

# The Importance of Self-Experience in Art for Future Generalist Teachers

## La importancia de la autoexperiencia en el arte para los futuros maestros generalistas

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### Abstract

The personal attitude of teachers towards the subject they teach, their professional self-efficacy and expertise are essential for their ability to deliver subject content to pupils. However, the relationship of future teachers to the subject is formed earlier in their own educational history than at university. From it derives their interest in the subject and further education. Our research has shown that students specialising in primary education and afterschool education have negative memories of art education at primary schools and they evaluate the subject and its benefits as marginal.

In this article, we will discuss how the transformation of the didactic approach when focusing more on the creative process rather than on the product can positively affect the already established relationship of future teachers to art education, and contribute to the understanding of the objectives of art education. This research was aimed at generalist teachers (primary school) and undergraduate students who will work in school clubs or as afterschool educators. The research was segmented into three phases where in the first phase of the research, we used a qualitative approach to determine the personal attitude of students to the subject of art education. In the second phase, we used the art-based approach. In this phase, didactic procedures inspired by creative art therapy and reflective experiential education were applied to change this attitude. Art-based approach was chosen mainly because it makes it possible to monitor the changes that take place in the process and at the same time, thanks to the process, it is possible to induce these changes. This type of research generates other, unexpected questions that enable a deeper understanding of the issue. In the third phase students presented their artworks and reflected on the

creative processes, as well as on the course itself, its benefits, obstacles and transferable experiences.

The conclusion of the research is that these methods can in a very short time change the attitude to one's own creative abilities / creative self-confidence / to update and expand the perception of the subject and its goals. At the same time, a need arises for deeper professional education that would facilitate students' didactic preparation of meaningful artistic activities.

**Keywords:** art education, experiential education, art based research, primary school, generalist teachers.

### Resumen

La actitud personal de los profesores hacia la materia que enseñan, su autoeficacia profesional y su experiencia son esenciales para su capacidad de transmitir el contenido de la materia al alumnado. Sin embargo, la relación de los futuros docentes con la materia se forma antes en su propia historia educativa que en la universidad. De ello deriva su interés por la materia y su posterior formación. Nuestra investigación ha demostrado que el alumnado de la especialidad de educación primaria y educación extraescolar tienen recuerdos negativos de la educación artística en la escuela primaria y evalúan la materia y sus beneficios como marginal.

En este artículo discutiremos cómo la transformación del enfoque didáctico al enfocarse más en el proceso creativo que en el producto puede afectar positivamente la relación ya establecida de los futuros docentes con la educación artística, y contribuir a la comprensión de los objetivos de la educación artística. Esta investigación estuvo dirigida a profesorado generalista (escuela primaria) y estudiantes de pregrado que trabajarán en clubes escolares o como educadores extraescolares. La investigación se segmentó en tres fases donde en la primera, utilizamos un enfoque cualitativo para determinar la actitud personal de los estudiantes hacia el tema de la educación artística. En la segunda fase, utilizamos el enfoque basado en el arte. En esta fase se aplicaron procedimientos didácticos inspirados en el arteterapia creativa y la educación experiencial reflexiva para cambiar esta actitud. Se eligió el enfoque basado en el arte principalmente porque permite monitorear los cambios que ocurren en el proceso y al mismo tiempo, gracias al proceso, es posible inducir estos cambios. Este tipo de investigación genera otras preguntas inesperadas que permiten una comprensión más profunda del problema. En la tercera fase el alumnado presentó sus obras y reflexionaron sobre los procesos creativos, así como sobre el curso en sí, sus beneficios, obstáculos y experiencias transferibles.

La conclusión de la investigación es que estos métodos pueden en muy poco tiempo cambiar la actitud hacia las propias habilidades creativas / autoconfianza creativa / para actualizar y ampliar la percepción del tema y sus objetivos. Al mismo tiempo, surge la necesidad de una formación profesional más profunda que facilite a los estudiantes la preparación didáctica de actividades artísticas significativas.

**Palabras clave:** educación artística, educación experiencial, investigación basada en el arte, escuela primaria, profesores generalistas.

## Introduction

The teacher's relationship to art education and their self-efficacy beliefs are absolutely crucial to the quality of the teaching they provide. In comparison with future art teachers, this relationship is rather problematic for future primary school teachers (generalists teachers). We can observe a similar situation regardless of national borders. Subject popularity with future generalists teachers (Garvis, 2008, 2012; Garvis, Pendergast, 2010; Lemon, Garvis, 2013); their self-efficacy (Lemon, Garvis, 2013; Pfitzner-Eden, 2016) and the reasons for non-quality in teaching are a frequent topic of research (Seidel & et al. 2009; Welch, 1995; Eisner, Day, 2004;). Studies show insufficient teacher training during their university studies (Garvis, Pendergast, 2010, Lemon, Garvis, 2013; Lummis, Morris, Paolino, 2014; Collins, 2016) lack of understanding of a school curriculum (Šobánková, 2012), the content of the subject (Řepa, 2019), or the key concept such as creativity, which shapes the content of the subject (štěpánková, 2019). Insufficient teaching hours for the subject, wide professional scope of future lower primary school teachers, and the emphasis on 'main subjects', which are mathematics and language (Garvis, Pendergast, 2010; Lemon, Garvis, 2013; Garvis, Twigg, Pendergast, 2010; Lemon, Garvis, 2013; Oreck, 2006; Tavşancil, Yalçın, 2016;) fundamentally inform the relationship and attitude of future teachers to the subject of art education and their own competencies for the subject, that is self-efficacy. However, the relationship to the subject is being formed much earlier, during their own education at primary school.

## Self-Efficacy

Bandura perceives the concept of self-efficacy beliefs, that is, "beliefs in one's capabilities to organise and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments" (Bandura, 1997, p. 3) as a key indicator of the quality of teaching. He points out that own experience with the subject shapes the professional self-concept of the teacher and also draws attention to the fact of transferring pedagogical patterns from own educational history to own teaching of the subject. Teacher's self-efficacy beliefs (TSE) (Bandura, 1977, 1994, 1997; Skaalvik and Skaalvik, 2010; Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, Hoy, 1998) is a concept derived from the sociocognitive theory of self-efficacy and testifies to the teacher's belief in their professional skills and abilities to influence pupils' learning. Research shows that teachers with low self-efficacy tend to approach teaching routinely and their ability to motivate students for the subject and learning is limited. In school, these teachers will pay more attention to discipline, routine and formal aspects of teaching (Pajares, 2005; Garvis, Pendergast, 2010; Lemon, Garvis, 2013; Bandura, 1994). At the same time, teachers with high self-efficacy have been shown to better motivate pupils to learn, devote more energy to preparation and self-learning, and are better protected against teacher burnout (Housego, 1990; Caprara, Barbaranelli, Steca & Malone, 2006; Garvis, Pendergast, 2010; Garvis, Twigg, Pendergast, 2010; Lemon, Garvis, 2013; Oreck, 2006).

It is important for pedagogical practice that, in addition to the very concept of self-efficacy, the main sources of its support are also described (Bandura, 1994; 2006; Pajares, 2006; Pajares, Urdan, 2006). Bandura (1994, 1997, 2006) considers mastery experience the most important resource for building a strong belief in one's own ability. It provides direct and (positive) experience from accomplishing a task. Vicarious experience is considered the second most important source. It is an experience gained by observing others, preferably those who can serve as a role model, and who the observes can easily identify with. Vicarious experience thus helps to form an idea of how to solve the task and strengthen confidence about one's own ability to handle the task. Verbal persuasion as a third source of self-efficacy beliefs mobilises efforts and willingness to persevere in achieving the goal. However, it is essential that the encouragement comes from authorities that we personally consider important. Somatic and emotional states help to evaluate situations and influence how we perceive and evaluate given situations. Positive emotions strengthen confidence in one's own abilities, stress reduces confidence in them and undermines them.

Although the theory provides sufficient insight into the issue and allows for understanding of the concept, very little has been documented in specific cases on how to use these resources effectively in school practice. In the case of art education, the lack of research studies is tied to the visual nature of the subject, the minority importance attached to the subject and also because of the nature of research tools mainly used in the academic environment.

### **Methodology of the Research (Art-Based Research)**

Artworks and art in general are appreciated especially because it allows to express facts that cannot be communicated in ordinary language (McNiff, 1998; Malchiodi, 1998; Eisner, 2008; Elsworth, 2005). From disciplines emphasising communication based on non-language code, there is an urgent need for research that would reflect on the artistic process (Mc Niff, 2000; Baronne, Eisner, 2011; Ellsworth, 2005; Leavy, 2017) and thus make it possible to present the goals of artistic disciplines as parallel to scientific goals (Eisner-Barone, 2011). The involvement of visuals in qualitative research is currently on the rise, as a result of the arrival of media and image-mediating technologies into public space (Sturken, Cartwright, 2009), as well as the need to gain a more comprehensive knowledge of qualitatively researched phenomena (Leavy, 2009). Art-based research does not place aesthetic and scientific knowledge in opposition to traditional research methods, on the contrary, it allows to use artwork "in any of the aspects of the research process, including the formulation of research questions, data generation, data analysis and presentation of research results" (Wang et al., p. 7; Leavy, 2017; Eisner, Barone, 2011)

The roots of art-based research as a method are historically closely connected with creative arts therapy, which lies on the border between psychotherapy and art (Karkou, Sanderson, 2006; Malchiodi, 1998). Art therapy has always used an artwork not only as a therapeutic tool and a way to reflect on the therapeutic process, but also as a research method that can inform us about the process and results of the therapy (McNiff,

1998; Malchiodi, 1998). The transfer of experience from this field has enabled artwork to become part of a qualitative approach to research. Art forms that reflect experience by other means that are difficult to express have thus significantly enriched the range of research tools, especially in the social sciences (Malchiodi, 1998; Barrone, Eisner, 2011). From his position as a pioneer of art-based research, McNiff demonstrates that creative art therapy has paved the way for art-based research and has shown that art and science can be successfully merged in inquiry processes (McNiff, 1998). Leavy (2017, p. 4) perceives art-based research as a “transdisciplinary approach to knowledge building that combines the tenets of the creative arts in research contexts”.

It is especially important for art education that the use of art and artmaking process has been promoted in research in the social and behavioral sciences by way of so-called art-based educational research since the 1990s by Elliot Eisner, a researcher and art educator. He saw art in the context of research as a way that allows us to look at the researched situation from a different perspective and thus understand it in a different way. Eisner (2008) was well aware of the fact that research that uses artistic components tends to ask questions rather than answers them. Nevertheless, he did not perceive this fact as a weakness of the research tool, because it allows to visualise phenomena that would be otherwise hard to identify without a creative context (Barone, Eisner 2011). He considers the main benefit of the method its ability to ‘illuminate’ what has not yet been seen; to communicate research results clearly to a wider audience (be referentially adequate); to generalise and combine research findings with practice (generalisability) (Barone, Eisner, 2011, p. 148-153).

Art-based research is defined as “research that uses the arts, in the broadest sense, to explore, understand, represent and even challenge human action and experience” (Savin-Baden, Wimpenny, 2014, p. 1). Therefore, artmaking process and art play a particularly invaluable role in the study of social phenomena. It can interpret experiences in a unique way social phenomena and personal narratives that are not otherwise transferable (Eisner, 2008; Barone, Eisner, 2011). Leavy (2009, p. 13) emphasises that “art-based practice can be employed as a means of creating critical awareness or raising consciousness,” and thus draws attention to the aspect of ‘change’ of perception.

The use of creative process is possible „in one or more aspects of a research process, (including formulating research questions, generating data, analysing data, and presenting research results) and with the purpose of widening audience participation and positively transforming participants, communities, or society” (Wang et al., 2017, p. 7).

Another characteristic of art-based research is that, like the creative process, it leaves room for surprise, spontaneity, intuition, and openness in the research process (Leavy, 2009, 2019; Barone, Eisner, 2011; Wang et al., 2017). Also, the involvement of lay people / non-researchers and the general public in research brings positives on which the art-based research community agrees (Barone, Eisner, 2011; Wang et al., 2017; Leavy, 2017; Malchiodi, 1998; Savin-Baden & Wimpenny, 2014; Härkönen, 2018). Art-based research allows for the transformation of the participants and the researcher (van der Vaart et al., 2018). Reflexivity, the focusing on the creative process and sharing lead to

increasing empathy, consciousness and self-awareness of all involved. The experience that is formed between the participants during the creative process and the dialogue is thus authentically created, not just passed on (Gerber et al., 2012; Leavy, 2017; van der Vaart et al., 2018; Härkönen, 2018).

## Research Questions

At the beginning of the research, the question was why students of primary education, who will teach art education throughout their pedagogical career, are very often afraid of art education, and value their own artistic abilities and skills as very low (I cannot draw, I have no talent, I was never good at art education), or express openly a negative attitude towards art education (I do not like art education). This question has initiated a second, more serious one, whether and how this attitude can be changed. The choice of research method resulted from the nature of the subject and the researched question. It was necessary to be able to monitor the creative process, the change in students' attitudes and then answer the question of how the relationship of students to art education, to their own artistic abilities and creation can be influenced and 'fixed', regardless of whether it was insufficiently supported or disturbed by external conditions. Art-based research was chosen as the main research method. It is a method specific to the art field, which allows to reflect on the creative process and interpret it as 'data' (Barone, Eisner, 2011; Coemans, Hannes, 2017) rather than just examining the end result as an aesthetic object (so-called 'art in research') (Wang et al., 2017; Leavy, 2017).

The research took place during two winter semesters in the academic year of 2018/2019 and 2019/2020 at the University of Hradec Králové, Czech Republic. Four groups of students in the final years of teacher-training for lower primary schools (n = 26) and afterschool education (n = 26) were involved in the teaching of the subjects Art Expression and Artphiletics. Each group had 11 meetings 2x45 min available during the semester. The seminar Art Expression is not conceived as a traditional art studio lessons, but stands on the border of 'process-based art education' and 'creative art therapy' (Karkou, 2006, p. 89). The aim of the course is to acquaint students with alternative approaches to art lessons within art education for lower primary schools, which emphasises the communicative, reflexive and expressive components of artmaking.

## First Phase of the Research

In the initial phase of the research, students' essays in which they answered questions regarding their relationship to art education, the history of its formation and students' self-efficacy in the field of art were analysed. The texts were coded and based on the coding, key topics were defined and individual categories were created (Miovský, 2006; Gavora, 2010). Within the categories, the frequency of keywords was analysed, and this data was quantified. It turned out that 15.4% of respondents have positive memories of the subject, they especially appreciated the teacher, their commitment, and the overall atmosphere in the classroom. However, another 38.5% described the subject as boring, stereotypical and

without content. 36.5% of respondents expressed an explicitly negative attitude towards art education. They were particularly dissatisfied with the absence of educational content, but above all with the teacher, their lack of interest in art education and their insufficient didactic guidance. 9.6% were unable to recall any memories of art education at lower primary school. In total, it was 75% of students who have adopted a rather negative or explicitly negative attitude towards art education.

What are your memories of art education at lower primary school?		
Positive	8	15,4 %
Boring and stereotypical	20	38,5 %
Negative	19	36,5 %
Can't remember	5	9,6 %

This early experience became the basis for later self-evaluation of students' own artistic qualities and the formation of their self-efficacy in the field of art. The data provided a starting point for designing the content of the seminars so that students could be offered the corrective experience associated with a creative process.

### Second Phase of the Research

In the second phase of the research, an art-based approach to the research was used (Leavy, 2017). The selected research method corresponded to the content, form and philosophy of the subject, while it activated students and involved them in the research process as participants, not as researchers (Coemans, Hanes, 2017). In this phase, art activities were carried out, the aim of which was to enable students to gain a creative experience. In relation to building self-efficacy, it was primarily a matter of acquiring mastery experience and vicarious experience (Bandura, 1994).

Throughout the semester, the same scheme-initiation was applied; an expressive play or a short artistic activity that introduced one's own artistic work; reflection and summary. The selected methods of work were aimed primarily at 1) eliminating students' fear of artmaking through artistic expression; 2) strengthening the ability to perceive the communicative aspect of artwork; 3) being aware of own creativity and working consciously on developing it.

Art activities were designed so that students experienced 1) working as individuals, 2) working in pairs, 3) working in a group, while gaining experience with a wide range of artistic expressive techniques (drawing, painting, action graphics, collage, spatial work) and artistic means (pencil, pastel, acrylic, watercolour, metal, wood, clay, paper, textile). The activities were designed in a way to encourage experimentation and searching for solutions while allowing the work to be transformed on the basis of impulses that occur during the actual creative process. The topics offered for artmaking were based on metaphor, ambiguity and enabled working with exaggeration (proverbs, fairy tales, parables, humour, poetry). During the activities, conditions supporting creativity (such as

experiment, play, work with more possible solutions, the possibility of correcting one's own mistakes, learning by the process, open-ended tasks, etc.) were ensured (Sternberg, 1999; Sawyer, 2012). The engagement of the teacher in the activities helped set a creative atmosphere without the fear of evaluation and what the end result will look like.

The artworks and the creative process were the starting point for a reflective dialogue. It made it possible to share experiences from the creative process, emotions, communicate topics that have surfaced thanks to the creative process, and also safely conclude the experience gained. Lawrence (2008), Eisner (2008) McNiff (1998), Denzin, Lincoln (2010) refer to the importance of the group, reflexivity, communication and emotional experience in learning. Although topics with a strong emotional charge opened up in the dialogue, the aims of the project were to focus on the pedagogical aspects and on building self-efficacy, not on providing a therapy. In connection with art-based research, McNiff (1998) or Gerber et al. (2012) highlight reflexivity and empathy of the participant/researcher as an indisputable benefit of the research. In addition, reflection is a very important type of experience for students. It relates to the ability to evaluate and give feedback, it increases sensitivity and attention to what is happening to me, around me, to the processes in the classroom, and non-verbal expressions. This aspect is also referred to in the curriculum, where the support of the ability to apply subjectivity in perception, creation and evaluation is enshrined among the main goals of art education (RVP, 2017).

### **Third Phase of the Research**

The seminar was concluded with students' presentation of all their artwork. Individual portfolios reflected the approach to working with the subject (literality, exaggeration, humour), the way of artistic approach (expressiveness, realism, descriptiveness, artistic exaggeration), personal commitment, courage to create, courage to be different. In the discussion held with the focus group (4 x 13 students), students reflected on the course of the seminar and identified subjectively perceived benefits, obstacles and transferable experiences. Above all, however, it was focused on the personally experienced artistic improvement and the transformation of self-efficacy.

### **Results of the Research**

The research data consisted not only of the students' artwork and their essays summarizing the experience from the project, but also photo documentation and notes from reflective dialogues. In them, students expressed the way they perceived the topics and selected art techniques, other contents that occurred spontaneously during the creative process, and subsequent reflection. The data obtained during the research were used as feedback to the seminar.

The visible result of the seminar was the departure from learned artistic imaging stereotypes and the objective and experienced improvement of students' artistic skills. Students were particularly surprised by their improvement. Due to their identification with the label 'I can't draw', they did not expect any improvement. Moreover, they did



not expect any improvement from teaching that did not primarily focus on ‘teaching how to draw’. Students found that the ability to express themselves with artistic means was brought about primarily by the creative process, in search of an appropriate expression (mastery experience), the opportunity to reflect back on this process, when talking about the end work and learning from each other (vicarious experience). Both their evaluation of the subject of art education, the idea of its meaning and content, and their attitude towards the subject and their own abilities have changed. There was a qualitative change in the evaluation of all students. Those who started from the position ‘I can’t do it’, ‘I don’t like it’, ‘I don’t enjoy it’, moved to the expression of ‘I won’t become an artist, but I enjoyed it’ during the self-evaluation or evaluation of the subject. More often, however, they expressed their surprise at what they were capable of making: ‘I had no idea I could draw a figure in motion,’ ‘I bought canvases and started painting at home.’

During the semester, the difference between better and less art-equipped students also decreased. The gradual elimination of fear enabled students with poorer art background to learn faster. On the contrary, it was more difficult for those with better formal education to depart from the learned routine and were less willing to embark on the path of ‘uncertainty’ toward art play, which does not allow for having a full control of the process or being able to predict the result, but leads to greater creativity. At the same time, the willingness of participants to talk about their own artwork, the ability to find artistic metaphors and discover the ambiguity of artistic communication in its reflection also increased. The dialogue thus created an opportunity to search for possible meanings of the work and to compare one’s own feelings with the feelings of others whom they would not otherwise be able to understand or share. Good examples of this are artworks based on experiments with drawing, action graphics or painting. The experiences that the students shared were very different. Some preferred working with coincidence and ‘play-like’ assignments as it allowed them to work without stress, and supported their playfulness and creativity, while in others ‘non-specific’ assignments, or a high degree of coincidence induced anxiety and tension.

- “It was great to just scribble, let the hand run over the paper and then suddenly see that ‘something’ is being created! And it was more than I could think of. All you had to do was make a decision and give it the final shape.”

- “I was very upset that I didn’t know what to do. So at least I made wavy lines and spirals. Then I saw landscape in the spots, and then the wavy lines were kind of an obstruction for me again. Yeah, in the end it was great, I was surprised by what I did, but the stress before that!”

To experience working in a group was completely new to the students. It showed that joint creative processes can be an opportunity to create work that exceeds the abilities and potential of an individual, that it is possible to create using the energy of all involved, and work with the inspiration gained in the creative process. In addition to artistic and expressive benefits, this experience allowed students to experience group dynamics, which belongs more to self-experienced groups focused on personal growth, understanding of their own abilities and limits. It was the dialogue and this experience that were among the components that helped fulfil the categories of social persuasion and emotional states.

Each technique or material offered a different experience. Working with material that put up physical resistance (clay, action graphics) resulted in a greater degree of expressiveness, working with a coincidence and its processing demanded better concentration, haptic drawings aimed at sensitivity, etc. The involvement of all participants in the work, including the teacher, also played an important role. In the discussion, they appreciated their own artwork, and viewed non-evaluation, and support from their classmates as the strongest self-experiential moments.

- “At the beginning, I was ashamed of how awful it (the artwork) looked. At school, my teacher used to tell that I should better sing than draw. Then I started enjoying it. I enjoyed scribbling the most, I didn’t have to be afraid to start, then I was just looking for what I saw there. I just scribbled and suddenly I saw I was drawing.”

- “I can’t draw, but I’m not afraid of it anymore!”

The energy of students naturally changed during the semester. Students appreciated that they can ‘play,’ and that the creative process is a relaxation for them, at the same time active participation in creation and reflection required a great deal of their own commitment and energy. For those students who could rely on positive artistic self-efficacy it was easier to work at first, but they were not always able to accept an artistic experiment or work with uncertainty, and incorporate forms and shapes that occurred unexpectedly and that could disrupt their artistic routine or intended concept. For those who were bound by a greater degree of self-criticism or fear, the work was initially more difficult, but due to the lack of knowledge of artistic ‘norms’, they later worked more freely and discovered their own possibilities far beyond the expected boundaries. Some of the students, who were aware of their artistic limits, wanted to focus on formal improvement after the introductory lessons rather than on open-ended art experiments, as they were faced with their inability to adequately express themselves artistically, which they felt as a limit.

The semester provided a fixed framework for the realisation of the course. Once a week, students had the opportunity to have an experience that went beyond the usual type of teaching. Their evaluation of the research project, in which they acted as both active participants and researchers, was highly positive in terms of their own benefits and for future practice. However, their own commitment to the creative process, their courage to experiment and take risks, to give up learned schemes and stereotypes, were key to their gaining of new experience and to the overall success of the course.

- “I started to pay much more attention to myself, the world around me, and now I’m looking forward to seeing what I discover next.”

- “It was great, but my issue was that I could not relax seeing that the work doesn’t look the way I intended it to be, so I felt quite exhausted.”

## **Discussion and Conclusion**

The aim of this study was to point out the issue of the complicated relationship of future primary school teacher to art education. On the other hand, the objective was also to show

the possibility of influencing the formed concepts of students regarding their own artistic skills and creative potential.

The involvement of the art-based research method made it possible to monitor the process of transformation of students' perceptions of their own self-efficacy in art education, the transformation of their imaging stereotypes, and to accelerate these processes. The starting point for the implementation was that the students accept the concept of the seminar as their own 'personal project'. To ensure the greatest possible internal motivation for work, it was necessary to communicate the goals of the seminar / research as achievable. The credit that students received at the end of the semester was awarded on the basis of active participation in the project, not on the basis of the quality of artworks created. Students' experience can be evidenced by their reflection on the seminars, final reflection and artworks during the semester, which thus form a comprehensive case study material. The increase in students' perception of their own artistic competencies and self-efficacy was not based only on a subjective 'feeling of change'. That alone would not be enough (Pajares, 2006). An important finding for the practice of art education at primary schools is that although teaching was based on art experiment and creative play, without focusing on the skills in drawing or painting, there was a visible qualitative artistic shift and higher sensitivity of students to working with artistic means. This confirms the opinions of experts that the obstacle to creativity is primarily the fear of failure, situations that do not allow learning from mistakes and too closed an assignment (Sternberg, 1999; Sawyer, 2012). It was an opportunity for the teacher to follow the process of this transformation, to moderate it, to perceive the obstacles that students have to overcome and to reflect on them when designing the curriculum. For both parties, it was valuable to increase the aspect of mindfulness in the process and content of creation, and perceiving each other.

The mastery experience category was undoubtedly the most important for creating a new experience. Subsequent sharing of experience gained in the creative process (thinking about the content, artistic means, selected procedures) and the reflection on the process (interpretation of the content of artistic realisations, mutual comparison of precepts and starting points for a creative process) enabled vicarious experience. Sharing and listening, which took place in a safe environment, gave room for feedback and appreciation and fulfilled the category of social persuasion and emotional states. Artworks reflected a special approach to the artistic solution or grasp of the content. The possibility of verbal explanation and presentation of work to others gradually strengthened the participants' confidence in their own artistic, but above all creative abilities and skills. Participants also shared their own and very often identical experiences that shaped their relationship to their own skills. Much more important than the increasing aesthetic quality of the works was the transformation of self-esteem and awareness of the power of the so-called self-fulfilling prophecy (Pajares, 2006). The creative part showed the importance of art-based research as a research method. Direct experience and the evoked emotional response opened up topics that would remain completely hidden or insufficiently clarified when 'asking questions'. This aspect is particularly emphasised by Eisner (2008), Lawrence (2008), Cohenmiller (2018), Coemans, Hannes (2017), Franz (2010). Eisner (2008, p.7)

also points out the ability of the arts in research “to promote a form of understanding that is derived or evoked through empathic experience”.

In addition to findings directly related to sources of self-efficacy, it was also observed that:

- The need for artistic expression and ‘self-expression’, which prevailed among students at the beginning, was gradually replaced with the need to be formally educated artistically, regardless of the initial low evaluation of their own artistic potential.
- The idea of ‘artistic self-expression’ or ‘product’ as a sufficient content of art education in primary school has spread.
- Students began to think about the content of art education.

The most limiting obstacle for students and the seminars was their fear and their low professional self-efficacy as well as the absence of artistic experience and skills. This course that would be included in the teacher training at the beginning of their studies rather than at the end, could help students deal with their own concerns, and ‘open them’ not only for education in the arts, but especially in didactic disciplines. Didactics of art education is the most important subject for students in relation to practice.

We believe that the experience gained will affect the pedagogical sensitivity of all involved. We believe that in the future it will help students with adopting a didactic approach, especially when working with children with a lack of self-confidence and increased self-criticism of their artwork, similarly to what the students felt at the beginning of the project. The methodological reflection of the project is also a contribution to the discussion on the possibility of involving creative and art-based research methods in research. According to Eisner (2002), no methodology is perfect. Every one of them leads to a gain and a loss. However, thanks to the different way of obtaining data and working with them, we also gain a different kind of knowledge (Eisner 2008; Eisner, Barone, 2011; Leavy, 2017; Gerber et al. 2012).

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