students (data of 2005 survey) took up visual arts since they were able 'neither to dance nor to sing', others accompanied their friend or even failed to point out the reasons for choosing visual arts. As it can be seen from the survey data, approximately half of the students wanted to expand their acquired knowledge, whereas the other half really lacked clear motives. Such a situation complicates work during classes, since interest of both groups have to be taken into consideration. Therefore, the tasks are formulated to enable all the students to perform them.

Practical cognition of visual arts consists of perception of visual expression elements, ability to apply them in creative activity, discussion of results, attendance of arts exhibition and value-based analysis of own relation with the work of art.

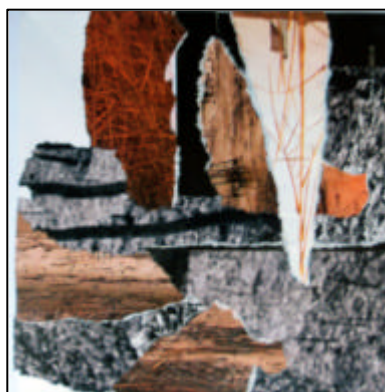
Visual expression is unique due to its possibility to convey one's mood, thoughts and ideas or spiritual state employing not verbal but plastic means. This requires theoretical and practical preparation: one has to be well aware of plastic, compositional and technical means of expression and to be able to purposively apply them in the activity of visual arts. The experience that includes knowledge, aesthetic awareness, creative initiative, ability of independent work and is acquired prior to the course of practical cognition of visual arts is not always sufficient. The main goal of this course is

to develop the inner artistic competence and creativity, which are of vital importance for an educator working at school.

The main problem solved during lectures of practical visual arts cognition is to provide students of different specialties with knowledge and skills applicable in their pedagogical work. Since the majority of students choose this subject without special education and the duration of the course is limited, the tasks, which do not require any specific skills (e.g. realistic rendering, technical drawing, painting skills) prevail. Students get practical tasks to find solutions to certain problems of composition or interpretation. The effect of elementary means of plastic expression on individual's emotions is discussed (e.g. the influence of dot or line location in the space and of colour, tone on a certain mood or idea, etc.). For example, future teachers are given a task 'Music' which consists of two parts and has to be performed applying collage (using coloured magazines) technique. The first one (see: Picture 1) asks for rendering of two very different works of music applying plastic and compositional means. The assignment aims to convey the impression and character purposively using expressive means of form, colour and composition.



Creative work by Jurgita Rasikaite, a second-year student of the Faculty of History

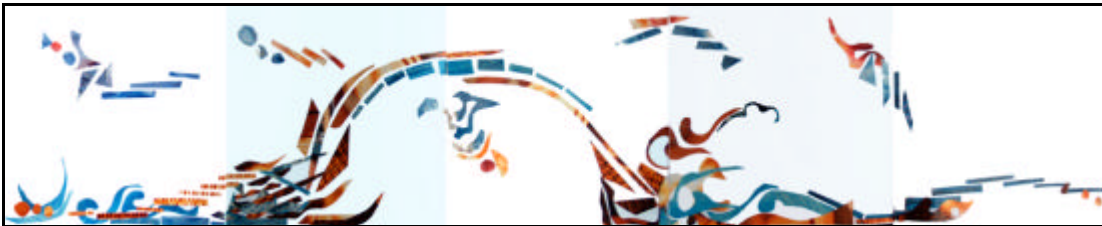


Creative work by Agne Grigonyte, a second-year students of the Faculty of Natural Sciences

Picture 1. **Music**

Having analysed the purposiveness and suggestibility of solutions, a further attempt is made to see the chosen music 'in time' or to imagine the sound of this music in a flow, conveyed in a number of planes (Picture 2). It is not an effort to illustrate music or to

mechanically and precisely reproduce a particular piece of music. It is rather a graphic interpretation and a conditional role of a composer.



Creative work by Aiste Lužaite, a second-year student of the Faculty of History



Creative work by Rita Babielaite, a second-year student of the Faculty of Natural Sciences

Picture 2. **Music clip**

A series necessitates retention of character, conveyance of dynamics, change in rhythm and, what is most important, to create an expressive series and graphical system. It is a more complicated phase compared to the previous one. However, it allows for revelation of student's interpretative-creative skills.

To consolidate the knowledge acquired during lectures, students have to attend exhibitions, to write reviews on them, to analyse works and to express their emotional impressions. Such assignments reveal students' attitude to modern arts. The extracts from some reviews are presented below:

'The exhibition made a relatively good impression on me. I really admired works of the majority of artists, some of the works shocked me or made me laugh. There was a number of works which did not arouse any emotions. I have to confess that I failed to grasp the artistic value of some of the works. In my opinion, art performs its function, regardless of form it is presented in, if it evokes emotions. Such emotions do not

necessarily have to be positive. Otherwise I doubt the artistic value of the object'. (Lina, a student of the Faculty of Physics and Technologies about the 8th Triennial of Art).

'Having seen the exhibition, I chose the works of ten artists, which made the biggest impression on me. I selected the works in a very simple way, that is, on the basis of my first impression. My attention was first attracted by works of distinctive colouring. Some of the works in pastel calm colours attracted my attention by their delicacy, lightness, subtlety...' (Gintas, a student of the Faculty of Pedagogy and Psychology, about the 8th Triennial of Art).

'Unique singularity and ideas that I accumulated looking at the works made me admire exhibitions. All the works evoked only positive emotions and made me smile or think for a moment... Though I saw some totally black work, they did not arouse any negative emotions for they radiated warmth, the good, and the beautiful but not grudge or sorrow. Everything was just perfect. All the artists try to find something new, what can make an observer enjoy their creation'. (Lina, a student of the Faculty of Mathematics and Informatics).

Such assignments facilitate students' understanding of artistic language and their deeper perception of art works. Their evaluation, though being subjective and limited to expression of their satisfaction or dissatisfaction, may transform into a need for higher artistic and aesthetic values.

Discussion and conclusions

During the 20th century with the increase of civic education in many countries (especially in totalitarian states), literature was the unrivalled leader. There were constant attempts to draw music and the visual arts into close alignment with politics, and theatre arts were ascribed to the custodians of literature. This was not only because men of letters wrote dramas, but to insure the correct political interpretation of plot. Dance was also politically important for its story line, not for characteristics of choreographic expression.

The self-realization of values and changes in artistic interests are influenced by needs tendencies in the overall culture. It is quite possible that the technology-driven environment that surrounds us, as well as mobility, drastic events and the information overload that characterize daily life presuppose the need and importance of kinaesthetic and spatial thinking, or, in the terminology of Howard Gardner, bodily kinaesthetic and spatial intelligences (Gardner, 1993) in today's cultural consciousness. If this is true, we should not be surprised if the art of dance were to gain tangible popularity alongside the development of various sports activities. We may come to see the fulfilment of the dream of famous American dancer and educator Isadora Duncan, who strived for the entrenchment of dance in schools. Thus far, this theoretical reasoning is based on observational data. More specific answers and weightier prognoses regarding motivation behind artistic interests will be possible upon evaluation of longitudinal quantitative and qualitative research results.

It is pleasant to point out that having selected music classes, students have to go to a concert. A big number of students attend a concert of academic music first time in their life and see the orchestra, soloists, opera or ballet performance alive. The majority of them express a note of admiration and they state that they are going to attend such concerts more often in future. Similar opinions are observed in the reviews written by other students who select the subject of practical arts cognition. The main goal of such reviews is to make students focus on how an arts event (concert, performance or exhibition) affects his/her state and mood. It is important to enable students to feel that the contact with live arts may sidetrack them from daily trouble and routine and that all the experienced artistic emotions may provide them with a sense of renewal or even exaltation.

During classes of visual arts, every student is stimulated to make artistic solutions applying as wide range of means as possible. It is obvious that such a requirement cannot comprise all the techniques and the existing variety of expression means. However, artistic solutions arrived at in a group are individual, they are all observed and analysed collectively. Thus the actual range of expression perceived is considerably broader and more varied. This is what is needed for general artistic awareness, ability to manipulate means of visual expression and for development of tolerance to such artistic solutions which is particularly necessary in pedagogical work.

Cognition of visual expression means provides a student with a possibility not only to convey own idea applying visual means but also facilitates perception of visual art works.

Separate research is also needed for so-called artistic “misfits” who are found among future educators of every specialization. These students apparently are unmotivated for artistic activity, they do not concern themselves with artistic experience, and they attend the activities out of necessity.

Theory-based activities that explain the nature and educative power of the arts facilitate understanding of artistic interest. During theory seminars with future teacher’s difficulties in explaining genre preferences come to the forefront and show that the world of art is sufficiently spacious and complex. Without systemic analysis and study, it is difficult to embrace.

The rapid imposition of technology onto our daily lives makes arts education a means for achieving balance through creativity. It also mediates technological development and globalisation with local cultural traditions. Sufficient attention to the process of arts education and creativity must be paid to achieve coherence between the global and the local.

Classes of practical arts cognitions aim to enable the students, who have analysed arts phenomena and social functions of arts and have made an attempt to define the criteria of a quality work of art themselves, to apply the acquired experience encountering arts in future. Attending different concerts, performances, exhibitions, the scope of students’ arts interests is expanded and they experience the social multifunctionality of arts and strengthen their preferences to more purposeful pastimes. A work with students during theoretical lectures of arts education and classes of practical arts cognition (dance, music, visual arts), discussions and interviews with students revealed that a half-year communication with professional artists considerably change young people’s attitudes to arts and culture values, strengthen their need to involve in local traditions and develop their personal identity.

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